

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON WORKLOAD & NEW MANAGEMENT MEASURES PRIORITIES

In March of each year, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduled to consider and potentially prioritize the development of new groundfish management measures based on the workload of the Groundfish Management Team (GMT), Council, and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The public and advisory bodies have the opportunity to propose and recommend new management measures and may recommend prioritizing certain groundfish topics to be taken up by the Council. This report provides the Council with the status of groundfish management measures requested to the Council, both prioritized and not prioritized (Appendix 1, Tables A & Table B respectively), as well as details about each management measure that has not been prioritized to date. Additionally, this report highlights items that the Council could consider adding to the groundfish management measure prioritization list (Appendix 1, Table C) along with other items that could be removed as they have either been resolved or no longer appear necessary.

Items currently in Table A are estimated to have high workload associated with their development. In particular, the steps associated with item A1 (Phase 2 stock definitions) are multifaceted, and decisions made by the Council during each “step” of Phase 2 are likely to have ripple effects on other management measures. Additionally, the GMT was tasked with developing open access discard mortality rates during the November Council meeting, and the team is currently working on it through the Methodology Review Process. Therefore, the GMT requests the Council be strategic regarding any additions to Table A. To that end, the GMT is only recommending prioritizing items B2 and B4 at this time since they are of value to the Council and appear to be ready for development. The GMT requests the Council refrain from prioritizing additional items listed in Table B or Table C with high workload or which may be directly impacted by phase 2 stock definitions (e.g., C1. Species Sorting).

Items are numbered based on Table B and Table C in Appendix 1. The numbering is not an indication of GMT prioritization or ranking of importance, but instead reflects the order that items have been added to the list as they have been requested or introduced. Additionally, the GMT estimation of workload (high, medium, low) is intended to be qualitative only, noting that items with the same workload designation may not have equal workload levels. We further note that items are not exchangeable and that the unique workload and logistics of each item mean that there is not a simple formula for determining the number and type of items the Council should prioritize (e.g., low + low \neq medium).

The GMT recommends:

- **Prioritizing items B2 and B4 (moving them to Appendix 1, Table A);**
- **Removing items B1 and B5 from the list;**
- **Retaining items B3, B6, B7, B9, B10, B12, and B13 on Table B;**
- **Adding but not prioritizing items C1, C2, C3, and C4 (moved to Appendix 1, Table B); and**

- **GMT does not have a recommendation for items B8 and B11.**

B1. Clarify Catch Accounting Rules for Amendment 21

Implementation of Amendment 21 resulted in unintended inconsistencies in the Federal regulations and the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) on how sablefish north of 36° N. lat. was accounted for in the incidental open access fisheries. After conversation with NMFS and Council staff, the GMT understands that this problem appears to have been resolved.

The GMT recommends the Council remove this item from the new management measures prioritization list.

Sector(s): Incidental Open Access

Anticipated Analytical Workload: Low

B2. Removal of Selective Flatfish Trawl Requirement Between 40° 10' N. and 42° N. lat.

This measure would remove a trawl gear regulation requiring the use of selective flatfish trawl gear (SFFT) between 42° N. lat. and 40° 10' N. lat. This change is currently being evaluated through the Trawl Gear Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP), as the 2017 Salmon Incidental Take Statement (ITS) required three years of data before implementing any changes. Since 2019, participants of the Trawl Gear EFP using bottom trawl gear have been exempt from the requirement to use SFFT while fishing between 42° N. lat. and 40° 10' N. lat. and shoreward of 100 fathoms ([Agenda Item F.8.a, NMFS Report 1, March 2023](#)). They have also been exempt from the prohibition on the use of small footrope trawl gear other than SFFT to fish for groundfish or have small footrope trawl gear onboard while fishing between 42° N. lat. and 40° 10' N. lat. At the time of this report, the EFP is in year seven of these exemptions. However, few vessels have taken advantage of these exemptions. Therefore, the GMT wonders if there is merit in continuing to provide this EFP exemption. In March 2023, NMFS indicated that they are “looking into the data availability of the ESU [evolutionarily significant unit]-level information of the Chinook bycatch from this EFP,” but also indicated that the available information may not be enough to evaluate impacts ([Agenda Item F.8.a, NMFS Report 1, March 2023](#)). It is the team’s understanding that NMFS anticipates submitting a report in the advanced briefing book for March 2025 regarding the status of ESU impacts analysis.

