

**DRAFT COUNCIL MEETING RECORD**  
**289<sup>th</sup> Session of the**  
**Pacific Fishery Management Council**  
**September 16-21, 2026**  
Hilton Vancouver Washington  
301 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Vancouver, WA 98660

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## INTRODUCTION

This document contains or identifies the various elements, documents, and sources comprising the complete and official record of Council meeting discussions and actions. In addition to the Meeting Summary, which follows this introductory section (see #7 below), it includes information or references that serve as the functional detailed minutes for this Council meeting as required by §302(i)(2)(E) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The full record is maintained at the Council office, is available on the Council website (<http://www.pcouncil.org/>) or upon request from the Council office, and consists of the following:

1. **Meeting Notice and Proposed Agenda** – These documents are available on the Council Website prior to and following each meeting at <http://www.pcouncil.org/>.
2. **Attendance Records** – These documents are available for the Council meeting and each advisory body meeting by request from the Council office.
3. **All Documents, Reports, and Presentations for Council Consideration** – These items include (1) all documents produced or received for the meeting briefing book, validated by a label assigned by the Council Secretariat and distributed to Council Members; (2) written public comments received at the Council meeting in accordance with agenda labeling requirements; and (3) electronic material or handout materials used in presentations to Council Members during the open session. They are available from links in the Meeting Summary of this document or at <https://www.pcouncil.org/council-meetings/previous-meetings/>.
4. **Council Decisions Summary Document** – This document is distributed shortly after each Council meeting. It provides very brief descriptions of most key Council decisions and is available at <https://www.pcouncil.org/council-meetings/previous-meetings/> and also provided by agenda item in the Meeting Summary of this document.
5. **Draft or Final Decision Documents Finalized after the Council Meeting** – Documents such as Environmental Impact Statements or Environmental Assessments are available on the Council website as they are completed.
6. **Gavel-to-Gavel Audio Recordings and Summary Transcripts** – These recordings contain the testimony, presentations, discussions, and actions occurring at the meeting. For additional reference, verbatim transcripts of Council Actions are available on the Council website. The recordings and transcripts may be accessed from the links contained within the Meeting Summary of this document or at <https://www.pcouncil.org/council-meetings/previous-meetings/>.
7. **Meeting Summary** (immediately follows this section) – The Meeting Summary lists, in agenda item order, the briefing book documents, reports, presentations, and Council motions and actions, including a brief summary from the Council Decisions Summary Document for each agenda item. It constitutes the meeting record formally approved by the Council. Links to the audio recordings may also be accessed at <https://www.pcouncil.org/council-meetings/previous-meetings/>.
8. **Voting Log** – The voting log lists, in Agenda order, the summarized Council motions and actions for each agenda item that took place during the meeting.

## MEETING SUMMARY

### A. Call to Order

#### 1. Opening Remarks – Pete Hassemer, Chair

Mr. Pete Hassemer, Council Chair, called the 289<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) to order at 10:15 a.m. on September 18, 2026. A closed session was held before this open session to discuss litigation and personnel matters.

#### 2. New Council Member Appointments

Mr. Jeff Lackey was given the oath of office by Mr. Sam Rauch.

#### 3. Roll Call – Merrick Burden

##### Council Members present during the meeting week:

|                                             |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| National Marine Fisheries Service:          | Ms. Susan Bishop, designee<br>Mr. Josh Lindsay, designee<br>Ms. Karen Palmigiano, designee<br>Mr. Frank Lockhart, designee                                           |
| Alaska State Official:                      | Ms. Dani Evenson, nonvoting designee<br>Ms. Rachel Baker, nonvoting designee                                                                                         |
| Washington State Official:                  | Mr. Kyle Adicks, designee<br>Ms. Heather Hall, designee<br>Mr. Corey Niles, designee                                                                                 |
| Washington Obligatory:                      | Mr. Butch Smith, Vice Chair                                                                                                                                          |
| Oregon State Official:                      | Mr. John North, designee<br>Mr. Justin Ainsworth, designee<br>Ms. Lynn Mattes, designee                                                                              |
| Oregon Obligatory:                          | Ms. Christa Svensson, Vice Chair                                                                                                                                     |
| California State Official:                  | Ms. Marci Yaremko, designee<br>Ms. Briana Brady, designee<br>Ms. Caroline McKnight, designee                                                                         |
| California Obligatory:                      | Ms. Corey Ridings                                                                                                                                                    |
| Idaho State Official:                       | Ms. Sharon Keifer, designee                                                                                                                                          |
| Idaho Obligatory:                           | Mr. Pete Hassemer Chair                                                                                                                                              |
| Tribal Official:                            | Mr. David Sones                                                                                                                                                      |
| At-Large:                                   | Ms. Jaime Diamond<br>Dr. Rebecca Lent<br>Mr. Jeff Lackey<br>Ms. Aja Szumylo                                                                                          |
| U.S. Coast Guard:                           | RADM Michael Campbell, nonvoting<br>Mr. Chris German, nonvoting designee<br>LT Skye-Marie Williamsz, nonvoting designee<br>LCDR Karrie Jefferies, nonvoting designee |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:             | Dr. Benjamin Cross, nonvoting designee<br>Mr. Roger Root, nonvoting designee                                                                                         |
| Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission: | Dr. Scott Rumsey, nonvoting designee                                                                                                                                 |

