



July 31 2019

Groundfish Research Priorities 2019

BSAI and GOA Groundfish Plan Team members,

A review of Groundfish Plan Team recommendations on research priorities is scheduled during the Joint session of the Groundfish Plan Team meeting in September. The description of the process below is provided to help you contribute to that review. A general overview of the Council's research priority process is available on [the Council website](#). Please take a look and let me know if you have any questions about your role in the review process.

Thank you,
Jim Armstrong

Late July 2019

Council staff

- Export research priorities from [NPFMC research priority database](#)
- Subset and organize into spreadsheet sorted by "Research Theme"
- Assign Groundfish Plan Team members to theme-based Subgroups
- Distribute spreadsheet to Subgroups

Subgroup members

- Open the spreadsheet and navigate to worksheet for your subgroup (see below)
- To the best of your ability,
 - Enter updates for (see guidance below) ...
 - "Research Status"
 - "Groundfish Plan Team Priority"
 - "Top 3 rank"
 - Enter comments as needed
 - Enter recommendations for new research as needed
- Send your revised spreadsheet to your Subgroup lead (see below)

Subgroup leads

- Because individuals in your subgroup will likely make different recommendations for the updates, please try to coordinate with them so that a single subgroup recommendation is made. If that isn't possible, use the comments column in the spreadsheet or email to explain, and we'll sort it out. Please send compiled subgroup revisions back to Council staff (me) by August 30, 2019.

Sept 3, 2019

Compiled results shared with ALL subgroups for final revisions/comments

Sept 10, 2019

Summary posted to Plan Team agenda

Sept 17, 2019 Joint session of Groundfish Plan Team meeting

- Presentation by Council staff to the Joint Groundfish Plan Teams
 - Results of the Subgroup reviews
 - Current state of the Council research priority process
 - Discussion of needed improvements
 - Suggestions for new research projects not covered in the existing list

Subgroups: (Subgroup leads in bold)

Sub-Group	Category	Plan Team Subgroup members (Lead in bold)	N_Projects
1	Stock assessment inputs	Lunsford , Tribuzio, Hulson, Kingham	18
2	Stock assessment methods	Ianelli , Thompson, Barbeaux	13
3	Observer program, Bycatch	Faunce , Cleaver, Furuness	11
4	Fishery management, Human Dimensions	Haynie , Lew, Davis	12
5	Habitat, Ecosystem Surveys	Lowe , MacLean, Hillier	13
6	Ecosystem Processes	Shotwell , Holsman, Spencer, Sullivan	14

Guidance for updating

Research Status – *Fill in the blank* - Currently, we have a handful of entries for this (No action, Partially underway, Underway, Completed), but we want to make it much more informative in the future including linking it to reports and investigators. Please enter anything that you may know about the progress of a given research item (e.g., awaiting funding, funded but awaiting start of fieldwork, field season 1 of 2 completed, in report-writing stage, etc.). Leave blank if you don't know.

Groundfish Plan Team Priority – *Drop down menu* - Four choices (Urgent, Important, Strategic, I don't know). These are pretty much set in stone and used by the Council. One classification (critical ongoing monitoring) is not available – by definition, these are “must have” efforts – essential surveys that must be funded to support resource management. [The priority](#)

[definitions for all of the categories are provided here](#). Please choose the one that you feel best suits the project.

Top 3 rank – *Drop down menu* - The Council has a Top Ten list of research priorities to reduce the review burden on the Council and to improve communication of highly relevant priorities to external funding sources and the general public. General criteria for the top priority list included considerations of priority level, research status, recent management events or actions, and the specificity of a particular research priority.

Theme and Focus – These are not “in the database” but appeared to be somewhat natural groupings and were created by me after I reviewed all the projects in the database over and over. They (or improved version) will be used to provide the Council and public with summary perspectives of our research interests and also to match up with categorical research themes associated with NPRB, AFSC, and others. Don’t get too hung up on their current state of development. It was nice that the projects were distributed pretty evenly among them.

Research Priorities Database - Our [online research priorities database](#) contains a large number of fields that are not visible on the splash page, and you can export the whole thing or subsets of it into Excel. The database was created to serve, among other things, as a nexus for Plan Team and SSC review, and that functionality will be utilized in the not-too-distant future, so this is likely the last year that I send out spreadsheets. Feel free to explore the database and the complete set of research priorities in the attached spreadsheet and provide any comments you may think of about improving the process.

Review Process – The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that Councils develop “multi-year research priorities for fisheries, fisheries interactions, habitats, and other areas of research that are necessary for management purposes”. In accordance with North Pacific Fishery Management Council procedures, research priorities are reviewed at the Council’s June meeting. Prior to Council review, the Council’s Plan Teams (GOA and BSAI Groundfish, Crab, and Scallop) review existing research priorities and make recommendations for modifications or additions to the list, as needed. Following the June meeting, the updated five-year research priorities are provided to the Secretary of Commerce, the Alaska Fishery Science Center, and a range of research and funding entities.

In February 2019, the Council moved from annual to triennial review of research priorities. This change recognized that the MSA does not require annual review and also reflects the Council’s desire to streamline the overall review process. Triennial comprehensive review will continue to include development of a “top ten” list of research priorities that highlights relevance to active Council management issues, as well as thorough vetting of critical ongoing monitoring and long-term strategic research needs.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

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