E Groundfish Management Policy Review



Katie Latanich, December 2025



Groundfish Management Policy Review

Today's discussion

- Staff will describe the proposed approach for the next review process, which will cover the period 2022-2025.
 - A review document will be presented to the Council for discussion in June 2026.
- No action is necessary if the Council supports this approach
 - Opportunity for questions and further direction
 - Potential Ecosystem Committee tasking on relevant topics





Background

- Groundfish Management Policy Reviews are a long standing, selfimposed requirement established by the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs in 2004 through the PSEIS
 - Adaptive management requires regular and periodic review. Objectives identified in this policy statement will be reviewed annually by the Council. The Council will also review, modify, eliminate, or consider new issues, as appropriate, to best carry out the goals and objectives of this management policy.
- Reviews now conducted every three years (previously annually)
- Most recent review completed in 2022 for the years 2019-2021





Background

- The next review would have been folded into the Programmatic Evaluation process
- At the October 2025 meeting the Council recommended taking no further action on the Programmatic Evaluation.
 - The Council supports reinstituting the triennial comprehensive review of Groundfish FMP objectives as a means for adaptive management. This review should continue to provide a summary of Council activities relative to Groundfish FMP goals and objectives, providing an opportunity for the Council to consider whether to undertake additional activities to fulfill goals and objectives and/or update and modify goals and objectives.
 (D4 motion, October 2025)
- This review will focus on the Groundfish FMPs; process could be adapted to other FMPs in the future





Groundfish FMPs Policy Guidance

Includes Management Approach statement, 9 goals, 45 objectives

Goals:

- 1. Prevent overfishing
- 2. Promote sustainable fisheries and communities
- 3. Preserve food web
- 4. Manage incidental catch and reduce bycatch and waste
- 5. Avoid impacts to seabirds and marine mammals
- 6. Reduce and avoid impacts to habitat
- 7. Promote equitable and efficient use of fishery resources
- 8. Increase Alaska Native consultation
 - Improve data quality, monitoring, and enforcement



Past reviews

Triennial reviews build on regular Groundfish Programmatic Workplan updates.

- A Workplan update is provided at every Council meeting during Staff Tasking
- Provide a snapshot in time that focuses on recent, current, ongoing, and pending actions and agenda items specific to the Groundfish FMPs

E1 Groundfish Workplan APRIL 2025

Groundfish Programmatic Workplan

The Council conducted its most recent *comprehensive* review of its Programmatic Groundfish Management Policy¹ (Policy) at its February 2022 meeting², highlighting Council activities in calendar years 2019-2021 which continue to fulfill the Priorities and Objectives established in the Policy. Annual review of the Policy is a requirement of the GOA and BSAI Groundfish FMPs, and the Council fulfills that requirement through this Programmatic Workplan, a concise tool that presents Council actions relative to Policy Objectives and is provided at every Council meeting. The Council generally conducts a comprehensive review of the Policy every three years, in order to accommodate the multi-year lifespan of major Council actions. However, the Council's action to initiate a revised Programmatic Evaluation of Council fisheries, to be reviewed in 2025-2026, will constitute the next comprehensive review.

The table below provides a two-meeting (previous and current) snapshot of the Programmatic Workplan, listing only Council actions relate to the Groundfish FMPs and indicating their correspondence to Programmatic Management Objectives. Those Management Objectives were intended to support decision-making under the Groundfish FMPs. Although the Policy's EBFM approach is reflected in actions outside of the Groundfish FMPs, these other actions are not included in the table. The tabular presentation of the Programmatic Workplan below as well as prior versions of the table are available on the Council eAgendas: (https://meetings.npfmc.org/).

Goal	Management Objective		Council actions		
	Management Objective		December 2024	April 2025	
1. Prevent Overfishing Maintain Sustainable Harvest	Adopt conservative harvest levels for multi-species and single species fisheries and specify optimum yield.				
	2. Continue to use the optimum yield caps for the BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries.		Climate workplan		
	Provide for adaptive management by continuing to specify optimum yield as range. Provide for periodic reviews of the adequacy of F40 and adopt improvemen as appropriate.		· Programm		
	5. Continue to improve the management of species through species categorie	es.			
2. Promote Sustainable Fisheries and Communities	Fromote conservation while providing for optimum yield in terms of the greatest overall benefit to the nation with particular reference to food production, and sustainable opportunities for recreational, subsistence, and commercial fishing participants and fishing communities.		ement		
	 Promote management measures that, while meeting conservation objective are also designed to avoid significant disruption of existing social and econom structures 	See specific actions also under			
	Promote fair and equitable allocation of identified available resources in a manner such that no particular sector, group or entity acquires an excessive share of the privileges.		Goals 1,7 and 8. • USCG Reports		