In anticipation of this forthcoming report, the GMT recommends the Council prioritize this item. Depending on the expected timeline of the ESU-level impacts analysis, the Council could schedule this item on the Year at a Glance (YAG) as part of the Agenda Item J.4 Future Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning.

Sector(s): IFQ

Anticipated Analytical Workload: Unknown

B3. New Dressed to Round Conversion Factors for Sablefish

Research by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) suggests that the current conversion factor in Federal regulations of 1.60 for dressed and head-off sablefish may be too high, particularly during certain times of the year. This new management measure item would revise or remove the current Federal rule which specifies “for headed and gutted (eviscerated) sablefish the weight conversion factor is 1.6” ([50 CFR 660.60\(h\)\(5\)\(ii\)\(A\)\(1\)](#)). However, Federal regulations also specify that conversion factors are established by the states. It is the GMT’s understanding that this new management measure was originally requested by WDFW for the state of Washington so that WDFW can apply the conversion factors of 1.54 for rolled-cut and 1.57 for slight angle cut, because they may be more appropriate and more representative of recent research. When this was discussed in the past, WDFW indicated, even if the Federal regulation were removed or modified to give the states flexibility in sablefish conversion factors, WDFW would continue to use the 1.6 conversion factor unless and until Oregon and California choose to also use the conversion factors of 1.54 and 1.57, in order to maintain consistency in how we account for sablefish mortality coastwide. The GMT also notes that if one state changes a conversion factor, debiting for IFQ species would differ between states, potentially creating equity issues.

If the Council were to prioritize this item, the GMT discussed the option to revise the Federal regulation so that it does not specify a conversion factor value but instead refers to the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document, which would cite the specific conversion factor value. This could give the states flexibility to update their conversion factors as needed but could also serve to facilitate consistency coastwide, as the SAFE would only serve to document but not mandate the conversion factor(s) used in practice. However, impacts to other factors beyond state coordination would need to be considered if this management measure were prioritized, such as sablefish deductions that currently take into account the conversion factor in their calculations and, as noted above, IFQ debiting of sablefish.

The GMT recommends this item stay on Table B.

Sector(s): IFQ, Non-trawl

Anticipated Analytical Workload: Low

B4. Remove Certain Time- and Area-Management Restrictions for Midwater Trawl Gear Targeting Non-Whiting

This measure is currently being evaluated through the Trawl Gear EFP, as the 2017 Salmon ITS required three years of data before implementing any changes. There are two separate components to this proposed measure: 1) allowing non-whiting IFQ vessels to use midwater trawl gear in all areas outside of the Pacific whiting primary season dates (i.e., time closures), and 2) allowing non-whiting IFQ vessels using midwater trawl gear to fish shoreward of 150 fm south of 40° 10' N. lat. (area closures). For vessels under the Trawl Gear EFP, these exemptions have been provided since 2018; At the time of this report, the EFP is in year eight of these exemptions. In March 2023, NMFS indicated that they were, “looking into the data availability of the ESU-level information of the Chinook bycatch from this EFP,” but also indicated that the available information may not be enough to evaluate impacts ([Agenda Item F.8.a, NMFS Report 1, March 2023](#)). As noted under

item B2 above, the GMT's understanding is that NMFS will be submitting a report in the March 2025 advanced briefing book that will update the Council as to the status of the ESU impact analysis.

In anticipation of this forthcoming report, the GMT recommends the Council prioritize this item.

Additionally, the Council could consider splitting this item into two separate new management measure items on the list that address the two separate components of 1) time closures and 2) area closures. These two measures are not tied to each other and, therefore, could be considered under separate actions if appropriate. The measure allowing midwater trawl vessels to operate year-round would only be applicable north of 42° N. lat., and the measure opening up fishing areas to midwater trawl vessels would only be applicable south of 40° 10' N. lat., so while there may be some overlap in impacted vessels, the majority of the analysis of impacts would likely be different. Based on the NMFS Report from March 2023, the scale of activity under the time closure component north of 42° N. lat. is much higher (760 total trips in 2018-2022) than that of the area closure south of 40° 10' N. lat. (43 total trips in 2018-2022), so there may be differences in the information available to support regulatory action ([Agenda Item F.8.a, NMFS Report 1, March 2023](#)).

