



## E Staff Tasking

June 2019 Council Meeting

### Action Memo

Staff: David Witherell, Diana Evans

Action Required:

1. Review Committees / Meetings
2. Provide direction on tasking and scheduling, including for the October 2019 Council meeting

### BACKGROUND

#### Committees / Meetings

Attached is the updated Council committee list reflecting Council changes in April 2019.

In the April 2019 newsletter, the Council reissued a call for nominations for a vacant pot CV representative seat on its **Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee**. The Council Chair will announce an appointment at the end of the meeting.

The Council may wish to offer a call for nominations for a vacant committee seat as well. The **Trawl EM Committee** has a vacancy for a representative from the processing sector. Additionally, the Council may also wish to call for nominations for **Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Action Module Taskforces**, as discussed at this meeting under Agenda Item D6.

Committee and Plan Team meetings that are currently anticipated between June and October 2019 include:

- Community Engagement Committee, tentative summer meeting
- Trawl EM Committee meeting, August 21-22, Portland, OR
- Crab Plan Team, September 16-20, AFSC, Seattle, WA
- Groundfish Plan Teams, September 16-20, AFSC, Seattle, WA
- Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Team, sometime in September 2019, teleconference
- Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee, September 23-24, AFSC, Seattle, WA
- Cook Inlet Salmon Committee, September 30, Homer, AK (tentative; alternately earlier in September)

NMFS hosted a **recreational halibut roundtable** earlier this week to bring together fishermen to talk about recreational fishing issues. Either NMFS staff or Mr. Mezirow may wish to provide the Council with a short update on how the discussion went.

## **Tasking and Scheduling**

Attached are various tasking documents. The Council may wish to discuss priorities for completing ongoing projects, as well as any new tasks assigned during the course of this meeting.

- Three-meeting outlook
- Council staff responsibilities
- Groundfish workplan
- Status of Observer Program projects
- Status of IFQ projects

## ***Bering Sea Snow Crab Data Update***

In December 2018, the Council reviewed the Initial Review Draft of an EA/RIR/IRFA of an action to modify snow crab PSC calculations and limits in Bering Sea trawl groundfish fisheries, and requested additional information on the distribution of snow crab bycatch throughout the BSAI by gear and fishery, gaps in bycatch data, regulatory provisions that could hinder the ability to minimize bycatch to the extent practicable, and a qualitative description of potential impacts on fishery participants of avoiding snow crab bycatch, which was provided in April 2019. At the April meeting, the Council directed staff to respond to data requests and comments from the SSC, AP, the Crab Plan Team and the Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers (ABSC) and provide the requested data to an informal stakeholder group that the Council encouraged industry to form.

While much of the data requested by the Crab Plan Team and the SSC have already been presented in the Council's April 2019 data report, the data files from which charts and figures were created will be made available shortly on the Council website as requested (<https://www.npfmc.org/crab-bycatch-overview/bsai-crab-bycatch/>), after confidential and non-relevant data are removed. Staff are currently considering ways to address other data requests by ABSC, and will plan to make existing data available on the Council website over the summer.

## ***October 2019 Council meeting***

As mentioned in the Executive Director's report, the agenda for the October Council meeting, which will occur in Homer, Alaska, is currently quite full. A preliminary draft October agenda is posted; this will change as we get closer to the meeting, based on prioritization and actions that the Council discusses at the June meeting, and other factors that are discussed between the Chair and the Executive Director.

### BSAI Halibut Abundance-based Management Draft EIS

Looking ahead, the Council is scheduled to conduct initial review of a Draft EIS of Abundance-based Management (ABM) of BSAI Halibut PSC limits. In April 2019, the SSC reviewed the Pacific halibut two-area operating model, which will be used for the halibut impact analysis in the Draft EIS. The Council had requested an update at this meeting regarding the status of model development and the schedule for getting to initial review in October.

The model is up and running. The data inputs for the model are coded and available, and the model is being calibrated and conditioned. This process of model calibration and conditioning is done to set up the model in order to represent current conditions and possible biological scenarios. Ongoing work is currently focusing on exploring model sensitivities and parameter assumptions.

The baseline scenario (status quo) will result from completing the model calibration/conditioning. Alternatives for analysis have been coded and are included in the model structure, as well as some

baseline scenarios for comparison. The SSC suggestion to integrate over uncertainty has been included in the updated model structure. Council staff will be available to provide additional details as needed during staff tasking, and initial review is still projected for October.

BSAI Pacific cod management

The Council has tasked five separate BSAI cod related actions that have all been listed on the three-meeting outlook for Council review in October. In order to make progress on each of these actions within our available staffing capacity, we are proposing the following. We would appreciate Council feedback on priorities and whether we are taking the best approach.

