

2025-2026 HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES PLANNING

Under this agenda item, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduled to adopt a detailed process and schedule governing the development of harvest specifications and related management measures for 2025-2026 groundfish fisheries (Agenda Item H.7, Attachment 1). The process details the important sequential decision-making steps necessary to ensure implementation of the 2025-2026 harvest specifications and management measures on January 1, 2025. Three Council Operating Procedures (COPs) guide the schedule for developing 2025-2026 harvest specifications and management measures: [COP 9](#), [COP 19](#), and [COP 25](#). The Council should consider the overarching processes outlined in these COPs and anticipated workload when adopting the detailed schedule provided in Attachment 1.

Key Decision Deadlines

Stock Assessments

The Council is scheduled to adopt the 2023 four full assessments, two catch-only assessments, two data-moderate assessments, and one limited update assessment in September 2023. In the event an assessment is sent to the “mop-up” panel for further review, final assessments must be adopted at the November 2023 meeting.

Harvest Specifications

Adoption of the 2025-2026 groundfish harvest specifications is a foundational component of the biennial process. In developing harvest specifications, the Council will need to adopt harvest control rules (HCR) for managed groundfish species. If the Council intends to implement the harvest specifications for any managed groundfish species based on the default HCRs, per [Amendment 24](#), no further analysis for those species’ HCRs is required. However, the Council will need to formally adopt those values by the November 2023 meeting. New information from the 2023 stock assessments and other sources may compel the Council to consider alternative HCRs for certain groundfish. In the event the Council would like to change the default HCR for any groundfish species, critical decisions must be made at the September and November 2023 Council meetings, as specified in Attachment 1, to ensure completion of the biennial process on time. The Council is scheduled to adopt their final harvest specifications in April 2024.

Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP)

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issues EFPs. The Council makes recommendations to NMFS regarding the merits and applicability of EFP applications to groundfish management. The Council first considers EFP applications at the November Council meeting and provides final recommendations to NMFS at the June 2024 meeting.

Management Measures

The Council will consider adjusting routine management measures (e.g., trip limits, seasons, etc.) that allow the fishery to achieve, but not exceed, annual catch limits. Routine measures are those that have been analyzed and are currently in regulation. Adjustments, in part, are based on new fishery information (e.g., stock assessments, fishery performance, etc.). The Council is scheduled

to adopt the range of alternatives (ROA) for management measures at the November 2023 Council meeting, with selection of preliminary preferred alternatives (PPA) in April 2024, and selection of the final preferred alternatives (FPA) in June 2024.

The Council could also consider developing new management measures for inclusion into the biennial process. New management measures are those that have not been analyzed or implemented. However, the Council should carefully consider how inclusion of new management measure(s) into this process could impact implementation deadlines and progress on previously prioritized management measures outside of the biennial process. The existing list of new management measures the Council prioritized in March 2023 is attached for reference (Agenda Item H.7, Attachment 2). Identification of new management measures for inclusion in the biennial process should occur at the September 2023 Council meeting, allowing for initial scoping to be completed by the November 2023 meeting.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt a schedule and process governing the development of 2025-2026 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures.**
- 2. Discuss and provide initial guidance on any biennial management issues that should be considered when the Council adopts management measure alternatives for analysis in November 2023.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.7, Attachment 1: Proposed Schedule for Developing the 2025-2026 Groundfish Harvest Specifications and Management Measures.
2. Agenda Item H.7, Attachment 2: Prioritized Groundfish Management Measures.
3. If Received, Public Comments are Electronic Only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- H.7 2025-2026 Harvest Specifications and Management
Measures Planning Todd Phillips/Marlene A. Bellman
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Initial Scoping, Adopt a Process and Schedule for Developing Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for 2025-2026 Groundfish Fisheries

PFMC
05/30/23