

Recommendations and Impacts Analysis of Board of Fisheries Meeting Scenarios

Table 1: Current to Proposed Revised Schedules

Meeting	Current Schedule	Proposed Schedule	Location/Days	Notes
Meeting Cycle 2021/2022				
Work Session	Completed	October 20-21, 2021	Anchorage/2 days	Same dates as currently scheduled 2021 work session
Prince William Sound Finfish and Shellfish	March 30-April 5, 2021	Nov. 28-Dec 4, 2021	Cordova/7 days	Same start date, a Sunday, as current planned Bristol Bay meeting
Southeast Finfish and Shellfish	April 17-29, 2021	January 4-16, 2022	Ketchikan/13 days	Same start date as originally scheduled. Will need flexibility to work with facility on final dates
Hatchery Committee	March 4, 2021	March 10, 2022	Anchorage/1 day	Day prior to currently scheduled Statewide Finfish
Shellfish Statewide	March 5-10, 2021	March 11-16, 2022	Anchorage/6 days	Same start date as currently scheduled Statewide Finfish
Meeting Cycle 2022/2023				
Work Session	October 20-21, 2021	October 20-21, 2022	Anchorage/2 days	Maintain
Pacific cod – Alaska Peninsula, etc.	October 22-23, 2021	October 22-23, 2022	Anchorage/2 days	Generally the same schedule
Bristol Bay Finfish	Nov. 28-Dec. 2, 2021	Nov. 29-Dec. 3, 2022	Anchorage/5 days	Same start date as current Lower Cook Inlet meeting. Will need to work with facility on availability.
Arctic, Yukon, and Kuskokwim Finfish	January 8-12, 2022	January 14-18, 2023	Anchorage/5 days	Similarly starts on a Saturday.
Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, Chignik Finfish	February 18-23, 2022	February 17-22, 2023	Anchorage/6 days	Similarly starts on a Friday.
Statewide Finfish	March 11-14, 2022	March 10-13, 2022	Anchorage/4 days	Similarly starts on a Friday.
Meeting Cycle 2023/2024				
Work Session	October 20-21, 2022	October 12-13, 2023	Anchorage/2 days	Similarly starts on a Thursday. Avoids NPFMC & AFN.
Lower Cook Inlet Finfish	Nov. 29-Dec. 2, 2022	Nov. 28-Dec. 1, 2023	Homer/4 days	Similarly starts on a Tuesday. Avoids NPFMC meeting.
Kodiak Finfish	January 10-13, 2023	January 9-12, 2024	Kodiak/4 days	Similarly starts on a Tuesday.
Upper Cook Inlet Finfish	Feb. 24-March 9, 2023	Feb. 23-March 8, 2024	Anchorage/14 days	Similarly starts on a Friday.

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Current Cycle Proposals Recommended for a Web Conference Regulatory Meeting

Criteria for Vetting Web Conference Proposals

The board contemplated criteria it may use to vet these proposals. After some reflection, the department recommends the board consider using the agenda change request criteria found in 5 AAC 39.999. It is clear, attempts to steer clear of overly allocative issues, and comes with precedence. The criteria are:

5 AAC 39.999

- (1) the board will accept an agenda change request only
 - (A) for a fishery conservation purpose or reason;
 - (B) to correct an error in a regulation; or
 - (C) to correct an effect on a fishery that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted;

- (2) the board will not accept an agenda change request that is predominantly allocative in nature in the absence of new information that is found by the board to be compelling;

Criterion (C) may apply to the following proposals given the global pandemic was unforeseen when the board passed regulations with sunset dates.

Recommended Proposals

Based in part on input received from the public in previous meetings, the department recommends the board consider taking up the following proposals from the current meeting cycle in a web conference meeting. Proposals are listed below and all public comments are from the October work session, except [PC14](#) which are new comments for this meeting.

PROPOSAL 98 5 AAC 33.383. District 7: *Anita Bay Terminal Harvest Area Salmon Management Plan*. Change the ratio of drift gillnet to purse seine openings from 2:1 to 1:2 in the Anita Bay Terminal Harvest Area.

- **Department Comment:** This proposal seeks to keep the current purse seine and drift gillnet rotations in place. The regulation has a sunset clause and will revert to different rotations after 2020. This is an allocative issue that seeks to keep enhanced salmon fishery allocation aligned between the two commercial gear groups.
- **Related Public Comment:**
 - Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance, RC7.
 - Southeast Seiners Association, PC11.
 - United Southeast Gillnetters Association, RC7.
 - Southeast User Groups Combined, PC14.