Past reviews

Groundfish Management Policy Reviews are **more comprehensive** than Groundfish Programmatic Workplan updates

- Include an expanded summary of Council activities related to goals and objectives over the review period (3 years vs. current meeting snapshot)
- Can include additional information beyond what is captured in single-meeting workplan updates
 - Examples: changes to Council practices, new information products, ongoing initiatives and Council priorities not linked to a single action

D3 Groundfish Management Policy Review FEBRUARY 2022

Table 1.

Council actions in 2019-2021 in relation to the Goals (column 1) and Objectives (column 2) of the Council's Programmatic Ground ish Management Policy. The actions reflected in the table are a mixture of specific Council meeting agenda items and ongoing management processes in 2019-2021.

Goal	Management Objective	Council actions	
1. Prevent Overfishing Maintain Sustainable Harvest Sustainable Sustainable Sustainable Harvest Sustainable Susta	Adopt conservative harvest levels for multi-species and single species fisheries and specify optimum yield. Continue to use the optimum yield caps for the BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries. Provide for adaptive management by continuing to specify optimum yield as a range.	Annual Proposed and Final Groundfish Specifications for 2019-2023 CIE reviews for various groundfish species	
	adopt improvements, as appropriate. 5. Continue to improve the management of species through species categories. 6. Promote conservation while providing for optimum yield in	National Standard 1 technical guidance Sculpins to ecosystem component category, product types adjustment	
2. Promote Sustainable Fisheries and Communities	terms of the greatest overall benefit to the nation with particular reference to food production, and sustainable opportunities for recreational, subsistence, and commercial fishing participants and fishing communities. 7. Promote management measures that, while meeting conservation objectives, are also designed to avoid significant	These considerations are applied in all Council management recommendations. See specific actions, also under Priorities 1,7 and 8.	
	disruption of existing social and economic structures 8. Promote fair and equitable allocation of identified available resources in a manner such that no particular sector, group or entity acquires an excessive share of the privileges.		
	9. Promote increased safety at sea.	USCG Reports NIOSH Report	



Past reviews

Typical Groundfish Management Policy Review actions (For example, see D3 Action Memo, February 2022)

- Review the Programmatic Groundfish Management Policy
- Review Council actions relative to the Policy
- Consider whether modifications to the Management Objectives are called for
- Consider whether additional Council actions to better fulfill the Management Policy are required

Reviews are a **process requirement** and do not require changes to be made. Changes to FMP guidance would require an amendment.





Why consider a more cumulative approach?

- Look holistically at the last 20 years of Groundfish Management Policy implementation and significant changes in management practices
- Support objectives for climate resilience
- Consider FMP policy guidance, including the Groundfish FMP Management Policy, goals, and objectives, in combination with other policy guidance including the Ecosystem Policy, Climate Resilience Workplan, Bering Sea FEP Goals and Objectives, and LKTKS Protocol
 - Recognize broader context for FMP goals and objectives, not reviewing all of these forms of policy guidance



Proposed components of a more cumulative approach

- 1. Updated chronology of Council actions related to goals and objectives, 2004-present
- 2. Summary table of Council actions related to goals and objectives, 2022-2025
- 3. Concise profiles by goal area to provide additional context (what, why, and how)
- 4. Additional section on climate resilience

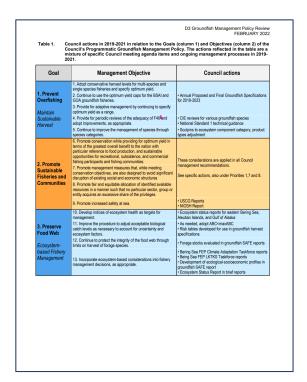


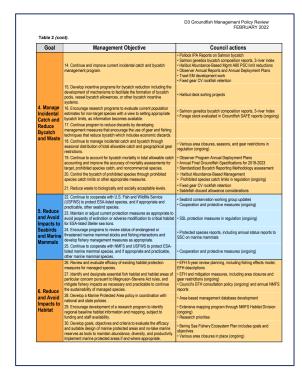
- Develop an updated chronology of Council actions and activities by goal area from 2004-present. This would build on information compiled in previous documents including:
 - Previous Groundfish Policy reviews
 - 2015 PSEIS Supplemental Information Report
 - 2023 PSEIS Roadmap Discussion Document