Sector(s): IFQ

Anticipated Analytical Workload: High

B5. Carryover when Management Units Change

As described in September 2013 ([Agenda Item G.9.a, Attachment 1](#)), there is currently no Federal regulation defining how shorebased IFQ provisions, including carryover, should be addressed following a reallocation of quota shares resulting from a change in management areas. For example, this became an issue when management of lingcod changed to north and south of 40° 10' N. lat., rather than 42° N. lat. As noted below under B6, a minority of stocks or stock complexes are currently eligible for carryover. However, management units change infrequently, and it is the GMT's understanding that the Council and NMFS can handle this on a case-by-case basis during the change of those management units, as was done most recently with shortspine thornyhead.

Therefore, the GMT recommends removing this item from Table B.

Sector(s): IFQ

Anticipated Analytical Workload: Medium

B6. Increasing Individual Fishing Quota Carryover from 10 Percent

Each year, typically in the Spring, the Council recommends issuing carryover up to 10 percent in the Shorebased IFQ Program for those stocks or stock complexes where the annual catch limit (ACL) is less than the acceptable biological catch (ABC). During the initial five-year catch share

program review, the Community Advisory Board (CAB) identified increasing the available amount to greater than 10 percent as a potential priority.

As shown in Table 1 below, only six stocks or stock complexes are currently eligible for carryover. Canary rockfish and shortspine thornyhead are newly eligible for carryover as of 2025, because their ACLs for 2025 and 2026 are set below the ABC. However, NMFS evaluates each eligible species to ensure the ACL is not expected to be exceeded as a result of carryover. Therefore, carryover only generates a benefit if an ACL is not fully attained. If NMFS determines that carryover can be issued, the GMT understands that increasing the carryover rate for constraining stocks could benefit individual vessels. Changing the carryover percentage would be a procedural change, so workload is expected to be low.

The GMT recommends this item stay on Table B.

Sector(s): IFQ

Anticipated Analytical Workload: Low

Table 1. Shorebased IFQ stocks and 2025 ABC/ACL comparison. Species in all uppercase are those that are overfished. Bolded rows indicate ABC is greater than ACL.

IFQ Stocks	2025 ABC/ACL Comparison
Arrowtooth flounder	ABC = ACL
Bocaccio south of 40° 10' N. lat.	ABC = ACL
Canary rockfish	ABC > ACL
Chilipepper rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat.	ABC = ACL
Cowcod south of 40° 10' N. lat.	ABC = ACL
Darkblotched rockfish	ABC = ACL
Dover sole	ABC = ACL
English sole	ABC = ACL
Lingcod north of 40° 10' N. lat.	ABC = ACL
Lingcod south of 40° 10' N. lat.	ABC > ACL
Longspine thornyhead north of 34° 27' N. lat.	ABC = ACL
Minor shelf rockfish north of 40° 10' N. lat.	ABC = ACL
Minor shelf rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat.	ABC > ACL
Minor slope rockfish north of 40° 10' N. lat.	ABC = ACL
Minor slope rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat.	ABC = ACL
Other flatfish	ABC = ACL
Pacific cod	ABC > ACL
Pacific halibut (IBQ) north of 40° 10' N. lat.	NA
Pacific ocean perch north of 40° 10' N. lat.	ABC = ACL
Petrable sole	ABC = ACL
Sablefish north of 36° N. lat.	ABC = ACL

IFQ Stocks	2025 ABC/ACL Comparison
Sablefish south of 36° N. lat.	ABC = ACL
Shortspine thornyhead	ABC > ACL
Splitnose rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat.	ABC = ACL
Starry flounder	ABC = ACL
Widow rockfish	ABC = ACL
YELLOWEYE ROCKFISH	ABC > ACL
Yellowtail rockfish north of 40° 10' N. lat.	ABC = ACL
Splitnose rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat.	ABC = ACL
Starry flounder	ABC = ACL
Widow rockfish	ABC = ACL
YELLOWEYE ROCKFISH	ABC > ACL

B7. Aggregate Non-Whiting Quota Share Control Limits and Individual Species Weighting

This item was identified by the CAB during the initial trawl IFQ 5-year review as a possible priority follow-on action but was not selected by the Council for inclusion in the follow-on package resulting from that initial program review. This item would reconsider the current 3.2 percent aggregate non-whiting control limit and the weighting methodology used in calculating the limit. The GMT was made aware of a new study¹ funded by NOAA which evaluates the aggregate non-whiting control limit. It is the GMT's understanding that this research will be considered as part of the Trawl Catch Share Review that is ongoing (proposed for adoption in September 2025), at which point the Council can consider prioritizing this item.

