



## Pacific Fishery Management Council

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

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 22, 2024

TO: Scientific and Statistical Committee

FROM: Marlene A. Bellman, Staff Officer

SUBJECT: April 2024 Council Meeting Materials

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council, PFMC) April 2024 meeting will be held in person from April 5 through April 11, 2024, in Seattle, Washington. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will meet **remote only** on Friday, April 5, starting at 8 a.m. Your meeting materials are enclosed.

Instructions for how to connect to the Council and Advisory Body meetings will be posted on the Council's [April 2024 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 online and 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 Friday, April 5, 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 and informational updates. The SSC will finalize their April 2024 meeting agenda and the March 2024 meeting minutes. Subcommittee assignments will be reviewed and updated, as necessary.

#### G. Council Administrative Matters

##### G.2 Council Operations and Priorities

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An [online briefing](#) for Advisory bodies will be held on March 29 and recorded for review prior to the April Council meeting. The briefing will cover outcomes of the January 18-19, 2024 meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole. If the SSC wishes to provide any comments on Agenda Item G.2, this item is scheduled for Thursday, April 11, otherwise this is an informational item with more information scheduled for June when SSC input will also be welcomed.

### G.3 Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures (SSC Closed Session)

Under Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures, the SSC may be asked to review any vacant management or technical team seats which come in before the April 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 Saturday, April 6.

### G.4 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 G.4 scheduled for Thursday, April 11. 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, SSC discussion is anticipated relative to updating the Council's Research and Data Needs. The SSC should further develop a proposed schedule of next steps and it would be helpful to document key planning points in SSC italicized notes for future reference. The SSC may also want to make note of materials related to the Council's proposed Inflation Reduction Act projects that are included in the Council's briefing materials under G.4. The Council is scheduled to have preliminary discussions regarding the plans for these projects. The SSC is not expected to comment on these materials, but they may be of interest.

## I. Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Management

### I.3 Pacific Sardine Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for 2024-25 – Final Action

At this meeting, the Council plans to adopt harvest specifications and management measures for the 2024-25 Pacific sardine fishing season. The SSC will make recommendations on the overfishing limit and corresponding acceptable biological catch to the Council based on the 2023 update assessment, the associated sigma (i.e. uncertainty), and determination of best available science for use in decision-making. The SSC will provide recommendations under Agenda Item I.3 on Tuesday, April 9.

The 2024 Pacific Sardine Stock Assessment was reviewed by a Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel February 21 – 23, 2024. The draft stock assessment and the STAR Panel report are included as Attachments 1 and 2. This benchmark stock assessment will be used to set harvest specifications and management measures for the July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 sardine fishery. Pacific sardine is currently overfished and directed harvest is closed. Limited live bait, exempted fishing permit, and small scale fishing is allowed, under the annual catch limit. Because the biomass estimate fell below 50,000 mt, incidental limits in other primary directed CPS fisheries are restricted to no more

than 20 percent sardine. If the biomass estimate is over 50,000 mt, the Council will select an incidental limit between 0 – 45 percent for sardine in other CPS fishing.

## E. Salmon Management

### E.4 Methodology Review Preliminary Topic Selection

Under Agenda Item E.4, the SSC plans to discuss preliminary salmon topics with the Salmon Technical Team (STT) and the Model Evaluation Workgroup (MEW) and provide recommendations for methodologies to be reviewed in 2024. The STT and MEW will be available for discussion or questions. The SSC will provide recommendations to the Council on Sunday, April 7.

Each year, the SSC completes a methodology review to help ensure new or significantly modified methodologies employed to estimate impacts of the Council’s salmon management use the best available science. The process normally involves: 1) developing a list of potential topics for review at the April Council meeting, 2) development of analytical materials to be reviewed between April and September Council meetings, 3) final selection of review topics at the September Council meeting, 4) a review of selected topics in October by the SSC Salmon Subcommittee and the STT, and 5) review by the full SSC at the November Council meeting.

## F. Groundfish Management

### F.2 Biennial Harvest Specifications for 2025-26 Fisheries – Final Preferred Alternatives

In November 2023, the Council adopted [preliminary preferred alternatives](#) for 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications, and annual catch limits for groundfish stocks and stock complexes. The Council is scheduled to adopt final preferred alternatives at this meeting. 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. The SSC should provide any recommendations or comments under Agenda Item F.2 on Sunday, April 7.

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

MAB:kma

### Council Enclosures include:

Agenda Item A – Council Meeting Agenda  
Agenda Item G – Administrative Matters  
Agenda Item E – Salmon Management  
Agenda Item F – Groundfish Management  
Agenda Item I – Coastal Pelagic Species Management

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

1. April 2024 SSC Agenda
2. Draft March 2024 SSC Minutes

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3. SSC Supplemental Materials
4. Closed Session
5. Informational Reports
6. General Information and Council Roster

PFMC  
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