

## INITIAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE ACTIONS FOR 2025-2026 MANAGEMENT

In June, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) adopted a process and schedule for deciding harvest specifications and management measures for 2025-2026 groundfish fisheries (see [Agenda Item H.7, Attachment 1, June 2023](#)). The sequence of decision-making is scheduled so that the new regulations can be implemented on January 1, 2025. Based on this schedule, the Council will begin deciding groundfish harvest specifications and providing input on new management measures for 2025-2026 groundfish fisheries at this meeting.

### *Harvest Specifications*

Under this agenda item, the Council is tasked with adopting final preferred overfishing limits (OFLs) for managed groundfish, where possible. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will review the proposed OFLs, stock categories, and sigma values ( $\sigma$  – *scientific uncertainty*), and make their recommendations to the Council. Under Amendment 24, the default harvest control rules (HCR) are applied to the best available scientific information to determine the 2025 and 2026 OFLs, acceptable biological catches (ABC), and annual catch limits (ACL). Agenda Item G.6, Attachment 1 provides the proposed 2025 and 2026 OFLs, ABCs based on the Scientific and Statistical Committee’s (SSC) default sigmas for each stock category and overfishing probabilities (P\*s – *probability of overfishing*) from the 2023-2024 management cycle, and ACLs that comport with the Council’s default HCRs. Agenda Item G.6, Attachment 2 provides harvest specifications projections for 2025 and beyond using the new sigmas implemented beginning in 2020 for select stocks where projections were missing.

While the Council could adopt default HCRs for all groundfish, it could consider alternative HCRs as well, for example for newly assessed species and species with new projections. If there is a desire to depart from default HCRs, the Council should adopt a preliminary range of OFLs and ABCs, including the P\*values and any additional ACL HCRs for more detailed analysis.

The SSC will review the proposed OFLs, stock categories, and sigma values, and make their recommendations. In the event it is necessary to reconsider any assessment or new projections, the SSC’s Groundfish Subcommittee is scheduled to convene a mop-up panel during the last week of September. The Council will need to decide on a final range of ACLs in November to facilitate the Groundfish Management Team’s (GMT) overwinter analytical work.

### *Preliminary Range of New Management Measures*

The Council is also scheduled to adopt a preliminary list of new management measures for analysis under this agenda item. New measures are those where the impacts have not been previously analyzed and/or have not been previously implemented in regulation. In the past, these measures have included such items as stock complex restructuring, protected resources mitigation measures, and changes to rockfish conservation areas.

Adopting a preliminary list of new management measures and providing initial guidance at this meeting will allow the GMT, in coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), to assess the analytical requirements and anticipated workload at the October GMT meeting. The preliminary analyses findings for the preliminary range of new management measures will be brought forward for Council review and revision, as appropriate, at the November 2023 Council meeting.

The Council should carefully consider the list of potential new management measures and available resources when deciding which issues are the highest priorities for more detailed analyses. Establishing a manageable range of alternatives for analysis will increase the likelihood that 2025-2026 harvest specifications are implemented January 1, 2025, consistent with the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan.

**Council Action:**

1. **Adopt final 2025-2026 OFLs, stock categories, and P\*s, where possible.**
2. **For groundfish where alternative HCRs are to be considered, adopt a preliminary range of P\* values, ABCs, and ACLs for detailed analysis for groundfish.**
3. **Adopt a preliminary range of potential new management measures.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item G.6, Attachment 1: 2025 and 2026 Groundfish Harvest Specifications under Default Harvest Control Rules.
2. Agenda Item G.6, Attachment 2: Harvest Specification Projections for Select West Coast Groundfish Stocks in 2025 and Beyond Informed by the Sigmas Implemented in 2020.
3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

**Agenda Order:**

- G.6 Initial Harvest Specifications and Management Measure Actions for  
2025-2026 Management Marlene A. Bellman /Todd Phillips
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Overfishing Limits, a Range of P\*/Acceptable Biological Catches, and Annual Catch Limits for Stocks that may Depart from Default Harvest Control Rules; Adopt a Preliminary List of Potential Management Measures Necessary to Implement Harvest Specifications to be Included in the 2025-2026 Regulation Process

PFMC  
08/16/23