

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PROPOSED SORTING REQUIREMENTS

Since the November 2023 Pacific Fishery Management Council, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) staff have been having conversations about the commercial rockfish sorting requirement issue in the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife report ([Agenda Item E.7.a, Supplemental WDFW Report 1, November 2023](#)).

The current Oregon sorting regulation states, “Fish Dealers and Limited Fish Sellers are responsible for reporting on fish tickets all landed catch sorted to market category (species or species group) as defined by ODFW ([OAR 635-006-0210](#)).” ODFW has information about market categories available online, as well as laminated photo identification sheets that are distributed to dealers and sellers. Additionally, ODFW port biologists provide outreach and education for local buyers and processors to assist with proper sorting and compliance.

ODFW already has a robust species composition sampling program that provides good estimates of landed catch by species. Requiring additional sorting could impact that sampling program, requiring additional sampling of smaller bins of fish species without providing more accurate estimates or lowering uncertainty.

Additional sorting requirements would put additional onus on processors and buyers. This may require extra work, totes, crew, and training. Many buyers in Oregon are small local buyers with limited facilities, staff, and dock and/or factory space to accommodate extra totes or staff.

With each state having a unique sampling program and the wide variety of fish buying operations along the US West Coast, this issue may be more than the Council would want to address via the biennial process. This issue may be better addressed by coordinating sampling/sorting requirements for commercial fisheries in each state, such as working through PacFIN. This would also give additional time for communication and outreach with fish buyers and processors. Alternately, this could potentially be incorporated into Phase 2 of the Stock Definitions process that the Council will be undertaking later this year.

Therefore, ODFW **recommends sorting requirements be removed from the 2025-2026 management measures.**