



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Marc Gorelnik, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 2, 2023

TO: Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, Groundfish Management Team, and Groundfish Interested Persons

FROM: Mr. Brett Wiedoff, Groundfish Staff Officer

SUBJECT: June 2023 Council Meeting Materials

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and its advisory bodies will meet in person [June 21-27, 2022](#) at the Hilton Vancouver Washington, 301 W. Sixth Street, Vancouver, WA 98660. The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) will convene their sessions starting Wednesday, June 21, 2022, at 8:00 a.m. in Heritage E and F, respectively. Their meetings will adjourn on Sunday, June 25, 2022.

All meetings are open to the public and at least one opportunity for public comment has been scheduled for each meeting day. Other Ancillary meetings will be conducted via a combination of online and in-person formats as noted in the Schedule of Ancillary Meetings in the Detailed Agenda (A.3). Instructions for joining online meetings will be posted to the [June Council meeting web page](#). Please see the Council website (www.pcouncil.org) for more information.

The Council will consider several important groundfish agenda items and related matters of interest at this meeting. The briefing book materials attached to this memorandum provide detailed information for these items on the Council's June 2023 agenda. The following agenda items summarized below may be of particular interest to the GMT and GAP.

C.2 Council and Process Efficiencies

In the third of a series of white papers, Council staff lay out a process and schedule for considering changes in Council procedures that would culminate in preparation of submission of the next funding request to NOAA for the 2025-2029 period. Of the many ideas that have been put forward so far under this topic, staff are seeking guidance on which ones it should further develop into concrete proposals. Those proposals would be initially vetted by the Budget Committee and then taken up by a "committee of the whole" of Council members in a strategic planning meeting.

C.3 Marine Planning Update

The Council's Marine Planning Committee (MPC) met May 18th and received an introductory briefing from Ms. Katie Westfall, NMFS Senior Advisor on Offshore Wind energy issues, as well

as updates on activities and issues for California, Oregon, and Washington, and a Tribal update. MPC Report 1 is included in the advanced Briefing Book materials. The MPC was also scheduled to convene June 6, 2023, to discuss fisheries communications plans (FCPs), which are a requirement for OSW lease holders. The five California OSW lease holders were invited to discuss the timing, schedule, and content of the FCPs. Draft FCPs are expected to be available for public review and comment. The June 6th MPC meeting was originally scheduled to consider the draft Wind Energy Areas (WEAs) off the Oregon Coast. However, the MPC was notified that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management will not be ready to present or discuss the draft Oregon WEAs.

C.7 Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures (COP)

In March 2023, the Council adopted a Harassment Reporting Procedures Policy (posted on the [Rules and Procedures](#) page) and discussed additional steps to promote a respectful and harassment-free work environment. Attachment 6 contains the staff-recommended measures, including COP updates, along with a summary of the Council, Advisory Body, and Tribal comments from [March 2023](#). Under this agenda item, the Council should identify the measures for implementation and next steps.

E.1. Scoping Catch Sharing Program and Regulation Changes

This item will address potential future topics related to halibut management policies that may affect the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan and non-tribal commercial halibut fishery regulations. A staff report is provided to help define or clarify the issues raised and provide a sense of the magnitude of the issue so that the Council can develop a process and timeline to fully address the issues as needed. The main areas of focus are recommendations from the Enforcement Consultants in their [September 2022 report](#), and the request from the Groundfish Advisory Panel reports in [November 2022](#) and [April 2023](#) to maximize opportunity for the California recreational fishery.

F.1 Ecosystem Management

The EWG held a public meeting on May 15 and 17 to begin work on Initiative 4, through which the Council could identify ways to integrate ecosystem information more directly into its fishery management processes. The Council has requested the EWG provide a short report on the outcome of that meeting under this agenda item. The EWG will submit a supplemental report for that purpose. During its meeting it explored the use of a risk assessment method modeled after work that has been carried out in the North Pacific since 2017, applying it to petrale sole and sablefish. Stoplight tables that summarize an array of climate and ecosystem indicators, which have been used in the annual salmon management process, were also explored. Finally, the EWG continued development of a framework to identify and prioritize the Council-managed species groups or species with management processes that should next be supported with ecosystem and climate information. As scheduled, the EWG will report on the results of this work at the September Council meeting.

H.2 Sablefish Gear Switching – Initial Preliminary Preferred Alternative

The main Council task is to identify an initial preliminary preferred alternative (IPPA) from within the current range of alternatives adopted at the April 2023 meeting. The IPPA will be helpful in developing and refining a preliminary preferred alternative, which is scheduled for November 2023 on the year-at-a-glance calendar. Depending on the outcome of this agenda item, there may be a need to revisit this item in September for further refinement. The GMT and GAP should review the briefing book materials and provide comments to assist the Council in this effort. Note

that selecting an IPPA does not necessarily imply an expression of preference for action over No Action.

