

EMERGENCY ACTION: REVISED 2026 SPECIFICATIONS AND MEASURES FOR
CANARY ROCKFISH, SHORTSPINE THORNYHEAD, AND PETRALE SOLE - FINAL
ACTION

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) took action on September 21, 2025 to add this agenda item to its September 2025 meeting agenda to consider a change in the 2026 harvest specifications for canary rockfish, shortspine thornyhead, and petrale sole. The Council added this item in response to requests from the public under Agenda Item B.1, Comments on Non-Agenda Item.

In March and April of 2025, industry began raising concerns about the impacts of reduced harvest specifications for these species resulting in the inability to prosecute fisheries and lack of movement in the quota market for the shorebased individual fishing quota fishery. Industry representatives reported that on-the-water observations were not matching the results of the 2023 stock assessments, which were used to set 2025-26 harvest specifications and management measures. In June 2025, industry provided additional comments under the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Report on the impacts of the assessments, which are beyond what was expected during the development of the 2025-26 harvest specifications. At that same meeting, the Groundfish Advisory Panel and Groundfish Management Team, provided an update on the conditions to date in the fishery under inseason. At that time, the Council requested the Northwest Fisheries Science Center, in conjunction with the NMFS West Coast Region, to add 2026 catch projections to the 2027-28 catch-only assessment updates currently being completed for petrale sole, shortspine thornyhead, and canary rockfish. The Council recommended that, if possible, Council staff and NMFS develop ad hoc acceptable biological catch control rules for Scientific and Statistical Committee and Council consideration at the September 2025 meeting. The results of these projections can be found in Agenda Item G.8, Supplemental Attachment 2-4.

Under Agenda Item B.1, industry requested that the Council consider changing the 2026 harvest specifications for these three species to provide additional relief and stability from the declines in the harvest specifications. In response, the Council will consider emergency rulemaking to amend the 2026 groundfish regulations to temporarily increase the harvest specifications and allocations for canary rockfish, petrale sole, and shortspine thornyhead.

NMFS has published policy guidelines for the preparation and approval of emergency regulations under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Agenda Item G.8, Supplemental Attachment 1). The criteria in the policy guidelines specify a fishery emergency as a situation that:

1. Results from recent, unforeseen events or recently discovered circumstances;
2. Presents serious conservation or management problems in the fishery; and
3. Can be addressed through emergency regulations for which the immediate benefits outweigh the value of advance notice, public comment, and deliberative consideration of the impacts on participants to the same extent as would be expected under the normal rulemaking process.

The Council will consider the situation and determine if emergency action is warranted based, in part, on the NMFS policy guidelines regarding the justification and criteria for such actions.

Council Tasks:

1. **Consider whether the current situation meets the emergency rule criteria.**
2. **Consider revised 2026 harvest specifications for canary rockfish, shortspine thornyhead, and petrale sole based on the catch only update assessments.**
3. **Confirm revised 2026 management measures, including allocations.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item G.8, Supplemental Attachment 1 - FR 97-22094: Policy Guidelines for the Use of Emergency Rules.
2. Agenda Item G.8, Supplemental Attachment 2- Catch Only Projection for Shortspine Thornyhead
3. Agenda Item G.8, Supplemental Attachment 3 – Catch Only Projection for Petrale Sole
4. Agenda Item G.8, Supplemental Attachment 4- Catch Only Projection for Canary Rockfish
5. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- G.8 Emergency Action: Revised 2026 Specifications and Measures for Canary Rockfish, Shortspine Thornyhead, and Petrale sole - Final Action Jessi Waller
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Revised 2026 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for Canary rockfish, Shortspine Thornyhead, and Petrale Sole, as Appropriate

PFMC
09/21/25