



Pacific Fishery Management Council

7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101 Portland, OR 97220-1384
Phone 503-820-2280 | Toll free 866-806-7204 | Fax 503-820-2299 | www.pcouncil.org
Brad Pettinger, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 17, 2024
TO: Scientific and Statistical Committee
FROM: Marlene A. Bellman, Staff Officer
SUBJECT: June 2024 Council Meeting Materials

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council, PFMC) June 2024 meeting will be held in person from June 7 through June 13, 2024, in San Diego, California. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will meet **in person** with a web broadcast on Friday, June 7, and Saturday, June 8, starting at 8 a.m. each day. Your meeting materials are enclosed.

Instructions for how to connect to the Council and Advisory Body meetings will be posted on the Council's [June 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 in-person with a web broadcast that 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, June 7, 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 June 2024 meeting agenda and the April 2024 meeting minutes. Subcommittee assignments will be reviewed and updated, as necessary. SSC recusals will be noted, plans for presenting SSC statements to the Council will be discussed, and an open SSC discussion period will follow.

Per suggestion in March 2024, a public comment period will be conducted at the beginning of the day to allow for relevant public comments to be made and considered prior to the SSC taking up an Agenda Item.

C. Council Administrative Matters

C.2 Council Operations and Priorities

An [online briefing](#) for Advisory bodies will be held on May 21 and recorded for review prior to the June Council meeting. The briefing will cover the Executive Directors recommended changes to Council operations, which are being made in response to long-term budget and workload considerations. At this meeting, the Council is asked to specify proposed recommendations for changing Council operations. To help inform these recommendations, Advisory Groups are encouraged to focus their input on the areas of the Council process where they have the most relative expertise. For example, they are encouraged to provide the Council with input relative to their own operations, specify any recommendations they may have for improving these operations, and outline how any changes being considered could affect their ability to provide advice to the Council. If the SSC wishes to provide any comments on Agenda Item C.2, this item is scheduled for Tuesday, June 11.

C.6 Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures - 2025-27 Advisory Body Composition and Respectful Workplace Policies (SSC Closed Session-Membership Appointments)

Under Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures, the SSC reviews any vacant management or technical team seats which are submitted before the Council meeting. As of the Advanced Briefing Book, the SSC is requested to review a nomination to the Groundfish Management Team to fill a vacant seat for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Any SSC recommendations regarding membership appointments will be offered during the Council Closed Executive Session on Saturday, June 8.

Additionally, the SSC may wish to review and provide feedback on the process for establishing the term-limited positions for the upcoming term (2025-2027). At the June Council meeting, the Council is scheduled to review the composition of all term-limited Advisory Body positions (SSC at-large positions; HC tribal, industry, conservation, and at-large positions; and all Advisory Subpanel positions) and adopt proposed changes for public review (see [COP 9, Schedule 6](#)). The current composition of all term-limited Advisory Subpanels can be found in Agenda Item C.6, Attachment 3 and the current roster can be found in the June Briefing Book. In September 2024, the Council is scheduled to adopt the final compositions of term-limited Advisory Body positions and request nominations to fill the next three-year term. Appointments are scheduled to be made in November 2024. Advisory Bodies should consider the form and function of the term-limited Advisory Body positions while taking into consideration the Council's financial status (see Agenda Item C.2 and C.4), when recommending the proposed changes for public review.

Staff has also made progress implementing Council guidance from June 2023 to further develop respectful workplace policies (Attachment 4). Several of the items were recommended for development and consideration by the Council Coordinating Committee (CCC) and are expected to be discussed at their May 2024 meeting. The Executive Director will provide a summary of the discussions and next steps.

The SSC should provide any comments or recommendations related to Agenda Item C.6, outside of the Closed Session nomination feedback, to the Council on Thursday, June 13.

C.7 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 C.7 scheduled for Thursday, June 13. 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.

E. Salmon Management

E.1 Sacramento River Fall Chinook (SRFC) Workgroup – Progress Report

In 2018, Sacramento River fall Chinook (SRFC) was declared ‘overfished’ and a rebuilding plan was subsequently adopted in June 2019. The plan included recommendations to reconsider the current conservation objective, develop an age-structured stock assessment, develop age-structured forecasts, and develop an age-structured harvest model. A salmon methodology review was conducted in October 2022 to review the basis behind the SRFC conservation objective ([Agenda Item D.2, Attachment 1 November 2022](#)). In April 2023, the Council agreed that taking a detailed look at information that is currently used, reviewing any new material available, and identifying data gaps is the next logical step forward in evaluating the SRFC conservation objective.

Thus, the Council formed an ad-hoc Sacramento River Fall Chinook Workgroup (Workgroup) in June 2023, and approved a draft Terms of Reference ([Agenda Item I.1 Supplemental Attachment 3, June 2023](#)). The Council tasked the Workgroup to 1) provide a summary report no later than the spring of 2024 to describe scoping of a revised SRFC conservation objective, related harvest control rule, and reference point alternatives, and 2) update the Council on the recommended next steps, timeline, and process to evaluate the conservation objective and related management measures.

In 2024, the Workgroup met on January 30-31 and May 1-2 to address its charges and develop a draft report (Agenda Item E.1.a, SRWG Report 1). The Workgroup plans to meet over the summer and fall in anticipation of the next Council update in November 2024.