- We are assuming that the **BSAI Pacific cod Trawl CV management scoping paper** is the Council’s top priority. Because much of the context for the **BSAI Pacific cod Pot CV discussion paper** is similar to the Trawl CV management paper, we are proposing to combine these actions for the purposes of an October 2019 agenda item, with the understanding that should the Council choose to take further action on either of these items, they might once more be separated.
- We are assuming that the **BSAI parallel waters initial review** is the next highest priority, as it has already been initiated as an analysis rather than first requesting a discussion paper. This analysis should be able to draw in large part from similar parallel waters analyses, and we intend to bring this initial review draft back in October.
- The final two actions are the **stranded BSAI and GOA Pacific cod discussion paper**, which was tasked in October 2017, and the **BSAI Pacific cod pot CP discussion paper**, tasked in December 2018. With your concurrence, we intend to bring back short discussion papers in October on both of these topics. The papers will not go into a great deal of depth, but should provide enough information for the Council to be able to consider how to proceed should they choose to take further action, and to be able to assess the priority of these projects in the context of other BSAI Pacific cod and broader Council staffing priorities.

As a reminder of what each action entails, the following table provides a summary of BSAI and GOA Pacific cod projects that are currently reflected on the Council’s 3-meeting outlook.

Name	Description	Target Date / Staffing
<b>BSAI Cod projects scheduled for June 2019</b>		
BSAI Pacific cod allocation review	The Council is required to conduct a periodic review of BSAI Pacific cod allocation to ensure that the OY is being achieved under current conditions. The allocation review provides an evaluation of the objectives of Amendment 85 and the appropriate groundfish FMP objectives, and discusses other relevant factors that may impact allocations, such as changes in BSAI Pacific cod management, species population, and the environment or ecosystem since implementation of Amendment 85	Allocation Review <b>June 2019</b> <i>Jon McCracken</i>
AI trawl CV Pacific cod set-aside	In April 2019, the Council tasked staff to prepare a discussion paper that includes a status report on the Amendment 113 litigation, the Council’s December 2018 revision to Amendment 113 including the purpose and need and alternatives considered, and a brief summary of conditions in the Aleutian Islands (AI) Pacific cod fishery that have occurred since Amendment 113 was implemented. The Council also asked staff to include in the discussion paper potential regulatory approaches that could be used to provide opportunities for trawl catcher vessels (CVs) harvesting Pacific cod in the AI and delivering to AI shoreplants.	Discussion Paper <b>June 2019</b> <i>Jon McCracken</i>

Name	Description	Target Date / Staffing
<b>BSAI Cod projects scheduled for October 2019</b>		
BSAI Pacific cod trawl CV management	The Council during the February 2019 meeting initiated an action to address the numerous concerns being encounter by the BSAI trawl CVs operating in the Pacific cod fishery. The Council adopted a purpose and need statement, and requested staff prepare a scoping document that could be incorporated into a comprehensive BSAI Pacific cod trawl CV management program.	Scoping Paper <b>October 2019</b> <i>Jon McCracken; Darrell Brannen, Sarah Marrinan, Stephanie Warpinski contributing</i>
BSAI Pacific cod pot CV management	The Council tasked staff during its February 2019 meeting to prepare a discussion paper to consider some form of rationalization or cooperative management structure of the BSAI Pacific cod pot CVs greater than or equal to 60' LOA.	Discussion Paper <b>October 2019</b> (Tentative – combine with trawl CV paper) <i>Same staffing as above</i>
BSAI Parallel Waters Initial Review	The Council during its April 2019 meeting requested staff prepare an initial review to limit access to the BS and AI parallel fishery for Federal fishery participants.	Initial Review Draft <b>October 2019</b> (Tentative) <i>Jon McCracken</i>
BSAI Pacific cod Pot CP management	The Council during its December 2018 meeting tasked staff to prepare a discussion paper to evaluate participation and effort in the BS pot CP fishery in response to a potential need to limit entry and participation for the sector in the Pacific cod fishery.	Discussion Paper <b>October 2019</b> (Tentative) <i>Council staff</i>
Stranded BSAI & GOA Pacific cod	The Council tasked staff to prepare a discussion paper that should outline steps necessary to remove obstacles that impede achieving, on a continuing basis, the complete harvest of Pacific cod allocations in the BS, AI, and GOA. The paper should outline the process for reallocating Pacific cod, and options for NMFS and ADF&G to facilitate the harvest by state and federal fishery participants of stranded allocation of Pacific cod in GHL fisheries. Also included in tasking is to examine steps to facilitate earlier season rollover of BSAI Pacific cod allocation to include ICA on fixed gear in the BSAI allocation, ICA in the GOA, CGOA Rockfish program, and Amendment 80 allocation.	Discussion Paper <b>October 2019</b> (Tentative) <i>NMFS staff</i>
<b>Other Cod projects not yet scheduled</b>		
GOA Pacific Cod Allocation Review	The Council is required to conduct a periodic review of GOA Pacific cod allocation to ensure that the OY is being achieved under current conditions.	Allocation Review to be <b>completed in 2020</b> <i>Council staff</i>

**Public comment**

The public comment letters submitted for your review and consideration are linked to the agenda.