

BIENNIAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS FOR 2025-26 FISHERIES –
FINAL PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduled to adopt final preferred 2025-26 harvest specifications under this item or under Agenda Item F.5, if necessary. Any specifications not adopted in April will be adopted at the June 2024 Council meeting. The Council will receive recommendations from management entities (including state, Federal, and Tribal agencies), Council advisory bodies, and the public to aid in these decisions.

In November 2023, the Council adopted preliminary preferred alternatives (PPA) for 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications (overfishing limits [OFLs], acceptable biological catches [ABCs]), and annual catch limits [ACLs]) for managed groundfish stocks and stock complexes, except quillback rockfish in California. The Council also adopted a range of alternatives for Dover sole, rex sole, and shortspine thornyhead.

In March 2024, the Council adopted a range of rebuilding strategies and an associated range of 2025-26 harvest specifications for the California quillback rockfish stock. This range was in addition to the range adopted in November 2023, which included the California Department of Fish and Wildlife alternative utilizing the MSY proxy from the 2021 data-moderate assessment of California quillback rockfish (based on SPR 50%), and also includes the default harvest control rule (HCR) which is required to be analyzed. In April, the Council is scheduled to refine the range of alternatives, if needed, and adopt a PPA. Final action on quillback rockfish in California harvest specifications and the associated rebuilding plan is scheduled for June 2024.

Attachment 1 provides a description of 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications and the biological impacts associated with the default and alternative HCRs under consideration. The corresponding management measures and associated impacts of the alternatives, including the initial analysis in support of the rebuilding plan, are provided in Agenda Item F.5, Attachment 2. Table 1 in Attachment 1 (enclosed below) describes the stocks with alternative harvest control rules and Table 3 in Attachment 1 provides the 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications for these stocks. Appendices 1 and 2 provide the default harvest control rule values for 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications, which were adopted as PPA for all groundfish stocks, except those with alternatives under consideration.

In March 2024, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) identified the need for a catch-only update for Washington cabezon ([Agenda Item F.7.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1](#)). The harvest specifications previously recommended by the SSC and adopted by the Council were mistakenly carried over from a past biennium. The 2019 Washington cabezon assessment did not contain projections for 2025-26 and thus a catch-only update was needed. Council staff coordinated with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to request the Northwest Fisheries Science Center provide a catch-only projection (Attachment 2). The SSC is requested to review and consider endorsing any technical corrections or catch-only projection updates, for use in management as the basis for recommended 2025-2026 harvest specifications.

Table 1. Alternative 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications for select U.S. West Coast groundfish stocks; Alternative 1 is the default harvest control rule (HCR), and Alternatives 2-4 are alternative harvest control rules under consideration. WCGBT – West Coast Groundfish Bottom Trawl Survey; CDFW – California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Stock	Alternative	Harvest Control Rule
Rex Sole	Alternative 1	Default: ABC = ACL (P* = 0.40)
	Alternative 2 (PPA)	ABC = ACL (P* = 0.45)
Shortspine Thornyhead	Alternative 1	Default: Precautionary; ACL < ABC, 40-10 rule ACL split N (70.6%) and S (29.4%) of 34° 27' N. Lat. 5-yr rolling avg of biomass estimates from WCGBT survey (P* = 0.40)
	Alternative 2 (PPA)	Precautionary; ACL < ABC, 40-10 rule ACL split N (70.6%) and S (29.4%) of 34° 27' N. Lat. 5-yr rolling avg of biomass estimates from WCGBT survey (P* = 0.45)
Dover Sole	Alternative 1	Default ACL = 50,000 mt
	Alternative 2 (PPA)	ABC = ACL (P* = 0.45)
Quillback Rockfish in CA	Alternative 1	Default HCR: SPR=0.55, ACL = ABC (P* = 0.45)
	Alternative 2	ABC Rule (P* = 0.45)
	Alternative 3	CDFW proposed (November 2023)
	Alternative 4	F=0 (i.e. no fishing mortality)

Council Action:

1. **Adopt final preferred harvest specifications for 2025-2026 groundfish fisheries.**
2. **Refine the range of California quillback rockfish alternatives and adopt a preliminary preferred alternative.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.2, Attachment 1: Draft Harvest Specifications Sections of the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery 2025-2026 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures (***Electronic Only***).
2. Agenda Item F.2, Attachment 2: Update to the 2019 Washington cabezon catch-only model.
3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

F.2 Biennial Harvest Specifications for 2025-26 Fisheries –

Final Preferred Alternatives

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- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
- b. Public Comment
- c. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Preferred Harvest Specifications for 2025-2026 Fisheries, if possible; Refine the Range of Quillback Rockfish in California Alternatives and Adopt a Preliminary Preferred Alternative