NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE STATEMENT ON THE GROUNDFISH ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT WORKGROUP

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) appreciates the collaboration and contributions of the Groundfish Endangered Species Act (ESA) Workgroup in supporting the conservation of ESA-listed species and fostering information sharing among agency staff, stakeholders, and technical experts. Given that action by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is not routinely required on biological opinions, NMFS believes the workgroup's objectives can be achieved more efficiently through existing agency and Council processes. Therefore, NMFS recommends disbanding the workgroup.

NMFS will continue to provide updates to the Council on ESA-listed species interactions, biological opinion requirements, and emerging conservation concerns. When warranted, NMFS will recommend appropriate next steps, including additional analyses, monitoring, or potential management measures for Council consideration. The agency will also coordinate with existing Council advisory bodies as needed to address specific issues and support informed management decisions.