



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Brad Pettinger, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 23, 2025

TO: Scientific and Statistical Committee

FROM: Marlene A. Bellman, Staff Officer

SUBJECT: June 2025 Council Meeting Materials

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council, PFMC) June 2025 meeting will be held in person from June 13 through June 16, 2025, in Rohnert Park, CA. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will meet **in person** on Thursday, June 12 and Friday, June 13, starting at 8 a.m. each day. In addition, the SSC Groundfish Subcommittee will meet **in person** on Wednesday, June 11, starting at 10 a.m. Your meeting materials are enclosed.

Instructions for how to connect to the Council and Advisory Body meetings will be posted on the Council's [June 2025 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 comments. 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 broadcast and 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 Thursday, June 12, 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 June 2025 meeting agenda and the April 2025 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.

A public comment period will be conducted at the beginning of each day to allow for public comments to be considered prior to the SSC taking up an agenda item.

C. Administrative Matters

C.5 Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

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. The SSC should review materials for Megan Mackey, for the NMFS West Coast Region seat on the Groundfish Management Team (GMT), who would be in the rotation of Groundfish Branch staff members. Nominations for current SSC at-large vacancies will be reviewed for Dr. Selina Heppell, Dr. Geoffrey Shester, Dr. Alberto Rovellini, and Dr. Francisco Werner. Any SSC recommendations regarding membership appointments will be offered during the Council Closed Executive Session on Friday, June 13.

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, June 16.

Future workload planning may include discussion with SSC subcommittees to plan for Council tasks noted in future Council meeting quick reference agendas (i.e. September and November 2025) or Year-at-a-Glance topics. The SSC statement regularly provides a table with important meeting dates and timelines. The SSC Groundfish Subcommittee should update any plans with the full SSC for the current 2025 stock assessment cycle.

E. Groundfish Management

E.4 Adopt Stock Assessments

Under this agenda item, the SSC will review and consider endorsing two update stock assessments for widow rockfish and yelloweye rockfish, as best scientific information available for management decision-making. The SSC Groundfish Subcommittee will provide recommendations from their review on June 11, 2025, to the full SSC.

The Council is scheduled to approve assessments and relevant analyses used to set groundfish harvest specifications for the upcoming biennial management period (2027-2028), at both the June and September 2025 Council meetings. In the event it is necessary to further review any assessments, new projections, or rebuilding analyses, the SSC's Groundfish Subcommittee is scheduled to convene a meeting (commonly referred to as "mop-up") during the last week of September 2025.

The SSC will provide recommendations under Agenda Item E.4 on Saturday, June 14.

E.6 Phase 2 Stock Definitions

Phase 2 stock definitions were initiated by the Council in September 2024, with direction to develop a range of alternatives (ROA). The ROA was adopted at the March 2025 meeting, along

with the Council's preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) for 47 groundfish species, as well as requesting to analyze 39 groundfish species under the 10 factors at [§600.305\(c\)](#).

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to 1.) adopt final preferred alternatives (FPAs) for the 47 species with PPAs from March 2025, 2.) consider those species from the 10-factor analysis to adopt a PPA (including stock definitions, where appropriate), and 3.) provide guidance on next steps (e.g., ecosystem component species, etc.).

There are two key aspects the SSC should review and consider under this action. The first task relates to defining stocks of four of the 47 groundfish species considered in the action outlined in Attachment 1 and four of the 40 species considered in the action outlined in Supplemental Attachment 2. As detailed in Attachment 1, if the Council adopts a coastwide stock definition for blackgill rockfish, bocaccio, cowcod, and/or greenspotted rockfish, this definition will require combining two independent sub-area assessments with different categories (e.g. Category 3 and 2 or Category 3 and 1) for each species in order to provide harvest specifications at the same scale as the definition. Similarly, as detailed in Supplemental Attachment 2, if the Council adopts blue rockfish, cabezon, gopher rockfish, and/or kelp greenling under Alternative 1 and under a coastwide stock option, combining two independent sub-area assessments with different categories will be required. The SSC should consider if the approach used to combine different category assessments under Amendment 31 (Agenda Item H.3.a, [Supplemental SSC Report 1](#) and [NWFSC Report 1](#), June 2023) is applicable to these species as well as its applicability in future actions.

