

2027-28 HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES PLANNING

Under this agenda item, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduled to adopt a detailed plan and schedule for the 2027-28 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures process (Agenda Item E.8, Attachment 1). This plan outlines the key decision points necessary to ensure implementation of these specifications and management measures by January 1, 2027. Three Council Operating Procedures (COPs) guide the schedule for developing 2027-28 harvest specifications and management measures; [COP 9](#) Management and Activity Cycles, [COP 19](#) Protocol for Exempted Fishing Permits for Groundfish Fisheries, and [COP 25](#) Groundfish Methodology Reviews. The Council should consider the overarching processes outlined in these COPs and anticipated workload when adopting the detailed schedule provided in Attachment 1. Council staff will also provide a brief presentation on this process.

Key Decision Deadlines

Stock Assessments

The Council is scheduled to adopt two update assessments in June 2025 (Agenda Item E.4), and five full assessments and six catch-only projections in September 2025. These include the stock categories and sigmas endorsed by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) for update and full assessments. In the event an assessment is recommended for further review (i.e. “mop-up” panel), final assessments must be adopted at the November 2025 Council meeting. An extended time series of catch-only projections may be requested for some species if default harvest specifications are no longer available in existing assessments or projections. Additionally, per the [Terms of Reference](#) for stock assessment review (2025-26), the deadline for proposed revisions to default or GMT catch assumptions used in projections is two weeks prior to the September Council meeting.

Harvest Specifications

Adopting the 2027–28 groundfish harvest specifications is a central component of the biennial process. Critical decisions must be made at the September and November 2025 Council meetings, as specified in Attachment 1. In brief, the Council must make a series of iterative decisions that will identify stocks considered under default harvest control rules (HCR), stocks considered under a range of alternative HCRs, as well as annual catch limits (ACLs) by November 2025 in order for routine management measures (e.g., trip limits, bag limits, allocations, etc.), to be developed over the 2025-26 winter period. The biennial harvest specifications will address stocks newly defined under Amendment 35, if finalized. If further stock definitions are complete in time as part of Phase 2 stock definitions, those may be addressed in the harvest specifications, if appropriate. Additionally, as an informational piece, Council staff have developed a more rigorous quality assurance/quality control process for reviewing harvest specifications than has been used in the past.

ACL Set-Asides

The Council adopts set-asides from the ACL to accommodate anticipated mortality in the Tribal, research, exempted fishery permit (EFP), and non-groundfish fisheries. The Treaty Tribes will

make formal requests to the Council for specific amounts at the November 2025 Council meeting. Research and non-groundfish fishery set-asides are calculated by the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) based on past mortality, and the EFP applicants must request set-asides to cover the anticipated mortality of groundfish in their proposal at the November 2025 meeting.

Exempted Fishing Permits

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issues EFPs. The Council is expected to provide guidance to NMFS regarding the merits and applicability of EFP applications to groundfish management at the November 2025 Council meeting and provides final recommendations to NMFS at the June 2026 meeting.

Management Measures

The Council will consider adjusting routine management measures (e.g., trip limits, seasons, etc.) that allow the fishery to achieve, but not exceed, annual catch limits. Adjustments, in part, are based on new fishery information (e.g., stock assessments, fishery performance, etc.). The Council is scheduled to accomplish specific tasks regarding management measures over the course of the next five Council meetings as outlined in Attachment 1. Further, to assist the Council in navigating this process, staff have drafted Attachment 2 as a reference document, which presents relevant information regarding harvest specification and management measure terminology. Additionally, the Council has the opportunity to front-load the management measure process by directing the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to scope modifications to routine management measures without competing biennial cycle priorities. The Council has indicated creating individual species trip limit to the Rockfish Complexes North of 40°10' N. lat. and biennial allocation modifications to canary rockfish as items of interest in the past.

New Management Measures

New management measures are those that have not been previously analyzed or implemented. The Council follows a defined process to prioritize the analysis of new measures (see [description](#)), after which staff resources are allocated by the Council and NMFS. In March, the Council prioritized measures aimed at increasing flexibility and adaptive management in the groundfish fisheries commercial sale of recreational fish waste, and moving the “trawl exempted fishing permit” into regulation (See [March 2025](#) Decision Document). The Council further considered aspects of increased flexibility and adaptive management in the groundfish fishery in April 2025 (See [April 2025](#) Decision Document), which will be discussed under Agenda Item E.7 at this meeting. If the Council is contemplating adding new management measures to the 2027-28 biennial process, it carefully consider should management how they could impact analytical resources and implementation deadlines. Furthermore, the inclusion of new measures within the biennial package may be affected by Executive Order 14192.

Council Tasks:

- 1. Adopt a schedule and plan for the 2027-28 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures process (Attachment 1).**
- 2. Discuss and provide initial guidance regarding on any biennial management issues (e.g., biennial allocations, trip limits, etc.) that would inform the Council’s decision-making process when it adopts management measure alternatives for analysis in November 2025.**

3. **Consider tasking the GMT with over summer work to scope routine management issues including, but not limited to, biennial allocations and other recommendations brought forward by the GMT and GAP.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.8, Attachment 1: Proposed Schedule for Developing the 2027-28 Groundfish Harvest Specifications and Management Measures.
2. Agenda Item E.8, Attachment 2: Groundfish Harvest Specifications and Accountability Measures: Definitions and Use in Management.
3. If Received, Public Comments are Electronic Only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- E.8 2027-28 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures Planning Todd Phillips/Marlene A. Bellman
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Initial Scoping, Adopt a Process and Schedule for Developing Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for 2027-28 Groundfish Fisheries

PFGC
05/21/25