

SABLEFISH GEAR SWITCHING – FINAL ACTION AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN (FMP) AMENDMENT

Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) discussions on limiting the use of non-trawl gear to target sablefish in the trawl individual fishing quota (IFQ) fishery (gear switching) began as part of its review of the Trawl Catch Share Program, finalized in 2017. As a result of the review, the Council adopted a gear switching control date (September 15, 2017). Subsequently it began a process that started with work by the Sablefish Allocation Management and Trawl Allocation Attainment Committee and led to further work on a range of alternatives across several Council meetings starting in September 2021. Most recently, at the November 2023 meeting, the Council selected its preliminary preferred alternative (PPA). The PPA would implement gear-specific quota pounds except in years in which a trigger is met, in which case generic quota pounds would be issued. Over the winter, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) determined that it would require a Fishery Management Plan (FMP) amendment for this action. At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to select its final preferred alternative and adopt FMP amendment language.

The following are the F.4 attachments and a few of the more important sections of each.

Attachment 1, Synopsis—provides:

- Section 1.0—PPA, including list of options and issues to address.
- Section 2.0—Brief description of the other action alternatives, including list of options for each.
- Section 3.0—Main contrasts among the alternatives.
- Section 4.0—Summary of direct allocational effects.
- Section 5.0—Main issues remaining to be addressed for all action alternatives.

Attachment 2, Alternatives—provides:

- A summary of the alternatives—more detailed than Attachment 1
- Full description of each alternative.
- Discussion of outstanding issues to be addressed for each alternative.
- Compendium of motions passed during Council deliberations.

Attachment 3, Analysis—provides:

- Section 1.0—Introduction
 - Section 1.2—List of some of the key considerations and where related material can be found.
- Section 2.0—Description of the fishery and analysis of the problem.
 - Section 2.2—History of sablefish allocations.
 - Section 2.4—Potential causes of trawl under attainment.
 - Section 2.5—Factors that may influence gear switching levels in the future.
- Section 4.0—Summaries of the analytical results
- Appendix 7.0—Main body of the analysis.
- Appendix 9.0—Analysis of alternative design
 - Section 9.4—Analysis of the PPA and triggers.

Attachment 4, FMP amendment language, provides:

- Two FMP amendment language options
- Related housekeeping changes

Additionally, NMFS will provide a report discussing implementation and ongoing tasks related to the PPA (Agenda Item F.4.a, NMFS Report 1).

Assuming the Council recommends an action alternative, the approval process requires that the Council deem that proposed regulations developed by NMFS are consistent with Council action. Generally, deeming is done by the Executive Director. On some occasions, deeming is conducted as part of a Council agenda item. This can be particularly useful for major or complex actions, for which policy issues are sometime discovered as regulations are developed.

Council Action:

- 1. Select final preferred alternative, including final preferred options and resolution of any outstanding issues (see list in Attachment 1 and discussion sections of Attachment 2).**
- 2. Adopt FMP language.**
- 3. Provide other guidance on the alternatives and process, as needed.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 1: Synopsis of Gear Switching Alternatives, Options, Comparisons, and Issues.
2. Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 2: Range of Gear Switching Alternatives Adopted for Analysis.
3. Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 3 (***Electronic Only***): Analysis to Inform Selection of Preliminary Preferred Alternative for Sablefish Gear Switching.
4. Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 4: Groundfish FMP Amendatory Language Proposed for the Council Preliminary Preferred Alternative on Gear-Switching.
5. Agenda Item F.4.a, NMFS Report 1: National Marine Fisheries Service Report on Gear Switching.
6. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- F.4 Sablefish Gear Switching – Final Action and Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment Jim Seger, Jessi Doerpinghaus
(Part 1; continues on Wednesday, April 10)
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. Council Action: *(Scheduled for Part 2 on Wednesday, April 10)*
- F.4 Sablefish Gear Switching – Final Action and Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment Jim Seger, Jessi Doerpinghaus
(Part 2, continued from Monday, April 8)
- c. **Council Action:** Adopt a Final Preferred Alternative and FMP Amendment Language, Provide Other Guidance as Appropriate

PFMC
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