



E Staff Tasking

December 2022 Council Meeting

Action Memo

Council Staff: David Witherell, Diana Evans

Action Required:

1. Review Committees and Plan Teams
2. Provide direction on tasking priorities and scheduling

BACKGROUND

Committees and Plan Teams

Membership

Attached is the updated Council committee list reflecting changes since October 2022. As reflected in the ED report, the Council has received nominations for the Advisory Panel, SSC, PNCIAC, and a candidate for the Scallop Plan Team. The Council may decide whether to make these appointments during this agenda item.

Note that the call for nominations for the Council's newly created Tribal representative seat on the Advisory Panel remains open through February 3rd, 2023. Information about the seat is available on the [eAgenda portal](#), which is also where nominations may be submitted.

Meeting status

The following Committee and Plan Team meetings are currently anticipated:

- **BSAI Crab Plan Team meeting and modeling workshop** – January 17-20, 2023, hybrid/Kodiak, AK
- **Joint Groundfish Plan Teams stock prioritization meeting** – February 2, 2023, virtual
- **Ecosystem Committee** – January 18-19, 2023, hybrid/Anchorage, AK
- **Trawl Electronic Monitoring Committee** – January 20, 2023, hybrid/Anchorage, AK
- **Partial Coverage Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (PCFMAC)** – January 31, 2023 (T), hybrid/Seattle, WA

The SSC is also hosting an SSC workshop, “Rapid change in the northern Bering and southern Chukchi Seas: Identifying ecosystem responses and effects on the management of Federal fisheries,” on February 7-8, 2022, as part of the Council meeting in Seattle, WA.

Tasking and Scheduling

Posted on the eAgenda are updated versions of tasking documents for background material: the 3-meeting outlook, Council staff responsibilities, and the groundfish workplan.

Draft February 2023 agenda

A preliminary February 2023 agenda is posted to the eAgenda for your review. Please note that this draft is for the purpose of discussion and feedback, and it will be revised after this meeting.

Council tasking priorities

Following on from the tasking conversation in October 2022, staff continues to be aware of NMFS' staffing constraints in populating the 3-meeting outlook. An assessment of Council agenda projects and staffing requirements has been updated and posted to the eAgenda. This document categorizes Council projects by taking into account how they match with NMFS higher and lower priorities, and which projects can be developed using primarily Council staff resources, versus those that require considerable input from NMFS staff, in either the development stage or to be implemented through rulemaking. The Council should expect project planning for future meetings to be less predictable than in recent years, as staff capitalize on windows of opportunity for expertise needed on particular projects.

In October during the tasking agenda item, the Council discussed opportunities to streamline proposed Council actions given NMFS staffing shortages and a large number of unscheduled items on the three-meeting outlook. One such opportunity might be with the **small sablefish release analysis**, currently scheduled to come back to the Council for initial review. Work on that analysis has stalled since February 2021, when the SSC recommended that the next iteration of the document should include more analysis on different discard mortality rates and selectivities that require substantial Council, AKR, and AFSC staff work to evaluate. Recent data from the sablefish fishery indicates, however, that since the Council last reviewed this action, the character of the fishery has changed. In 2022, over 80% of IFQ sablefish was caught using pot gear rather than hook and line gear. Staff have highlighted that requiring escape rings on pot gear in the IFQ fishery could be an alternative solution to alleviate the catch of small sablefish for many fishery participants. If the Council is interested in considering how to reconceive the alternatives in the current small sablefish analysis, staff could bring back a short discussion paper in February to provide appropriate context.

Public Comment

Written public comments that have been submitted to the Council are available on the eAgenda.