

INFORMATION FOR THE 2025 GROUND FISH STOCK ASSESSMENT CYCLE

The Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Sciences Centers (NWFSC and SWFSC) are preparing for the 2025 assessment cycle for groundfish stocks. This report aims to provide information to facilitate communication among the Pacific Fishery Management Council (the Council), State representatives, Tribes, interested parties, and Science Center staff working on next year's stock assessments. All benchmark assessments will be reviewed during three separate, week-long in-person stock assessment review (STAR) panels held in Seattle, Washington, or Santa Cruz, California, in 2025. Virtual participation options will be available for those unable to attend in person and will include scheduled opportunities for public comment. This informational report provides contact information for those leading assessments and potential dates for pre-assessment data workshops (data workshops), deadlines, and reviews to support awareness and involvement opportunities in the 2025 assessment cycle.

Benchmark Assessments

Information is provided below for each species selected by the Council for a benchmark assessment in 2025. The data workshops are the first opportunity for group conversations among assessment scientists, State representatives, Tribes, and other interested parties. Materials for the data workshops will be posted on the Council website (pcouncil.org) two weeks before those meetings. People are strongly encouraged to review the online material ahead of time. The range of dates for three data workshops is preliminary and is specified below to facilitate planning and/or the identification of conflicts. The finalized dates will be noticed in the Federal Register and posted to the Council website.

Benchmark assessments have an initial data deadline for near-complete landings, effort, and other time series of demographic data through 2023, which should be provided to STATs by December 1, 2024.

Yellowtail Rockfish North of 40° 10' North Latitude

Lead Stock Assessment Author: Dr. Kiva Oken (NWFSC)

Contact Information: kiva.oken@noaa.gov, 564-225-2297

Data Workshop: January 29 or 30, 2025, with the specific date to be selected later

Final Data Deadline: February 24, 2025

STAR Panel Date: May 19–23, 2025

STAR Panel Location: Seattle, WA

Council Meeting Agenda Item: September 18–24, 2025

Chilipepper Rockfish Coastwide

Lead Stock Assessment Author: Dr. E.J. Dick (SWFSC)

Contact Information: edward.dick@noaa.gov, 831-420-3947 (prefer email)

Data Workshop: January 23 or 24, 2025, with the specific date to be selected later

Final Data Deadline: March 31, 2025

STAR Panel Date: June 23rd–27th, 2025

STAR Panel Location: Santa Cruz, CA

Council Meeting Agenda Item: September 18-24, 2025

Quillback Rockfish off California south of 42° North Latitude

Lead Stock Assessment Authors: Dr. Brian Langseth (NWFSC) and Dr. Melissa Monk (SWFSC)

Contact Information: brian.langseth@noaa.gov, 425-666-9939, melissa.monk@noaa.gov, 831-420-3950

Data Workshop: January 23 or 24, 2025, with the specific date to be selected later

Final Data Deadline: March 31, 2025

STAR Panel Date: June 23rd–27th, 2025

STAR Panel Location: Santa Cruz, CA

Council Meeting Agenda Item: September 18–24, 2025

Rougheye and Blackspotted Rockfish Coastwide

Lead Stock Assessment Authors: Dr. Jason Cope (NWFSC) and Dr. Vladlena Gertseva (NWFSC)

Contact Information: jason.cope@noaa.gov, 206-302-2417, vladlena.gertseva@noaa.gov, 206-860-3457

Data Workshop: March 18 or 19, 2025, with the specific date to be selected later

Final Data Deadline: April 21, 2025

STAR Panel Date: July 14th–18th, 2025

STAR Panel Location: Seattle, WA

Council Meeting Agenda Item: September 18–24, 2025

Sablefish Coastwide

Lead Stock Assessment Author: Dr. Chantel Wetzel (NWFSC)

Contact Information: chantel.wetzel@noaa.gov, 206-302-1753

Data Workshop: March 18 or 19, 2025, with the specific date to be selected later

Final Data Deadline: April 21, 2025

STAR Panel Date: July 14th–18th, 2025

STAR Panel Location: Seattle, WA

Council Meeting Agenda Item: September 18–24, 2025

Update Assessments

Yelloweye Rockfish Coastwide and Widow Rockfish Coastwide

The Council selected two species for update assessments in 2025: yelloweye rockfish and widow rockfish. Update assessments retain the same model structure (e.g., fleets, selectivity, etc.) and data sources used in the previous benchmark assessment, with only additional years of data (e.g., catch, indices, composition data, etc.) added to the model. The PFMC Groundfish Stock Assessment [Terms of Reference](#) provides further information about how update assessments are conducted and reviewed. Since update assessments retain the same model structure and data streams within the assessment, data workshops are typically not held for these assessments.

The update assessment for yelloweye rockfish will be based on the 2017 benchmark coastwide assessment ([Gertseva and Cope, 2017](#)), and the update assessment for widow rockfish will be based on the 2015 benchmark coastwide assessment ([Hicks and Wetzel, 2015](#)), which was updated in 2019 ([Adams et al., 2019](#)). Both update assessments will be led by graduate students participating in a University of Washington (UW) stock assessment course instructed by assessment staff at the NWFSC. Update assessments are reviewed by the Groundfish Subcommittee of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (GFSC) and are not subject to STAR panel review. The GFSC will complete its review of each update assessment before the June 2025 Council meeting.

Update assessments have an initial data deadline for near-complete landings, effort, and other time series of demographic data through 2023 to be provided to STATs by December 1, 2024.

Science Center Staff Leading the UW Course:

Dr. Owen Hamel (owen.hamel@noaa.gov)

Dr. Kiva Oken (kiva.oken@noaa.gov)

Dr. Ian Taylor (ian.taylor@noaa.gov)

Dr. Vlada Gertseva (vladlena.gertseva@noaa.gov)

Final Data Deadline: March 19, 2025

Council Meeting Agenda Item: June 12–18, 2025 (SSC GFSC review June 11, 2025)

As-Needed Additional Assessment Review Meeting

If, during the review, either a benchmark or update assessment is determined to need additional analysis, that work will be reviewed at a subsequent additional review meeting, often referred to as the “mop-up review.” At this review meeting, the GFSC and an independent scientific reviewer from the Center of Independent Experts will review the additional analysis and determine whether the issues identified have been adequately addressed. Additionally, if any species assessed is

determined to need a new or updated rebuilding analysis, it is reviewed during this meeting. All material presented at the review meeting will be discussed at the November 2025 Council meeting.

If needed, the additional assessment review meeting for the 2025 assessment cycle will be held from September 29th to October 3rd, 2025.

Catch-Only Projections

The Council selected catch-only projections for petrale sole, canary rockfish, shortspine thornyhead, darkblotched rockfish, bocaccio, and black rockfish off Oregon. Catch-only projections update recent fishery catch data in previously approved stock assessment models to revise Overfishing Limit (OFL), Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC), and Annual Catch Limit (ACL) values. The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to the PFMC is tasked with providing the recent year's catch (e.g., years since the last assessment or catch-only projection) and catch assumptions for 2025-26. No other data are updated or changed within the model for catch-only projections. The Groundfish Stock Assessment [Terms of Reference](#) provide further information about how catch-only projections are conducted and reviewed.

The GFSSC will review the results of the catch-only projections before the September 2025 Council meeting, and they are anticipated to be available in the September 2025 Briefing Book.

Catch Data Deadline: June 24, 2025

Council Meeting Agenda Item: September 18–24, 2025