

## GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON WORKLOAD AND NEW MANAGEMENT MEASURES PRIORITIES

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) continues to support the New Management Measure (NMM) prioritization recommendations made in our advanced briefing book report on this item ([Agenda Item H.8.a, GMT Report 1, March 2025](#)). Since the submission of our Report 1, the GMT offers two additional NMMs for Council consideration and recommends expanding the scope of previously discussed NMM item C.4 Bottom Longline Discard Mortality Rates.

### **The GMT recommends:**

- **Expanding item C.4 to include DMRs for trawl gear and moving it to Table B;**
- **Adding a new item, C.5 - Determination of ABC, to Table B;**
- **Adding a new item, C.6 - Intersector Allocation, to Table B.**

### ***C4. Commercial Bottom Longline and Trawl Discard Mortality Rates***

In [Agenda Item H.8.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1](#), the GMT recommended adding an item to the new management measure list (Table B) that would explore the development of bottom longline discard mortality rates (DMRs) to achieve more accurate mortality estimates for constraining species that are likely to experience higher discard rates under reduced harvest limits. **After further consideration, the GMT recommends expanding item C.4 to include DMRs for trawl gear for the same reason and continuing to move it to Table B.** In the near future, there may be greater benefits from developing DMRs for certain species compared to others. For example, harvest limits for shortspine thornyhead are substantially lower in 2025-26 in both the trawl and non-trawl sectors, and anecdotal evidence indicates that shortspine thornyhead is a hardy species that likely has a discard mortality rate lower than 100 percent. Current discard mortality rates used in management are in [Section 4 of the Groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation report](#).

When considering this item for prioritization, the Council could reduce the analytical workload and expedite the action by keeping the scope of the proposed item narrow. For example, the Council could focus on a limited number of species or single species, such as shortspine thornyhead. The Council could also choose to split this item into separate items focused on different gear types, depending on the level of new information that may be used to develop gear-specific DMRs.

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

Sector(s): Limited Entry Fixed Gear, Open Access, Trawl

Anticipated Analytical Workload: Medium

## **Additional Items for consideration to add to the list**

### **C5. Determination of ABC**

As described in Section 4.4 of the Fishery Management Plan, the acceptable biological catch (ABC) is a harvest specification set below the overfishing limit (OFL) to reduce the risk of overfishing. Currently, the reduction from the OFL to the ABC (i.e., ABC buffer) may be achieved in one of two ways: (1) using the P\*/sigma approach or (2) another Scientific and Statistical Committee- (SSC) recommended method. P\*/sigma is the default approach, where sigma (proxy to characterize scientific uncertainty) is recommended by the SSC and the P\* value is a policy decision based on the level of risk tolerance by the Council. For Category 1 and Category 2 stocks, time-varying sigmas increase the ABC buffer with the number of years since the last assessment (Table 3-3 [SAFE](#)). The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) has raised concerns to the GMT regarding steadily increasing buffers between OFL and ABC, which decreases available yields over time relative to available yields with constant sigma.

This measure would investigate the Council's framework for setting harvest specifications that account for scientific uncertainty and the Council's risk tolerance, with the intent of exploring additional or alternative approaches not currently in use. The GMT discussed that such an investigation could build off of the 2019 GMT analysis ([Agenda Item D.5.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, June 2019](#)), and may include P\* values between 0.45 and 0.5, alternative methods to account for uncertainty around stocks without recent stock assessments, or any other approaches available to the Council. If prioritized by the Council, the GMT anticipates working with the GAP and SSC to investigate potential next steps, including an in-depth exploration into how time-varying sigmas and ABC buffers are most likely to affect fishing communities over the near and long-term.

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

Sector(s): All

Anticipated Analytical Workload: High

### **C6. Intersector Allocations**

In June 2025, the Council will be presented with the final Intersector Allocation Review report, which will analyze the sector attainments and trends in the trawl and non-trawl fisheries. After reviewing this information, the Council may wish to task the GMT and GAP with evaluating changes to any allocation schemes. Doing so through a new management measure will enable the advisory bodies to conduct this evaluation on a longer time scale than the biennial harvest specifications process affords.

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

Sector(s): All

Anticipated Analytical Workload: High