

PHASE 2 STOCK DEFINITIONS – PLANNING

Under this agenda item, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is tasked with adopting a workplan and schedule for Phase 2 of the stock definitions process. In Phase 1, the Council adopted stock definitions for 14 priority groundfish species under Amendment 31(A31) to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) in June 2023. At the beginning of the A31 process, the Council was informed by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that stocks would need to be defined for all managed groundfish species in an additional phase. This agenda item is an opportunity for the Council to consider the schedule for Phase 2 and give guidance on and direction to staff in the development of this action.

In Phase 2, the Council is scheduled to define stocks for the remaining groundfish species in the FMP. At maximum, Phase 2 will require the Council to define stocks of at least 75 species. However, it is important to note that the proposed scope of Phase 2 is not just limited to defining stocks. The Council is also scheduled to consider revisions to the groundfish stock complexes. Phase 2 was prioritized by the Council in the Workload Prioritization and New Management Measures agenda item ([Agenda Item F.8.a, Revised GMT Report 1, March 2023](#) – see Appendix 2, Table A). These actions are necessary to align the FMP with aspects of the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and the National Standards.

Also as part of this action, NMFS is recommending the Council evaluate whether stocks are in need of conservation and management, including consideration identifying ecosystem component species, per the criteria outlined in National Standard 1 (§600.305(c)). For nearshore species (e.g., rockfish and roundfish), such an analysis would also be intended to explore the issues associated with federal management authority, which is limited to the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) defined as 3 nautical miles (nm) to 200 nm.

Council staff has outlined the key issues (Agenda Item E.8, Attachment 1) and developed a draft proposed Phase II schedule for Council consideration (Agenda Item E.8 Attachment 2). The items in Phase II are highly interrelated and the schedule was developed to highlight the critical and sequential decision-making steps necessary to ensure a timely implementation schedule.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt a workplan and schedule for the Phase 2 stock definitions process.**
- 2. Provide guidance to staff, as appropriate.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.8; Attachment 1: Stock Definitions Phase II: Planning.
2. Agenda Item E.8: Attachment 2 Proposed Schedule for Developing the Phase 2 Stock Definitions.
3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

E.8 Phase 2 Stock Definitions – Planning

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- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
- b. Public Comment
- c. **Council Action:** Adopt Workplan and Schedule

PFMC

10/12/23