Therefore, the GMT recommends this item stay on Table B and be considered for action after the Council finishes the upcoming Trawl Catch Share Review.

Sector(s): IFQ

Anticipated Analytical Workload: Medium

B8. Permitting Commercial Sale of Recreational Fish Waste

The Council is being asked to consider allowing the sale of discarded recreationally-caught fish waste on a limited scale. Fish processors and charter operators at ports that prohibit the dumping of carcasses or fish waste in port must find alternative modes of disposal. The interest to sell fish discards is to offset the costs of disposal incurred by processors or charter vessel operators.

In San Diego, processors handle (cut and vacuum seal) recreational fish offloaded from Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) and private recreational boats. The heads, frames,

¹ Guo, Xinyu & Kedagni, Desire & Weninger, Quinn, "undated". "[Strategic underproduction and ownership limit policy in cap-and-trade](#)," [ISU General Staff Papers](#) 202112212129530000, Iowa State University, Department of Economics.

and offal from these fish are gathered by commercial trash collecting services and taken to the municipal dump. The processors have to pay for this service. The processors would like to be able to sell this recreational waste to trap/pot fisherman or sell it to be rendered down into fish oil. Similarly, in Washington, recreational vessels are required by state regulation to land whole fish or the carcasses (head and frame) of fish if fileted at-sea to allow species identification and enumeration. A common practice of charters is to filet catch during the return to port. After customers disembark, the charter vessels then must haul the fish waste out of the harbor for disposal. This adds extra expense and inconvenience to the charter operators. To help ease disposal of the carcasses, charter operators would like to be able to provide the carcasses to fish processors who in turn would have the ability to render and sell the waste.

At the March 2023 meeting the Council “requested that the... proposed management measures be further explored before the next prioritization process.” Currently, under §[660.352](#) of Federal regulations, it is unlawful to “[s]ell, offer to sell, or purchase any groundfish taken in the course of recreational groundfish fishing.” This includes those parts of the fish that have been discarded or abandoned. In addition to changing Federal regulations to allow the sale of fish waste from recreationally-caught fish, the states of Washington (Washington Administrative Code [220-353-090](#), [220-305-010](#), & [220-310,170](#), Revised Code of Washington [77.12.047](#), [77.125.050](#) and [77.125.060](#)), Oregon (Oregon Revised Statutes [498.022](#)), and California ([California Fish and Game Code section 7121](#) ,§ [75](#), § [12012](#), § [12013](#) & [Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 14, § 231](#)) would need to implement conforming state regulations should they wish to allow this activity. The general question is if the Council wants to remove this federal regulation. If so, the decision on whether to allow the sale of recreational carcasses would fall to state law. Alternatively, the action could evaluate rescinding the federal restriction and instead delegate the issue as part of recreational fishery management to each state under Stock Definitions Phase 2 or later phases. That would allow each state to independently determine their desired policy.

During previous Council discussions on this topic, it was noted that recreational carcass disposal and potential sale affects other non-groundfish species as well. The Federal regulation cited above is specific to groundfish (§[660.352](#)). If the Council wanted recreational sale of carcasses to apply to other non-groundfish species, the Council would need to task other advisory bodies with a similar analysis to those undertaken by the GMT.

The GMT has concerns about blurring the line between commercial and recreational fisheries. While this request specifically deals with fish “waste,” waste would have to be very carefully defined to prevent commercial sale of whole recreational fish, filets, cheeks, etc. Removal of the current Federal regulations would mean Federal and state law are no longer in alignment, which may have unintended consequences, as each state has similar but slightly different laws on sale of recreationally caught fish. Additionally, if a state wished to allow the sale or donation of recreational carcasses, the state would need to develop new regulations to document the amount of carcasses landed and provisions to allow the transport of recreational carcasses. Without such regulations in place it would be unclear if a carcass was from a commercial or recreational fishery, and each state's recreational bag and possession limit would limit the amount of recreational carcasses that can be transported. This would lead to additional regulatory complexity and confusion.

