



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: October 25, 2024
TO: Scientific and Statistical Committee
FROM: Marlene A. Bellman, Staff Officer
SUBJECT: November 2024 Council Meeting Materials

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council, PFMC) November 2024 meeting will be held in person from November 13 through November 18, 2024, in Costa Mesa, California. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will meet **in person** with a web broadcast on Wednesday, November 13 and Thursday, November 14, 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 [November 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 Wednesday November 13, 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 November 2024 meeting agenda and the September 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 each 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.5 Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures – Including Final 2025-27 Advisory Body Appointments

Under Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures (COPs), the SSC reviews any vacant management or technical team seats which are submitted before the Council meeting in an SSC closed session. As of the advanced briefing book, the SSC is requested to review two nominations, Ms. Katlyn Lockart to an ODFW position on the Groundfish Management Team and Dr. Tim Copeland to an IDFG position on the Scientific and Statistical Committee. In addition, the SSC will review nominations for the at-large seats on the SSC for the next three-year term (2025-2027). Current SSC members who are re-nominated will be excused from the closed session during their consideration. Regarding the 2025-2027 terms, the Council is particularly interested in SSC candidates with stock assessment and social science expertise. The SSC should highlight those skills, as appropriate, in their report to the Council. Any SSC recommendations regarding membership appointments will be offered during the Council Closed Executive Session on Thursday, November 14.

Additionally, the SSC will receive a briefing on the process by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to update their guidelines for National Standards 4, 8, and 9. During this meeting, the Council will discuss forming an ad hoc committee to help draft a comment letter on the expected proposed rule to revise National Standard Guidelines 4, 8, and 9 which cover allocation, communities, and bycatch ([Advanced Notice of Proposed Rule Making, May 2023](#); [Agenda Item H.6.a, Supplemental NMFS Presentation 1, September 2023](#); [Council Comment Letter October 2023](#)). The proposed ad hoc committee would be comprised of members from existing Council Advisory Bodies, similar to the Marine Planning Committee. Advisory Bodies should review the proposed approach (Agenda Item C.5, Attachment 2) and situation summary, provide feedback, and recommend individuals to serve on the proposed ad hoc committee for this item on Monday November 18.

C.6 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.6 scheduled for Monday, November 18.

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. The SSC Groundfish Subcommittee should plan with the full SSC for the upcoming 2025 stock assessment cycle; see the Informational Report from the Science Centers to guide this discussion.

A framework for conducting the research and data needs review is provided under Agenda Item D.3 (see Cross Fishery Management Plan section below). Under D.3, the SSC will be asked to provide perspective on the top science challenges in a statement for the Council. The sub-item here for SSC workload discussion relates to project management steps for developing the next briefing book material for the April 2025 Council meeting, which would select and pair a sub-set of research and data needs proposals to best address the top challenges identified by the Council under Agenda Item D.3. The SSC should discuss the steps and timelines needed to ensure

expectations can be met or provide feedback for any adjustments. Note that Subcommittee chairs would be coordinating much of the workload for this exercise.

F. Salmon Management

F.2 Final Methodology Review Results and Proposed Council Operating Procedure (COP) 15 updates

In April 2024, the Council did not identify any topics for methodology review during 2024. However, at the September 2024 meeting, the Council moved two topics proposed by the ad-hoc Sacramento River fall Chinook Workgroup (SRWG) forward for review, a.) Cohort Reconstruction for Sacramento River Fall Chinook salmon and Comparison with the Sacramento Index (SI) (Attachment 1), and b.) Updated FMSY Proxy and SMSY/SMP Ratio (Attachment 2).

The SSC will be provided with an overview by the SSC Salmon Subcommittee regarding the salmon methodology review conducted on October 4, 2024 (see report under SSC Materials). The SSC will discuss the results of the methodology review and provide any recommendations to the Council, so the Council may approve any new methodologies for use in 2025 and beyond. The STT will be available to answer any questions on their statement (Agenda Item F.2., Supplemental STT Report 1).

In addition, Council staff are proposing administrative updates to COP 15 that reflect the current process for conducting salmon methodology reviews and clarifies roles and responsibilities. The current version of COP 15 with suggested red-line edits is provided for the Council to consider and approve for public review (Attachment 3). The Council is scheduled to take final action on COP 15 updates in March 2025. The SSC is scheduled to have an initial joint discussion with the STT and then focused SSC discussion and statement development on this topic.

For Agenda Item F.2, the SSC will provide recommendations to the Council on Friday, November 15.

F.6 Sacramento River Fall Chinook Workgroup Progress Report and Recommendations

In June 2023, the Council formed an ad-hoc Sacramento River Fall Chinook Workgroup (SRWG or Workgroup). In June 2024, the SRWG provided the Council with a report ([Agenda Item E.1.a, Workgroup Report 1](#)) and the Council provided guidance to focus future work on (1) that Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) serves as the basis of salmon fishery management, and not Maximum Sustainable Production; and (2) to evaluate the draft cohort reconstruction for SRFC and determine if it will provide substantial improvement and accuracy over current forecasting and modeling methodologies.

In September 2024, the Workgroup proposed three topics for Council consideration under salmon methodology review. Two of these items were approved by the Council for methodology review in 2024 and the results will be considered at this meeting under Agenda Item F.2.

Under Agenda Item F.6, the Workgroup will provide an update to the Council on progress relating to their guidance provided in June 2024. The SSC should review the November 2024 Workgroup report (SRWG Report 1) and focus on the specific questions posed to the SSC or requests for SSC

feedback in this report. The SSC is asked to provide guidance as needed to address any Workgroup recommendations or concerns. The Council is scheduled to receive the next Workgroup report in June 2025. The SSC will provide any recommendations on Agenda Item F.6 to the Council on Friday, November 15.

