

AMENDMENT 31 STOCK DEFINITIONS – FINAL ACTION

Under this agenda item, the Council is scheduled to adopt their final preferred alternative (FPA) for Amendment 31 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Amendment 31 will define stocks for 14 managed groundfish species (i.e., priority species) and is necessary to achieve the mandates of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), its National Standards, and to allow the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to make status determinations for these species.

The Council adopted their preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) for 12 of the 14 priority species in March 2023. The Council did not adopt a PPA for vermilion and vermilion/sunset rockfishes in March and will need to adopt a definition for these species at this meeting. Additionally, the Council added a new alternative in March to the range of alternatives for quillback rockfish and vermilion and vermilion/sunset rockfishes for consideration. The completed analysis for the PPA is provided in Agenda Item H.3, Attachment 1, June 2023 (Electronic Only).

Another outstanding item is for the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to consider the methods by which species with sub-area assessments can be combined to achieve harvest specifications for the stock defined area and interrelated issues as described in Section 3.2.1 of Attachment 1. Additionally, the Northwest Fishery Science Center (NWFSC) has developed a series of questions the SSC should consider as they review this section (Agenda Item H.3.a, NWFSC Report 1).

This action requires revisions to the FMP. The FMP, through Amendment 30, is provided with red-lined revisions that will support this action (Agenda Item H.3, Attachment 2, June 2023 [Electronic Only]). The Council will need to formally adopt changes to the FMP under this agenda item.

In addition to defining stocks for the priority species, the Council will also need to consider how to incorporate the stock definition process into the groundfish management timeline, [Council Operating Procedure 9](#) (COP 9). COP 9 Schedule 1 provides a detailed decision-making timeline which governs the biennial harvest specifications and management measure process. Council staff have drafted two timeline proposals for Council consideration, which are presented in Chapter 4 of Attachment 1. The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and the SSC should review these proposals and comment, as appropriate. The Council should provide guidance on the preferred proposal and any recommended changes, which will be brought back at the September 2023 meeting under the Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures agenda item for the Council to adopt.

Council Action:

1. **Adopt a final preferred alternative for all of the priority groundfish species.**
2. **Adopt revised language to the FMP relating to stock definitions for the priority groundfish species.**
3. **Review proposed timelines and provide guidance regarding potential revisions to COP 9, as appropriate, for final adoption at the September Council meeting.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.3, Attachment 1: Analysis for Proposed Amendment 31 to the Pacific Groundfish Fishery Management Plan in Support of the Final Preferred Alternative (*Electronic Only*).
2. Agenda Item H.3, Attachment 2: Draft Language for Amendment 31 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (*Electronic Only*).
3. Agenda Item H.3.a, NWFSC Report 1: Proposed Approaches for Calculating Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC), Applying 40-10 and 25-5 Rules, and Determining Stock Status from Multiple Sub-Area Assessments with Varying Assessment Categories or Sigma (Σ) Values.
4. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- H.3 Amendment 31 Stock Definitions – Final Action Todd Phillips
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt a Final Preferred Alternative, as Appropriate

PFMC
05/31/23