The GMT does not anticipate any management impacts from this measure and, instead, considers this an enforcement consideration. Thus, the GMT seeks guidance from the Council on whether this should remain on the list or be removed.

Sector(s): Recreational

Anticipated Analytical Workload: Low

Note: The GMT anticipates the implementation workload to be low, however the downstream workload for this item after implementation would likely be high for the states and enforcement as new state regulations and monitoring systems would need to be developed.

B9. Salmon VMS Ping Rate

In June 2019, the Enforcement Consultants (EC) provided an update to the Council on Vessel Monitoring Movement (VMM) with respect to vessel monitoring system (VMS) ping rate for salmon troll vessels ([Agenda Item I.2.a, Supplemental EC Report 1, June 2019](#)). In their June 2019 report, they noted the “Council [previously] chose not to consider exempting salmon trollers in subsequent VMM Public Scoping Documents, primarily due to concerns related to monitoring salmon troll activity in and near the North Coast Commercial Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA) and activity inside and outside of the non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Areas.” In that same report, the EC recommended the Council consider exempting the salmon trollers from the then proposed, now current 15-minute VMS ping rate ([85 FR 35594](#)), but create specific areas where an increased ping rate would be required (e.g., a geofence around YRCAs).

In March 2023, the EC supported the 15-minute ping rate and deferred to the industry representatives as to whether, “there is continued interest... to request a waiver.” At that meeting, the Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) confirmed that there was continued interest in seeking a waiver and requested that it remain on the list.

The salmon troll fleet has now been subject to the 15-minute ping rate since July 2020. The GMT recognizes that VMS costs are often higher for more frequent ping rates, and therefore, this measure would likely provide cost savings to salmon trollers. However, a measure that would exempt the salmon trollers from the 15-minute ping rate would likely raise some equity concerns and warrant considerable discussion. The VMS rule only applies to salmon trollers who choose to retain groundfish, but the Council would need to consider the appropriateness of exempting salmon trollers from rules that apply to groundfish fishery participants. The GMT recognizes that there may also be enforcement concerns related to this item in terms of monitoring salmon trollers retaining groundfish in closed areas, but the team defers to the Enforcement Consultants (EC) for their guidance on this matter.

The GMT recommends this item remain on Table B.

Sector(s): Salmon troll/incidental open access groundfish

Anticipated Analytical Workload: High

B10. Prohibition of Directed Shortbelly Rockfish Fishery

The background for this item is detailed in Agenda Item H.8, Attachment 1 in the March 2025 briefing book.

The GMT recommends this item remain on Table B.

Sector(s): IFQ

Anticipated Analytical Workload: High

B11. Lingcod Trip Limit Adjustments in the Salmon Troll Fishery North of 40° 10' N. lat.

The Council took inseason action in April 2021 to increase the lingcod opportunity for salmon trollers. At that time, the Council adjusted the lingcod allowance ratio from 1 per 5 Chinook salmon to 1 per 2 Chinook salmon, per trip when fishing in the non-trawl RCA north of 40° 10' N. lat. The GMT and Council had lengthy discussions about the ability to, and appropriateness of, making that adjustment under inseason action. Ultimately, the Council chose to pursue inseason action due to prior analyses in the [2019-20 Groundfish Harvest Specifications and Management Measures Environmental Assessment](#) and the need for immediate action due to COVID-19 related impacts and depressed salmon quotas. Since this action was taken, lingcod retention in the directed groundfish fishery has been prohibited in the non-trawl RCA between 42° and 40° 10' N. lat. to protect quillback rockfish ([Agenda Item G.8.a Supplemental GMT Report 5 September 2023](#), [Agenda Item F.7.a Supplemental GMT Report 1 June 2024](#)). The proposed action would increase access to lingcod by the salmon troll fishery between 42° and 40° 10' N. lat (if/when their season reopens) while the Council continues to prohibit the retention of lingcod in the directed groundfish fishery. Thus, this action raises concerns about providing opportunity to salmon trollers where restrictions exist for directed groundfish vessels to protect California quillback rockfish. The GMT recognizes that this lingcod trip limit is particularly important for Washington salmon trollers, because the non-trawl RCA effectively covers their entire fishing grounds off of Washington. Off of Oregon and California, salmon trollers can access the Open Access trip limits outside of the non-trawl RCA.

