



## Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Brad Pettinger, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 13, 2023  
TO: Scientific and Statistical Committee  
FROM: Marlene A. Bellman, Staff Officer  
SUBJECT: November 2023 Council Meeting Materials

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) November 2023 meeting will be held in person from November 1 through November 8, 2023, in Garden Grove, California. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will meet **in person** with a web broadcast on Thursday, November 2 and Friday, November 3, starting at 8 a.m. each day. In addition, the SSC Groundfish Subcommittee (GFSC) will meet in person on Wednesday, November 1, from 3 to 5 p.m. to review catch-only projections for chilipepper rockfish, yellowtail rockfish north of 40° 10' N. lat., as well as harvest specifications for vermilion rockfish in California that result from combining assessment areas. The SSC GFSC will prepare their recommendations for the full SSC and Council consideration. Your meeting materials are enclosed.

Instructions for how to connect to the Council and Advisory Body meetings will be posted on the Council's [November 2023 Meeting webpage](#) prior to the first day of the meeting. Upon entering the meeting remotely, please modify your entry to reflect your full identification (full name and affiliation). This additional information helps participants identify speakers during public comment. All meetings are open to the public and at least one opportunity for public comment has been scheduled for each meeting day.

This meeting is being conducted in person with a web broadcast that provides the opportunity for remote public comment. In the event an outage occurs, or technical issues arise that impact the experience of remote attendees, we will attempt to resolve them but, ultimately, we cannot guarantee that they will be resolved satisfactorily.

#### SSC Administrative Matters

On Thursday, November 2, the SSC meeting will be called to order by the SSC Chair and any designated alternates will be introduced. Next, the SSC will receive a briefing from the Council's Executive Director, Merrick Burden, to provide clarification on Council direction, informational updates, etc. The SSC will finalize their November 2023 meeting agenda and the September 2023 meeting minutes. Subcommittee assignments will be reviewed and updated, as necessary.

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## C. Council Administrative Matters

### C.7 Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

Under Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures (COPs), the SSC may be asked to review any vacant management or technical team seats which come in before the September Council meeting. As of the advance briefing book, none have been submitted. Any SSC recommendations will be offered during the Council Closed Executive Session on Friday, November 3.

### C.8 Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning

The SSC will discuss future workload planning matters and report to the Council on this matter under Agenda Item C.8 scheduled for Wednesday, November 8. Future workload planning may include discussion with SSC subcommittees to plan for Council tasks noted in future Council meeting quick reference agendas or year-at-a-glance topics. The SSC statement regularly provides a table with important meeting dates and timelines.

Relative to the Year-at-a-Glance, the Council's provisional budget anticipates that some Advisory Bodies will meet remotely for select meetings in 2024. All remote meetings would be scheduled to occur prior to the Council meeting to better align with staff resources. The SSC is scheduled to have one remote meeting and four in person meetings. Based on the agenda, Council staff recommends that the SSC's April meeting be remote. The SSC should review the schedule, Council staff proposal, and comment as appropriate.

In March 2024, the full SSC will meet with the Council to discuss SSC priorities and the needs the Council has of the SSC. This will serve as a dialog intended to clarify Council priorities of the SSC and any questions that may exist regarding these priorities.

## D. Salmon Management

### D.3 Final Methodology Review

At the September 2023 meeting, [three topics](#) were selected for final methodology review as well as one progress update. The Salmon Technical Team (STT) and SSC will report on outcomes and any recommendations from the October Salmon Methodology Review. The SSC will provide any recommendations under Agenda Item D.3 on Friday, November 3.

## E. Groundfish Management

### E.2 Adopt Rebuilding Analyses, Catch-Only Projections, and Revised Projections

Under this agenda item, the SSC will review and consider endorsing new groundfish rebuilding analyses for quillback rockfish in California, catch-only projections for chilipepper rockfish and yellowtail rockfish North of 40° 10' N. latitude, and any other revised projections. These analyses will be evaluated by the SSC as best scientific information available for management decision-making for fisheries in 2025 and beyond. The Council is scheduled to approve rebuilding analyses and projections used to set groundfish harvest specifications for the upcoming biennial management period (2025-2026). The SSC's Groundfish Subcommittee will report on any

recommendations regarding the quillback rebuilding analyses and revised projections during their mop-up review meeting held on September 26, 2023 and a subsequent review meeting on November 1, 2023. The full SSC will provide recommendations under Agenda Item E.2 on Saturday, November 4.

