

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the draft March ([Agenda Item I.5., Attachment 2, November 2018](#)) and draft April ([Agenda Item I.5., Attachment 3, November 2018](#)) Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting agendas and the draft Year at a Glance ([Agenda Item I.5., Attachment 1, November 2018](#)) and offers the following comments.

January Work Session

The GMT has scheduled a work session from 1 pm on Monday, January 14 through noon on Friday, January 18 at the Council office in Portland, OR. This schedule allows most team members to travel Monday morning and Friday afternoon, reducing overnight stays. Items currently identified for discussions and/or work at that meeting are:

- GMT Chair/Vice-Chair elections
- Sablefish Management and Trawl Allocation Attainment Committee (SaMTAAC) follow-up;
- Endangered Species Act (ESA) salmon mitigation measures;
- Meeting with the Ecosystem Workgroup on scenario planning;
- 2019-20 harvest specifications post-mortem and planning for 2021-22;
- Groundfish workload prioritization scoping of items, including revising Council Operating Procedure 9;
- Meeting with Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission staff on the PacFIN biennial harvest specifications and management measures database;
- Stock assessment and Stock Assessment Review (STAR) panel planning/check-in; and
- Possibly groundfish bycatch impacts from proposed changes to the directed halibut fishery.

The GMT will begin working on these items following the November Council meeting to accommodate this full agenda.

March Council Meeting

The draft quick reference agenda for March has the GMT meeting for three days, with three groundfish and three ecosystem items on our agenda. That schedule may not allow for comprehensive discussion and thorough reports on the agenda items. Additionally, based on Council guidance under Agenda Item G.4. at this meeting, the groundfish workload prioritization (“omnibus”) item needs to be scheduled to start the revised process that would prioritize items yearly at the March meeting. The GMT notes that the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) requested review of new sigmas in March in their report, which the GMT supports ([Agenda Item I.5.a, Supplemental SSC Report, November 2018](#)). Finally, as a reminder, carryover is usually included in the inseason agenda item in March. Even with carryover, we believe the inseason agenda item can likely be reduced from two hours to one hour.

April Council Meeting

The GMT notes that the advanced briefing book deadline is March 13, the day after the March Council meeting concludes. This limits the amount of time available between the March and April

meeting for GMT work. The GMT notes seven groundfish items and four administrative items will currently require GMT tracking and may require discussion and statement writing. Currently, the “Salmon Caps for the Midwater EFP” is shaded; the GMT believes that this check-in could occur under the inseason agenda item. Additionally, the seabird and salmon ESA Final Preferred Alternative (FPA) agenda items should be labeled as Preferred Preliminary Alternative (PPA) based on Council action at this meeting and requirements of the Incidental Take Statement (ITS).

Year at a Glance

The GMT believes that expecting sablefish allocation alternatives to be available for PPA in September and FPA in November may be ambitious. We recommend the Council consider plan to identify a range of alternatives in June rather than April and defer PPA to November and FPA to 2020. As noted under Agenda Item G.4., Groundfish Workload Prioritization, the Cowcod Conservation Area adjustment item has not been included in the current Year at a Glance and should be re-added. Additionally, the “Flexibility in ACL Management” item could be removed from the Year at a Glance until the scope of the item is considered under the groundfish workload prioritization.

SaMTAAC

The GMT was sent a list of proposed dates for the next SaMTAAC meeting. The first three proposed dates directly overlap with the SSC workshop being held January 22-24, which would limit participation by key analysts. In addition to this direct conflict, these dates occur during the week between our January work session (January 14-18, 2019) and the International Pacific Halibut Commission Annual Meeting (January 28- February 1, 2019). The GMT requests the SaMTAAC not be scheduled the week of January 21-25, 2019 to better enable members’ full engagement and participation in all of these meetings.

Stock Assessments and Workshops

The GMT has identified to Mr. John DeVore of Council staff our intended representatives to the 2019 STAR panels, as requested. However, the GMT is concerned about the ability of key team members to attend the CA/OR cabezon panel. That panel was initially indicated to likely occur in Newport, but we understand now that it is planned to take place in Seattle, WA. The GMT has concerns that an assessment on California and Oregon stocks is being conducted in Seattle, WA. This will limit participation by industry members from California and Oregon. Additionally, travel restrictions for California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) staff are more stringent for travel to Washington than to Oregon, making it more difficult for CDFW staff to represent the GMT at this STAR panel. Additionally, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) staff scheduled other work obligations based on the understanding that the STAR panel would likely be in Newport; now, with the unexpected and undiscussed change in location, the schedules of ODFW staff conflict and would likely prevent the level of staffing and support for the STAR panel that was previously intended. If this STAR panel is in Seattle, the ability for the GMT, state agencies, and industry to provide appropriate and essential input will be severely limited.

The SSC has identified a number of workshops this winter and next year ([Agenda Item I.4.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1](#)), many of which would benefit from GMT participation. For most of these workshops, we request to have an official GMT representative in attendance, including the remote operating vehicle (ROV) workshop, the skate reconstruction workshop, and the stock

assessment data workshop. Further, the GMT requests that a representative attend the Groundfish Electronic Monitoring Policy Advisory Committee (GEMPAC) meeting if scheduled.

PFMC
11/08/18