

PFMC INFORMATIONAL REPORT ON NMFS SCIENCE CENTERS' 2025 WEST COAST
GROUNDFISH STOCK ASSESSMENTS AND SURVEYS

NOAA Fisheries is committed to our mission and we are currently evaluating how best to allocate resources and execute our vital fish stock assessments and the ocean surveys to best support the American people.

1. Assessments Update

NMFS Science Centers' groundfish stock assessments are proceeding. The [NMFS Science Center report from March 2025](#) (H.1.b Supplemental NMFS Science Center Report) highlights data deadlines, review meeting dates, and points of contact for each planned assessment for this cycle. We appreciate the engagement with the third and final pre-assessment data workshops for sablefish and rougheye/blackspotted rockfish that occurred in March. NWFSC ageing work is on track to be completed by upcoming data deadlines. Assessment modeling and documentation and meeting preparations are underway for Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel meetings and Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and SSC Groundfish Subcommittee review meetings scheduled for May through September. If NMFS stock assessment staff or NMFS reviewers are not approved to travel to participate in assessment review panels or present assessments in person to Council and Advisory bodies, we anticipate some challenges in shifting to virtual-only participation for those meetings due to the technical nature of the material and the interactive discussions required among stock assessment scientists and reviewers. However, NMFS Science Centers plan to complete all in-progress groundfish assessment work and participate in review meetings as scheduled even if travel remains limited.

2. Surveys Update

NMFS Science Centers' 2025 groundfish surveys planning continues with some challenges. The [NMFS Science Center report from March 2025](#) (H.1.b Supplemental NMFS Science Center Report) provides details on planned groundfish-related surveys.

- The 2025 West Coast Groundfish Bottom Trawl Survey (GFBTS) is currently seeking to staff the survey to the extent possible and seeking approval for essential procurements and contracts.
- The 2025 Integrated West Coast Pelagics Survey (IWCPs) currently has 80 days-at-sea allocated to it. We are seeking to staff the survey to the extent possible using available agency staff and seeking approval for essential procurements and contracts.
- The 2025 Southern California Rockfish Hook and Line Survey is currently fully staffed and planning continues.
- The 2025 Rockfish Recruitment and Ecosystem Assessment Survey currently has 45 days-at-sea allocated and is currently fully staffed. Planning continues pending travel approvals.

Given the procurement challenges and current understaffing, unknown budget allocations, and the potential for reductions in federal or contract staff, we are developing scenarios that could delay surveys and/or reduce survey effort to account for these uncertainties. We will provide an update on surveys and assessments during the Groundfish NMFS Report at the June 2025 PFMC meeting. For more information, contact Michael.Milstein@noaa.gov.