**Absent from the Meeting:**

U.S. State Department:

Mr. Colin Brinkman, nonvoting designee

**4. Agenda – Pete Hassemer**

**a. Council Action: Approve Agenda**

**Motion 1:** Adopt [Agenda Item A.4, September 16-21, 2026, Council Meeting Agenda](#)

Sharon Kiefer/David Sones (Motion 1 carried unanimously)

**5. Executive Director’s Report – Merrick Burden**

**B. Open Comment Period**

**1. Comments on Non-Agenda Items - Merrick Burden**

**a. Council Discussion and Comment, as Appropriate**

**C. Cross Fishery Management Plan**

**1. Office of Law Enforcement, United States Coast Guard, and Tri-State Enforcement Biennial Report - Alyssa Seibt**

**d. Council Discussion and Comment, as Appropriate**

**Staff Summary:** The Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), United States Coast Guard (USCG), and Tri-State Enforcement representatives presented their biennial enforcement report covering enforcement activities along the West Coast from the past two years. Along with written reports, the enforcement representatives gave several presentations to the Council which summarized these enforcement activities. The Council then commented on and discussed the reports which highlighted their appreciation for the enforcement that these agencies provide along the West Coast.

**2. Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) Report - Kerry Griffin**

**d. Council Discussion and Comment, as Appropriate**

**Staff Summary:** None

**3. Special Projects: Project Planning, Updates, and Clarifications - Gilly Lyons**

**c. Council Action: Refine Scope of Special Projects to Align Work with Available Capacity**

**Motion 2:** Council:

- Adopt the recommendations in [Agenda Item C.3, Supplemental Attachment 5](#) to refine the scope of the Council's Special Projects.

- Advance the actions in [Agenda Item C.3, Supplemental Attachment 5](#) specified under a no-cost extension of the current Inflation Reduction Act grant, to be completed by December 31, 2027.

Corey Ridings/Jaime Diamond (Motion 2 carried unanimously)

**Staff Summary:** The Council discussed the status of the three Special Projects for which it has received dedicated funding under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and considered ways to refine the remaining work within each project, given available capacity and resources. The Council considered the staff recommendations provided in [Agenda Item C.3, Supplemental Attachment 5](#); work anticipated to be complete under the IRA grant by the end of 2026; work to be completed under the IRA No Cost Extension (NCE) by the end of 2027; and work to continue under regular (base) Council funding. The Council adopted the staff recommendations for completing IRA work under an NCE, and for deferring future work as part of Council base funding.

#### **4. Council Efficiencies - Kelly Ames**

##### **c. Council Action: Adopt Preliminary COPs Related to Governance and Process Improvements; Discussion and Guidance, as Appropriate**

**Staff Summary:** The Council provided guidance to continue ongoing efficiency efforts and implement the meeting schedule in [Agenda Item C.4, Attachment 3](#), with several modifications as follows:

- The September Council meeting in even years will be a light groundfish meeting rather than inseason only, with the groundfish advisory bodies meeting remotely.
- In even years, the Council will discuss Highly Migratory Species (HMS) matters in March, June, September, and November, with the HMS advisory bodies meeting remotely in March and September.
- Ecosystem matters will remain on the Council's March and September agendas with the ecosystem groups being in person in March and remote in September. Council staff will continue to evaluate the timing of Council discussions of ecosystem matters and meeting format for the ecosystem groups as the Council's Special Projects wind down and future Fishery Ecosystem Plan initiatives are considered.
- Council staff will have the flexibility to make adjustments to the planned schedules, as needed.

The Council schedule for considering Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and Fishery Ecosystem Plan matters will be incorporated into the Council Operating Procedures (COPs) and brought back for Council adoption at a future Council meeting. Advisory Body meeting formats will be published on the respective Advisory Body webpages and on page two of the Council's Year at a Glance for the upcoming year.

