



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Brad Pettinger, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 17, 2024

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

FROM: Jessi Doerpinghaus, Groundfish Staff Officer

SUBJECT: June 2024 Council Meeting Materials

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet June 8-13 in San Diego, California. The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) will convene meetings starting Friday, June 7, 2024, at 1 p.m. The GAP and GMT will adjourn on Monday, June 11, 2024. All meetings are open to the public and at least one opportunity for public comment has been scheduled for each meeting day.

The briefing book materials attached to this memorandum provide detailed information for items on the Council's June 2024 agenda. The following agenda items may be of particular interest to the GMT, the GAP, and other groundfish-interested stakeholders.

Groundfish

F.1 National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Report

The Council is scheduled to receive updates from the NMFS West Coast Region and the Northwest Science Fishery Center (NWFSC). The GAP and GMT will be briefed in a joint session.

F.2 Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Coral Research and Restoration Closures-Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment Final Action

Under this action, the Council is expected to select its final preferred alternative for deep-sea coral research and restoration areas within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. In March 2024, the Council adopted a range of alternatives for three areas and determined that the areas would be closed to only commercial groundfish bottom contact gears. The GMT and GAP should consider the analysis in Attachment 1 and provide a recommendation on a final preferred alternative as well as the proposed FMP language in Attachment 2.

F.3 Final Stock Assessment Plan and Terms of Reference – Final Action

This agenda item considers two interrelated issues. The Council will need to adopt the list of species to be assessed for 2025 and 2027. The Council will also adopt Terms of Reference (TOR) for groundfish stock assessment review, rebuilding analysis, and methodology reviews. The GMT and GAP should consider the proposed species to be assessed and make recommendations to the Council, as appropriate. They should also review the TORs and provide input to aid the Council in considering the updates and edits to these documents.

F.4. Stock Definitions for Species Assessed in 2025 and 2027- Range of Alternatives

This action is a continuation of the process to define stocks of all managed groundfish species which originated under Amendment 31 to the groundfish FMP. Under Agenda Item F.3, the Council will decide on the species to be assessed in 2025 and 2027. Stocks of these species will need to be defined. The GMT and GAP should give initial consideration regarding the management implications that should be considered as this action develops.

F.5 Fixed Gear Marking and Entanglement Risk Reduction- Final Action

In March 2024, the Council selected its preliminary preferred alternatives for gear marking and entanglement risk reduction measures for the groundfish fixed gear (i.e., pot and bottom longline) fishery. At this meeting, the Council is expected to select their final preferred alternatives. The GMT and GAP should review Attachment 2 and provide their recommendations to the Council.

F.6 2025-26 Harvest Specifications, Management Measures, and Exempted Fishing Permits-FMP Amendment Final Action

Under this action, the Council is scheduled to adopt final preferred alternatives (FPA) for routine management measures alternatives for 2023-26 fisheries, including a suite of new management measures. Routine measures include adjustments to trip limits, Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) boundary updates, and allocations. The new management measures include a registration requirement for open access vessels that fish in federal waters, a descending device for the recreational fishery, and modifications to the shortspine thornyhead allocation structure. The Council will need to adopt final harvest specifications and the rebuilding plan for California quillback rockfish. Additionally, Council is expected to finalize their recommendations to NMFS for 2025-26 exempted fishing permits. The GMT and GAP should closely review the Council adopted PPA for 2025-26 management measures and make recommendations to support the Council's FPA decisions making process.

F.7 Inseason Management

This agenda item will consider progress to date of the groundfish fisheries as well as routine inseason adjustments to the 2024 fisheries, as necessary, to achieve conservation objectives. This agenda item is the opportunity for the GAP and public to request inseason adjustments. Requests should be brought to the GMT by no later than noon, Monday, June 10 to ensure adequate analysis.

Cross-FMP Items

H.1. Marine Planning

The Council's Ad Hoc Marine Planning Committee (MPC) met online April 18, 2024, to consider current issues, activities, and impacts related to offshore wind (OSW) energy development on the Pacific Coast. The MPC will develop a draft comment letter on the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Proposed Sale Notice for two lease sites off the Oregon Coast. The GMT and GAP should review H.1.a, MPC Report 1 and provide comment as appropriate.. Council advisory bodies should review H.1.a, MPC Report 1, and consider developing supplemental reports if the Council would benefit from additional information or clarification of OSW-related issues.