In March 2023, the SAS expressed continued interest in this item and requested that it remain on the list. The GMT looks to the SAS to confirm at the March 2025 meeting whether this should continue to remain on the list. If so, the GMT seeks additional clarity from salmon troll industry members on what specific measures they would be requesting as part of this item.

The GMT does not have a recommendation and defers to the SAS as to whether this item should remain on the list. Before the Council considers prioritization of this item at any point, the GMT suggests that the effort analysis done in June 2018 be updated to understand the scale at which this trip limit is being utilized ([Agenda Item E.4., Supplemental REVISED Attachment 6, June 2018](#) and [Agenda Item E.4.a, Supplemental WDFW Report 1, June 2018](#)).

Sector(s): Salmon troll/incidental open access groundfish

Anticipated Analytical Workload: Medium

B12. Remove the Non-Trawl RCA

This new management measure would aim to remove the non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA), which was originally implemented to protect overfished rockfish species at that time. Those species have now all been rebuilt, with the exception of yelloweye rockfish. The GMT notes that there will be EFH and ESA considerations. New data sources to analyze impacts have emerged in recent years, including the non-trawl logbook and the allowance of fishing with non-bottom contact gear within the non-trawl RCA, which may be used to inform Council action. Therefore, **the GMT recommends this item stay on Table B but be reconsidered when yelloweye rockfish is rebuilt.**

Sector(s): Non-trawl

Anticipated Analytical Workload: High

B13. Use of Natural Bait in Oregon Recreational Long-leader Fishery

The Oregon recreational long-leader fishery was implemented in April 2018 ([March 29, 2018; 83 FR 13428](#)) after testing under an EFP. The EFP test fishing, which commenced in 2009 and ended in 2011, was conducted by the Oregon Recreational Fishing Alliance in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) under a NMFS authorized EFP. The EFP and analysis ([regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NMFS-2017-0047](https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NMFS-2017-0047)) used to support the utility of long-leader gear successfully avoiding yelloweye rockfish provided the additional detail that canary rockfish prefer natural bait. During the testing and development of the gear, both canary and yelloweye rockfishes were in the midst of a rebuilding plan, thus not allowing the use of natural bait was a key component in the gears success at avoiding both canary and yelloweye rockfishes.

Recently, a request to allow natural bait in the long-leader fishery was brought forward, particularly in light of a recent allowance for natural bait for commercial stationary vertical jig gear (12E) as part of Amendment 32 ([88 FR 83830](#)). The request to allow natural bait in the long-leader fishery was made prior to the 2023 canary rockfish stock assessment, with the intent to open up the fishery to harvest midwater rockfish with greater ease/flexibility. This measure may require considerations of seabird and salmon interactions with the gear in accordance with their respective biological opinions. In wake of recent catch limit reductions in the Oregon recreational fishery, **the GMT recommends this item stay on Table B**, as canary rockfish are now a limiting resource in the Oregon recreational fishery.

Sector(s): Oregon recreational fisheries

Anticipated Analytical Workload: Medium

Additional Items for consideration to add to the list

C1. Rockfish Species Sorting

In November 2023, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife provided a report to the Council scoping the potential for a new management measure that would require species-specific sorting of rockfish in Federal regulations ([Agenda Item E.7.a, Supplemental WDFW Report 1, November 2023](#)). At that meeting, the Council added this new management measure to the 2025-26 biennial management measures package for analysis. At the April 2024 meeting, the GMT submitted a report providing preliminary analysis of the impacts from species-specific sorting requirements under this new management measure ([Agenda Item F.5.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, April 2024](#)). At that time, the Council decided to remove this item from the 2025-26 biennial management measures package due to the complexity of the potential impacts and requested that this item be added to the New Management Measures List. However, the Council has yet to formally add it to the New Management Measures List as part of the workload and new management measures process.

As described in more detail in the [April 2024 Supplemental GMT Report 1](#), the three states currently have different sorting requirements. As an alternative to the workload and new management measures process, this issue could be addressed outside of the Council process in a collaborative process between the three states, possibly with the assistance of the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. This item may also be affected by the results of Phase 2 Stock Definitions analysis of stock complexes.

The GMT recommends that this item be added to Table B.

