

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT WORKPLAN AND UPDATE

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) recommends that groundfish be one of the focal fishery management plans (FMP) examined through the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Adaptive Management project, in order to look for methods to build flexible and adaptive tools into the groundfish management framework. Groundfish would be a good test case to explore the project objectives, "to identify innovations to Council decision-making processes and operating procedures that will allow the Council to develop, analyze, and adopt management actions and recommendations on timeframes that are more responsive to rapidly changing conditions". Because most groundfish actions (apart from in-season actions that have already been analyzed) take at least two Council meetings to implement, there isn't currently much ability to respond to crises quickly under the groundfish FMP. The Council staff report ([Agenda Item C.4, Supplemental Attachment 1, April 2025](#)) provides examples of tools that could help streamline responsive decision-making, and reduce workload, such as if/then tools used in other regions, pre-written frameworks for inseason action, and programmatic environmental impact statements that frontload analytical work and require less action-specific analysis. As part of the Adaptive Management project, the Council could also consider looking back at COVID-19 or other emergencies, and determining which tools, if any, would have been useful for the Council to have in its toolbox before the crisis happened.

The Adaptive Management project could include, but not be limited to, supporting research into some of the harvest specifications flexibility items the GAP recommended at the March meeting (D1-D4 in [Agenda Item H.8.a, Supplemental GAP Report 1, March 2025](#)), and that the Council has shaded on for the June agenda ([Agenda Item H.3, Attachment 1, April 2025](#) and [Agenda Item H. 3, Attachment 2, April 2025](#)). These items clearly fall into the Adaptive Management project objectives, by building tools into the groundfish FMP up front that would enable the Council to choose from a suite of timely response options beyond the current restrictive and time-consuming options available. Regardless of whether the Adaptive Management project could facilitate the funding and/or staff time to look into harvest specifications flexibility, the GAP recommends the "Harvest Specifications Flexibility – Scoping" agenda item be unshaded for the June 2025 Council meeting and work continue on that agenda item as expeditiously as possible.