The SSC is requested to review the SRWG evaluation of current technical approaches or alternatives developed to date in the report provided and offer any feedback. If the SSC recommends that some approaches are not viable and can be taken out of consideration at this point in time, that guidance would be helpful. The SSC should provide any comments or recommendations to the Council on Saturday, June 8.

E.2 Queets River Spring/Summer Chinook Rebuilding Plan – Progress Report

Queets River natural spring/summer Chinook were declared overfished in November 2023 ([Agenda Item D.1.a, Supplemental NMFS Report, November 2023](#)). Under the Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP), a rebuilding plan is required for Council consideration within one year and be implemented by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) within two years. NMFS has

stated that the Council should submit rebuilding plans for approval by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce within 15 months of the overfished declaration.

The Salmon Technical Team (STT) is working collaboratively with tribal, state, and Federal entities to develop the rebuilding plan. Work began in January 2024 and continues to date. This is the first update the Council has received on development of the rebuilding plan. The Council is slated to select a Preliminary Preferred Alternative in September 2024 and adopt a final plan for recommendation to NMFS in November 2024. The SSC should provide any recommendations on Agenda Item E.2 to the Council on Saturday, June 8.

F. Groundfish Management

F.3 Final Stock Assessment Plan and Terms of Reference

In March 2024, the Council adopted a preliminary list of groundfish species to be assessed in 2025 and for potential assessment in 2027. The Council is scheduled to adopt a final schedule for 2025 and preliminary 2027 stock assessment priorities by species, type of assessment (full, data-moderate, or update), and language for the three 2025-2026 TOR documents. Drs. Jim Hastie and Chantel Wetzel, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest Fisheries Science Center, will report on proposals for stock assessment priorities and scheduling (Attachment 1 and 2), as well as additional considerations in a report related to concerns regarding assessment frequency and capacity (NMFS Report 1). The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has also provided a summary report of data available for assessments (ODFW Report 1). The SSC is requested to review the materials and consider any issues or comments related to the SSC's review role in the upcoming assessment cycle, including scheduling. The SSC is requested to review the materials and provide any recommendations under Agenda Item F.3 on Sunday, June 9.

F.4 Stock Definitions for Species Assessed in 2025 & 2027 – Range of Alternatives

A proposed Amendment to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) concerns the definition of stocks to be assessed in 2025 and potentially assessed in 2027. The list of preliminary species identified by the Council in March 2024, which are not yet defined in the FMP under the previous Amendment 31, include: roughey/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.

For the species listed above, Attachment 1 synthesizes the current state of scientific knowledge to inform a potential range of stock definitions (Agenda Item F.4 Attachment 1). The SSC is asked to review this information, in particular the scientific literature review results relevant to stock structure, and provide any scientific guidance to the Council for consideration of stock definition alternatives. The SSC should provide any recommendations or comments under Agenda Item F.4 on Monday, June 10.

H. Cross FMP

H.2 NFMS Regional Equity and Environmental Justice (EEJ) Plan and EEJ Committee Update

The NMFS West Coast Regional Office is developing a Regional Implementation Plan that will serve as a roadmap for applying the national EEJ Strategy's goals and actions in the context of West Coast needs.

Earlier this year, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) published a report titled *Assessing Equity in the Distribution of Fisheries Management Benefits: Data and Information Availability (2024)* (Agenda Item H.2.a Attachment 1). The report is the product of a consensus study conducted by the NAS, at the request of the NMFS. The report considers the data and information needed to assess equity in the distribution of fisheries management benefits.

The SSC should review the NAS report and provide any comments under Agenda Item H.2 on Monday, June 10.

I. Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Management

I.1 Stock Assessment Terms of Reference and Accepted Practices – Final Action

The Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Subcommittee of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) met on April 17, 2024 to review the Terms of Reference (TOR) and Accepted Practices Guidelines for CPS Stock Assessments and propose changes. Members of the CPS Advisory Subpanel and Management Team and the Pacific sardine stock assessment team also participated in this meeting and offered recommendations. Attachments 1 and 3 are the track changes drafts showing modifications for consideration by the full SSC, the Council, and its advisory bodies. Attachments 2 and 4 are provided as clean reference documents with proposed edits accepted.

The Council is scheduled to adopt the CPS TOR and Accepted Practices documents for use in 2025-2026 stock assessments. The Council may also consider how often the documents should be reviewed and revised. Currently, the CPS TOR and Accepted Practices are on a biennial cycle because the documents were previously merged with groundfish stock assessment TOR and Accepted Practices. However, given the differences between groundfish and CPS, less frequent reviews and revisions may be appropriate. The SSC will provide recommendations under Agenda Item I.1 on Monday, June 10.

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

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Council Enclosures include:

Agenda Item A – Council Meeting Agenda
Agenda Item C – Administrative Matters
Agenda Item E – Salmon Management
Agenda Item F – Groundfish Management

Agenda Item H – Cross FMP

Agenda Item I – Coastal Pelagic Species Management

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

1. June 2024 SSC Agenda
2. Draft April 2024 SSC Minutes
3. SSC Supplemental Materials
4. Closed Session
5. Informational Reports
6. General Information and Council Roster

PFMC

05/15/24