PROPOSAL 102 5 AAC 33.376. District 13: *Deep Inlet Terminal Harvest Area Salmon Management Plan*. Change the ratio of drift gillnet to purse seine openings from 2:1 to 1:2 in the Deep Inlet Terminal Harvest Area.

- **Department Comment:** See explanation on Proposal 98.
- **Related Public Comment:**
 - Same as comments for Proposal 98.
 - Southeast User Groups Combined, PC14.

PROPOSAL 122 5 AAC 33.366. *Northern Southeast seine salmon fishery management plans*. Remove sunset date so regulation remains in effect.

- **Department Comment:** If no action is taken on this proposal there will be no provisions in place restricting wild sockeye salmon harvest in the north Chatham seine fishery. As a result, the department may have to allocate sockeye salmon harvest in north Chatham. This does not appear to be the intention by the board when the sunset clause was adopted at the 2018 Southeast Finfish meeting.

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- **Related Public Comment:**
 - Southeast Alaska Fishermen’s Alliance, RC7.
 - Southeast Seiners Association, PC11.
 - United Southeast Gillnetters Association, RC7.
 - Southeast User Groups Combined, PC14.

PROPOSAL 123 5 AAC 33.366. *Northern Southeast seine salmon fishery management plans*. Remove the sunset date so regulation remains in effect and change effective end date of the plan from July 22 to July 15.

- **Department Comment:** See explanation on Proposal 122.
- **Related Public Comment:**
 - Same as Proposal 122.

PROPOSAL 124 5 AAC 33.366. *Northern Southeast seine salmon fishery management plan*. Establish additional guidelines for the department to manage the District 12 purse seine fishery north of Point Marsden.

- **Department Comment:** See explanation on Proposal 122.
- **Related Public Comment:**
 - Same as Proposal 122.

These proposals are about more than sunset dates and the stakeholders would like to maintain the opportunity to review all aspects of the proposals at the next in-person meeting. If the board chooses to accept these proposals for review at a web conference with the intent to only review the sunset dates, it should consider how to maintain the proposals for further review at the next meeting.

Additional Subjects for Consideration

The department identified one section of regulation that is in conflict with a department salmon escapement goal. 5 AAC 24.361. *Copper River King Salmon Management Plan* specifically lists a sustainable escapement goal of 24,000 king salmon. The department has revised its sustainable escapement goal and rather than seek to amend this regulation each time it is changed, the department recommends simply referencing the goal in regulation without stating a specific number. This will reduce confusion and have no effect on the overall management. The department recommends the board use its delegation authority to the department to make this change.

There are a number of stocks of concern and action plans before the board this cycle for Southeast. The existing action plans and department EO authority are adequate to protect these stocks, including Taku, Stikine, and Chickamin river and Andrew Creek king salmon, which have been recommended as Stocks of Management Concern. Nonetheless, the board may wish to review the stock of concern designations and action plans at a web conference meeting.

Treatment of the Call for Proposal Process

If the 2020/2021 meetings are postponed, the boards must determine how they will treat existing proposals, including whether or not to reopen the call for more proposals. A risk of re-opening the Call for Proposals is the potential to significantly increase the number of proposals for each meeting, and the boards might expect the submission of new proposals countering those already submitted.

The department recommends the board reopen its call for proposal for the current meeting subjects for new proposals that meet the agenda change request criteria. This will allow conservation issues to be presented and will reduce the likelihood of allocative proposals. This recommendation would further seek the board conducts a summertime meeting, preferably the end of May or early June, to vet and accept those proposals that meet the criteria.

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The department further recommends the board cancel its current call for proposals, with a plan to reopen it for next year.

Impacts Analysis

Boards Support Section was asked by the chair of the Board of Fisheries to review the feasibility of conducting regulatory meetings over web conferencing and potential impacts from changes to the Board of Fisheries 2020/2021 meeting cycle. There are three regulatory meetings this year planned for 25 in-person meeting days. The meetings, dates and locations are:

- All Shellfish Statewide, March 5-10, 2021, Anchorage
- Prince William Sound (PWS) Finfish and Shellfish, March 30-April 5, 2021, Cordova
- Southeast and Yakutat Finfish and Shellfish, April 17-29, 2021, Ketchikan

With that as a backdrop, this analysis looks at a range of impacts for handling the meetings going forward which address options including –

1. Conducting meetings (in whole or part) via a web conferencing platform like Zoom for the 2020/2021 meeting cycle.
2. Postponing meetings until the 2021/2022 meeting cycle under three scenarios – 1.) shift all the meeting cycles back by one year, 2.) reshuffle the meeting schedule in such a way that by 2023/2024 the board is conducting the PWS/Southeast/All Shellfish meeting cycle, or 3.) conduct a blend of web conferencing this year and finishing 2020/2021 next year, again to get the board back on schedule by 2023/2024.