Sector(s): Incidental Open Access, Directed Open Access, LEFG, IFQ, At-sea whiting, shoreside whiting

Anticipated Analytical Workload: High

C2. Stock Complex Species Specific Trip Limits

As part of inseason action at the November 2024 meeting, the GMT was informed by NMFS that an inseason action was not an appropriate rulemaking vehicle for creating a new sub-trip limit for a species managed within a stock complex ([Agenda Item I.6.a Supplemental GMT Report 1, November 2024](#)). Alternatively, this item can be taken up through a non-inseason process and subject to notice and comment rulemaking, if moved forward. This action would analyze and provide notice that certain stocks, such as vermilion/sunset rockfish, will be managed with targeted sub-trip limits within the shelf rockfish complex. Management measures at a stock or species level within a stock complex generally also generate a sorting requirement to allow for appropriate management and monitoring.

This initial request from the GAP was intended to provide relief to the LEFG and OA sectors affected by closures aimed at protecting quillback rockfish. Exploring the option of sub-trip limits within a complex both north and south of 40° 10' N. lat. will allow the fleet to access underutilized

stocks, while ensuring that the few constraining stocks remain within their ACL contribution to the complex.

The GMT recommends this item be added to Table B.

Sector(s): Commercial non-trawl

Anticipated Analytical Workload: Medium

C3. Discard Mortality Rates for Sablefish

In response to the growing interest and accessibility of sablefish in the Oregon recreational fishery, a discard mortality rate (DMR) for sablefish could benefit the fishery (and other recreational fisheries) as fish without a DMR are assumed at 100 percent dead when released. Unlike rockfish, sablefish do not have a swim bladder, therefore barotrauma is not an obstacle or variable to consider when assessing the mortality rate. However, mortality to hook injuries, time on deck, handling of fish and release methods will still apply. Any future analysis on sablefish DMR in the recreational fishery could lean on the current longline sablefish DMR (20 percent) as a starting point.

The GMT recommends this item be added to Table B. Sablefish ACLs are at a historic high for the 2025-26 harvest specifications, therefore there is no needed “savings” during high catch limits. If interest in sablefish persists during years of lower catch limits, a more accurate DMR would benefit fisheries. Sablefish DMR in the recreational fishery was recommended by Council to be included on the Management Measures list during the March 2024 meeting. Furthermore, when DMRs are being developed, other species in need of a DMR (or updated DMR) should be considered under this management measure.

Sector(s): Recreational Fisheries (West Coast)

Anticipated Analytical Workload: Low

C4. Bottom Longline Discard Mortality Rates

The 2023 stock assessment for shortspine thornyhead determined that the coastwide stock is in the precautionary zone ([Status of Shortspine Thornyhead \(Sebastolobus alascanus\) along the US West coast in 2023](#)). As a result, harvest limits are expected to constrain most commercial sectors targeting slope species. The combination of reduced shortspine thornyhead allocation and historic high sablefish ACLs may lead some fleets to discard shortspine thornyhead. Therefore, it is important to establish DMRs for species caught alongside sablefish, including shortspine thornyhead. Bottom longline DMRs are already applied to lingcod, longnose skate, sablefish, and spiny dogfish, suggesting that a framework has been developed and could be utilized.

Like the other species for which bottom longline DMRs are applied, shortspine thornyhead are known to survive when brought up from deep depths, as evidenced by its high market value in the live fish fishery. If discarding of shortspine thornyhead increases due to exceeded allocations or trip limits, it will be important to accurately capture their mortality.

The GMT recommends this item be added to Table B.

Sector(s): LEFG, Open Access, IFQ

Anticipated Analytical Workload: Medium

Appendix 1. The most recent groundfish workload lists

Table A. Groundfish management measures items prioritized by the Council.

Item #	Sector	Short Title	Purpose	Analytical Workload (H = high, M = medium, L = low)	Primary Analysts	Progress to Date	Scheduled on YAG
A1	All	Stock Definitions-Phase 2 (including stock complexes, deferral/removal)	Current step: Identify and define groundfish stocks in need of conservation and management	H	Council/ NMFS staff	White paper, literature review, preliminary modeling	March 2025 ROA/PPA
A2	All	Cordell Bank Fishery Regulation Changes	Reduce regulatory complexity	M	Jessi Waller/ Lynn Massey	PPA adopted in Nov 2024	March 2025 FPA
A3	LEFG	LEFG follow on					
a	Primary Tier Fishery	Cost recovery	Increase gear flexibility for LEFG permits, develop a cost recovery for the primary tier fishery, and other administrative changes	H	Jessi Waller/ NMFS staff	Initial analysis, white papers, ROA	March 2025 PPA
b		Removal of base permit designation					
c		Removal of start/stop time from regulation					
d	Permit price reporting						
e	LEFG	Change LEFG gear endorsements to increase flexibility					

Table B. All other potential groundfish management measure items (not in priority order nor scheduled on YAG).

