

GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON GROUNDFISH WORKLOAD  
PRIORITIZATION: RECOMMENDATIONS

In [Agenda Item G.4.a, GMT Report 1](#), the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) provided an assessment of the workload and benefits for each item remaining on the groundfish workload priority list from November 2018. In this report we provide some additional information, if available, as well as our recommendations on prioritizing or delaying items. Recommendations are summarized in Appendix A.

**1. Clarify Catch Accounting Rules for Amendment 21**

**The GMT recommends this item stay on the list and be scoped for inclusion in the 2021-2022 Harvest Specification and Management Measures.**

**2. Removal of Selective Flatfish Trawl Requirement Between 40° 10' N lat. and 42° N lat.**

Based on the requirements of the Salmon Incidental Take Statement (ITS) to have three years of an exempted fishing permit (EFP) to assess salmon bycatch, this provision was not included in the final trawl gear rule published in 2018. **Therefore, the GMT recommends this item stay on the list until the three years of the EFP are completed (data available 2022 at the earliest), at which point the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) then re-assess it on the prioritization list.**

**3. Limited Entry Fixed Gear--Phase 2 (Permit Price Reporting)**

The GMT understands the implementation burden of this survey would be primarily undertaken by the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC), and would require little Council or West Coast Regional Office work while providing valuable information to measure performance of this sector. **The GMT recommends that this remain on the list and the Council take action when considering mandatory fixed gear logbooks per the seabird ITS.**

**4. Create 60-Mile Bank Rockfish Conservation Area Lines**

The GMT previously recommended to remove this item from the list but now understands that more information is necessary to fully understand the scope of the request including proposed coordinates for the GMT and Enforcement Consultants (EC) to evaluate impacts to groundfish species and the feasibility of enforcement, respectively **The GMT recommends the interested parties bring forward specifics for the proposal for the Council consider this for the 2021-2022 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures.**

## **5. New Dressed to Round Conversion Factors for Sablefish**

The GMT concludes that further research is needed regarding dressed to round conversion factors beyond just Washington, therefore **the GMT recommends this remain on the list, but not be considered for action until the results of that research are available.**

## **6. Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area Modifications**

With the rebuilding of yelloweye rockfish ahead of schedule and shelf rockfish opportunities increasing, there are significant potential benefits to modifying the non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) on both the seaward and shoreward boundaries.

**The GMT recommends this remain on the list and be prioritized.** This item would be better addressed as a stand-alone action item, rather than included in the 2021-2022 new management measures, due to the high workload and uncertainty about scope of changes. This will also provide additional opportunity for stakeholder input regarding which areas they would prefer to be reopened.

## **7. Remove Certain Midwater Area-Management Restrictions for Midwater Trawl Gear Targeting Non-Whiting**

This measure is currently being evaluated through the year-round midwater EFP, as the 2017 Salmon ITS requires three years of data before implementing any changes. **The GMT recommends that this remain on the list during the EFP and the Council re-consider prioritization after the 2020 EFP concludes.**

## **8. Carryover when Management Units Change**

**The GMT recommends this remain on the list and be considered for the 2021-22 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures.**

## **9. Retain Halibut in the Sablefish Fishery (South of Pt. Chehalis)**

Based on discussions between the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and the Council on the non-tribal directed commercial fishery, there may be a separate process developed to look at the commercial fishery as a whole. That holistic look should include analyzing incidental retention in the sablefish fishery. Therefore, **the GMT recommends it be taken off this groundfish workload prioritization list and be included in the proposed IPHC/Council commercial halibut process.**

## **10. Discard Mortality Rates for Recreational Fisheries**

The NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) have tentative plans to conduct a joint research project that would update the methodology used to establish surface discard mortality rates that are used for both the recreational fishery and for jig-and-pole commercial nearshore gears. This includes potential improvements such as using telemetry data to inform long-term mortality instead of using arbitrary buffers, and doing more individual species “death by depth” matrices instead of using multi-species guilds.

For descending device survival credits, the GMT is unaware of any new research that is available to inform rates for new species. Therefore, **the GMT recommends this item remain on the list, but not be prioritized until new research becomes available.**

## **11. Gear Switching and Trawl Sablefish Area Management**

Given the workload associated with the current alternatives for this topic, if the Council chooses this as a priority, this will take up all of the GMT's resources. There will be no time for any other items from this list, and this may also limit new management measures included in the next biennial harvest specifications and management measures. Therefore, **the GMT recommends the Council keep this item on the list, and re-consider once the SaMTAAC reports on its status at the June Council meeting.**

## **12. Increasing Individual Fishing Quota Carryover from 10 Percent**

As shown in [Report 1](#), only ten species are currently eligible for carryover, and all but sablefish have less than 50 percent attainment. However, the GMT understands from speaking to industry that there could be benefits to individual vessels for constraining species like Pacific halibut. The workload associated with changing the percentage consists of a procedural change and therefore, **the GMT recommends that the Council consider including this in the 2021-22 biennial specifications.**

## **13. Aggregate Non-Whiting Quota Share Control Limits and Individual Species Weighting**

As noted in [Report 1](#), the NWFSC is currently evaluating the performance of the aggregate non-whiting control limit. **The GMT recommends this remain on the list and be considered for action when research by the NWFSC economists is completed.**

## **14. Trawl/Non-Trawl Amendment 21 Allocations**

**The GMT recommends this be considered for the 2021-22 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures; however, we recommend that it be limited to only the trawl and non-trawl allocations for lingcod south of 40° 10' N lat.**