Web conferencing Board of Fisheries meetings

Technical notes

There are a few caveats in assessing the suitability for meetings to work on web conference. Regardless of what is noted in this analysis, web-based meetings are no substitute for in-person meetings. They will not simulate the same rich exchange of information that occurs at a typical Board of Fisheries meeting.

This analysis assumes there are proposals that would be very difficult to conduct over web conference. Major traits to these proposals includes very large interest groups, complex management subjects, subjects prone to or bound by litigation, or involving stakeholders who may not have strong Internet capacity. Taking up these proposals would be problematic on web conference. For this analysis, the department reviewed the proposals based on the traits listed above. In no way does the review attempt to measure the perceived importance of an issue.

If the assertion that some proposals are poor candidates for web conference, it means the board must develop criteria to guide which proposals it will take up on web conference. If something more expansive than the agenda change request criteria is developed, the board needs to set aside time to do so. Moreover, the time it takes for the board to review each proposal to see if it meets certain criteria would be significant. There are 276 proposals before the board this year.

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Further, if the board decides to conduct any of its work via web conference, it is recommended the board allow for flexibility in its review and deliberations. If during review and deliberations the board determines a proposal or issue has not had adequate public participation to make an informed decision, it can always table the proposal for later review.

There are three meetings this year, Prince William Sound, Southeast, and Statewide All Shellfish. No agenda change requests (ACRs) were accepted for this cycle. If the meetings, or portions of them, occur over web conferencing, the technical aspects will be handled as envisioned in the [Mitigation Scenarios](#) report reviewed at the Board's Special Meeting, September 16, 2020. The meetings would be held on Zoom. Participation through Zoom may occur via the Internet with video/audio, but also through traditional phone service. Boards Support is researching the ability to use a toll-free number for stakeholders to use during public testimony and committee work.

Staff reports and deliberations are relatively simple. Participants must sign-up three days in advance for public testimony and committee work. This allows Boards Support to establish predictable timing for public testimony, and for committee chairs to select a group of stakeholders for committee work. Substitute language development is more difficult, but could be accomplished with Zoom-based breakout meeting rooms for applicable staff and stakeholders. Boards Support could accommodate 2 to 3 substitute language efforts at a time. To accommodate staff, board members, and stakeholders who may need to attend to more than one breakout room, it may be necessary to set aside half or full days for substitute language development.

There are some advantages to holding meetings through web conferencing aside from a reduction in travel costs. Because participants do not need to travel there is greater flexibility in scheduling. The board does not need to feel compelled to conduct the meeting in consecutive days. Rather, it could stop for the weekend, or perhaps open testimony on a Saturday when more individuals are available. Staffing might also increase given they only need to log-on to the web conference versus flying between towns.

In a final review of this analysis, the department is concerned about the level of uncertainty the assumptions herein involve. Much of the discussion about which proposals may be more suitable to conduct through web conferencing (over other proposals) may be completely inconsistent with the opinions of the interested public. Working in the web conferencing environment can be very unpredictable for technical reasons no one has control over. Many of these proposal subjects have a history of litigation and it is uncertain if allegations of inaccessibility provide an avenue to have board decisions overturned and returned back to the board for additional work. Inaccurately accounting for the urgency of an issue may also be cause for legal action.

The department shares the concern that inaction is not a desirable outcome and web conferencing can accomplish some of this work, but the unknowns to this critical public process are significant and requires careful consideration by the board. This uncertainty is confirmed to a strong degree by a strong level of public comment that seeks the board to postpone these meetings until such time as in-person meetings are possible.

Statewide All Shellfish Meeting

Introduction

Statewide All Shellfish, March 5-10, 2021. This six-day meeting combines all shellfish and regions except Southeast/Yakutat and Prince William Sound (except shrimp). Previously, statewide meetings for shellfish

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were the King and Tanner crab meeting and the Dungeness, Shrimp and Other Miscellaneous Shellfish meeting. Each of the previous shellfish meetings were four-days. This new format was extended to six-days to accommodate an uncertain workload. In assessing the number of proposals (42) for this meeting, with no agenda change requests, six-days is ample time at an in-person meeting.

Table 2: Statewide All Shellfish Meeting Metrics

Metric (Average of last 6 meetings)	King and Tanner	Dungeness, et al.	Statewide All Shellfish
Meeting Days*	5.3	6	6
Number of proposals	41.8	36.8	42
Public Testimony Time (hours)	3.6	5.9	--
Staff Reports Time (hours)	2.5	1.7	--
Number of Record Copies (RCs)/day	12.8	14.9	--
Number of Substitute Language RCs/meeting (from last three meetings)	11.1	9.3	--

* The number of meeting days for these meetings declined significantly over time. In 2003, the Dungeness meeting went for 11 days. It was four in 2018. In 2005, the King and Tanner meeting lasted 7 days. It finished in 3 in 2020.