#### E.4 Sablefish Gear Switching – Preliminary Preferred Alternative

Council discussions on limiting the use of non-trawl gear to target sablefish in the trawl individual fishing quota (IFQ) fishery (gear switching) began in 2017 and began a process that led to development a range of alternatives across several Council meetings starting in September 2021. Due to the extended development period, the SSC is being asked to evaluate the economic analysis associated with the current alternatives and its soundness for use in groundfish fishery management decision-making by the Council. The SSC Economics Subcommittee is scheduled to review briefing book materials at a meeting on October 24, 2023, and report recommendations to the full SSC. The full SSC is requested to provide recommendations under Agenda Item E.4 on Saturday, November 4.

#### E.5 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for 2025-2026 – Part 1

In September 2023, the Council conditionally adopted 2025-2026 harvest specifications for overfishing limits (OFLs) and P\*/acceptable biological catches (ABCs). In November, the Council is tasked with adopting final OFL and ABC values for stocks and stock complexes that fall under default harvest control rules (HCR) (Agenda Item E.5 Attachment 1, Table 1-2 for 2025 and Table 1-3 for 2026). If there is a desire to depart from default HCRs, the Council should adopt a range of ABCs and annual catch limits (ACLs) to be further analyzed. The Council should consider adopting preliminary preferred ACLs, where possible, at this meeting. Attachment 1 details harvest specifications under default HCRs and the range of alternatives adopted in September 2023. Harvest specifications that were unavailable or requested to be revised by the Council in September have now been provided, noting that the values are presumptive pending Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) endorsement.

In September 2023, the Council requested alternative harvest projections associated with alternative HCRs for canary rockfish, rex sole, sablefish, and shortspine thornyhead (alternative and default projections in Agenda Item E.5 Attachment 1, summary Table 1-3).

In Agenda Item E.2, the Council is expected to consider adopting rebuilding analyses for quillback rockfish off California. Under Agenda Item E.5, the Council should consider adopting a range of harvest specifications, associated with various rebuilding strategies, for more detailed analysis. Harvest specifications for quillback rockfish off California are provided in the updated rebuilding analyses (Agenda Item E.2 Attachment 1).

The SSC will review 2025-2026 groundfish harvest specifications under default harvest control rules, projected harvest specifications for species under alternative harvest control rules, and specifications in the quillback rockfish off California rebuilding analyses. The SSC will recommend the 2025 and 2026 OFLs and ABCs to inform Council decisions under Agenda Item E.5 on Sunday, November 5. Any harvest specifications that are not ready for adoption under this agenda item could be recommended and adopted under Agenda Item E.7 on Tuesday, November 7.

## E.8 Phase 2 Stock Definitions – Planning

Under Phase II, the Council is scheduled to 1) define stocks of the managed groundfish species not defined under A31, scheduled to be defined in 2024, or planned to be addressed in another process and 2) consider revisions to groundfish stock complexes. Also, as part of this action, NMFS is recommending the Council evaluate whether stocks are in need of conservation and management, including consideration for 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 developed a draft proposed Phase II schedule and additional overview considerations (Agenda Item E.8 Attachment 1 and 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, which is ambitious.

The SSC should review these materials and comment to the Council regarding the proposed planning for Phase II under Agenda Item E.8 on Tuesday, November 7.

Thank you all for your dedication to West Coast fishery management and the Council process.

MAB:rdd

Enclosures include:

### Council and SSC Administrative Matters (A and C)

1. Agenda Item A – Council Meeting Agenda and Executive Directors Report
2. Agenda Item C.7 – Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures
3. Agenda Item C.8 – Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning

### Salmon Management (D)

4. Agenda Item D.3 – Final Methodology Review

### Groundfish Management (E)

5. Agenda Item E.2 – Adopt Quillback Rebuilding Analyses, Catch-Only Projections, and Revised Projections
6. Agenda Item E.4 – Sablefish Gear Switching – Preliminary Preferred Alternative
7. Agenda Item E.5 – Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for 2025-2026 – Part 1
8. Agenda Item E.8 – Phase 2 Stock Definitions – Planning

### SSC Agenda, Draft SSC Minutes, Closed Session, Etc.

9. November 2023 SSC Agenda
10. Draft September 2023 SSC Minutes

11. SSC Supplemental Materials
12. Closed Session
13. Informational Reports
14. General Information and Council Roster

PFMC  
10/12/23