

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, self-imposed 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
9. 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	
		December 2024	April 2025
1. Prevent Overfishing Maintain Sustainable Harvest	1. 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. 3. Provide for adaptive management by continuing to specify optimum yield as a range. 4. Provide for periodic reviews of the adequacy of F40 and adopt improvements, as appropriate. 5. Continue to improve the management of species through species categories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Climate workplan discussion• Groundfish harvest final specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programmatic evaluation discussion
2. Promote Sustainable Fisheries and Communities	6. Promote 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. 7. Promote management measures that, while meeting conservation objectives, are also designed to avoid significant 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.	These considerations are applied in all Council management recommendations. See specific actions also under 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 Groundfish 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	1. Adopt conservative harvest levels for multi-species and single species fisheries and specify optimum yield.	• Annual Proposed and Final Groundfish Specifications for 2019-2023 • CIE reviews for various groundfish species • National Standard 1 technical guidance • Sculpins to ecosystem component category, product types adjustment
	2. Continue to use the optimum yield caps for the BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries.	
	3. Provide for adaptive management by continuing to specify optimum yield as a range.	
	4. Provide for periodic reviews of the adequacy of F40 and adopt improvements, as appropriate.	
	5. Continue to improve the management of species through species categories.	
2. Promote Sustainable Fisheries and Communities	6. Promote 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.	These considerations are applied in all Council management recommendations. See specific actions, also under Priorities 1, 7 and 8.
	7. Promote management measures that, while meeting conservation objectives, are also designed to avoid significant 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.



Proposed approach

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 approach

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



Proposed approach

1. 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



Proposed approach

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

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 Groundfish 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	1. 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. 3. Provide for adaptive management by continuing to specify optimum yield as a range. 4. Provide for periodic reviews of the adequacy of FQO and adopt improvements, as appropriate. 5. Continue to improve the management of species through species categories.	• Annual Proposed and Final Groundfish Specifications for 2019-2023 • CIE reviews for various groundfish species • National Standard 1 technical guidance • Scoping to ecosystem component category, product types adjustment
	6. Promote 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. 7. Promote management measures that, while meeting conservation objectives, are also designed to avoid significant 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.	These considerations are applied in all Council management recommendations. See specific actions, also under Priorities 1.7 and 8.
2. Promote Sustainable Fisheries and Communities		
3. Preserve Food Web Ecosystem-based Fishery Management	10. Develop indices of ecosystem health as targets for management. 11. Improve the procedure to adjust acceptable biological catch levels as necessary to account for uncertainty and ecosystem factors. 12. Continue to protect the integrity of the food web through limits on harvest of forage species. 13. Incorporate ecosystem-based considerations into fishery management decisions, as appropriate.	• USOC Reports • NIOSH Report • Ecosystem status reports for eastern Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska • As needed, adopt ABC=msABC • Risk tables developed for use in groundfish harvest specifications • Forage stocks evaluated in groundfish SAFE reports • Bering Sea FEP Climate Adaptation Taskforce reports • Bering Sea FEP LKTKS Taskforce reports • Development of ecological-socioeconomic profiles in groundfish SAFE report • Ecosystem Status Report in brief reports

D3 Groundfish Management Policy Review FEBRUARY 2022		
Table 2 (cont.).		
Goal	Management Objective	Council actions
4. Manage Incidental Catch and Reduce Bycatch and Waste	14. Continue and improve current incidental catch and bycatch management program. 15. Develop incentive programs for bycatch reduction including the development of mechanisms to facilitate the formation of bycatch pools, vessel bycatch allowances, or other bycatch incentive systems. 16. Encourage research programs to evaluate current population estimates for non-target species with a view to setting appropriate bycatch limits, as information becomes available. 17. Continue program to reduce discards by developing management measures that encourage the use of gear and fishing techniques that reduce bycatch which includes economic discards. 18. Continue to manage incidental catch and bycatch through seasonal distribution of total allowable catch and geographical gear restrictions. 19. Continue to account for bycatch mortality in total allowable catch accounting and improve the accuracy of mortality assessments for target, prohibited species catch, and noncommercial species. 20. Control the bycatch of prohibited species through prohibited species catch limits or other appropriate measures. 21. Reduce waste to biologically and socially acceptable levels.	• Pollock IPA Reports on Salmon bycatch • Salmon genetics bycatch composition reports, 3-river index • Habitat Abundance-Based Mgmt ABO PSC limit reductions • Observer Annual Reports and Annual Deployment Plans • Trawl EM development work • Fixed gear CV rockfish retention • Halibut deck sorting projects • Salmon genetics bycatch composition reports, 3-river index • Forage stock evaluated in Groundfish SAFE reports (ongoing)
	22. Continue to cooperate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to protect ESA-listed species, and if appropriate and practicable, other seabird species. 23. Maintain or adjust current protection measures as appropriate to avoid jeopardy of extinction or adverse modification to critical habitat for ESA-listed Steller sea lions. 24. Encourage programs to review status of endangered or threatened marine mammal stocks and fishing interactions and develop fishery management measures as appropriate. 25. Continue to cooperate with NMFS and USFWS to protect ESA-listed marine mammal species, and if appropriate and practicable, other marine mammal species. 26. Review and evaluate efficacy of existing habitat protection measures for managed species. 27. Identify and designate essential fish habitat and habitat areas of particular concern pursuant to Magnuson-Stevens Act rules, and mitigate fishery impacts as necessary and practicable to continue the sustainability of managed species. 28. Develop a Marine Protected Area policy in coordination with national and state policies. 29. Encourage development of a research program to identify regional baseline habitat information and mapping, subject to funding and staff availability. 30. Develop goals, objectives and criteria to evaluate the efficacy and suitable design of marine protected areas and no-take marine reserves as tools to maintain abundance, diversity, and productivity. Implement marine protected areas if and where appropriate.	• Various area closures, seasons, and gear restrictions in regulation (ongoing) • Observer Program Annual Deployment Plans • Annual Final Groundfish Specifications for 2019-2023 • Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology assessment • Habitat Abundance-Based Management • Prohibited species catch limits in regulation (ongoing) • Fixed gear CV rockfish retention • Seabird discard allowance considerations • Seabird conservation working group updates • Cooperation and protective measures (ongoing) • SSL protection measures in regulation (ongoing) • Protected species reports, including annual status reports to SSC on marine mammals • Cooperation and protective measures (ongoing) • EFN 5-year review planning, including fishing effects model, EFN descriptions • EFN and mitigation measures, including area closures and gear restrictions (ongoing) • Council's EFN consultation policy (ongoing) and annual NMFS reports • Area-based management database development • Extensive mapping program through NMFS Habitat Division (ongoing) • Research priorities • Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan includes goals and objectives • Various area closures in place (ongoing)