Proposal breakdown

There is a total of 42 proposals.

- Statewide sport fishing reporting and definitions, 3 proposals
- Statewide Shrimp definition, 1 proposal
- Prince William Sound Shrimp, sport and commercial, 17 proposals
- Cook Inlet Clams, 6 proposals
- Cook Inlet Dungeness Crab, 1 proposal
- Statewide Dungeness Crab, commercial gear, 1 proposal
- Kodiak Dungeness Crab, 4 proposals
- Kodiak, Tanner Crab, 3 proposals
- Kodiak King Crab, 1 proposal
- Westward Shrimp, 1 proposal
- Westward, Tanner Crab, 1 proposal
- Aleutian Islands, Tanner Crab, 1 proposal
- BS/AI Observer Program, 2 proposals

Considerations

Of the 42 proposals, 14 were submitted by the department.

The largest grouping of proposals is Prince William Sound shrimp, with 17 of 42 proposals. These proposals generally attract a small number of sport and commercial users, engendering spirited debate. At the last shrimp statewide meeting there were 11 shrimp proposals. Not only did all proposals fail, but there was also not a single “yes” vote during deliberations. The commercial shrimp fishery season starts mid-April. It is unlikely any changes to regulations will be finalized in time to impact this fishery.

There are not many king and Tanner crab proposals, perhaps because the Statewide King and Tanner Crab Meeting was just held March 2020. There is 1 king crab proposal and 7 Tanner crab proposals. To a large

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extent the Tanner crab stakeholders are large commercial crab boats represented by a professional gear group. There are just 3 proposals impacting these users. It is notable 4 of the 7 Tanner crab proposals are from the department.

There are 6 Cook Inlet clam proposals. This triennial issue deals with conservation concerns. Most of the stakeholders that engage in this issue are the Kenai/Soldotna, Central Peninsula, Seldovia, and Homer advisory committees. While debate may be vigorous it recently has been among a small number of participants. Internet access is reasonable in this region and most of the stakeholders are advisory committees.

Aside from these groupings, there are a number of localized proposals dealing with Dungeness and shrimp in the Cook Inlet, Kodiak and Westward regions. There will likely be 2-5 stakeholders for each of these proposals.

The other large group of proposals are crab-related in the Westward region (Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula, and Aleutians). The interest groups for these proposals are small and, in most cases, it is assumed capable of operating through the web conference platform.

Perhaps the most helpful metric to determine how complicated the meeting may become is the look-back on the number of substitute language projects from past meetings. This is approximately 10 per meeting.

Prince William Sound Finfish and Shellfish Meeting

Introduction

Prince William Sound Finfish and Shellfish Meeting, March 30-April 5, 2021. This seven-day meeting covers Prince William Sound Finfish and Shellfish (except shrimp), and includes the Upper Copper and Upper Susitna rivers. The addition of shellfish proposals to this meeting is new. The meeting length was increased from six to seven days to accommodate the change. While the finfish meetings in 2014 and 2017 were set for six days, both ended in five.

Table 3: Prince William Sound Finfish and Shellfish Meeting Metrics

Metric (Average last 5 meetings)	PWS Finfish	PWS shellfish proposals from last four cycles (no shrimp)	PWS Finfish and Shellfish
Meeting Days*	6	n/a	7
Number of proposals	85.0	6.3	79
Public Testimony Time (hours)	6.2	n/a	--
Staff Reports Time (hours)	2.6	n/a	--
Number of RCs/day	14.1	n/a	--
Number of Substitute Language RCs/meeting (from last three meetings)	10.0	n/a	--

*The number of meeting days for this meeting declined since 2003 from 7 to 5 days.

Proposal breakdown

There is a total of 79 proposals.

- Commercial Groundfish, 4 proposals
- Copper River Salmon Management/Policy, 1 proposal

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- Upper Copper River Personal Use and Subsistence, 17 proposals
- Prince William Sound Subsistence, 7 proposals
- Prince William Sound and Upper Copper and Susitna Rivers Sport, 11 proposals
- Commercial Finfish, Copper River King Salmon Management Plan, 1 proposal
- Commercial Finfish, Enhancement, 14 proposals
- Commercial Finfish, Gear, Seasons, Closed Waters, 5 proposals
- Shellfish Subsistence and Commercial, Sea Cucumbers, 2 proposals
- Shellfish Subsistence and Commercial, King Crab, 5 proposals
- Shellfish Subsistence and Commercial, Tanner Crab Commercial, 12 proposals

Considerations

Of the 79 proposals, 16 were submitted by the department.¹

The Prince William Sound meeting attracts a diverse set of user issues along an expansive range of Alaska. From Cordova up through Fairbanks, the interest among residents is high. Coastal commercial fishermen highlight the Cordova area, while a few hundred miles upriver the Copper River's more rural traditional subsistence users are strong participants. Further north and in Southcentral, urban-based subsistence, sport and personal use fishermen take part in upriver watershed fishing. There are several coastal communities that focus heavily on subsistence as well. These are generalizations, but tend to reflect the majority of interests at this meeting.