H.3 Amendment 31 Stock Definitions - Final Preferred Alternative

The Council is scheduled to adopt final preferred stock definitions for all priority species at this meeting. The GMT, GAP, and the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) should review the analysis document Agenda Item H.3, Attachment 1 in its entirety and comment as appropriate. As noted in the situation summary, the SSC should concentrate on Section 3.2.1 and Chapter 4 of the analytical document. This action will require revisions to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The revised FMP is provided with red-lined edits as Agenda Item H.3, Attachment 2 for review.

H.4 Limited Entry Fixed Gear (LEFG) Follow-On Actions and Gear Marking- Scoping

In March 2023, the Council prioritized a series of potential management measures from the groundfish workload list related to the LEFG program and gear marking for pot and longline gear. At this meeting, the GMT and GAP should review Attachment 1, which provides a preliminary scoping of the proposed measures and potential pathways for moving the items forward. NMFS also provides two reports (NMFS Report 1 and NMFS Report 2) for consideration. The GMT and GAP should provide comments and recommendations to the Council on which items should move forward, the scope of those items, and the timeline on which they should proceed. Additionally, any guidance on potential alternatives should be noted to help develop a potential range of alternatives at the next meeting (currently scheduled for September 2023).

H.5 Electronic Monitoring Implementation Update

The Council is scheduled to receive an electronic monitoring program (EM Program) implementation update from NMFS, consider revisions to the EM business rules, and provide guidance to NMFS regarding implementation of the EM program for 2024. The Council will review draft language to address potential changes to business rules for documenting non-allowable discards and clarify these review protocols in the EM Manual.

H.6 Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup Report

The Council will receive a summary report from the Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup (GESW) meeting and species-specific reports on population status of humpback whale, eulachon, leatherback sea turtle, short-tailed albatross, and green sturgeon. These reports serve to inform the Council regarding any potential groundfish management concerns related to the fishery's interaction with these species. The GMT and GAP should review the GESW report and consider any recommendations as appropriate.

H.7 2025-2026 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures Planning

The Council is scheduled to adopt the process and timeline that will be used in developing the 2025-2026 harvest specifications and management measures. This step in the biennial process is necessary to ensure deadlines are met so that the 2025-2026 groundfish regulations are enacted by January 1, 2025. The SSC, GMT, and GAP should review this schedule and provide input to the Council, as appropriate.

H.8 Inseason Management – Final Action

This agenda item will consider progress to date of the groundfish fisheries as well as routine inseason adjustments to the 2023 fisheries, as necessary, to achieve conservation objectives.

Other Items

The following are additional pre-Council meeting briefings that may be of interest:

- The NWFSC will host the Stock Assessment Review (STAR) panel for copper rockfish off California, rex sole, and shortspine thornyhead assessments June 5th through June 9.
- The GAP will host its pre-June Council meeting [webinar](#) to discuss items on the Council's June agenda on Friday, June 13 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- The GMT will host its pre-June Council meeting [webinar](#) to discuss items on the Council's June agenda on Friday, June 16 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.
- NMFS Southwest and Northwest Fisheries Science Centers (SWFSC, NWFSC) will host an informal outreach event regarding the Integrated West Coast Pelagics Survey on June 21st from 6-8 pm in Heritage F. This survey is an effort to combine the NWFSC survey for Pacific hake with the SWFSC's survey for coastal pelagic species starting in 2025. This is the second of several public outreach events for all stakeholders.

This mailing includes the enclosures listed below. Please review these briefing materials in advance to facilitate an efficient meeting week. Please note that the Council will continue to encourage participants to obtain briefing book materials via our website. Printed materials are not available at the meeting, unless requested.

Thank you for your commitment to the Council process and management of Pacific groundfish fisheries.

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Enclosures include:

1. Agenda Item A. – Council Meeting Agenda and Executive Director's Report
2. Agenda Item B.1 – Open Public Comment
3. Agenda Item C – Administrative
4. Agenda Item E – Pacific Halibut
5. Agenda Item F – Ecosystem
6. Agenda Item H – Groundfish Management
7. Enforcement Consultants Agenda
8. GAP Agenda
9. GMT Agenda
10. Scientific and Statistical Committee Agenda and Draft Minutes
11. Informational Reports
12. General Information and Council Roster

PFMC
05/31/23