GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON STOCK ASSESSMENT TERMS OF REFERENCE 2027-28

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed materials under this agenda item and has a recommendation for revisions to the text in Agenda Item G.5, Attachment 1, November 2026, and a comment.

The text on page 12 of Attachment 1 about alternative catch streams at less than full attainment (paragraph 1) and provision of alternative mid-biennium catch assumptions that differ from GMT provided values (paragraph 3) applies to benchmark and update assessments, as well as to catch-only projections, but this text is within the "Catch Only Projections" section. **The GMT recommends this section be revised to clarify that additional projection and mid-biennium catch assumptions are intended to apply to all assessment types.** Specifically, the GMT believes that adding the following sentences (in red italics) to paragraphs 1 and 3, respectively, better matches their intent as well as current practices.

> Paragraph 1, page 12, Attachment 1: "Full ACL or harvest guideline attainment should be assumed for the catch projections within the current biennium in the absence of a strong rationale from the GMT that an alternative assumption is appropriate. Full ACL or harvest guideline attainment should be assumed for all projection years following the current biennium. Additional catch streams *for benchmark or update assessments as well as for catch-only projections* that include values lower than full ACL or harvest guideline attainment may be requested by the GAP or GMT representatives for all projection years following the current biennium. Recent average catch distribution among fleets should be used for projections unless the GMT requests an alternative distribution. Additional requests can also be made to the STAT if the amount of uncertainty associated with assessment results (e.g., due to highly variable recruitment) should be evaluated further."
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> Paragraph 3, page 12, Attachment 1: "In the event that in-season adjustments result in fishery management measures that considerably differ from GMT catch assumptions *for benchmark and update assessments as well as catch-only projections*, a written request for reconsideration may be submitted to the GMT. Requests to revise catch assumptions to values that differ from the GMT provided values should differ by an amount such that they would have a demonstrable impact in how the fishery is managed compared to the GMT estimates. A rationale for the differences and details on the methodology for derived values should be provided to the GMT in writing to inform review of the request."

Additionally, new text on page 11 of Attachment 1 states that "catch-only projections should not be conducted if the most recent benchmark or update assessment is 10+ years old". The GMT notes that California scorpionfish was last assessed as a benchmark in 2017 and is currently scheduled as a catch-only projection, meaning it would be done 10 years after its most recent assessment. The GMT raises this to the Council's attention; however, we do not plan any deviations to the species prioritized at the June Council meeting for catch-only projections in 2027 at this time.