Copper River salmon proposals tend to garner significant attention. One could expect significant interest to participate in the committee process. It is also unclear how strong internet accessibility is for small coastal communities such as Chenega or the interior watershed areas.

Within the commercial salmon proposals there are 14 related to enhancement. Half of the proposals are issues among or within the commercial gear groups, including allocation and gear conflicts. This subset of proposals creates significant debate, but could be handled by a small subset of representatives. The other remaining 7 proposals concern straying and reductions to salmon enhancement. These stakeholders likely have good connectivity, but the subjects attract statewide interest, and the web conferencing platform may be inadequate to accommodate interests.

There are 4 proposals in the commercial groundfish section, 3 of which are from the department. The one industry-based proposal is to establish a skate fishery. These all likely could be accomplished through web conferencing.

The meeting has 7 Prince William Sound subsistence proposals (outside the Upper Copper River area). These touch on different species throughout the management area in fresh and marine waters, and could be contentious at points. Two are from the Native Village of Chenega and two from the Native Village of Eyak. While it is unclear if Chenega has adequate bandwidth to participate fully, the Chugach Regional Resources Commission last fall indicated participating telephonically was acceptable².

¹ The department notes a sustainable escapement goal number in regulation under 5 AAC 24.361. *Copper River King Salmon Management Plan*. The goal does not reflect a change recently determined by the department. The department recommends the board generates a proposal to simply remove the specific sustainable escapement goal number and state "to achieve the established escapement goal".

² [Chugach Regional Resources Commission Public Comment, #4](#), for the Board of Fisheries Special Meeting, September 16, 2020.

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There are 11 proposals addressing sport fishing, mainly in fresh waters. There are several allocative proposals that may attract significant participation and many of the proposals are coming from the interior portion of the watershed.

Within the commercial fishing proposals, there are 5 addressing gear, seasons, and closed waters, including one from the department. These appear manageable via web conferencing, although two related to permit stacking could have statewide implications.

There are 17 shellfish proposals for sea cucumbers, king crab, and Tanner crab. The 2 sea cucumber proposals seek to establish a commercial fishery in the Sound. This subject should attract a small and manageable group. All of the king crab proposals seek to start-up the golden king crab fishery as proposed by commercial operators. Spirited debate is anticipated. Finally, there are 12 Tanner crab proposals, 7 of which are from the department. One is a subsistence proposal seeking to establish an amount reasonably necessary (ANS) for subsistence to support a previous customary and traditional use finding. ANS findings take a fair bit of time to develop before the board. The remaining 10 proposals involve the commercial Tanner crab fishery and will attract a manageable group of participants. Crab management concepts are detailed and complex often requiring additional staff explanation during the meeting.

Southeast/Yakutat Finfish and Shellfish Meeting

Introduction

Southeast and Yakutat Finfish and Shellfish Meeting, April 17-29, 2021. This thirteen-day meeting covers Southeast and Yakutat Finfish and Shellfish. This is a long meeting covering a significant range of topics. Stakeholders are very engaged, and with conservation and allocation concerns among many stakeholder groups, the meeting in 2018 took all 13 days. The same intensity is anticipated this year.

Table 4: Southeast and Yakutat Finfish and Shellfish Meeting Metrics

Metric	SE/Yak Finfish and Shellfish*	2018 SE/Yak Finfish and Shellfish
Average (last six meetings)		
Meeting Days**	17.0	13
Number of proposals	212.7	155
Public Testimony Time (hours)	15.7	--
Staff Reports Time (hours)	8.0	--
Number of RCs/day	17.3	--
Number of Substitute Language RCs/meeting (from last three meetings)	22.7	--

* Until 2018, Southeast meetings were separated between finfish or shellfish. There was one meeting when groundfish was combined with shellfish. The numbers here reflect the combined metrics for Southeast meetings in each cycle.

** The number of meeting days for these meetings declined since 2003, from a cumulative of 18 to 13 days.

Proposal breakdown

There is a total of 155 proposals for the Southeast meeting.

