

STOCK DEFINITIONS

Amendment 31 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) concerns defining West Coast groundfish stocks, including their area stratifications, in the FMP. Adequately defining the range of a stock is foundational to many aspects of sustainability and the goals contained in the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), especially National Standard 1 and the ability to attain Optimum Yield. Defining stocks is also necessary to allow the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to make status determinations concerning the health and abundance of West Coast groundfish resources. Due to the lack of stock definitions in the groundfish FMP, in early 2022 NMFS notified the Council that the status of some stocks off the West Coast could not be determined. Amendment 31 thus concerns the appropriate definition of stocks in order to 1) continue to attain sustainability objectives, and 2) to appropriately administer the assessment and monitoring of the health of those stocks.

The Council did initial scoping of Amendment 31 at their June 2022 meeting. A [scoping document](#) provided at the June meeting outlined the issues compelling Amendment 31, including the NMFS recommendation to prioritize stock definitions for those stocks assessed in 2021 and planned for assessment in 2023. The Council conducted further scoping of Amendment 31 and adopted a Purpose and Need for Amendment 31 in September 2022. The Council also tasked staff to develop a white paper to synthesize the state of the knowledge for priority stocks and the management implications of the different prioritized stock definitions (Agenda Item H.5, Attachment 1). Attachment 1 also provides a proposed range of alternatives for Council consideration of Amendment 31.

The Council should consider advisory body recommendations and public comment before deciding a range of alternative stock definitions for priority species under Amendment 31.

Council Action:

Adopt a range of alternative stock definitions for priority species.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.5, Attachment 1: A Proposed Range of Alternatives and Associated Management Implications for Defining Stocks Under Amendment 31.
2. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

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|-----|--|-------------|
| H.5 | Stock Definitions | John DeVore |
| | a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies | |
| | b. Public Comment | |
| | c. Council Action: Adopt a Range of Alternatives | |