



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 26, 2026

TO: Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, Groundfish Management Team, and Groundfish Interested Persons

FROM: Jessi Waller, Groundfish Staff Officer

SUBJECT: June 2026 Council Meeting Materials

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet June 12-15, 2026 in Spokane, Washington, Oregon. The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) will convene meetings starting Wednesday, June 10, at 8 a.m. and will adjourn on Sunday, June 14, 2026. The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) will convene meetings starting Thursday, June 11, at 8 a.m. and will adjourn on Sunday, June 14, 2026. The GMT and GAP are scheduled to meet in Salon I and Salon II, respectively. All meetings are open to the public and at least one opportunity for public comment has been scheduled for each meeting day.

The briefing book materials attached to this memorandum provide detailed information for items on the Council's June 2026 agenda. The following agenda items may be of particular interest to the GMT, GAP, and other groundfish-interested stakeholders. The GMT and GAP should closely review these items and determine if a statement to the Council with recommendations is warranted.

Groundfish Management

E.1 National Marine Fisheries Service Report

Under this agenda item, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will update the GMT and GAP regarding recent regulatory developments relevant to groundfish fisheries and issues of interest. NMFS is expected to discuss current workload and rulemaking plans for 2026. The NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) is expected to provide information on their current groundfish-related science and research activities.

E.2 Inseason Management – Final Action

This agenda item will consider progress to date of the groundfish fisheries as well as routine inseason adjustments to the 2026 fisheries, as necessary, to achieve conservation objectives. This agenda item is an opportunity for the GAP and public to request inseason adjustments be analyzed by the GMT for Council consideration. As this agenda item is scheduled for Day 1 of the Council, requests should be brought to the GMT representatives before they start their meeting (i.e., June 10) to ensure adequate time for analysis.

E.3 Stock Assessment Process Review and Proposed Process Revisions

The Council relies on stock assessments to manage fisheries sustainably and collaborates with the NMFS to create an open and transparent stock assessment process. This is a complex process involving iterations between reviewers and scientists, stakeholder engagement, public comment, and has often involved deliberations by the Council (see Attachment 3 for a brief visual description of major points in the current stock assessment process). As indicated in past Council discussions, Advisory Body statements, public comments and more, the past few stock assessment cycles have come with increasing amounts of tension and deliberation regarding assessment results. Additionally, both West Coast Science Centers have alerted the Council to capacity constraints related to conducting assessments. In order to impartially identify ways to improve this process given these issues, an external reviewer, Lynker, was contracted to provide a review of the stock assessment process.

The report (see Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 1) from Lynker outlines five themes as places for which adjustments may improve the process and identifies 64 actions across these five themes. Council staff have reviewed these actions and provided a brief preliminary response to each action (see Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 2). The responses to the recommended actions outline the high-level steps that would need to occur in order to achieve the action as stated or how the action is already part of the process and where to find relevant material, as appropriate. As outlined in the Lynker report and subsequent Staff material, some of the recommendations can be handled over the short term (before the next stock assessment cycle and/or as part of Agenda Item E.7 Stock Assessment Terms of Reference at this meeting), while other recommendations are longer term considerations that would need further consideration and deliberation regarding resources, capacity, and design of Council process.

The GAP and the GMT should review the materials and provide comments for Council consideration on short- and long-term priorities. Depending on the workload associated with the recommendations, some of the items could be accomplished as part of the upcoming 2027 stock assessment cycle while others may be part of a larger discussion or process with the Council.

E.4 Final Stock Assessment Plan for 2027, Preliminary Priorities for 2029 and beyond

In March 2026, the Council requested that the Science Centers bring back additional data regarding age-reading capacity, data availability and related issues to consider benchmark assessments for the following:

For 2027, redbanded rockfish, lingcod, widow rockfish, and yellowtail rockfish south of 40° 10' N. lat. For 2029, black rockfish off Oregon and Washington and spiny dogfish. Attachment 1 provides the information requested as well as a preliminary ten-year plan for long-term assessment planning.

The GAP and the GMT should review the materials and provide recommendations on a final list of species by assessment type for 2027 and any comments on the proposed long-term plan, including preliminary 2029 priorities. The Council will take final action on the long-term plan in March 2027.

E.5 Moving Trawl Gear EFP into Regulations; Updating Declaration Requirements; Removing Duplicative Recreational Regulations

The Council is considering moving the long-standing exempted fishing permits (EFP) into regulation for Time/Area-Management Restrictions for Midwater Trawl Gear Targeting Non-Whiting and Removal of Selective Flatfish Trawl (SFFT) requirement between 40° 10' and 42° N. lat. Additionally, the Council is considering two additional actions to improve regulatory flexibility, changes to a set of at-sea declaration regulations and to allow the sale of recreational fish waste consistent with state regulations. At this meeting, the GMT and GAP should review Attachment 1 and recommend, as appropriate, for each item, a purpose and need, range of alternatives, and preliminary preferred alternative.