- King salmon, 16 proposals
- Enhancement and Special Harvest Areas, 14 proposals
- Commercial salmon, 15 proposals
- Finfish, Subsistence, 9 proposals
- Finfish, Personal Use, 9 proposals

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- Finfish, Sport, 13 proposals
- Herring, 15 proposals
- Shrimp, 15 proposals
- Other miscellaneous shellfish, 5 proposals
- Crab, 25 proposals
- Groundfish, 19 proposals

Considerations

Of the 155 proposals, relatively few, 16 were submitted by the department

The Southeast and Yakutat meeting brings together a number of fisheries and user groups. The region is large and managed out of eight department offices, including Ketchikan, Craig, Wrangell, Petersburg, Sitka, Juneau, Haines, and Yakutat. These local offices support fishing activities within their areas, highlighting the unique nature of fisheries throughout the region.

In 2019 there were over 20 commercial fisheries conducted in the region. Only one of these fisheries had more than 250 permits fished. Earnings in many fisheries are modest. As such, commercial harvesters are often diversified into more than one fishery. Along with a commercial sector with participants interested in many fisheries, there is a robust residential base keenly interested in subsistence, sport, and personal use fisheries. There are many urban areas where Internet connectivity is adequate, but also a number of smaller fishing communities where connectivity is poor. With a diversity of interests among a broad group of users with inconsistent access to Internet, web conferencing this meeting is challenging.

Given this backdrop, it is difficult to identify proposals within the meeting that lend themselves well to a small subset of players. Perhaps proposals that squarely deal with a specific area or are completely a matter of concern for one user group might garner a small enough subset to conduct a meeting on web conference.

Certain issues garner tremendous interest and will be difficult to hear in a virtual setting. King salmon, impacted significantly by the Pacific Salmon Treaty and conservation concerns throughout the region, attracts all users. All advisory committees, commercial salmon gear groups, and most sport fishing businesses and organizations have a keen interest in king salmon, as does the general public. Herring is another resource of intense debate and currently in litigation. There is tremendous public involvement in the herring proposals, particularly those dealing with Sitka Sound herring. It is ill advised to tackle either of these big subjects on web conference.

While prominent in the naming of the board meeting, Yakutat-related proposals are few. There are three Yakutat proposals that likely will not generate much interest outside of the region. Historically, the Yakutat proposals at the Southeast meeting have a very small pool of participants. At the 2015 Southeast meeting there was no one from Yakutat in attendance with the exception of the ADF&G area manager who was not in position to speak on allocative issues. Internet access may be an issue for holding Yakutat proposals over web conference.

Under “Other miscellaneous shellfish” there are three Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Association (SARDF) proposals. The dive fishery is small and well represented by SARDF. There are very few competing users.

For its October 2020 work session, the board sought specific recommendations from the public for proposals that needed to be addressed this year. The department also engaged in a similar exercise. Between public comments and staff recommendations there are several proposals that could use expedited consideration. All

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deal with allocation between commercial salmon gear groups, and mainly allocation of hatchery salmon. While these will attract significant attention from many quarters, the most impacted users are commercial operators and the three gear groups (troll, drift and seine) are well represented by organizations. For the allocation of hatchery salmon, there is a long-standing [Enhanced Salmon Allocation Management Plan](#) which is helpful in these negotiations. While a difficult and complex issue, the gear groups have a solid history of productive negotiations. This are the proposals recommended earlier for taking up on web conference.

There are a number of proposals that address a specific locality and user group. There are four “special provisions” proposals for sport fishing. Those are highly specific to a region and will have a small group of interest groups. There are several personal use proposals dealing with the Taku River. This will attract attention from Juneau residents and some commercial operators. The Redoubt Bay near Sitka has three proposals seeking changes. Similar to the Taku River, this is a small, localized area that will attract modest stakeholder interest with reasonable internet accessibility.

There are a number of closed waters or catch limit restriction proposals, including several dealing with Prince of Wales Island. These are mainly shellfish related, but not entirely. While these proposals impact all users and may attract attention throughout the Southeast region, if the board focuses on reviewing the Prince of Wales related proposals the public comments may be thematic and consistent. Key stakeholders will emerge and help with reviewing these proposals. Internet accessibility is a question.

There are many shrimp proposals, some of which are regionwide and impactful for many users. There are three dealing with the commercial shrimp pot season timing.

There are many groundfish proposals addressing sport, commercial, and subsistence users, some which appear to have linkages between users. Given the proposals affect large swathes of the region and impact different users, it was unclear this grouping could be easily handled on web conference.

