

CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONAL CALIFORNIA QUILLBACK ROCKFISH ANALYSES AND ADOPT REBUILDING ANALYSIS

In November 2023, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) requested the Scientific and Statistical Committee's Groundfish Subcommittee (GFSC) review issues and additional analysis provided in two public comments from Dr. Mark Maunder and Dr. Ray Hilborn. The purpose of reviewing this information was to provide the full Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Council with further guidance on using the existing 2021 California quillback rockfish assessment ([Langseth et al. 2021](#)) and corresponding 2023 rebuilding analysis ([Langseth 2023](#); Attachment 1). The review meeting was held January 26, 2024, which followed a meeting-specific Terms of Reference, with outcomes and a post-meeting summary report to be presented to the full SSC in March 2024 (see Briefing Book: SSC Materials). Any GFSC recommendations will be considered by the full SSC, after which the full SSC will advise the Council.

The Council process for setting groundfish harvest specifications depends on periodic assessments of the status of groundfish stocks. If a groundfish stock falls below a default overfished threshold level or minimum stock size threshold, a rebuilding analysis is conducted. Amendment 31 to the [Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan](#) was recommended by the Council in June 2023 and approved by National Marine Fisheries Service in November 2023, defining quillback rockfish along the U.S. west coast as three separate stocks corresponding to waters off Washington, Oregon, and California. The 2021 stock assessment of quillback rockfish in California waters estimated that the population was below the overfished threshold level. In December 2023, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration notified the Council of the overfished status determination (Attachment 2). Thus, a draft rebuilding analysis has been developed per the [Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Rebuilding Analysis for 2023-2024](#), to examine a range of alternative rebuilding strategies and inform harvest specification decision-making.

The SSC will review the outcomes of the GFSC meeting and the associated rebuilding analysis and will make recommendations relative to the standards of best scientific information available for use in groundfish fishery management decision-making by the Council.

Under this agenda item, the Council is scheduled to adopt the rebuilding analysis for the California quillback rockfish ([Langseth 2023](#); Attachment 1), which specifies resulting scientific rebuilding parameters (e.g., T_{min} , T_{max} , mean generation time). Under Agenda Item F.7, the Council is scheduled to adopt a rebuilding strategy and associated harvest specifications for a preliminary preferred alternative and analysis in the rebuilding plan.

Council Action:

- 1. Review and discuss the outcome of the January 26, 2024 SSC GFSC meeting. Provide guidance on next steps.**
- 2. Adopt the California quillback rockfish rebuilding analysis (which specifies scientific rebuilding parameters) for use in 2025 and beyond.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.2, Attachment 1: DRAFT 2023 Rebuilding analysis for quillback rockfish (*Sebastes maliger*) in U.S. waters off the coast of California based on the 2021 stock assessment. [*Document also provided November 2023 BB, Agenda Item E.2, Attachment 1*].
2. Agenda Item F.2, Attachment 2: NOAA Letter to PFMC re: California Quillback Rockfish Overfished Determination.
3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- F.2 Consideration of Additional California Quillback Rockfish Analyses and Adopt Rebuilding Analysis Marlene A. Bellman
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Review Additional Analyses and Provide Guidance on next steps; Adopt California Quillback Rockfish Rebuilding Analyses

PFMC
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