

Groundfish Workplan

At its February 2018 meeting¹, the Council conducted an annual review of its Programmatic Groundfish Management Policy², as required under the GOA and BSAI Groundfish FMPs. The review highlighted Council activities in 2017 that reflect continued fulfillment of the Groundfish Management Policy. The Groundfish Workplan³ is a tool that tracks Council actions within the year, in the context of the Management Policy, and is updated for every meeting. The table below provides a two-meeting tracking tool for Council actions. This and prior versions of the table for 2018 are available on the Council website (www.npfmc.org).

The Management Objectives established under the Groundfish Management Policy were intended to support decision-making under the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs. Although the Policy’s EBFM approach and comprehensive nature of its objectives are reflected in actions outside of the Groundfish FMPs, these other actions are not included in the table. **A special note on the Bering Sea Ecosystem Plan is included at the end of this document.**

2018		Council Actions	
General Priority	Management Objective	October	December
1. Prevent Overfishing	1. Adopt conservative harvest levels for multi-species and single species fisheries and specify optimum yield.	Proposed Groundfish Specifications	Final Groundfish Specifications
	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.		
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.	AI Pacific cod set aside adjustment – Initial Review	AI Pacific cod set aside adjustment – Final Action
	7. Promote management measures that, while meeting conservation objectives, are also designed to avoid significant disruption of existing social and economic structures	Sablefish discard allowance – Discussion paper	GOA pollock, cod seasons/allocations – Initial Review BSAI cod review
4. Manage Incidental Catch and Reduce Bycatch and Waste	14. Continue and improve current incidental catch and bycatch management program.	2019 Observer Program Annual Deployment Plan – Review; FMAC, EMC Reports ADF&G Report on 3-river index	Trawl EM 2019 Plan

¹ http://legistar2.granicus.com/npfmc/meetings/2018/2/971_A_North_Pacific_Council_18-02-05_Meeting_Agenda.pdf

² <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/node/33552>

³ <https://www.npfmc.org/wp-content/PDFdocuments/fmp/ProgWorkplan2018-02.pdf>

2018		Council Actions	
General Priority	Management Objective	October	December
4. Manage Incidental Catch and Reduce Bycatch and Waste	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.	Halibut retention in sablefish pots – Final Action	Adak pollock EFP
	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.	2019 Observer Program Annual Deployment Plan – Review; FMAC, EMC Reports Proposed Groundfish Specifications	Final Groundfish Specifications Bering Sea Snow Crab PSC Limits
5. Reduce and Avoid Impacts to Seabirds and Marine Mammals	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.	Protected species report	Protected species report
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.		WGOA pollock vessel limitations
	33. Provide for adaptive management by periodically evaluating the effectiveness of rationalization programs and the allocation of access rights based on performance.	Unguided halibut rental boats	BSAI cod review CGOA Rockfish Program
9. Improve Data Quality, Monitoring and Enforcement	38. Increase the utility of groundfish fishery observer data for the conservation and management of living marine resources.	2019 Observer Program Annual Deployment Plan – Review; FMAC, EMC Reports	Trawl EM 2019 Plan Observer tenders update

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to review a *revised* draft of the **Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP). The Bering Sea FEP establishes a framework for the Council’s continued progress towards ecosystem-based fishery management (EBFM) of the Bering Sea fisheries, and relies and builds on the Council’s existing processes, advisory groups, and management practice. This core FEP document identifies management goals and objectives for the FEP and for monitoring of the Bering Sea ecosystem and describes how the FEP framework will support research projects (Action Modules) to address Council priorities. The FEP offers a framework for strengthening trust, transparency, and a sense of shared investment among managers, scientists, and stakeholders.