

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS FOR 2026 AND TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS FOR 2027-28 - FINAL ACTION

In this report, the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) details the action items that have been brought to the GMT for the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) consideration regarding changes to be implemented for the remainder of 2026, as well as a technical correction to harvest specifications for 2027-28. Scorecards are available in Appendix 1 for Chinook salmon, canary rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish.

Recommendations

- The GMT recommends adopting the corrected 2027-28 harvest specifications for the Oregon/Washington stock of vermilion rockfish, as described in [Attachment 1](#).

Technical Corrections

The GMT recommends adopting the corrected 2027-28 harvest specifications for the Oregon/Washington stock of vermilion rockfish and the corresponding shelf rockfish complex north of 40°10' N. lat. harvest specifications values, as detailed in Table 1 of [Agenda Item H.3 Attachment 1, September 2026](#). The corrections address an error identified during final review by National Marine Fisheries Service and Council Staff of the 2027-28 harvest specifications. This review identified that the 2027-28 specifications for the Oregon/Washington vermilion rockfish stock were based on the 2021 stock assessments rather than the 2025 catch projection adopted by the Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) as the best scientific information available. The corrected specifications are slightly higher than those adopted by the Council in June 2026.

Informational Items

Vermilion/sunset rockfish south of 40°10' N. lat.

Vermilion/sunset rockfish is managed within the shelf rockfish complex south of 40° 10' N. lat. Over the June 2026 meeting, the GMT and Groundfish Advisory Sub-Panel (GAP) recommended, and the Council took inseason action, to implement Limited Entry (LE) and Open Access (OA) sub-trip limit reductions for vermilion/sunset rockfish south of Point Conception (34° 27' N. lat.; [Agenda Item E.2.a Supplemental GMT Report 1, June 2026](#), [Agenda Item E.2.a Supplemental GAP Report 1, June 2026](#)) due to increased landings occurring in the non-trawl commercial sector as highlighted in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's inseason report ([Agenda Item H.3.a Supplemental CDFW Report 1, September 2026](#)). The inseason rule was implemented later than originally anticipated and was made effective on August 20, 2026. As a result, year-end landings of vermilion/sunset rockfish may be higher than initially projected in June. However, the opening of the commercial lobster fishery may curb the higher landings from the OA sector as participants in the south switch to the lobster fishery and associated higher price per pound. The GMT will continue to monitor landings under the new trip limits and will have more information in November to suggest any action needed for 2027.

In addition, recreational mortality of vermilion/sunset rockfish this year is higher than anticipated and is more variable by month than in recent years. This is likely due to a combination of delayed El Niño conditions affecting the availability of other targets as well as highly favorable spring and early summer weather in southern California (see Agenda Item H.3.a, Supplemental GAP Report 1, September 2026, for additional information on fishery conditions). Starting October 1 through the end of the year, the recreational season south of Point Conception will be offshore-only of 50 fathoms, which is expected to curb vermilion/sunset rockfish mortality. The GMT anticipates considering inseason action for 2027 over the November meeting.

Petrale sole

The GMT estimates that the total 2025 petrale sole mortality was 2,389 mt, or 102 percent attainment of the 2,354 mt ACL, based on the final GEMM discard-mortality estimates. Trawl mortality was 2,011 mt, non-trawl mortality was 48 mt, and research set-aside mortality was 40 mt. The final mortality estimate remains below the 2,518 mt OFL. For additional information on the factors contributing to mortality by sector, please see the GMT's April 2026 report under [Agenda Item C.6.a GMT Report 1, April 2026](#). As of September 14th, 2026, petrale sole mortality in 2026 is 1,429 mt and the respective ACL is 2,489 mt according to the PacFIN scorecard.

Quillback Rockfish off California

For the California stock of quillback rockfish, the GEMM report estimates 1.7 mt of total fishing mortality occurred in 2025, which is 0.2 mt over the 2025 OFL (1.5 mt). The 2025-26 harvest specifications for quillback rockfish are based on the rebuilding plan (Langseth, 2023), which the Council adopted removing from the FMP since the stock has been declared rebuilt. The 2025 California quillback rockfish stock assessment (Langseth et al, 2025) projected ACLs of 11.6 and 11.9 mt in 2027-28, respectively.

The Council took inseason action in June 2025 to remove depth restrictions that were originally put in place to control mortality of quillback rockfish. At that time, it was understood that there may be an overage in 2025 (and 2026) as a result of the action, but that the stock can accommodate more harvest than anticipated by the 2025-26 harvest specifications. Therefore, the GMT sees no management concern associated with this overage. With California Recreational Fisheries Survey estimates through June 2026 and non-trawl commercial landings through August 2026, California quillback rockfish mortality in 2026 so far is 0.5 mt (Table 3, [Supplemental CDFW Report 1](#)).