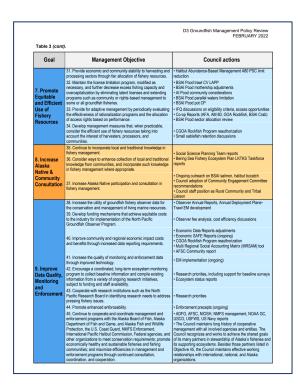


2. Map Council actions and activities to Groundfish FMP objectives, 2022-2025, using a table format similar to past review documents.

Table 1 from 2019-2021 review: Council actions in relation to goals and objectives









Excerpt from Table 1: Actions and activities related to Goal 3: Preserve Food Web (2019-2021 review)

		•
3. Preserve Food Web Ecosystem- based Fishery Management	10. Develop indices of ecosystem health as targets for management.	 Ecosystem status reports for eastern Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska
	11. Improve the procedure to adjust acceptable biological catch levels as necessary to account for uncertainty and ecosystem factors.	 As needed, adopt ABC<maxabc< li=""> Risk tables developed for use in groundfish harvest specifications </maxabc<>
	12. Continue to protect the integrity of the food web through limits on harvest of forage species.	Forage stocks evaluated in groundfish SAFE reports
	13. Incorporate ecosystem-based considerations into fishery management decisions, as appropriate.	 Bering Sea FEP Climate Adaptation Taskforce reports Being Sea FEP LKTKS Taskforce reports Development of ecological-socioeconomic profiles in groundfish SAFE report Ecosystem Status Report in brief reports



- 3. New to this review process: Develop <u>concise</u> narrative profiles for each of the 9 goal areas, focusing on the review period 2022-2025
 - Complement tables and appendices
 - Short, accessible descriptions to support participation in strategic discussion of the role of FMP guidance
 - Capture what, why, and how actions relate to goals and objectives, using Council language (motions, purpose and need, newsletter updates)



- 3. Narrative profiles: Include discontinued actions
 - Briefly describe issues and Council actions during the review period that were considered but not pursued or resulted in no further action; these are also valuable information to consider relative to goals and objectives. For example:
 - Programmatic Evaluation (Multiple goals)
 - Bristol Bay Red King Crab closure areas (Goal 6 habitat)
 - Potential Gulf of Alaska FEP scoping (Goal 3 ecosystems)



- 3. Narrative profiles: include Council actions pre-2022
 - Include <u>some</u> examples of work prior to the review period to help illustrate change and/or to provide context for specific management objectives as they were originally written in 2004.
 This would not be comprehensive. For example:
 - Objective 41: Increase the quality of monitoring and enforcement data through improved technology – Objective developed prior to electronic monitoring



- 3. Narrative profiles: Include references to opportunities, information needs, gaps, recommendations, etc. identified in other Council work products. Examples:
 - Climate Readiness Synthesis
 - Climate Resilience Workplan
 - Community Engagement Committee recommendations
 - LKTKS protocol



- 4. New to this review process: Provide an additional short section on climate resilience planning
 - Climate is not explicitly identified in existing Groundfish FMP goals and objectives
 - Climate resilience planning and integration of information span multiple goal areas; including in a separate section can help manage duplication.
 For example:
 - HCR work under Goal 1: Prevent overfishing
 - CCTF work under Goal 3: Ecosystems
 - LKTK (IRA objective 2) under goal 8: Alaska Native consultation and Goal 3: Ecosystems



In summary: 4 steps

- 1. Updated chronology of Council actions related to goals and objectives, 2004-present
- 2. Summary table of Council actions related to goals and objectives, 2022-2025
- 3. Concise profiles by goal area to provide additional context (what, why, and how)
- 4. Additional section on climate resilience



June discussion:

- Typical review tasks (review Policy, Council actions in support of goals and objectives, consider changes and further actions)
- Consider whether existing the Council's existing body of policy guidance, including the Groundfish Management Policy, continues to:
 - Communicate Council values and priorities
 - Provide guidance to analytical staff
 - Provide transparency regarding how the Council considers information and tradeoffs in its management advice