H.2. NMFS Regional Equity and Environmental Justice (EEJ) Plan and EEJ Committee Update

The Council will be updated on Regional Implementation Plan for the [NOAA Fisheries National Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy](#), a [National Academy of Science report](#) regarding their assessment of equity in fishery management, and the Council Coordination Committee's EEJ

workshop. The GMT and GAP should review the briefing book materials and provide guidance as appropriate.

Administrative Items

C.2. Council Operations and Priorities

At the April 2024 meeting, the Council reviewed the Committee of the Whole report ([G.2.a, COTW Report 1, April 2024](#)). The Council tasked the Executive Director with further development of recommendations regarding budgetary issues, Council operations, and processes. At this meeting the Council is being asked to specify proposed recommendations it has for changing the nature of Council operations. To help inform these recommendations, Advisory Groups and the public are encouraged to focus their input on the areas of the Council process where they have the most relative expertise. For example, Advisory Subpanels and Management Teams are encouraged to provide the Council with input relative to their own operations, specify any recommendations they may have for improving these operations, and outline how any changes being considered could affect their ability to provide advice to the Council.

The Executive Director's recommended improvements will be discussed at the Council and during an all [advisory body webinar](#) on May 21, 9a.m to 12 p.m., Pacific Time. The GMT and GAP should attend this briefing and make recommendations to the Council, as appropriate.

C.6. Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures- 2025-2027 Term and Respectful Workplace Planning

The Council will consider appointments to Council membership, including Chair and Vice Chair elections under this agenda item. Advisory Bodies may wish to focus their review on the process for establishing the term-limited positions for the upcoming term (2025-2027). At the June Council meeting, the Council is scheduled to review the composition of all term-limited Advisory Body positions (SSC at-large positions; HC tribal, industry, conservation, and at-large positions; and all Advisory Subpanel positions) and adopt proposed changes for public review (see [COP 9, Schedule 6](#)). The current composition of all term-limited Advisory Subpanels can be found in Agenda Item C.6, Attachment 3 and the current roster can be found in the June Briefing Book. In September 2024, the Council is scheduled to adopt the final compositions of term-limited Advisory Body positions and request nominations to fill the next three-year term. Appointments are scheduled to be made in November 2024. Advisory Bodies should consider the form and function of the term-limited Advisory Bodies while taking into consideration the Council's financial status (see Agenda Item C.2 and C.4), when recommending the proposed changes for public review.

The Council will also discuss respectful working practices. At the June 2023 meeting, the Council adopted staff recommendations for promoting a respectful and harassment-free environment, which included revisions to the Council Operating Procedures to address harassment, decorum, and an anonymous reporting system. Staff has made progress implementing Council guidance from June 2023 to further develop respectful workplace policies (Attachment 4). Several of the items were recommended for development and consideration by the Council Coordinating Committee (CCC) and are expected to be discussed at their May 2024 meeting. The Executive Director will provide a summary of the discussions and next steps.

Non Council Agenda Item

Monterey Bay Aquarium [Seafood Watch](#) staff will brief the GMT and GAP at a joint session. The Seafood Watch program is in the process of developing a draft assessment for several species of groundfish. As part of the assessment process, Seafood Watch solicits public review for interested

stakeholders to share feedback. This briefing will introduce their plans and process for the assessment to the GMT and GAP during this session and provide other relevant information. No report is required for this item and is informational only.

Other Items

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

- The GMT will host a [webinar](#) meeting to discuss items on the Council's June Agenda on May 22, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- The GAP will host a [webinar](#) meeting to discuss items on the Council's June Agenda on Thursday, May 23 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- The Council will host a [webinar meeting](#) to brief advisory bodies regarding Council operations and priorities on Tuesday, May 21 from 9a.m. to 12 p.m.

This mailing includes the enclosures listed below. Please review these briefing materials in advance to facilitate an efficient meeting week. Briefing materials for this meeting can be accessed from the [June 2024 Meeting briefing book webpage](#).

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

JKD:ael

Enclosures include:

1. Agenda Item A.3 – Council Meeting Agenda
2. Agenda Item B.1 – Open Comment Items
3. Agenda Item C – Administrative Matters
4. Agenda Item F – Groundfish Management
5. Agenda Item H – Cross FMP
6. Enforcement Consultants Agenda
7. GAP Agenda
8. GMT Agenda
9. SSC Agenda and Draft Minutes
10. Informational Reports
11. General and Hotel Information and Council Roster

PFMC
05/15/24