

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT  
AND FLEXIBILITY – SCOPING

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a presentation from Ms. Gilly Lyons and offers the following comments and recommendations.

In general, the GAP supports the effort to identify methods of accelerating Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) decision making and processes to better respond to unexpected events and changing ocean conditions, and to reduce the lag between when the data that informs a decision is produced and the implementation of that decision, which may be years later. As noted in the Staff Report on this topic ([Agenda Item H.1, Attachment 1, September 2025](#)), our current process poses both ecological and socio-economic risk. More streamlined and adaptive decision making could lead to increased fishing opportunities while minimizing risk to our fish stocks.

Specific comments:

The GAP supports the problem statement outlined in the Staff Report.

The GAP also supports exploration of the framework and tools described in the document as they relate to groundfish.

In particular, the GAP supports the exploration of process improvements to streamline management actions. These include frontloading, process efficiencies to avoid reconsideration of range of alternatives, and exempted fishing permit process improvements among others.

The GAP also appreciates the emphasis on exploring ways to better incorporate local and indigenous knowledge and expertise. The GAP has always believed that fishermen have intimate and documented knowledge and have the best understanding of what's happening in real time as they are on the water actively. As one example, the GAP believes the accuracy of the yellowtail assessment would be improved through greater incorporation of fishery dependent data, as well as the expert information fishermen can provide on why catch per unit effort, for example, was low (see [Agenda Item G.3.a, Supplemental GAP Report 1, September 2025](#)). Additionally, the GAP recommends that another avenue of sharing this knowledge could come through implementation of pre-assessment workshops or other information sharing opportunities for all assessment types (full and update).

The GAP notes that while this process may lead to more responsive management over time, the initial investment in building out tools to achieve that outcome (e.g. If/Then statements and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement documents) will require a significant upfront investment of Council and National Marine Fisheries Service staff time, as well as significant input from advisory bodies and the public. The GAP is concerned about potential conflict and delay on other important matters, and suggests further exploring the likely benefit as well as the time required to develop and implement the tools outlined in the Staff Report.