

GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON TRAWL CATCH SHARE PROGRAM REVIEW

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the updates to the Trawl Catch Share (CS) Review document and appreciates the analysis team's efforts to accommodate the GMT's requests from September. Given reduced capacity due to the recent Federal furlough and competing workload at this meeting, the team's discussion and analysis of this agenda item was limited by time and capacity constraints. **The GMT recommends the Council finalize the Trawl CS Review document with the addition of the research and data need described in this report.** We also offer some high-level comments.

Diagnosis and Conclusions

The analysis document demonstrates that there are a variety of external factors contributing to the constraints felt by the trawl fishery, including tariffs, competition with imported products, inflation, and other external economic conditions. These external factors are generally outside of the Council's purview and control. However, the document outlines several internal factors that the Council has some control over; yet, it is still unclear which of these, if any, could address the root problems in the fishery. The internal factors explored are:

- Participation in other fisheries,
- Changes in costs and profitability,
- Changes in stock assessments and allocations,
- Quota market functioning.

Given the increasing reliance on other fisheries in recent years, as the Review analysis shows, the Council should more consistently consider accounting for participation in other fisheries when considering actions to groundfish fisheries.

The GMT agrees with the overarching conclusions made in the document and is prepared to work on follow-on actions moving forward that may improve utilization and flexibility in the trawl fishery, recognizing the limited ability for Council action to control some of the major drivers of economic impacts. The GMT has compiled a list of all follow-on actions proposed by industry and the public to-date and has begun considering them to prepare for any Council prioritization in March 2026.

Research and Data Needs

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) and public comment have expressed that costs are a priority to address, given the decline in profitability within the fishery. While administrative costs of the program are a component of overall costs, the analysts also indicated that it is still unclear what exactly is driving other costs that have increased for processors, such as additional equipment needed, environmental compliance costs, or something else. The loss of infrastructure and contraction of processing capacity along the West Coast appears to be a large contributor to the problem the trawl fishery is facing since it is fundamental to the operation of the fishery. Therefore, a better understanding of if and how the Council can support the health of shoreside infrastructure would be helpful. For example, while the Council does not have control over costs for processors, they can indirectly help processors maintain markets by reducing volatility in species limits and providing access to product year-round to the extent practicable. **Therefore, the GMT**

recommends adding a research and data need that explores economic impacts to shoreside processors in more detail and if and how the Council could take action to mitigate those impacts.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee identified a research and data need to explore “price declines in the non-whiting fishery,” ([Agenda Item F.7.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1, November 2025](#)). The GMT notes that discussions with the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel indicated that sablefish prices have been severely impacted by changes in the value of the Japanese yen (¥), along with declining seafood demand in Japanese markets, which are a large export market of West Coast sablefish. An initial discussion between economists and participants in the sablefish fishery could help focus any research efforts based on fishery knowledge.

PFMC

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