

STOCK ASSESSMENT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) Staff, in consultation with Dr. André Punt (University of Washington), Dr. Owen Hamel (National Marine Fisheries Service Northwest Fisheries Science Center), Dr. John Budrick (California Department of Fish and Wildlife) and Dr. Michael Hinton (all four contributors are members of the Scientific and Statistical Committee's Coastal Pelagic Species Subcommittee [SSC-CPSSC]) and staff from the National Marine Fisheries Service Southwest Fisheries Science Center have proposed changes to the Terms of Reference (TOR) for Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Stock Assessments.

The Council is scheduled to adopt the preliminary TOR for use in future CPS stock assessments, beginning in 2027. The Council may provide additional guidance to Council Staff to return with further edits to the draft TOR, as appropriate. The Council is scheduled to take final action on revisions to the TOR in November 2026.

Attachment 1 is the draft TOR with proposed changes redlined in tracked changes, showing modifications for consideration by the SSC, the Council, and its advisory bodies. Attachment 2 is provided as a clean reference document with proposed edits accepted. At this meeting, the Council should consider any additional edits and provide guidance to Council Staff to further edit the TOR, so staff can bring a final draft to the Council in November 2026.

The major changes in the updated version of the TOR relative to the current version of the TOR (last updated in 2024) include 1) re-organization of content to reflect standardized National guidance and to align with similar changes to the Council's groundfish stock assessment TOR, 2) clarity of required elements for different assessment types, 3) removal of outdated requirements, including those originally intended for the groundfish TOR but retained as an artifact for CPS, and 4) improvements to facilitate better coordination between the Stock Assessors Team, Council Staff, and the SSC-CPSSC.

The Council may also consider whether the Accepted Practices for Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessments (Accepted Practices, Attachment 3) should be revisited. Historically, both the TOR and the Accepted Practices were reviewed and revised on a biennial cycle. However, since the last revision in 2024, updates are made on an as-needed basis. Council Staff are not proposing an update to the Accepted Practices at this time, as no benchmark assessments are scheduled for CPS in the next year.

Council Tasks:

- 1. Review proposed edits to the TOR for CPS Stock Assessments.**
- 2. Provide guidance on proposed edits and additional requests.**
- 3. Provide guidance on reviewing the Accepted Practices.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item J.2, Attachment 1: Terms of Reference for the Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessment Review Process (redlined) (***Electronic Only***).
2. Agenda Item J.2, Attachment 2: Terms of Reference for the Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessment Review Process (clean) (***Electronic Only***).
3. Agenda Item J.2, Attachment 3: Accepted Practices Guidelines for Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessments (2024).
4. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- J.2 Stock Assessment Terms of Reference Katrina Bernaus
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Preliminary Stock Assessment Terms of Reference and Provide Guidance, as Appropriate

PFMC

08/20/26