



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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August 23, 2019

Executive Director Chuck Tracy
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, OR 97220-1384

**RE: Sixtieth Annual Meeting of the Technical Subcommittee (TSC) of the Canada-U.S.
Groundfish Committee**

Dear Executive Director Tracy,

The Technical Subcommittee (TSC) is an interagency group of groundfish researchers and resource managers from Canada and the United States that has met annually since 1960 to discuss groundfish research, assessment methods, conservation, and data-driven exploitation in the Northeast Pacific Ocean. As the only entity that meets annually to share such information across this expansive geographic range (from the Arctic to southern California) the TSC serves a unique management facilitation role.

Specific objectives of the TSC are to:

1. Exchange information on the status of groundfish stocks of mutual concern and coordinate, whenever possible, desirable research programs.
2. Recommend the continuance and further development of research programs having the potential to provide a scientific basis for the management of groundfish fisheries.
3. Review scientific and technical aspects of existing or proposed management strategies, and their component regulations relevant to conservation of stocks, or other scientific aspects of groundfish conservation and management of mutual interest.
4. Transmit approved recommendations and appropriate documentation to appropriate sectors of the Canadian and U.S. governments and encourage implementation of the recommendations.

The TSC met April 23rd+24th, 2019 in Olympia, WA at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. This year's meeting was hosted by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and attended by representatives from eight natural resource management entities (full list of attendees attached). As is done each year, every agency submitted a written report summarizing groundfish accomplishments for the previous year and at the meeting their representative reviewed these achievements, responded to questions from other attendees, and discussed current year research and management activities. Final agency reports and minutes for the 2019 meeting, which dealt with activities occurring in 2018, are available online at <http://www.psmfc.org/tsc2/>. The following are some highlights of the meeting.

1. **The TSC once again noted the valuable ongoing work of the Committee of Age Reading Experts (CARE)** (<http://care.psmfc.org/>), a long-standing TSC Working Group originally created in 1982.

The purpose of CARE is to facilitate standardization of groundfish age determination criteria and techniques among management entities along the West Coast. In 2018 member agencies of CARE engaged in 10 exchanges of age structure collections for standardization and validation purposes, with four of these exchanges focusing on ecologically and economically important Sablefish. Work also continued on documenting and rectifying inter-laboratory ageing bias for Yelloweye Rockfish greater than 30 years in age, an issue with potentially dramatic effects on stock assessments. In 2018 CARE member agencies also continued to actively pursue use of near infrared spectroscopy for aging samples, which could prove to be far less labor intensive and more cost effective than traditional techniques. Two weeks prior to the TSC meeting several CARE members attended an international symposium on the use of this research tool and a full report is expected in next year's report. CARE also made considerable improvements to their [website](#) in 2018, which now serves as a repository for procedural manuals, comparison reports associated with structure exchanges, and various other documents of use to age reading practitioners and resource managers.

2. **The TSC recognizes the critical need to share distributional and tagging data for transboundary stocks.** Sharing of data for species such as Sablefish, Black Rockfish, Lingcod, and sharks that are tagged in both countries will enhance scientific understanding of population dynamics for these species, which will improve management. In April of 2018 a coast-wide, international meeting to exchange data for Sablefish occurred, prompted by the recommendation of the TSC. While this is a wonderful start, the TSC recommends sharing data for *all* tagged species where transboundary tag interception may occur and urges agencies in both countries to enable additional data exchanges using the Sablefish sharing agreement as a template. Work to this end has been initiated for Halibut, Pacific Cod, and North Pacific Spiny Dogfish.
3. The annual reports produced by the TSC contain updates on dozens of ongoing monitoring programs as well as details of numerous novel scientific explorations, some of which are never published elsewhere. The reports also bring to light research gaps, identify short- and long-term assessment needs, and otherwise provide recommendations for targeted resource management activities. Being this comprehensive, however, comes at the cost of accessibility. **The TSC is actively working on new guidance for report formatting and detail level that will incorporate hyperlinks and other space-saving tools without compromising content inclusivity.** A hot-linked table of contents and index are also being explored for use in future reports.
4. The TSC is a long-standing committee, but only recently are researchers and managers along the West Coast becoming aware of its role and accomplishments. In addition to sponsoring symposia at the biennial Western Groundfish Conference and other regional meetings, **the TSC seeks to expand regional awareness of itself** by: 1) annually updating the [TSC Accomplishments](#) document and posting it to the website; 2) encouraging TSC members to widely distribute annual reports to colleagues, and make them aware of the web repository for past reports; and 3) generally publicizing the work of the committee, and the annual reports, to academic partners including students, who are likely to find the reports fertile ground for research concepts, as noted above. Further information on the TSC, its accomplishments, and the annual reports are available at <http://www.psmfc.org/tsc2/>.

The 61st Annual Meeting of the TSC is scheduled for April 23rd-24th, 2020 in Vancouver, BC and will be hosted by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada. We hope to see representation from all entities that conduct groundfish research and apply management strategies to these critical natural resources in the Northeast Pacific Ocean.

The TSC would like to thank the member entities for their contributions to the annual report as well as their attendance at the annual meetings. The ongoing success of this organization is a direct result of this commitment and participation. We also thank the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and Stephen Phillips for the funding and support that facilitate communication and information sharing among groundfish research and management entities on the West Coast.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dayv Lowry', written in a cursive style.

Dayv Lowry, Ph.D.

Chair, Technical Subcommittee of the Canada-U.S. Groundfish Committee
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Fish Management Division
Marine Fish Science Unit

Attachment:

List of attendees at the 2019 TSC Meeting:

Cara Rodgveller, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NOAA, Auke Bay Lab, Juneau, AK
(Cara.Rodgveller@noaa.gov)

Maria Surry, Pacific Biological Station, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Nanaimo, BC
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Wayne Palsson, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NOAA, Seattle, WA (Wayne.Palsson@noaa.gov)

Olav Ormseth, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NOAA, Seattle, WA (Olav.Ormseth@noaa.gov)

Lara Erikson, International Pacific Halibut Commission, Seattle, WA (Lara.Erikson@iphc.int)

Josep Planas, International Pacific Halibut Commission, Seattle, WA (Josep.Planas@iphc.int)

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Bob Pacunski, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, WA
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Lisa Hillier, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, WA (Lisa.Hillier@dfw.wa.gov)

Andrew Claiborne, CARE Representative, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, WA (Andrew.Claiborne@dfw.wa.gov)

Stephen Phillips, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Portland, OR (SPhillips@psmfc.org)

Alison Whitman, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Newport, OR
(Alison.D.Whitman@state.or.us)

Traci Larinto, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Los Alamitos, CA
(Traci.Larinto@wildlife.ca.gov)