



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 26, 2026

TO: Scientific and Statistical Committee

FROM: Diana Perry, Staff Officer

SUBJECT: June 2026 Council Meeting Materials

The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council, PFMC) June 2026 meeting will be held in person from June 12, 2026 through June 15, 2026, in Spokane, WA. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will meet **in person** on Thursday, June 11 and Friday, June 12 starting at 8 a.m. each day (see [Meeting Page](#)). 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 2026 Meeting webpage](#) prior to the first day of the meeting. If you have been approved to join 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 11 at 8:00 a.m. 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 2026 meeting agenda and the April 2026 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.4 Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures (COP)

Under Membership Appointments, the SSC reviews any nominations for vacant management or technical teams, which are submitted before the Council meeting and reviewed in an SSC Closed Session. A nomination was submitted to fill one of the two vacant SSC at-large seats (Closed Session A.1, Attachment 8). SSC recommendations regarding membership appointments will be offered during the Council Closed Session on Friday, June 12.

C.5 Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning

The SSC will discuss future workload planning matters and report to the Council under Agenda Item C.5 scheduled for Monday, June 15.

Future workload planning may include discussion with SSC subcommittees to plan for Council tasks noted in future Council meeting quick reference agendas (i.e., Sept and Nov 2026) or Year-at-a-Glance topics. The SSC should discuss and confirm the dates for the six planned subcommittee meetings that are scheduled to occur through the November 2026 Council Meeting. The discussion should be included in the SSC statement, which regularly provides a table with important meeting dates and timelines.

At their April 2026 meeting, the Council provided guidance on several next steps for the amendment to the CPS FMP revising the sardine stock. These next steps include a review of the key management provisions for Pacific sardine described in the CPS FMP to determine if any of these reference points or other management criteria must be revised. Next, the CPS subcommittee of the SSC will meet over the summer (of 2026) to review options for generating or reviewing several of these provisions, including the minimum stock size threshold and the overfishing limit, for the iFPA stock definition (a coastwide sardine stock). This meeting may be held in conjunction with the CPS management team. Materials for the meeting will be prepared by NMFS and Council staff and will include a summary of past analyses and any additional relevant information. This meeting is scheduled to be held at the SWFSC in La Jolla, CA in July 2026. This SSC should include this meeting in their workload planning discussion.

The SSC requested to review the eDNA-based index of abundance methodology at their April meeting. It was also requested that it be paired with the fishery-dependent indices methodology review which is set to occur in October of 2026. The SSC should review the methodology summary from the Northwest Fisheries Science Center and determine if this methodology review should move forward as suggested in April.

D. Cross Fishery Management Plan

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 are available in the June Advanced Briefing Book. The project team will seek feedback 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.

The [Economics Subcommittee of the SSC](#) will meet June 2, 2026 to review the draft methodology and will provide their recommendations to the SSC. Key areas or questions that the SSC Economics Subcommittee may comment on include:

- Recommendations to ensure the methodology is applicable and useful across fisheries and fishing communities;
- Suggestions for other data, metrics, or indicators to consider;
- Desired balance between a narrative tool and an analytical tool;
- Type of case study to apply the methodology and framework to (e.g., current Council action vs. retrospective FMP amendment or specifications action).

Interested SSC members can attend the Economics Subcommittee meeting on June 2 or the [all-Advisory Body briefing](#) on June 5, which will also be recorded and posted on the meeting website. The SSC will receive the report of the SSC Economics Subcommittee and make their recommendations to the Council under Agenda Item D.3 on Saturday, June 13.

E. Groundfish Management

E.3 Stock Assessment Process Review and Proposed Process Revisions

The Council relies on stock assessments to manage fisheries sustainably and collaborates with the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Center partners (Science Centers) 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 from Lynker outlines five themes as places for which adjustments may improve the process and identifies 64 actions across these five themes (Attachment 1). Council staff have reviewed these actions and provided a brief preliminary response to each action (Attachment 2).

Staff have responded to the recommended actions in ways that include high-level steps that would need to occur to achieve the action as stated; how the action is already part of the Council's process; and where to find relevant material, as appropriate.

As outlined in the Lynker report and subsequent staff report, 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 SSC should review the materials and provide comments for Council consideration on short- and long-term priorities. The item will begin with a brief summary of the current stock assessment process. A member of the Lynker team will be present to discuss the report and recommendations with the SSC and highlight areas for SSC input. Then, there will be a presentation on staff recommendations with a focus on those related to SSC operations and participation. 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. The SSC will provide their comments to the Council under Agenda Item E.3 on Saturday, June 13.