The second task relates to SSC advice to the Council in [Agenda Item H.6.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1 March 2025](#) that deviated from past recommendations regarding state-by-state stock definitions. In [Agenda Item H.6.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1 March 2025](#), the SSC recommended against state-specific inclusion or exclusion of species in the FMP due to considerable uncertainty in the information used to define stock structure. However, the SSC also recommended nearshore rockfish in general be managed at a finer-scale than coastwide, even in the absence of species-specific information on stock structure in multiple instances (e.g., [Agenda Item H.5.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1, November 2022](#)). The SSC should clarify their recommendation, particularly for nearshore rockfish species under consideration for Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 as PPA in Supplemental Attachment 2 (e.g., black rockfish, copper rockfish, etc.) at this meeting.

The SSC should provide any recommendations or comments under Agenda Item E.6 to the Council on Saturday, June 14.

E.8 2027-2028 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures - Planning

Under this agenda item, the Council is scheduled to adopt a detailed process and schedule governing the development of harvest specifications and related management measures for 2027-2028 groundfish fisheries (Agenda Item E.8, Attachment 1). Key decision deadlines in this cycle are outlined for stock assessment review, adopting groundfish stock assessments, harvest specifications, exempted fishing permits, and management measures.

The SSC should consider anticipated timing, workload, and alignment with various Terms of Reference (e.g. stock assessment review, rebuilding analysis, etc.) and provide any clarifications or recommendations under Agenda Item E.8 on Sunday, June 15.

D. Cross Fishery Management Plan

D.3 Research and Data Needs

In November 2024, the Council began a review process for updating and communicating research and data needs to support the management of U.S. west coast fisheries. 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](#)). These high-level challenges were an initial step to communicate prioritization of areas where research is needed to advance Council objectives.

The 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, April 2025](#)). At the April 2025 meeting, the Council adopted their preliminary research and data needs, which included the Scientific and Statistical Committee recommendations (SSC Report 1) and the edits and recommendations from other Advisory Body reports. These were used to generate a document representing the Council's preliminary research and data need priorities for review and consideration for final action (Agenda Item D.3, Attachment 1).

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to adopt a final list of research and data needs. The SSC should provide any further comments related to the Council's preliminary research and data need priorities and/or final SSC recommendations, under Agenda Item D.3 scheduled for Monday, June 16.

Informational Council Agenda Items

The SSC may find several other Council Agenda Items of interest, or which may contain informational materials relevant to the SSC including:

D.1 - Presidential Executive Orders and Administration Updates and D.2 - Council Response to Executive Orders and Administration Updates

Under Agenda Item D.1, the Council will receive a presentation from NMFS on administrative updates, with a focus on Executive Order (EO) 14276: *Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness*. This is the opportunity for the Council and Advisory Bodies to gain clarity on the task for the Regional Fishery Management Councils necessary to generate the Council's response. Under Agenda Item D.2, the Council is expected to identify actions that align with the objectives of EO 14276—including stabilizing seafood markets, improving access, enhancing economic profitability, and preventing fishery closures. The Council will also provide guidance on key factors to consider when setting priorities. Input from Advisory Bodies on potential actions and prioritization criteria is encouraged under Agenda Item D.2.

E.1 – National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Report

The NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) is expected to discuss current groundfish-related science and research activities with the Council.

E.7 – Harvest Specifications Flexibility – Scoping

In March 2025, the Council adopted several priorities related to harvest specification flexibility (Items D1-D4 from Agenda Item H.8.a, Supplemental GAP Report 1) and provided further guidance in April on the Adaptive Management special project. Agenda Item E.7 materials provide a preliminary assessment of the groundfish fishery to support identification of the problem within the current management framework and GAP priorities from March 2025, in addition to other ideas that may provide additional flexibility to the groundfish fishery. Topics within touch on aspects of interest to the SSC (i.e., scientific uncertainty, etc.).

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

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Council Enclosures include:

Agenda Item A – Council Meeting Agenda
Agenda Item C – Administrative Matters
Agenda Item D – Cross Fishery Management Plan
Agenda Item E – Groundfish Management

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

1. June 2025 SSC Agenda
2. Draft April 2025 SSC Minutes
3. Closed Session
4. Informational Reports
5. General Information and Council Roster

PFMC
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