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# STAFF PAPER

REFLECTIONS ON THE COUNCIL PROCESS,  
TIMING OF GROUND FISH SPECIFICATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2022

UPDATE FOR GROUND FISH PLAN TEAM



# 2022 ITERATIVE STAFF PAPERS

Council requested an evaluation of potential ideas for improving the Council process, including:

- Council meeting schedule, timing (dropping Feb mtg)
- Harvest specifications timing
- Council agenda/reports
- SSC workload
- Role of advisory bodies

## Of most relevance to GPT:

- Reevaluate the timing of the groundfish harvest specifications, in light of fishery needs and stock prioritization
- Consider ways to reduce SSC workload



# SEPTEMBER 2022 UPDATE

## **Take home message:**

- Council is not making any critical decisions or changes to GPT/ groundfish assessment timing at the October 2022 meeting
- Recommendations proposed for improvements within existing framework to address SSC workload and communication concerns
- Opportunity for ongoing discussion with GPT re improvements or changes



# ADJUST THE TIMING FOR GROUND FISH SPECS

## ■ Why was this raised?

- The limited time available in the fall for preparing stock assessments after survey info comes in, and to allow for adequate PT/SSC review, was initially raised as an acute issue for the crab assessment cycle; but was broadened also to groundfish
- For groundfish specifically, the timing of PT meetings occurring immediately before the SSC leaves very little review time, esp exacerbated in Nov with the volume of materials and the Thanksgiving holiday
- Opportunity to consider outside-the-box ways to improve the process, esp considering the critical tradeoff between incorporating the newest data and the quality/ thoroughness of assessment and review

## ■ How does this affect the GPT?

- Any change in timing will also affect the GPT meeting cycle, and the information that is available for incorporating in assessments and recommending specs.

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO FOCUS ON IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN EXISTING PROCESS

1. SSC appreciates continued PT emphasis on fast turnaround of minutes
  - SSC member access to PT meeting short term recordings also helpful
2. SSC and PT leadership will meet after the GPT meeting and before every GPT presentation to SSC, to streamline what the SSC does/does not need to review in detail
  - Minimize reporting on informational items
3. SSC aim to prioritize recommendations in minutes, to identify which are critical and which are for the longer-term
  - Still asking authors to respond to each (so not ignored), but for lower priorities, sufficient to explain a plan for how that will get addressed in future
4. Avenue for authors to get clarification from SSC Chairs if needed
  - Coordinate through Council staff

# TIMING CHANGES THAT HAVE BEEN RAISED

## *Ideas that have come up:*

- Align crab and groundfish PT cycles
  - May/June model review and adoption
  - Fall assessments with new survey data
- Move Sep PT meeting earlier

## ■ **GPT leadership feedback:**

- Concern that moving GPT meeting to May will result in more work, not less
- Also would be less time for authors to do research
- Earlier timing for September PT challenging for members/presenters
- Better to focus first on efficiency within current process by both PT and SSC

# NEXT STEPS

- Looking for Groundfish PT feedback and ideas
- See how 2022 specifications cycle works
- Continue to dialogue with GPT and public before any major decisions reached