J. Coastal Pelagic Species Management

J.3 Stock Assessment Prioritization

The CPS stock assessment prioritization (SAP) process was designed to guide stock assessment priorities, survey design, and the long-term integrity and value of abundance indices while providing sufficient flexibility to allow for revisions in the intervening year based on new information. The Council underwent SAP for the first time in November 2022 for prioritizing assessments for 2024 and 2025.

The upcoming proposed schedule for stock assessments outlined in Council Operating Procedure 9 in addition to a proposed methodology review poses challenges in timing and workload capacity. Council staff along with NMFS West Coast Region and Southwest Fisheries Science Center staff offer considerations for the Council in Attachment 1.

The Council could also choose to set priorities for more than just two years ahead, therefore providing as much advance notice as possible, but ultimately retains the opportunity to re-evaluate and adjust them as necessary when this item is scheduled to come before the Council in 2026.

The SSC should provide any perspective and recommendations regarding the proposed schedule of methodology review and assessments under Agenda Item J.3 on Monday, November 18.

H. Highly Migratory Species Management

H.3 Biennial Harvest Specifications and Management Measures – Final

The Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) lays out a biennial process that affords the Council input on identifying key management reference points for HMS stocks.

In September 2024, NMFS presented updated information to the Council on biological reference points, status determination criteria (SDC), and preliminary status determinations based on stock assessments conducted in 2023 and 2024 (Agenda Item J.3.a NMFS Report 1, September 2024). The Council reviewed the SDCs and resulting status determinations and had no comment except it requested the Scientific and Statistical Committee review the basis for shortfin mako shark SDCs and report back to the Council on their appropriate use. If the Council has no additional comments, the SDCs and pending status determinations may be considered adopted.

The shortfin mako stock assessment should have the calculation information the SSC needs for their discussion and is provided under SSC Materials in the briefing book. The reference points (depletion and exploitation) are first described under "Stock Status" of the Executive Summary, page 7. The SSC should review the appropriateness of using the reference points as proxies for FMSY and BMSY to complete a status determination for the stock, and if needed, explain their

derivation to the Council. Steve Teo (SWFSC scientist involved in the shortfin mako assessment) will be available to answer questions.

The SSC should provide recommendations per the Council's September 2024 request to review the basis for shortfin mako shark SDCs and their appropriate use under Agenda Item H.3 on Saturday November 16.

D. Cross Fishery Management Plan

D.3 Research and Data Needs

Under this Agenda Item, the Council is scheduled to adopt top science and management challenges to guide the research and data needs prioritization process. These challenges can be thought of as a "high-level" challenge or category that may stretch across more than one FMP and for which multiple types of research activities could be pursued. This is the initial step in the framework to review and update the Council's research and data needs (Attachment 2). In April 2025, the Council is scheduled to adopt a list of preliminary research and data needs associated with the top science and management challenges identified at this meeting. The preliminary list would be considered, refined and a final list is scheduled to be adopted at the June 2025 Council meeting.

To initiate discussion on this matter, Council staff have compiled an initial draft of categorical topics and challenges that stretch across various FMPs and for which the Council has, at one time or another, expressed a collective interest (Attachment 1). The Council is encouraged to keep the list of challenge categories to ten or less. Advisory bodies should review this as a starting point and provide feedback and recommendations on top science and/or management challenges from their perspective. Recommendations from the SSC are particularly important for the top science challenges to address prioritization of research and data needs in the next five years.

The vision is that, when the Council's research and data needs process has concluded, there will be a relatively small set of categorical challenges identified and a list of specific research and data needs within each.

For Agenda Item D.3, the SSC will provide recommendations to the Council on Saturday, November 16.

I. Groundfish Management

I.3 Methodology Review: Final Fishery Impact Model Review Topics and Stock Assessment Methodologies

Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) Operating Procedure 25 ([COP 25](#)) specifies the Council process for reviewing proposed new methodologies to inform management decisions. Two types of methodologies are considered in COP 25, groundfish impact analyses and those proposed for use in groundfish stock assessments.

At the September 2024 meeting, the Council provided guidance on development of a groundfish incidental-catch projection model for non-sablefish, non-nearshore fishing activity to analyze and predict fishery impacts in the biennial specifications process. The Council will consider this topic

for final methodology review and if selected, the anticipated schedule would require the SSC to conduct a groundfish methodology review in advance of the June 2025 Council meeting. The SSC should provide any comments or recommendations relative to this topic and methodology review timing or workload.

In September 2023, the Council adopted a methodology review topic for potential use in groundfish stock assessments. The SSC Groundfish Subcommittee (GFSC) conducted a methodology review on the suitability of fish age estimates developed using Fourier Transformed Near-Infrared Spectroscopy (FT-NIRS) in groundfish stock assessments in October 2024 and will provide an overview to the full SSC. The full SSC should provide any recommendations to the Council for adopting final stock assessment methodologies for 2025 and beyond.

For Agenda Item I.3, SSC recommendations would be provided to the Council on Sunday, November 17.

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

MAB:ael

Council Enclosures include:

Agenda Item A – Council Meeting Agenda
Agenda Item C – Administrative Matters
Agenda Item D – Cross Fishery Management Plan
Agenda Item F – Salmon Management
Agenda Item H – Highly Migratory Species Management
Agenda Item I – Groundfish Management
Agenda Item J – Coastal Pelagic Species Management

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

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

PFMC
10/21/24