Scenarios and Impacts for Postponing Meetings

There are three scenarios for postponing meetings considered here: 1.) shift the 2020/2021 cycle to 2021/2022, shift 2021/2022, and so forth; 2.) shift 2020/2021 into 2021/2022 and move parts of 2021/2022 to 2022/2023, or 3.) handle a portion of 2020/2021 proposals on web conferencing and shift the remaining workload as envisioned under Scenario 2. Available budget and staff resources are an important consideration in the analysis.

Table 5 provides the current three-year meeting schedule with revised dates for 2020/2021. With an unknown number of proposals for future meetings, the average of the last five or six meetings was used. While the number of meeting days in the 2021/2022 cycle is fewer than in 2020/2021, it is a busy schedule and issues are of critical importance to users. The 2021/2022 cycle focuses on finfish in the western regions.

Table 5. Current Three-Year Meeting Schedule

Cycle	Meetings (Dates and Days)	Locations	# Proposals
2020/2021	Shellfish Statewide, (March 5-10, 2021 – 6 days)	Anchorage	42
	Prince William Sound Finfish and Shellfish (March 30-April 5, 2021 – 7 days)	Cordova	79
	Southeast Finfish and Shellfish (April 17-29, 2021 – 13 days)	Ketchikan	155
Total	26 days		276
2021/2022	Work Session (October 20-21, 2021 – 2 days)	Anchorage	n/a

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Cycle	Meetings (Dates and Days)	Locations	# Proposals
	Pacific cod – Alaska Peninsula, etc. (October 22-23, 2021 – 2 days)	Anchorage	25
	Bristol Bay Finfish (November 28-December 2, 2021 – 5 days)	Anchorage	74
	Arctic, Yukon, and Kuskokwim Finfish (January 8-12, 2022 – 5 days)	Anchorage	63
	Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, Chignik Finfish (February 18-23, 2022 – 6 days)	Anchorage	54
	Statewide Finfish (March 11-14, 2022 – 4 days)	Anchorage	26
Total	24 days		216
2022/2023	Work Session (October 20-21, 2022 – 2 days)	Anchorage	n/a
	Lower Cook Inlet Finfish (November 29-December 2, 2022 – 4 days)	Homer	43
	Kodiak Finfish (January 10-13, 2023 – 4 days)	Kodiak	38
	Upper Cook Inlet Finfish (February 24-March 9, 2023 – 14 days)	Anchorage	231
Total	24 days	Total	312

Scenario 1. Shift the Meeting Cycles Back a Year

The simplest measure for meeting planning is to push the meeting cycles back a year so that the current meeting cycle is handled in 2021/2022, 2021/2022 is handled in 2022/2023, and so forth. There are impacts from such a shift. Effectively all the regions are put in a four-year cycle for the next three years. It can be expected that a larger number of agenda change requests will be submitted for review in years to follow. Conservation issues, of which there are several in the western regions, will likely rise to the fore. The board may consider committees to handle the most pressing issues.

Scenario 2. Shift the 2020/2021 Meeting Cycle to 2021/2022 with Minimal Change to 2021/2022

In this scenario all the 2020/2021 meetings (and locations) are shifted to 2021/2022 while keeping the 2021/2022 meeting and location schedule largely intact. Under this aggressive schedule, the Prince William Sound and Southeast meetings are handled in a busy fall. The shipment of board freight is a key consideration and supports moving the work session to Cordova prior to the Prince William Sound meeting or conducting it through web conference as was done in October 2020. Following the Prince William Sound meeting, the freight can go to Ketchikan with the Southeast meeting to follow after a small break. This also necessitates the Pacific cod meeting to shift from October to December, just after the Bristol Bay meeting. In this scenario, the Statewide Finfish meeting, normally held in March 2022, shifts to March 2023 to lessen the meeting load in 2021/2022.

An alternative schedule is to shift Southeast to January and adjust the AYK and Alaska Peninsula meetings appropriately.

Budget becomes a major consideration for the 2021/2022 meeting cycle under this scenario. Boards Support is moving forward with purchasing airline tickets for board members and staff for the Prince William Sound and Southeast meetings this fiscal year (FY21) in anticipation of in-person meetings occurring. If these meetings are cancelled, the value of those flights is assignable to other flights in the next state fiscal year (FY22). This would alleviate budget concerns to a small degree. The remaining increase in cost is additional facilities, board honoraria, and freight shipped by air to make the close turnaround meeting dates. The cost of holding the Prince William Sound and Southeast/Yakutat meetings in 2018 was approximately \$140,000. This does not include costs associated with advisory committee travel, department division staff, or costs to the

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participating public. Department budget information indicates actual expenditures from the Board Appropriation in FY18 (the last cycle that had the 2020/2021 meetings) was approximately \$1,218,000. While costs can vary dramatically based on workload, board member duty station, meeting locations, and other, the Governor’s FY22 budget submission is \$1,206,100. Extreme cost cutting measures would be required to add additional meetings into the current 2021/2022 meeting cycle.

