

## PHASE 2 STOCK DEFINITIONS – FINAL ACTION

The Phase 2 stock definitions process was initiated at the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) September 2024 meeting when it adopted the Phase 2 process ([Agenda Item I.8, Attachment 1, September 2024](#)) and plan ([Agenda Item I.6, Attachment 2, September 2024](#)). This process was designed to investigate the 86 managed groundfish species and determine if they are in need of conservation and management in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ; i.e., Federal Waters) based on the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA).

The Range of Alternatives ([Agenda Item H.6, Revised Supplemental Attachment 1, March 2025](#)) for this action was adopted at the March 2025 Council meeting and specified three action alternatives: 1) Alternative 1 would identify species (or stocks<sup>1</sup>) as in need of conservation and management in the EEZ, would require the Council to adopt a stock definition, and these species (or stocks) would remain in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) as actively managed species; 2) Alternative 2 identifies species (or stocks) as not in need of conservation and management in the EEZ and would remove these species (or stocks) from the FMP; and 3) Alternative 3 also identifies the species as not in need of conservation and management in the EEZ, but would specify a species as an ecosystem component (EC), which requires the species to remain in the FMP. The main difference between Alternatives 2 and 3 is, in short, that the Council could develop a limited suite of management measures for an EC species; whereas, species adopted under Alternative 2 would be completely removed from Federal management. In June 2025, the Council considered all 86 managed groundfish under the three alternatives. It adopted 44 species/portions of species under Alternative 1 and adopted stock definitions for the 25 undefined species under Alternative 1 as their final preferred alternative (FPA).

Under this agenda item, the Council is scheduled to adopt an FPA for the remaining species (or stocks). In order to inform their decision-making, the Council recommended a full [§600.305\(c\)](#) 10-Factor analysis at the March 2025 meeting for 39 species. The 10 Factors outlined at [§600.305\(c\)](#) consider environmental, fishery, social, economic, and governance aspects related to each species and can be used to guide the Council when considering if a species should be identified as a species in need of conservation and management (and remain as a Federally managed species) or removed from the FMP. A draft 10-Factor analysis ([Agenda Item H.6, Supplemental Attachment 2, June 2025](#)) for these species was provided to the Council in June. The Council was able to adopt their preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) for 39 species (or stocks) at that meeting. In June, the Council directed staff to analyze three additional species (harlequin, stripetail, and rosethorn rockfishes) under the full 10 Factors for consideration at the September meeting. Thus, the total number of species analyzed via the 10 Factors increased from 39 to 42.

At their June 2025 meeting, the Council adopted Alternative 1 for copper rockfish (just the Oregon/Washington stock), black rockfish (just the individual Oregon and Washington stocks), quillback rockfish (all three state-specific stocks), blue rockfish and deacon rockfish off Oregon

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<sup>1</sup> Note, 'stocks' in this context applies to both those already defined (under Amendment 31), as well as the potential range of stock definition Options for each species adopted by the Council in March 2025 ([Agenda Item H.6 Supplemental Revised Attachment 1, March 2025](#)).

and Washington, cabezon off Washington, and kelp greenling off Washington as PPA. The PPA stock definition for blue and deacon rockfishes was Option 2, two stocks, an Oregon stock and Washington stock. The PPA for cabezon and kelp greenling was Option 1, 1 stock, a Washington-only stock.

The stocks of black, blue, deacon, and copper rockfishes off California were adopted under Alternative 2 as PPA. In total, the Council adopted Alternative 2 for 26 species, or stocks, as PPA. The Council adopted Alternative 3 for 12 species as PPA.

Council staff completed a draft Environmental Assessment (Attachment 1) and updated the 10-Factor analysis and stock definition analysis (Appendix to Attachment 1) to support the Council's decision making under this Agenda Item. This analysis includes recommended updates to the draft 10-Factor analysis that was originally presented in June 2025 based on the discussions and recommendations of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Council in June as well as refinements and corrections by analysts. Informed by the final version of the 10-Factor analysis (Appendix to Attachment 1), the Council should determine which species (or stocks) are in need of conservation and management in the EEZ and adopt an FPA as appropriate.

Additionally, the FPA will require the FMP to be updated to reflect the stock definitions of these species. A draft of the FMP with red-lined revision is provided as Attachment 2.

### **Council Tasks:**

- 1. Adopt FPA for the 42 remaining species based on the analysis in Attachment 1, as appropriate.**
- 2. Adopt the FPA stock definition Options for the species adopted under Alternative 1, if not previously defined, as appropriate.**
- 3. Adopt revised language to the FMP in conjunction with Attachment 1 decision-making, as appropriate.**
- 4. Provide guidance on next steps, as appropriate.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item G.2, Attachment 1: Draft Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review/Regulatory Flexibility Analysis/MSA Analysis for Proposed Amendment to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan and Appendix, including the §600.305(c) 10 Factor Analysis of 42 Groundfish Species and a Range of Alternatives to Support Council Decision-Making for a Final Preferred Alternative (*Electronic Only*).
2. Agenda Item G.2, Attachment 2: Draft Language for Amendment [TBD] to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan.
3. Agenda Item G.2, Attachment 3. Phase 2 Stock Definitions: Summary of Decision Points for September 2025.
4. Agenda Item G.2.a, ODFW Report 1.

### **Agenda Order:**

G.2 Phase 2 Stock Definitions-Final Action

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- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
- b. Public Comment
- c. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Preferred Alternative including a Fishery Management Plan Amendment

PFMC  
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