Appendix 1.

Chinook Salmon Scorecard

Table A1. 2026 Chinook salmon catch (numbers of fish) in relation to the sector thresholds. Source: PacFIN IFQ021 Combined Sector Salmon Bycatch ESA Report, 9/15/2026).

Sector a/	Sub-Sector	Catch To Date (# of fish)	Percent of Threshold	Total Threshold (# of fish)
Whiting	CP	1,316	12%	11,000
	MS	119	1%	
	Shoreside	675	6%	
	Tribal	291 b/	2%	
	Total	2,401	22%	
Non-Whiting	Bottom Trawl	1,649	30%	5,500
	Midwater Trawl	145	3%	
	Tribal	*	*	
	Fixed Gear	500 c/	9%	
	WA Rec			
	OR Rec			
	CA Rec			
	Total	2294	42%	
All groundfish fisheries & EFPs		4,695		

* Confidential data

a/ There is a reserve of 3,500 fish, in addition to the number of fish in the whiting and non-whiting thresholds.

b/ Current year tribal landings are estimated as the maximum of the historic landings for the last 5 years.

c/ GMT proposed assumption of annual mortality, which assumed maximum historical mortality (154) plus a 250 fish buffer from the 2017 BiOp and an additional 96 fish to account for some uncertainty in recreational salmon seasons; recreational estimates only apply to groundfish fisheries occurring outside of salmon seasons.

Canary Rockfish Scorecard

Table A2. 2026 harvest limits or set asides (mt) and current year-to-date mortality estimates (mt) of canary rockfish as of September 15, 2026.

Sector	Estimated Mortality (mt)	Harvest Limits or Set-Asides (mt)	Percent Attainment
<i>Trawl</i>	<i>104.9</i>	<i>403.6</i>	<i>26%</i>
--At-Sea CP	3.5	21.9	23%
--At-Sea MS	1.6		
--IFQ (shoreside whiting)	32.0	381.7	26%
--IFQ (non-whiting)	67.9		
<i>Non-Trawl</i>	<i>71.0</i>	<i>154.7</i>	<i>46%</i>
--Non-Nearshore & Nearshore	32.7	55.7	59%
--WA - Recreational a/	11.5	19.0	61%
--OR - Recreational b/	19.3	28.6	67%
--CA - Recreational c/	13.9	51.4	27%
Fishery Harvest Guideline	182.3	558.3	33%
<i>Set-Asides d/</i>	<i>61.7</i>	<i>67.6</i>	<i>91%</i>
--Research and Incidental	7.0	12.9	54%
--Treaty	54.7	54.7	100%
Total (Harvest Limit = ACL)	244.0	625.9	39%

*Confidential data

a/ WA estimates available through July 2026

b/ OR estimates available through July 2026

c/ CRFS estimates available through June 2026

d/ Current year set-asides (tribal, research and incidental) are estimated as year-end full attainment.

Yelloweye Rockfish Scorecard

Table A3. 2026 allocations and year-end total mortality estimates (mt) of yelloweye rockfish as of September 15, 2026.

Sector	Sub-sector	Estimated Total Mortality (mt)	Reference Point	Tracking Limit (mt)	Percent (%) Attainment
Grand Total a/		32.3	ACL c/	56.6	57%
Off the top b/		14.8	Set-Asides	14.8	100%
Trawl	CP	--	Trawl allocation	3.3	100%
	MS	*			
	IFQ	3.4			
	Sub Total	3.4	Trawl allocation	3.3	100%
Non-trawl	Non-nearshore + Nearshore	0.0	HG	8.1	0%
	WA Rec	1.6		9.8	16%
	OR Rec	3.4		9.0	38%
	CA Rec	9.1		11.6	78%
	Sub Total	14.1	HG d/	38.5	37%
	Non-nearshore + Nearshore	0.0	ACT	6.3	0%
	WA Rec	1.6		7.7	20%
	OR Rec	3.4		7.0	48%
	CA Rec	9.1		9.1	100%
	Sub Total	14.1	ACT	30.2	47%

* Confidential data

a/ The Grand Total is the sum of the Trawl Sector Total and Non-trawl Sector ACT Total.

b/ Off-the-top set-asides: Tribal = 8.0 mt; EFPs = 0.0 mt; Research = 2.9 mt; Incidental Open Access = 3.9 mt.

c/ ACL = Set-asides + Trawl allocation + Non-trawl allocation.

d/ The non-trawl allocation is the sum of the non-trawl HGs, 38.5 mt.

PPMC
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