E.6. 2027-28 Harvest Specifications, Management Measures, and Exempted Fishing Permits – Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment Final Action

Under this action, the Council is scheduled to adopt multiple items to support the completion and implementation of the 2027-28 harvest specifications and management measures process. The Action Item Checklist provides a summary of the items under consideration (Attachment 1) and detailed in Attachment 2. Under this agenda item the Council has three overarching and interconnected tasks. First the Council should confirm FPA for all stocks and stock complexes adopted as interim FPA at the April 2026 meeting. Second, the Council will need to adopt their FPA for the widow rockfish harvest control rule and resulting harvest specifications (overfishing limits (OFL), allowable biological catches (ABC) and annual catch limit (ACL)). Third the Council will need to adopt a suite of management measures designed to attain but not exceed, harvest objectives. For widow rockfish, the Council moved three HCR options forward at the April Council meeting for additional analysis (Attachment 4). The Council must adopt a final HCR for widow rockfish for 2027-28 fisheries at this meeting or risk delaying implementation of the biennial groundfish regulatory package. The Council is also scheduled to adopt its preferred management measures for 2027-28 to achieve harvest objectives (e.g., trip limits adjustments, area management modifications, biennial allocations, etc). The Council will also consider recommendation of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) EFP to NMFS (Attachment 5) and adoption of an FMP amendment to remove yelloweye and California quillback rockfishes rebuilding plans from the document (Attachment 6). The GMT and GAP should review all supporting briefing book documents regarding these items and make recommendations as appropriate.

E.7 Stock Assessment Terms of Reference for 2027-2028

This is the second of three meetings (March, June, and November 2026) where the Council will consider recommending revisions regarding the Terms of Reference (TOR) for Groundfish Stock Assessments, Rebuilding Analyses, and Methodology Reviews for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species. Only the stock assessment review process TOR documents have recommended edits for this cycle. At this meeting, the Council and its advisory bodies will consider the preliminary changes to the TOR for stock assessment review process as put forth in a detailed outline (Attachment 1). The detailed outline in Attachment 1 was developed by Science Center staff, SSC Groundfish Subcommittee leadership, and Council staff based on the guidance provided by the Council at the March 2026 Council meeting, considered the comments from the SSC, GAP, and GMT during the scoping phase of this three meeting process, and some recommendations from

the Agenda Item E.3. report prepared by Lynker. At this meeting, the Council will provide its final action on its stock assessment recommendations for 2027 (under Agenda Item E.4. at this meeting). This will be followed by November 2026 final action for the TORs so that the documents are in place for the 2027 stock assessment cycle. The GAP and GMT should provide comments on the detailed outline for proposed changes to the stock assessment review TOR.

Cross-Fishery Management Plan Management

D.2 Marine Planning

The Ad Hoc Marine Planning Committee (MPC) met on April 30 and considered several topics, including the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's West Coast oil and gas leasing activities, deep-sea mineral mining on the high seas as well as within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, the Ocean Rainforest kelp farming project in Southern California, marine carbon dioxide removal efforts, state and tribal updates, a potential comment letter template for use in quick turnaround comment situations, and a brief update on the Pacific Fishing Effort Mapping Project. These issues are described in the MPC's report (Agenda Item D.2.a, MPC Report 1) as well as recommendations for Council consideration. The GAP and the GMT should consider the MPC report and provide any additional feedback, as appropriate.

D.3 Special Project 2: Socioeconomic Framework

This agenda item is the Council's first opportunity to receive an update on the progress of Special Project 2, *Decision Making for Stronger Fishing Communities* – one of three special projects for which the Council has received dedicated funding. The goal of Special Project 2 is to improve the Council's ability to measure and understand the impact of its decisions on fishing communities, primarily through the development of a decision support tool/management evaluation framework that outlines how Council actions affect community resilience. The framework and its underlying methodology are being developed by Northern Economics, Inc. (NEI), and the NEI project team will attend the June Council meeting to share the first phases of their work: a synthesis report and gap analysis (focusing on a summary of available research on fishing community resilience, vulnerability, and adaptive capacity, as well as identification of available indicators and tools), and a draft methodology for evaluating community resilience. Both products will be available in the June Advanced Briefing Book. The project team will seek feedback from Advisory Bodies (ABs) and the Council on the design of the draft methodology in particular, as well as on the selection of a case study to help evaluate how the eventual framework would function in practice. ABs may wish to review the Briefing Book materials and consider any recommendations regarding the draft methodology and the type or category of action that could serve as a case study. The Council will also host an [all-Advisory Body briefing](#) via webinar on this agenda item in advance of the Council meeting, on June 5, from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. (the briefing will be recorded and made available on the Council website).

D.4 Council and NMFS Workload- Capacity Alignment

Under Agenda Item D.4, the Council will hear a report summarizing ongoing efforts by Council and National Marine Fisheries Service leadership to evaluate workload and staffing capacity constraints across the fishery management process, including consideration of opportunities to improve alignment between available resources and Council priorities. The report is intended to

inform Council discussion regarding potential future process improvements and workload planning approaches. No Advisory Body comments are requested at this time. Following the discussion, the Council may identify topics for future Advisory Body review and comment, as appropriate.

Other Items

The following are additional pre-Council meeting briefings or informational items that may be of interest:

- The GMT and GAP will host a [joint webinar](#) on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. Pacific Time to discuss items on the Council's June agenda.
- The GMT will have a [webinar](#) work session on Friday, June 5, 2026 from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. to discuss items on the Council's June agenda.
- The Council will also host an [all-Advisory Body briefing](#) via webinar on Special Project 2 on June 5, from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

This mailing includes the enclosures listed below. Please review these briefing materials in advance to facilitate an efficient meeting week. Briefing materials for this meeting can be accessed from [the June 2026 Meeting briefing book webpage](#).

Thank you for your commitment to the Council process and management of Pacific groundfish fisheries.

JKW:kma

Enclosures include:

1. Agenda Item A.3 – Council Meeting Agenda
2. Agenda Item B.1 – Comments on Non-Agenda Items
3. Agenda Item C – Administrative Matters
4. Agenda Item D – Cross FMP Matters
5. Agenda Item E– Groundfish Management
6. Enforcement Consultants Agenda
7. GAP Agenda
8. GMT Agenda
9. SSC Agenda and Draft Minutes
10. Informational Reports
11. General and Hotel Information and Council Roster

PFMC

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