Table 6 shows the workload impacts of shifting 2020/2021 to 2021/2022. The total number of meeting days is 46. For the closest comparable workload, the board met for 41 days in the 2013/2014 cycle, including a five-day Joint Board meeting. This schedule is significant and would challenge the available budget. The specific dates listed below for revised meetings are illustrative only. Final dates depend on facility availability.

Table 6. Postponing 2020/2021 to 2021/2022 and Statewide Finfish to 2022/2023

Cycle	Meetings (Dates and Days)	Locations	# Proposals
2020/2021	All meetings shifted to 2021/2022		
2021/2022	Work Session (October 20-21, 2021 – 2 days)	Cordova	n/a
	Prince William Sound Finfish and Shellfish (October 22-28, 2021 – 7 days)	Cordova	79
	Southeast Finfish and Shellfish (November 5-17, 2021 – 13 days)	Ketchikan	155
	Bristol Bay Finfish (November 28-December 2, 2021 – 5 days)	Anchorage	74
	Pacific cod – Alaska Peninsula, etc. (December 3-4, 2021 – 2 days)	Anchorage	25
	Arctic, Yukon, and Kuskokwim Finfish (January 8-12, 2022 – 5 days)	Anchorage	63
	Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, Chignik Finfish (February 18-23, 2022 – 6 days)	Anchorage	54
	Shellfish Statewide, (March 5-10, 2021 – 6 days)	Anchorage	42
Total	46 days		492
2022/2023	Work Session (October 20-21, 2022 – 2 days)	Anchorage	n/a
	Lower Cook Inlet Finfish (November 29-December 2, 2022 – 4 days)	Homer	43
	Kodiak Finfish (January 10-13, 2023 – 4 days)	Kodiak	38
	Upper Cook Inlet Finfish (February 24-March 9, 2023 – 13 days)	Anchorage	231
	Statewide Finfish (March 2023 – 4 days)	Anchorage	26
Total	27 days	Total	338

Scenario 3. A Mix of Web Conferencing in 2020/2021 and Shifting Meetings to 2021/2022

This final scenario combines a mixture of web conferencing in 2020/2021 and shifting the remainder of the meetings to 2021/2022. For illustrative purposes, the analysis assumes roughly one-third of the 2020/2021 proposals are managed on web conference. This scenario would reduce projected meeting days in 2021/2022 from 46 to 39. This remains a challenging workload and still would require more funding than what is expected to be available. However, it lessens the impact on the budget and work resources, and allows more time for the movement of freight.

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Table 7 provides a revised schedule that includes web conferencing for some proposals this year and shifting the remaining proposals to the next year. The specific dates listed below for revised meetings are illustrative only. Final dates depend on facility availability.

Table 7. Conduct Select Proposals on Web Conferencing and Shift Remainder to Next Two Cycles

Cycle	Meetings (Dates and Days)	Locations	# Proposals*
2020/2021	Shellfish Statewide, (March 5-10, 2021 – 3 days)	Web Conference	14
	Prince William Sound Finfish and Shellfish (March 30-April 2, 2021 – 4 days)	Web Conference	26
	Southeast Finfish and Shellfish (April 17-22, 2021 – 6 days)	Web Conference	52
	Total	13 days	92
2021/2022	Work Session (October 20-21, 2021 – 2 days)	Cordova	n/a
	Prince William Sound Finfish and Shellfish (October 22-26, 2021 – 5 days)	Cordova	53
	Southeast Finfish and Shellfish (November 10-17, 2021 – 8 days)	Ketchikan	103
	Bristol Bay Finfish (November 28-December 2, 2021 – 5 days)	Anchorage	74
	Pacific cod – Alaska Peninsula, etc. (December 3-4, 2021 – 2 days)	Anchorage	25
	Arctic, Yukon, and Kuskokwim Finfish (January 8-12, 2022 – 5 days)	Anchorage	63
	Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands, Chignik Finfish (February 18-23, 2022 – 6 days)	Anchorage	54
	Shellfish Statewide, (March 5-10, 2021 – 4 days)	Anchorage	28
Total	39 days	400	
2022/2023	Work Session (October 20-21, 2022 – 2 days)	Anchorage	n/a
	Lower Cook Inlet Finfish (November 29-December 2, 2022 – 4 days)	Homer	43
	Kodiak Finfish (January 10-13, 2023 – 4 days)	Kodiak	38
	Upper Cook Inlet Finfish (February 24-March 9, 2023 – 13 days)	Anchorage	231
	Statewide Finfish (March 2023 – 4 days)	Anchorage	26
Total	27 days	Total	338