Item #	Sector	Short Title	Purpose	Analytical Workload (H = high, M = medium, L = low)	Progress to Date	GMT Recommendation
B1	Incidental Open Access	Clarify Catch Accounting Rules for Amendment 21	Address catch accounting issue regarding sablefish north in IOA sector	L	Resolved	Remove
B2	IFQ	Removal of Selective Flatfish Trawl (SFFT) requirement between 40° 10' and 42° N. lat.	Implement EFP exemption into regulation	Unknown	Ongoing EFP	Prioritize (Move to Table A)
B3	IFQ, Non-Trawl	New Dressed to Round Conversion Factors for Sablefish	Remove or modify Federal regulation specifying the sablefish conversion factor	L	Preliminary discussions held at PacFIN meeting	Retain in Table B
B4	IFQ	Remove Certain Time and Area-Management Restrictions for Midwater Trawl Gear Targeting Non-whiting	Implement EFP exemption into regulation	H	Ongoing EFP	Prioritize (Move to Table A)
B5	IFQ	Carryover when Management Units Change	Develop policy for carryover when IFQ management units change (i.e., combination of areas or change in area definition)	M	None	Remove
B6	IFQ	Increasing IFQ Carryover from 10 Percent	Increase the amount of IFQ carryover to greater than 10 percent	L	None	Retain in Table B
B7	IFQ	Aggregate Non-whiting QS Control Limits and Individual Species Weighting	Consider changes to the overall non-whiting QS control limit and weighting calculation	M	Pending research; Considering in upcoming catch share review	Retain in Table B

Item #	Sector	Short Title	Purpose	Analytical Workload (H = high, M = medium, L = low)	Progress to Date	GMT Recommendation
B8	Recreational	Permitting Commercial Sale of Recreational Fish Waste	Removal federal regulations to allow sale of recreationally-caught fish waste to reduce costs and recover value	L	None	No recommendation
B9	Salmon troll	Salmon VMS Ping Rate	Consider an exemption to the salmon troll VMS ping rate requirement when retaining groundfish to reduce costs and monitoring	H	Preliminary scoping	Retain in Table B
B10	Commercial	Prohibition of directed shortbelly rockfish fishery	Reduce impacts to California current forage species	H	pre-scoping via ODFW report Nov 2021	Retain in Table B
B11	Salmon troll/Incidental Open Access	Lingcod trip limit adjustments north of 40° 10' N lat.	Increase the lingcod allowance in the salmon troll fishery (currently 1:2 limited to 10 per trip)	M	None	No recommendation
B12	Non-trawl	Remove the non-trawl RCA	Increase access to fishing grounds to non-trawl sector	H	None	Retain in Table B
B13	Recreational	Use of natural bait in Oregon recreational long-leader fishery	Change regulations to allow recreational anglers to select fishing methods	M	None	Retain in Table B

Table C. Potential groundfish management measure items to be added to prioritization list (not in priority order nor scheduled on YAG).

Item #	Sector	Short Title	Purpose	Analytical Workload (H = high, M = medium, L = low)	Progress to Date	GMT Recommendation
C1	All non-tribal commercial groundfish sectors	Rockfish Species Sorting	Revise Federal sorting requirements for better catch accounting and improved landings monitoring	H	Agenda Item F.5.a Supplemental GMT Rpt 1, April 2024	Move to Table B
C2	Commercial non-trawl	Stock Complex species specific trip limits	Improve flexibility of trip limits to attain OY	M	None	Move to Table B
C3	Recreational	Discard mortality rates for sablefish	Improve catch accounting of discarded species	L	None	Move to Table B
C4	LEFG, Open Access, IFQ	Bottom longline discard mortality rates	Improve catch accounting of discarded species	M	None	Move to Table B