The Council discussed revisions to COP 1 General Council Meeting Operations to clarify the distinction between formal action taken by motion, Council guidance reflecting consensus, and

comments by individual Council members, as detailed in [Agenda Item C.4, Attachment 5](#). The Council later adopted those revisions under Agenda Item D.4 Membership Appointments and COPs.

**5. Special Project 1: Nationwide Review of If, Then Statements, and Council Meeting Requirements - Gilly Lyons**

**c. Council Action: Adopt Staff Report as Final or Provide Further Direction, as Appropriate; Recommend Adjustments to Council Meeting Requirements for Incorporation into the Council Operating Procedures**

**Staff Summary:** The Council discussed a [nationwide review of if-then statements and inseason management actions](#) – a report requested by the Council as part of its priority actions under Special Project 1 (*Adaptive Management and Flexibility*). The Council adopted this report as final, and encouraged Advisory Bodies and Council staff to use the review as a resource to support the development of future if-then statements as opportunities arise.

The Council also discussed [proposed changes](#) to Council Operating Procedure (COP) 11 Plan Amendment Cycles that describe criteria for identifying when an accelerated Council meeting schedule may be appropriate for FMP amendments and other actions that are well-developed, thoroughly analyzed, and low controversy.

The Council identified additional clarifying revisions to the proposed COP 11 edits, which were adopted under Agenda Item D.4, Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures. See additional details in the summary of Agenda Item D.4.

**D. Administrative Matters**

**1. Council Member Recusals - Merrick Burden**

**d. Council Action: Consider the report of NOAA General Counsel**

**Staff Summary:** None

**2. Fiscal Matters - Patricia Hearing**

**d. Council Action: Consider Budget Committee Report and Recommendations**

**Motion 8:** Council adopt the Budget Committee recommendations as presented in [Supplemental Budget Committee Report 1 for Agenda Item D.2.a](#).

Sharon Keifer/David Sones (Motion 8 carried unanimously)

**3. Approve Council Meeting Record - Pete Hassemer**

**a. Council Action: Approve Previous Council Meeting Record**

**Motion 9:** Council approve the meeting record for the 288<sup>th</sup> (June 2026) Council meeting presented in [Agenda Item D.3, Attachment 1](#).

Sharon Kiefer/Butch Smith (Motion 9 carried unanimously)

#### **4. Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures (COPs) - Kelly Ames**

##### **c. Council Action: Announce Membership Appointments; Adopt Changes to COP 11, as Appropriate**

**Motion 13:** Council adopt:

- The adjustments to COP 1 detailed in [Agenda Item C.4, Attachment 5](#); and
- The adjustments to COP 11 detailed in [Agenda Item D.4.a, Supplemental Council Member Report 1](#), with revisions to clarify timing and responsibility for evaluating when actions are eligible for adjusted Council meeting requirements.

Aja Szumylo/Sharon Kiefer (Motion 13 carried unanimously)

**Staff Summary:** The United States Coast Guard designated Rear Admiral Michael Campbell as the Agency's principal representative to the Council, replacing Rear Admiral Arex Avanni. The Budget Committee elected Ms. Jaime Diamond as Chair, with Mr. Corey Niles continuing to serve as Vice Chair.

The Council made the following appointments

- Ms. Lori Steele to the Processor position on the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel
- Mr. Michael Nelson to the At-Large position on the Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel
- Ms. Heather Mann to the Midwater Trawl position on the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP)
- Mr. David Toriumi to the Open Access South of Cape Mendocino position on the GAP
- For the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel, temporarily reclassify the Commercial Purse Seine seat as an At-Large seat for the remainder of the current term which ends December 31, 2027, and appoint Mr. Mike Conroy.
- Dr. Peter Kuriyama to the Southwest Fisheries Science Center seat on the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)
- Dr. David Kling to an At-Large position on the SSC
- Mr. Christian Heath to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife seat on the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team

There is one remaining vacant At-Large position on the SSC. Staff will proceed with a solicitation noting that all applications are welcome, but experience in economics, social science, groundfish, coastal pelagic species, and salmon is desired.

The Council adopted revisions to COP 1 General Council Meeting Operations to clarify the distinction between formal action taken by motion, Council guidance reflecting consensus, and comments by individual Council members, as detailed in [Agenda Item C.4, Attachment 5](#). The Council also adopted revisions to COP 11 Plan Amendment Cycles that explicitly recognize the

Council's ability to combine procedural steps for actions that are well-developed, thoroughly analyzed, and low controversy, while preserving applicable Fishery Management Plan and Magnuson-Stevens Act public-process requirements, as described in [Agenda Item D.4.a, Supplemental Council Member Report 1](#). Additional revisions clarify that the Council will consider the Executive Director's recommendation as to whether a particular action is suitable for an accelerated process and that Council staff coordinates with NMFS in making National Environmental Policy Act determinations.

