

FINAL ACTION ON STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)  
FOR GROUND FISH AND COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES

This agenda item concerns planning for new groundfish stock assessments that are anticipated to be conducted in 2019, which will be used to inform the harvest specifications and management measures decisions for groundfish fisheries in 2021 and beyond. The Council will also refine the priorities for groundfish stock assessments to be conducted in 2021 to advance the planning of future assessments.

The decision on which stocks to assess next year entails whether the assessment should be a full assessment that requires peer review by a Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel, a data-moderate assessment, or an update assessment that requires only a review by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). Council policy on this subject has been to schedule no more than ten full assessments in a given year with no more than two full assessments reviewed at each STAR Panel. A maximum of five STAR Panels should be considered for next year.

The Council identified their preliminary list of stock assessment priorities for public review at their March 2018 meeting. The preliminary list of full assessments include sablefish, cowcod, cabezon (Oregon and California), longnose skate, big skate, gopher rockfish (may be gopher and black-and yellow rockfish as a complex), and Dover sole. The preliminary list of update assessments include widow rockfish and petrale sole. The Council is soliciting comments from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science centers, state and Tribal agencies, Council advisory bodies, and the public on this preliminary list.

Dr. Jim Hastie, NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center, will report on proposed stock assessment priorities, potential data sources to inform these proposed assessments, and the Science Centers' capacity to address Council stock assessment priorities (Agenda Item E.3, Attachments 1 and 2).

There are three Terms of Reference (TOR) that guide the stock assessment process; one specifies how the next assessment process should occur and defines the roles and responsibilities of various entities contributing to this process, one guides the development of rebuilding analyses used to develop harvest specifications and rebuilding plans for overfished species, and one guides how new methods are reviewed and recommended for scientific activities that inform analyses used in management decision-making. These TOR have been revised based on SSC and Council recommendations in March, reviewed by some members of the SSC and others, and are included as Agenda Item E.3, Attachments 3, 4, and 5, respectively.

The Council will consider the input from NMFS, state and Tribal agencies, the advisory bodies, and the public before providing a final decision on 2019-2020 stock assessment priorities by species, type of assessment (full, data-moderate, or update), and language for the three draft TOR.

**Council Action:**

1. **Adopt Final List of Stocks to be Assessed in 2019;**
2. **Refine the List of Stocks to be Assessed in 2021;**
3. **Adopt the Terms of Reference for the Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2019-2020;**
4. **Adopt the Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analysis;**
5. **Adopt the Terms of Reference for the Methodology Review Process for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species; and**
6. **Adopt the 2019 Groundfish Stock Assessment Review Schedule.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 1: Prioritization of Species and NMFS Final Recommendations for Stock Assessments in 2019 and 2021.
2. Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 2: Excel Workbook of Data Informing 2019 and 2021 Stock Assessment Prioritization (**Electronic Only**).
3. Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 3: Draft Terms of Reference for the Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2019-2020.
4. Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 4: Draft Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Rebuilding Analysis for 2019-2020.
5. Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 5: Draft Terms of Reference for the Methodology Review Process for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species for 2019-2020.

**Agenda Order:**

- E.3 Final Action on Stock Assessment Plans and Terms of Reference (TOR) for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species John DeVore
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Final List and Schedule of Groundfish Stocks for Assessment in 2019, the Stock Assessment and Methodology Review TOR for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species, and the Rebuilding TOR for Overfished Groundfish stocks

PFMC  
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