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 of 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.

Council and NMFS staff are also proposing changing from a two-meeting process (March and June of even years) for selecting species for an assessment to a one-meeting process (June of even years). Council staff are proposing to develop a Council Operating Procedure (COP) to describe the stock assessment prioritization process which would outline this proposed change. This is consistent with the recommendation under the Term of Reference (TOR) agenda item (Agenda Item E.7) to move the stock assessment prioritization description from the TOR to the COPs. Council staff is proposing to bring back a proposed COP on the stock assessment prioritization in November 2026 so that the process is finalized before adopting the ten-year plan in March 2027 (see Year-at-a-Glance Schedule, Agenda Item C.5, Attachment 1).

The SSC 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 is scheduled to take interim final action on the long-term plan in March 2027. The SSC should also weigh in on the proposal to change from a two-meeting process (March and June of even years) for selecting species for an assessment to a one-meeting

process (June of even years), particularly regarding information needed to expediate decision-making and the availability of data on the proposed timeframe. The SSC will provide their comments to the Council under Agenda Item E.4 on Saturday, June 13.

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

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 Council is scheduled to confirm their FPA for all stocks and stock complexes adopted as interim FPA at the April 2026 meeting. Additionally, 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), as recommended by the SSC, and annual catch limits (ACL)).

The most recent widow rockfish assessment, which was endorsed by the SSC as BSIA, showed a substantial change in stock projections and estimated stock productivity compared with the previous assessment ([Agenda Item D.2, Attachment 1, March 2026](#)). Establishing harvest specifications under the default harvest policy, generated from the new assessment, could result in significant socio-economic impacts that are disproportionate to the stock’s status, which is expected to remain above the target biomass level both near term and over the ten-year projection period.

In November 2025, the Council requested that the SSC’s Supplemental Review of the Widow Rockfish assessment consider looking at alternative harvest control rules (HCR) that would keep the stock above B_{40%} (the management target) in 2029. In March 2026, the Council adopted a problem statement to guide the consideration of alternative harvest control rules and recommended a range of annual catch limit (ACL) alternatives for analysis (see [March 2026 Decision Summary Document](#)). In April 2026, the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) presented an analysis of the alternatives ([Agenda Item C.3, Attachment 1, April 2026](#)). The SSC recommended an alternative OFL of 6,239 mt based on the National Standard 1 Technical Memo and information provided in the NWFSC analysis and the assessment. The Council adopted a revised range of harvest specification alternatives for widow rockfish in April 2026 (shown the table below). Alternative 2, Suboption d was a new alternative based on the SSC recommended OFL. Alternative 2, Suboption b was maintained in the range of alternatives, but is above the SSC-recommended OFL.

Specification	Alternative 1 (Default HCR, ABC=ACL, P*=.45)		Alternative 2, Suboption d		Alternative 2, Suboption b	
	2027	2028	2027	2028	2027	2028
OFL	4,916	5,172	6,239	6,239	TBD	TBD
ABC	4,596	4,810	6,238	6,238	TBD	TBD
ACL	4,596	4,810	6,238	6,238	6,720	6,720

Under this agenda item, the SSC should review information provided in Attachment 4 under this agenda item and provide additional rationale for their OFL recommendation. The SSC should recommend OFLs and ABCs for the alternative HCRs, as appropriate. The SSC will provide their recommendation to the Council under Agenda Item E.6 on Sunday, June 14.

E.7 Stock Assessment Terms of Reference for 2027-28

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. No changes to the Rebuilding Analyses and Methodology Reviews for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species TORs have been proposed. At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to adopt a detailed outline for the TOR (Attachment 1), which will be used to develop a final TOR for adoption in November 2026.

Additionally, in June, the Council will receive an Evaluation of the Pacific Fishery Management Council Stock Assessment Review Process, prepared by Lynker, which was an external review of the groundfish stock assessment process that has been occurring over the last year (Agenda Item E.3). The detailed outline was developed by Science Center staff, 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 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 SSC should provide comments on the detailed outline for proposed changes to the groundfish TORs to inform development of a final draft for the November 2026 meeting. The SSC will provide their comments to the Council under Agenda Item E.7 on Monday, June 15.

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

DFP:kma

Council Enclosures include:

Agenda Item A.3 – 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.

June 2026 SSC Agenda
Draft April 2026 SSC Minutes
Closed Session
General Information and Council Roster

PFMC
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