## **15. Mothership Sector Utilization**

The mothership sector attained 69 percent of their 2017-2018 allocations; relative to 92 percent in the CP sector and 81 percent shoreside. The continued low attainment of this sector relative to the other whiting sectors indicates a potential to improve progress towards the National Standard (NS) 1 goal of optimum yield. Given the importance of whiting catch by mothership catcher vessels to coastal communities and west coast fishery economies overall, this item warrants additional consideration under NS 5 and NS 8 (efficiency in utilization and sustained participation of communities, respectively). Therefore, **the GMT recommends this remain on the list and be prioritized.**

## **16. Moving Platt/Emley Exempted Fishing Permit into Regulations**

Given limited opportunities in California salmon fisheries, there is interest in considering moving this EFP into regulation to offset those losses for California fishermen. Given the importance of this issue to CDFW staff, they will begin to assess and scope this item. **The GMT recommends this remain on the list, and continue to be considered as CDFW assesses and scopes this item.**

## **17. Sablefish Harvest Specification Change- Managing with ACTs (new)**

This item is new on the list and not summarized in Report 1, so additional information is provided here.

### **Background**

Sablefish is assessed coastwide and has a coastwide overfished limit and allowable biological catch (ABC), which are used as a basis for conservation. However, annual catch limits (ACLs) are used to allocate sablefish for the management areas north and south of 36° N. lat based on the historical extent of the trawl survey. This action would change the north and south ACLs to soft-cap annual catch targets (ACTs), and change the ACL to coastwide, being the sum of the north and south ACTs.

While the SaMTAAC proposals pertain to the individual fishing quota (IFQ) fisheries, this proposal is intended to benefit all commercial fisheries without having to reallocate south of 36° N. lat. quota. Each fishery would maintain their current allocation framework, but the resulting allocations, shares, etc. would be based off the ACT instead of ACL. All would still be managed to not exceed their allocations or set-asides while providing flexibility for unforeseen high catch events.

### **Relevant Factors for Analysis**

Risks of exceeding the coastwide ACL and potential for impacts to sectors.

### **Potential Benefits:**

High

The GMT sees significant benefits in changing the ACLs to ACTs. This would not reallocate any sablefish amongst the north or the south or between sectors. This would help provide flexibility to the Council to be more risk tolerant in implementing inseason mitigation measures in years of high bycatch (e.g., 2017 for the whiting fisheries) or keeping a sector open in the face of decreased opportunities in other fisheries (e.g., closure of Dungeness crab fishery leading to unexpected effort in the daily trip limit fisheries). Ultimately, the Council would continue to manage to the ACTs for both the northern and southern fisheries.

### **Workload**

Low

**The GMT recommends the Council move this forward for the 2021-2022 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures.**

## Appendix A. Summary of GMT Recommendations.

Items that are **bolded** are ones the GMT recommends be considered for prioritization at this time.

New #	Sector	Short Title	Remain on list?	GMT Prioritization Recommendation
1	Trawl, Non- Trawl	Clarify Catch Accounting Rules for Amendment 21	Yes	Scope for inclusion in 2021-2022 management measures
2	Trawl IFQ	Removal of Selective Flatfish Trawl (SFFT) requirement between 40° 10' and 42° N. lat..	Yes	Prioritize once the EFPs are completed (2022 at earliest)
3	LE FG	LEFG Permit Price Reporting	Yes	Take action when considering mandatory fixed gear logbooks per the seabird ITS
4	Trawl, Non- Trawl, Rec	Create 60-Mile Bank RCA Lines	Yes	Scope for inclusion in 2021-2022 management measures
5	Trawl, Non- Trawl	New Dressed to Round Conversion Factors for Sablefish	Yes	Prioritize once new research is completed
<b>6</b>	<b>Trawl, Non- Trawl</b>	<b>Non-Trawl RCA Modifications</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Prioritize</b>
7	Trawl IFQ	Remove Certain Time and Area-Management Restrictions for Midwater Trawl Gear Targeting Non-whiting	Yes	Prioritize once the EFP is completed in 2020
8	Trawl IFQ	Carryover when Management Units Change	Yes	Scope for inclusion in 2021-2022 management measures
9	LEFG, OA	Retain Halibut in the Sablefish Fishery (South of Pt. Chehalis)	No	Remove and instead include in IPHC/Council commercial halibut process
10	Rec	Discard Mortality Rates for the Recreational Fisheries	Yes	Prioritize once new research is completed
11	IFQ	Gear Switching and Trawl Sablefish Area Management	Yes	Prioritize once the SaMTAAC reports on its status at the June Council meeting
12	IFQ	Increasing IFQ Carryover from 10 Percent	Yes	Scope for inclusion in 2021-2022 management measures
13	IFQ	Aggregate Non-whiting QS Control Limits and Individual Species Weighting	Yes	Prioritize once new research is completed
14	Trawl, Non- Trawl	Trawl/Non-trawl Amendment 21 Allocations	Yes	Scope for inclusion in 2021-2022 management measures, but limit to only lingcod south
<b>15</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>Mothership Sector Utilization</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Prioritize</b>
16	Fixed Gear	Moving Emley/Platt EFP into Regulations	Yes	Prioritize after CDFW completes scoping
17	Trawl, Non- Trawl	Coastwide sablefish ACL; soft caps for north and south	Yes	Scope for inclusion in 2021-2022 management measures

PFMC 03/09/19\*