

## HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS FOR 2023-2024 INCLUDING FINAL OVERFISHING LIMITS AND ACCEPTABLE BIOLOGICAL CATCHES

In June, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) adopted a process and schedule for deciding harvest specifications and management measures for 2023-2024 groundfish fisheries (see [Agenda Item G.6, Attachment 1, June 2021](#)). The sequence of decision-making is scheduled so that the new regulations can be implemented on January 1, 2023. Based on this schedule, the Council will decide final 2023 and 2024 overfishing limits (OFLs) and acceptable biological catches (ABCs) for groundfish stocks and stock complexes under default harvest control rules (HCRs), as well as a range of harvest specifications for select species under alternative HCRs, at this meeting. Specifically, the Council is tasked with adopting a range of alternative OFLs, ABCs, and annual catch limits (ACLs) to be further analyzed if there is a desire to depart from default HCRs for 2023-2024 fisheries.

Amendment 24 established default HCRs that are applied to the best scientific information available to determine the 2023 and 2024 OFLs, ABCs, and ACLs. No action is needed if the Council intends to implement the remaining harvest specifications based on the default HCRs described in Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 1 (these harvest specifications are also available on the PacFIN website in the [GMT008 report](#)). In September, the Council requested alternative harvest projections for black rockfish in Oregon (Attachment 3), lingcod, sablefish, spiny dogfish, and vermilion and sunset rockfishes (all projections except Oregon black rockfish in Attachment 4). They also anticipated alternative projections for copper rockfish (Agenda Item E.2, Attachments 1-3) and quillback rockfish (Agenda Item E.2, Attachment 5).

The Council also requested further information and recommendations on restructuring the current stock complexes with a particular focus on management of copper rockfish, quillback rockfish, and vermilion and sunset rockfishes. The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) has prepared a report comparing recent total catches of stocks managed in complexes against their OFL contributions (Agenda Item E.3.a, GMT Report 1). The GMT also highlights those stocks where OFL contributions have recently been exceeded, which may compel Council consideration for alternative management strategies for these stocks. Additionally, information in consideration of stock and management area delineations has been compiled for copper and quillback rockfish (Attachments 5 and 6, respectively). It was also reported that 4.4 percent of the relative biomass of vermilion and sunset rockfishes in California north of Pt. Conception occurs north of 40°10' N lat. ([Agenda Item C.6, Attachment 5, September 2021](#)). Table viii in that assessment also provides a summary of projected harvest specifications for vermilion and sunset rockfishes in the Shelf Rockfish complexes north and south of 40°10' N lat. using results from the four 2021 assessments.

Background information on the groundfish fishery and the stock assessments informing Council decisions are available electronically in the draft groundfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation document (SAFE; Attachment 2). Edits to the draft and proposed content are solicited before the document is finalized early next year.

The Council is scheduled to review and adopt the range of OFLs, ABCs, and preliminary preferred ACLs under alternative HCRs to analyze for those stocks the Council is contemplating departing from current HCRs. Final 2023-2024 harvest specifications are scheduled to be decided in April 2022.

**Council Action:**

1. **Adopt 2023-2024 OFLs, stock categories, and P\*s.**
2. **In the event the Council chooses to depart from the default HCR, adopt a preliminary range of 2023-2024 P\*s/ABCs and ACLs for more detailed analysis.**
3. **Provide guidance on stock complex restructuring.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 1: 2023 and 2024 Groundfish Harvest Specifications under Default Harvest Control Rules.
2. Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 2: Draft Status of the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery - Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (*Electronic Only*).
3. Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 3: Catch Only Projections for Black Rockfish (*Sebastes melanops*) off Oregon in 2021.
4. Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 4: Harvest Specification Projections for Select West Coast Groundfish Stocks Under Alternative Harvest Control Rules for 2023 and Beyond.
5. Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 5: Evaluating available information to determine stock management delineation for copper rockfish (*Sebastes caurinus*) off the U.S. West Coast.
6. Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 6: Evaluating available information to inform stock management delineation for quillback rockfish (*Sebastes maliger*) off the U.S. West coast.
7. Agenda Item E.3.a, GMT Report 1: Groundfish Management Team Report on Biennial Harvest Specifications for 2023-24 Including Overfishing Limits and Acceptable Biological Catches.
8. Agenda Item E.3.a, GMT Report 2: Groundfish Management Team Report on Stock Complexes.
9. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

**Agenda Order:**

- E.3 Harvest Specifications for 2023-2024 Including Final Overfishing Limits and Acceptable Biological Catches John DeVore/Todd Phillips
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Overfishing Limits, Final P\*/Acceptable Biological Catches, and Preliminary Preferred Annual Catch Limits for Stocks and Stock Complexes

PFMC  
10/28/21