

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region is expected to provide updates to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) regarding rulemakings and notices posted in the *Federal Register* as well as updating the Council on its current workload and future rulemaking plans.

At the September 2023 meeting, the Council was informed that a take reduction team (TRT) would need to be formed to create a take reduction plan to address the incidental mortality and serious injury of relevant humpback whales per the stipulated settlement agreement ([Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 1, September 2023](#)). The TRT would, at minimum, consider the Federal sablefish pot gear fishery, and could also be expanded to consider other fisheries in the Pacific Ocean that interact with the Central America/Southern Mexico-CA/OR/WA and Mainland Mexico-CA/OR/WA stocks of humpback whales. A notice was published in the [Federal Register](#) on September 29, 2023, to notify the public of the scoping process for the TRT and solicit interest from stakeholders who wish to be considered for TRT membership (Agenda Item E.1, Attachment 1). The Council will have the opportunity to develop a comment letter on the contents of the Federal Register Notice under the NMFS report. Recommendations for stakeholder membership of the TRT should be considered under Agenda Item C.7.

The NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) is expected to discuss current groundfish-related science and research activities with the Council. The NWFSC has provided two reports for Council discussion. The first report is Pacific halibut bycatch in groundfish fisheries (Agenda Item E.1.b, NWFSC Report 1) which is accompanied by an infographic (Agenda Item E.1.b, NWFSC Report 2) and the report's data in MS Excel format (Agenda Item E.1.b, NWFSC Report 3). The second report relates to salmon bycatch in groundfish fisheries (Agenda Item E.1.b, NWFSC Report 4) which is accompanied by the report's data in MS Excel format (Agenda Item E.1.b, NWFSC Report 5).

Council Action:

- 1. Discuss the Federal Register Notice announcing the TRT and determine whether Council comment, outside of the TRT membership, is needed. Recommendations for stakeholder membership of the TRT should be considered under Agenda Item C.7.**
- 2. Council Discussion and Guidance, as Appropriate.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.1, Attachment 1: Federal Register Notice: Scoping for a Marine Mammal Take Reduction Team to Address Incidental Mortality and Serious Injury of Humpback Whale Stocks in the Pacific (*Electronic Only*).

2. Agenda Item E.1.b, NWFSC Report 1: Pacific Halibut Bycatch for 2002-2022.
3. Agenda Item E.1.b, NWFSC Report 2: Pacific Halibut Bycatch 2002-2022 Infographic.
4. Agenda Item E.1.b, NWFSC Report 3: Pacific Halibut Bycatch for 2002-2022 – Tables (*Electronic Only*).
5. Agenda Item E.1.b, NWFSC Report 4: Observed and Estimated Bycatch of Salmon in U.S. West Coast Fisheries, 2002-2022.
6. Agenda Item E.1.b, NWFSC Report 5: Observed and Estimated Bycatch of Salmon in U.S. West Coast Fisheries, 2002-2022 Report – Tables (*Electronic Only*).
7. If received, Public Comments are electronic only (see the [e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

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| E.1 | National Marine Fisheries Service Report | Todd Phillips |
| | a. Regulatory Activities | Keeley Kent |
| | b. Fisheries Science Center Activities | Craig Russell |
| | c. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies | |
| | d. Public Comment | |
| | e. Council Discussion and Guidance, as Appropriate | |

PFMC
10/10/23