

RESEARCH AND DATA NEEDS

According to the [Magnuson-Stevens Act](#), the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is required to review research and data needs and provide a list of the Council's priorities to support the management of U.S. west coast fisheries. This list is important for the Council's partner agencies (e.g. Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers, state fish and wildlife agencies, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and other public/private/academic entities) that may be able to help fill research and data gaps.

In recent years the Council's list of research and data needs has become extensive. The [Council's research and data needs database](#) includes over 350 research priorities that were identified in the last review cycle. This extensive list incorporates far more research topics than can be addressed with available resources. Recent discussions with leadership of various partner agencies indicated a strong desire for the Council to prioritize, organize, and streamline the Council's research and data needs list. It is for this reason that Council staff proposed a slight departure from the usual research and data needs identification process that is outlined in the [Council Operating Procedure 12](#) for this review cycle ([Agenda Item D.3 Attachment 2, November 2024](#)).

Per the review cycle framework, in November 2024 the Council adopted science and management challenges to guide the next steps (descriptions provided in [Agenda Item D.3 Supplemental SSC Report 1, November 2024](#)).

Science and Management Challenges:

- Data collection
- Stock assessment methodologies
- Life history and stock structure
- Evaluating fishery impacts
- Ecosystem dynamics
- Harvest policy
- Economic and social science
- Habitat science and spatial management

The term "challenge" can be thought of as a high-level research need that stretches across more than one fishery management plan (FMP) and for which multiple research topics or data gaps can be identified. These high-level challenges are an initial step to communicate prioritization of areas where research is needed to advance Council objectives.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) then conducted an exercise to identify and compile preliminary research and data need recommendations which could be pursued for potential solutions under each of these challenges (Agenda Item C.2 Scientific and Statistical Committee Report 1). This included additional outreach with Council advisory bodies where possible. The report format provides a concise and streamlined set of recommended research and data needs.

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to adopt a list of preliminary research and data needs selected to best address their science and management challenges. The Council will consider the

SSC preliminary recommendations, reports from advisory bodies regarding their perspectives, and any public comment.

At the June 2025 Council meeting, the preliminary list could be refined, if needed, and a final research and data needs list is scheduled to be adopted. The vision when the Council's research and data needs process has concluded, is a relatively small set of science and management challenges and a list of specific research and data needs within each, which could be pursued as potential solutions to those challenges.

Council Action:

1. Adopt Preliminary Research and Data Needs.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item C.2, Scientific and Statistical Committee Report 1: Research and Data Needs - Preliminary Priorities.
2. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- C.2 Research and Data Needs Marlene A. Bellman
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Preliminary Research and Data Needs

PFMC
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