

JOINT GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL AND GROUND FISH
MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND PRIORITIES

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) and Groundfish Management Team (GMT) discussed the materials under this agenda item together, and are submitting a joint report.

The GAP and GMT understand that the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is investigating the opportunity to streamline future meetings in order to keep Council operations within budget constraints. The materials under this agenda item include a proposal to reduce the number of meetings with each Advisory Body/Management Team's respective agenda items, as well as reduce in-person involvement. However, groundfish workload remains significant in the Year-at-a-Glance, March Quick Reference, and April Quick Reference, and we are concerned about balancing workload with reducing capacity. Many Council meetings, particularly September and November of 2025, have included a large number of groundfish items to balance concurrently, limiting the GAP and GMT's abilities to thoroughly discuss, and document for the record, all items that would benefit from deliberation. The Range of Alternatives being brought forward under F.5, Harvest Specifications and Management Measures Flexibility have the potential to help streamline processes and alleviate workload constraints. However, their ultimate efficacy remains unrealized. With the Council continuing to explore ways to further reduce meeting times and more deliberately prioritize groundfish agenda items, the GAP and GMT encourage the Council to consider the benefits of in-person discussion and the role of collaboration that occurs within informal channels during in-person Council meetings (e.g., hallway conversations). This results in efficiencies that are simply not possible during virtual meetings and ultimately saves Council time due to the enhanced productivity that in-person meetings provide.

With respect to Council guidance item 4 on remote meetings ([Agenda Item D.4, Supplemental Attachment 1, November 2025](#)) and the proposed groundfish schedule ([Agenda Item D.4, REVISED Supplemental Attachment 2, November 2025](#)), the GAP and GMT request that groundfish be exempt from any fully remote meetings, as we believe remote meetings create more work for the Council overall and impacts the efficiency of GAP and GMT personal interactions. GAP meetings work much better in person, and we experienced great difficulty holding the September 2025 GAP meeting remotely. Other groups may be better suited for remote work, but advisory bodies that include active fishermen are not, and we need to keep those voices in this process. The GAP and GMT greatly benefit from being in person together, and have been improving our meeting structure to better align between the groups. This has led to more thorough GAP and GMT discussions, and benefitted the Council by having the groups on the same page, often able to talk out controversial issues in detail and bring forward more informed, more refined, and often better aligned reports to the Council. However, if the only groundfish item at a Council meeting were inseason, that would be workable to manage remotely. But our groups are typically reviewing and/or providing statements on fourteen or more agenda items, which is too much to manage through fully remote GAP or GMT meetings.

We also note that remote or reduced in-person meetings often require lengthy advanced planning and more pre-Council webinars, which fishermen and other stakeholders are often not able to attend when they are already attending so many other Council-related meetings throughout the

year. This reduces efficiency and benefit of the webinar, but still requires Council and other staff time to manage.

As discussed above, the GAP and GMT request that groundfish be exempt from the action to remove meetings or be fully remote, given the volume of groundfish workload and the expectation that workload would simply shift. However, if these changes are necessary for groundfish groups as well, we provide recommendations in Table 1 below for scheduling groundfish meetings. **The GAP and GMT recommend no groundfish items scheduled in April of odd years (i.e., off), combined with only the Inseason agenda item scheduled in September of even years with fully remote participation for that item.** The joint groups discussed the pros and cons of having fully remote Inseason discussions in September compared to an alternative month. We recognize that September is an important month for considering fishery performance to-date and adjusting management measures as needed, particularly to optimize utilization of allocations. However, when comparing September to either June or November in terms of a fully remote Inseason-only meeting, the GAP and GMT agreed that September Inseason was the best option, provided that efforts are made to consider the opportunity for Inseason actions in June, followed by any additional actions in September. The goal would be to avoid stacking all inseason actions in September.

Lastly, the GAP and GMT have been providing summarized recommendations in many of our reports, as identified in Council guidance item 2 ([Agenda Item D.4, Supplemental Attachment 1, November 2025](#)), and hopes those will be used to develop any future advisory body templates.

PPMC
11/18/25

Table 1. Groundfish Fishery Management Plan Scheduling for Even and Odd Years Starting in 2027. This table uses 2027-28 as an example of future cycles. Months marked with checks indicate meeting in person. Months shaded with a black background indicate being off in odd years and remote with inseason as the only groundfish item in even years. Grey shaded months indicate months that the GMT is working on Harvest Specifications and Management Measures.

	2027					2028				
	March	April	June	Sept	Nov	March	April	June	Sept	Nov
GMT & GAP Recommendation	✓	Off	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Inseason only (remote)	✓