D3 Groundfish Management Policy Review FEBRUARY 2022		
Table 3 (cont.).		
Goal	Management Objective	Council actions
7. Promote Equitable and Efficient Use of Fishery Resources	31. Provide economic and community stability to harvesting and processing sectors through fair allocation of fishery resources. 32. Maintain the license limitation program, modified as necessary, and further decrease excess fishing capacity and overcapitalization by eliminating talent licenses and extending programs such as community or rights-based management to some or all groundfish fisheries. 33. Provide for adaptive management by periodically evaluating the effectiveness of rationalization programs and the allocation of access rights based on performance. 34. Develop management measures that, when practicable, consider the efficient use of fishery resources taking into account the interest of harvesters, processors, and communities.	• Habitat Abundance-Based Management ABO PSC limit reduction • BSAI Pood trawl CV LAPP • BSAI Pood membership adjustments • AI Pood community considerations • BSAI Pood parallel waters limitation • BSAI Pood pot GP • PQO discussions on eligibility criteria, access opportunities • Co-op Reports (AFA, AM 80, GOA Rockfish, BSAI Crab) • BSAI Pood sector allocation review • CGOAK Rockfish Program reauthorization • Small sablefish retention discussions
	35. Continue to incorporate local and traditional knowledge in fishery management. 36. Consider ways to enhance collection of local and traditional knowledge from communities, and incorporate such knowledge in fishery management where appropriate. 37. Increase Alaska Native participation and consultation in fishery management.	• Social Science Planning Team reports • Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan LKTKS Taskforce reports • Ongoing outreach on BSAI salmon, halibut bycatch • Council adoption of Community Engagement Committee recommendations • Council staff position as Rural Community and Tribal Liaison
8. Increase Alaska Native & Community Consultation		
	38. Increase the utility of groundfish fishery observer data for the conservation and management of living marine resources. 39. Develop funding mechanisms that achieve equitable costs to the industry for implementation of the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program.	• Observer Annual Reports, Annual Deployment Plans • Trawl EM development • Observer fee analysis, cost efficiency discussions
9. Improve Data Quality, Monitoring and Enforcement	40. Improve community and regional economic impact costs and benefits through increased data reporting requirements. 41. Increase the quality of monitoring and enforcement data through improved technology. 42. Encourage a coordinated, long-term ecosystem monitoring program to collect baseline information and compile existing information from a variety of ongoing research initiatives, subject to funding and staff availability. 43. Cooperate with research institutions such as the North Pacific Research Board in identifying research needs to address pressing fishery issues. 44. Promote enhanced enforceability. 45. Continue to cooperate and coordinate management and enforcement programs with the Alaska Board of Fish, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and Alaska Fish and Wildlife Protection, the U.S. Coast Guard, NMFS Enforcement, the International Pacific Halibut Commission, Federal agencies, and other organizations to meet conservation requirements, promote economically healthy and sustainable fisheries and fishing communities, and maximize efficiencies in management and enforcement programs through continued consultation, coordination, and cooperation.	• Economic Data Reports adjustments • Economic SAFE Reports (ongoing) • CGOAK Rockfish Program reauthorization • Multi-Regional Social Accounting Matrix (MRSAM) tool • AFSC Community report • EM implementation (ongoing) • Research priorities, including support for baseline surveys • Ecosystem status reports • Research priorities • Enforcement precepts (ongoing) • ADFG, AFSC, NIOSH, NMFS management, NOAA GC, USFWS, US Navy reports • The Council maintains long history of cooperative management with all involved agencies and entities. The Council recognizes and works to achieve the shared goals of its many partners in stewardship of Alaska's fisheries and its supporting ecosystems. Besides those partners listed in Objective 45, the Council maintains effective working relationships with international, national, and Alaska organizations.



Proposed approach

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

3. Preserve Food Web <i>Ecosystem-based Fishery Management</i>	10. Develop indices of ecosystem health as targets for management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As needed, adopt $ABC < maxABC$• Risk tables developed for use in groundfish harvest specifications
	12. Continue to protect the integrity of the food web through limits on harvest of forage species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forage stocks evaluated in groundfish SAFE reports
	13. Incorporate ecosystem-based considerations into fishery management decisions, as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bering Sea FEP Climate Adaptation Taskforce reports• Bering Sea FEP LTKTS Taskforce reports• Development of ecological-socioeconomic profiles in groundfish SAFE report• Ecosystem Status Report in brief reports



Proposed approach

3. **New to this review process:** Develop concise 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)



Proposed approach

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)



Proposed approach

3. Narrative profiles: include Council actions pre-2022

- Include some 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



Proposed approach

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



Proposed approach

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



Proposed approach

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



Proposed approach

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

