

STOCK DEFINITIONS FOR SPECIES ASSESSED IN 2025 AND 2027 –
RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

A proposed Amendment to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) concerns the appropriate definition of stocks to be assessed in 2025 and potentially assessed in 2027 (referred to as priority species), in order 1) to continue to attain sustainability objectives, 2) to appropriately administer the assessment and monitoring of the health of those stocks, and 3) for National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to make stock status determinations for actively managed stocks.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is asked to adopt a Purpose and Need for the proposed FMP Amendment and a range of alternative stock definitions for priority species. Attachment 1 synthesizes the current state of scientific knowledge for priority species to inform a potential range of stock definitions (Attachment 1). Thus far, the priority species initially identified by the Council in March 2024 for potential assessment in 2025 and 2027, which are not yet defined as stocks in the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP include: rougheye/blackspotted rockfish, yellowtail rockfish, chilipepper rockfish, widow rockfish, yelloweye rockfish, and English sole. The final list of species for assessment in 2025 and preliminary for 2027 are scheduled to be adopted under Agenda Item F.3.

Adequately defining the range of a stock is foundational to many aspects of sustainability and the goals contained in the Magnuson-Stevens Conservation and Management Act (MSA), especially National Standard 1 and the ability to attain optimum yield. Defining stocks is also necessary to allow NMFS to make status determinations concerning the health and abundance of U.S. west coast groundfish resources. Due to the lack of stock definitions in the groundfish FMP, in early 2022 NMFS notified the Council that the status of some stocks could not be determined.

In June 2023, [Amendment 31](#) to the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP defined an initial set of U.S. west coast groundfish stocks, including their area stratifications. A Purpose and Need statement for Amendment 31 was adopted by the Council in September 2022 ([Agenda Item H.5, Attachment 1, November 2022](#)).

The Council should consider advisory body recommendations and public comment before adopting a Purpose and Need statement and deciding a range of alternative stock definitions for priority species under a proposed Amendment to the groundfish FMP.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt a Purpose and Need statement for a Groundfish FMP Amendment.**
- 2. Adopt a range of alternative stock definitions for priority species.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 1: Stock Definition Considerations for a Range of Alternatives and Associated Management Implications for Stocks to be Assessed in 2025 and 2027.
2. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- F.4 Stock Definitions for Species Assessed in 2025 and 2027 -
Range of Alternatives Marlene A. Bellman
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt a Purpose and Need and Range of Alternatives for Analysis

PFMC
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