



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Pete Hassemer, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 13, 2026

TO: Salmon Advisory Subpanel, Salmon Technical Team, and Interested Persons

FROM: Angela Forristall, Staff Officer

SUBJECT: March 2026 Council Meeting

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and its Advisory Bodies will meet in person from [March 3 through March 9](#), 2026 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Sacramento, 2001 Point West Way, Sacramento, CA 95815. The Salmon Technical Team (STT) and the Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) will also meet in person. The STT will meet in the California 3 room at 8 a.m. daily from March 4 through March 9. The SAS will meet in person in the California 2 room at 8 a.m. daily from March 4 through March 8. All meetings are open to the public and at least one opportunity for public comment has been scheduled for each meeting day.

The Council will consider several important salmon agenda items and related matters of interest at this meeting. The briefing book materials identified at the end of this memorandum provide detailed information for these items on the Council's March 2026 agenda. The following agenda items summarized below may be of particular interest to the STT and SAS. Please note that the Council will continue to encourage participants to obtain briefing book materials via our website. Printed materials may not be available at the meeting.

The Council will discuss salmon agenda items each day of the March meeting. Other topics of interest on the Council agenda include Pacific Halibut, Ecosystem Management, Administrative Matters, and Groundfish Management.

SALMON MANAGEMENT

The Salmon agenda item (Agenda Item C) will begin on Thursday, March 5 (Day 1) with two topics for discussion. The first is a briefing from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to the Council on salmon-related topics and a report from the Science Centers on current research (Agenda Item C.1). Next, the Council will be briefed by the STT on the *Review of 2025 Ocean Salmon Fisheries* and *Preseason Report I: Stock Abundance Analysis for 2026 Ocean Salmon Fisheries* (Agenda Item C.2). The *Review of 2025 Ocean Salmon Fisheries* is scheduled to be posted on the Council website by February 18. The *Preseason Report I* is being compiled by the STT the week of February 17 and should be posted to the Council website by February 27.

The main salmon issue before the Council will be developing alternatives for modeling 2026 ocean fisheries. On Friday, March 6, the SAS will present the Council with recommendations for three alternatives (Agenda Item C.3). SAS representatives should review the *Guidance for Alternative Development and Assessment* (Agenda Item C.3, Attachment 1) and clearly identify their fishery priorities and engage in negotiations as necessary to resolve conflicts among fishery sectors and areas to arrive at cohesive and coordinated options. This agenda item is on the Council floor the morning of Friday, March 6, so best practice would be to finalize the SAS report no later than mid-day Thursday, March 5 so that it can be processed and posted by the Secretariat prior to close of business.

After the SAS provides the preliminary 2026 management alternatives, the STT will then collate and analyze the alternatives as directed by the Council. The STT results will first be presented under Agenda Item C.4 on Saturday, March 7. Working throughout the week the SAS, STT, and Council will refine the alternatives (Agenda Items C.5), which are scheduled to be adopted for public review on Monday, March 9 (Agenda Item C.6). The Council will adopt the hearing officers for the three public salmon hearings scheduled for late March under Agenda Item C.7.

PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGEMENT

The Pacific halibut agenda item (Agenda Item H.1) is scheduled for Sunday, March 8. Under Agenda Item H.1, the Council will consider preliminary incidental halibut retention limits for the salmon troll and final incidental retention limits for the fixed gear sablefish fisheries. The SAS should be prepared to offer recommendations regarding alternatives for halibut retention in salmon troll fisheries that begin May 16, 2026, and for the 2027 season occurring prior to May 16, 2027. In addition, the SAS should be prepared to offer recommendations for any inseason adjustments to the halibut retention regulations occurring prior to May 16, 2026. The Council will adopt for public review the incidental halibut retention alternatives in the commercial salmon fisheries and include them in the 2026 management alternatives package (Agenda Item C.6).

Information related to the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) annual meeting that occurred in January 2026 will be available under the Council's Informational Reports.

ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

E.1 California Current Ecosystem Annual Status Report and 2026 Science Review Topics

The Council will receive a briefing from the California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (CCIEA) Team regarding the most recent California Current Ecosystem Status Report and appendices on Thursday, March 5. This annual report highlights trends in physical, biological, and socioeconomic components of the ecosystem – taking into account the effects of fisheries and other human activities. An [all advisory body briefing](#) will be held on Wednesday, February 25 during the Ad Hoc Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) meeting. Interested parties can also watch the recording afterward, which will be posted on the EWG [meeting webpage](#). The recording of the presentation provided to the Council will also be available on the [Council's YouTube channel](#).

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT

D.1 National Marine Fisheries Service Report

On Thursday, March 5, as a part of the Groundfish NMFS Report agenda item, the Council will receive an update on the year-round all depth non-whiting midwater trawl exempted fishing permit

(EFP) (Agenda Item D.1.c, NMFS Report 1). In December 2017, NMFS issued a [biological opinion](#) for the groundfish fishery requiring that prior to allowing the use of midwater trawl gear outside of the whiting season, EFPs be used to collect information on potential impacts to threatened and endangered salmon species. That information will be provided as a supplemental report under this agenda item.

Mr. Todd Phillips will meet with the SAS on Wednesday, March 4 to discuss this topic and potential next steps for the activities currently authorized under the EFP, as well to provide an update on the Pacific Whiting Conservation Cooperative EFP application for at-sea processing of Pacific whiting between 40° 10' North latitude and 42° North latitude discussed at the November 2025 Council meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

I.2 Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

Under this agenda item, draft Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Sacramento River fall Chinook S_{MSY} peer review are provided in Attachment 4. The purpose of providing the TORs is to:

- Provide context regarding responsibilities and potential workload demands as the Council contemplates the type of expertise needed to serve on the review panel.
- Allows for sufficient time to identify and solicit qualified reviewers before the Council makes appointments in April 2026, and
- To provide the SSC extended review time before the Council agenda item specific to the TORs scheduled for April 2026.

Under Agenda Item I.2, the Council is expected to develop a greater understanding of the peer review proposal and may offer input on potential candidates. Between the March and April Council meetings, Council staff will assess candidate interest and availability to participate in the review, as appropriate. The Council will not be receiving feedback on the draft TOR at this meeting, and instead will do so in April.

The SAS and STT are not anticipated to provide comment at this time but may review the attachment for awareness.

I.3 Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning

The Council will discuss Future Council Meeting Agenda & Workload Planning (Agenda Item I.3) on Monday, March 9. The SAS and STT may submit reports relating to future meeting schedules and workload planning, as appropriate.

Please take the necessary time needed to review and familiarize yourself with briefing materials thoroughly before the meeting. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your commitment to the Council's salmon management process.

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Enclosures:

1. Agenda Item A – Council Agenda and Executive Director’s Report
2. Agenda Item C – Salmon Management
3. Agenda Item E – Ecosystem Management
4. Agenda Item H – Pacific Halibut Management
5. Agenda Item I – Council Administrative Matters
6. Informational Reports
7. Proposed SAS Agenda
8. Proposed STT Agenda
9. Proposed SSC Agenda
10. General Information and Council Roster

PFMC
02/11/26