## **5. Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning - Merrick Burden**

### **c. Council Discussion and Guidance on Future Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning**

**Staff Summary:** None

## **E. Habitat Issues**

### **1. Habitat Issues - Kerry Griffin**

#### **d. Council Action: Consider Habitat Committee Report and Recommendations**

**Staff Summary:** The Council received information on numerous habitat-related issues and current activities contained in E.1.a, Supplemental [HC Report 1](#) and Supplemental [HC Report 2](#). The Council directed staff to work with Advisory Bodies as appropriate to develop comments in response to 1) the National Science Foundation request for priorities related to the Ocean Observing Initiative priorities, and 2) the National Ocean Service request for consultation on three deep-sea mineral mining applications (see [Informational Report 5](#)).

## **F. Pacific Halibut Management**

### **1. 2027 Commercial and Recreational Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Regulations – Preliminary - Angela Forristall**

#### **c. Council Action: Adopt Preliminary 2027 Commercial and Recreational Catch Sharing Plan and Regulation Changes for Public Review**

**Motion 3:** Council adopt for public review, status quo directed commercial fisheries season structure and the proposals for the recreational fisheries in the WDFW and ODFW reports under this agenda item (Agenda Item F.1.a, [WDFW Report 1](#) and Supplemental [ODFW Report 1](#), September 2026).

Heather Hall/Lynn Mattes (Motion 3 carried unanimously)

**Staff Summary:** The Council adopted, for public review, proposed changes to the 2027 Pacific Halibut Commercial and Recreational Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) and annual regulations. The adopted proposals for the Pacific halibut recreational season structure are consistent with those found in the reports from the [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife \(WDFW\)](#) and the [Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife \(ODFW\)](#), and the recommendations of the [Groundfish](#) and [Salmon](#) Advisory Subpanels.

WDFW proposed changes to the recreational season structure in the North Coast, South Coast, and Columbia River recreational subareas. No changes from *status quo* were proposed for the Puget Sound subarea. ODFW did not propose any changes to the Central Coast or Southern Oregon subareas but is supportive of the WDFW proposals for the Columbia River subarea. No changes are proposed for the California recreational season structure.

#### **Washington North Coast recreational subarea:**

Option 1: The subarea will open in early May, with the flexibility to open on April 30 in years when April 30 falls on a Thursday. The subarea may be open up to 4 days per week (Thursday through Sunday) in May and June. If sufficient quota remains, the subarea may be open up to 7 days per week in August and September.

- Unlike under the *status quo* season structure where the number of days a week open in May is contingent on the Area 2A Fishery Constant Exploitation Yield (FCEY), under Option 1 the subarea may be open up to four days a week in both May and June (regardless of what the FCEY is).

Option 2: Add Monday to the Memorial Day weekend fishing days.

#### **Washington South Coast recreational subarea:**

Option 1: Modify the nearshore fishery to (a) move the nearshore fishery boundary from 30 fathoms to 50 fathoms, and (b) allow the nearshore fishery to be open on weekend days in July and August, when the all-depth fishery is closed, nearshore harvest would be counted towards the all-depth quota.

- Option 1 has been proposed to better conform with groundfish management by shifting the nearshore fishery boundary and allowing for halibut retention during the days listed, when closed to the all-depth fishery.

Option 2: Add Monday to the Memorial Day weekend fishing days.

Option 3: Open the subarea on deepwater lingcod days in June.

- Option 3 would allow anglers the additional opportunity to retain halibut when deepwater lingcod fishing.

#### **Columbia River recreational subarea:**

Option 1: In June, open the subarea 5 days per week (Thursday, Friday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday; except for days open to the non-tribal directed commercial fishery). If catch estimates indicate that the subarea quota will be reached before June 30, Mondays and Tuesdays may be closed through inseason action.

- Under the *status quo* season structure, the season opens for three days a week in June and an additional two days may be added via inseason action. Under this option, the season would automatically open for five days a week, and the number of days could be reduced by inseason action if catch estimates indicate the quota may be reached before June 30. This is anticipated to reduce administrative burden, allow for more days open in June, and aid in advanced planning.

Option 2: Add Monday to the Memorial Day weekend fishing days.

## **Commercial-Directed Fishing Regulations for 2027**

The Council adopted, for public review, the *status quo* season structure for 2027, as described in [Section 5.6.4](#) of the current CSP.

The Council will adopt final changes to the 2027 Pacific halibut CSP and annual fishery regulations at their November 2026 meeting.

## **G. Salmon Management**

### **1. Methodology Review—Final Topic Selection - Angela Forristall**

#### **c. Council Action: Identify Topics for Review in 2026**

**Staff Summary:** Under this agenda item, the Council did not identify any topics for methodology review in 2026.

The Council did receive updates on several ongoing salmon estimation and modeling projects that fall into the category of changes that do not require formal methodology review. The Council will continue to receive updates on these projects as they progress.

### **2. Klamath River Dam Removal and Basin Update - Angela Forristall**

#### **d. Council Discussion and Comment, as Appropriate**

**Staff Summary:** The Council received updates on the status of the Klamath River basin two years after the largest dam removal project in U.S. history. The Council was provided an overview of fish repopulation, disease presence, and changes in water turbidity, sediment transport, dissolved oxygen, and water temperature ([Agenda Item G.2.a, Supplemental NMFS Presentation](#)). The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) provided updates on collaborative projects with the Hoopa Valley Tribe and fishing activity in the Klamath River ([Agenda Item G.2.b, Supplemental CDFW Report 1](#)).

This agenda item was informational only, and the Council will continue to receive annual updates on conditions in the Klamath River basin in the coming years.

### **3. Risk Management Framework – Risk Tables and Other Approaches, Informational - Angela Forristall**

#### **e. Council Discussion and Comment, as Appropriate**

**Staff Summary:** The Council received information on two risk management frameworks: (1) salmon risk tables, originally explored through the Council’s Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) Initiative 4, and (2) the scientific paper “*Methods for assessing and responding to bias and uncertainty in the U.S. West Coast salmon abundance forecasts*” (Satterthwaite and Shelton, 2023).

Salmon risk tables for Klamath River fall Chinook and Sacramento River fall Chinook have been explored as a potential approach for organizing and integrating ecosystem and climate information to help inform whether greater or lesser caution may be warranted in management in a given year. The Satterthwaite and Shelton (2023) paper describes methods for characterizing bias and precision in salmon abundance forecasts and discusses the scientific and management implications of applying these methods to salmon stocks.

The Council discussed the tools presented and how they compare to existing methods for accounting for risk and uncertainty in the management of salmon stocks that contribute to west coast salmon fisheries. The Council is currently scheduled to begin scoping alternatives for an updated Sacramento River fall Chinook harvest management framework in 2027. The information presented provides additional tools the Council could consider when exploring how to account for risk in the updated harvest policy of that stock. No action was taken under this agenda item.

## **H. Groundfish Management**

### **1. Protocol for Reviewing Ecosystem Component Species Catch and Identifying Stocks in Need of Conservation and Management - Katrina Bernaus**

#### **c. Council Action: Recommend a Review Process for Incorporation in the Council Operating Procedures, Provide Guidance, as Appropriate**

**Motion 4:** The Council, direct the GMT to work with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to develop an ecosystem component (EC) species mortality report on PacFIN. The report would serve as a regular update on the status of EC species mortality that is available on the public platform.

Schedule an inaugural report to the Council for March 2028 but don’t set a recurring agenda item at this time. This does not preclude the GMT from providing more frequent updates to the Council as needed.

The metrics for the inaugural report should be limited to total mortality, total landings, and ex-vessel revenue (adjusted for inflation) reported for each sector as well as summed across all sectors. Total mortality and total landings should also be provided as a percent change from the previous year, and as a proportion relative to the average value in years before and after the species was declared an EC species as recommended by the GMT. For species formerly

requiring conservation and management, mortality should be provided as a percent of the most recent ACL.

Given that the report will be a new product, the GMT has flexibility to update the report as needed between now and March 2028.

In updating COP 9, refer to [Attachment 1, Section 3](#) to incorporate EC species mortality review into the regular review process of the GMT to capture their role of tracking catch and regularly reporting issues to the Council.

To facilitate timely input to the Council, each biennium the GMT should review and discuss the EC species mortality report well in advance of the March meeting to allow sufficient time to request an agenda item to be scheduled if there is something to flag for the Council.

Heather Hall/Lynn Mattes (Motion 4 carried unanimously)

**Staff Summary:** The Council adopted a process for reviewing ecosystem component (EC) species catch, including development of a publicly available mortality report and a regular opportunity to update the Council on the status of EC species.

The Council directed the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to work with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to develop a mortality report on the publicly available Pacific Fisheries Information Network (PacFIN) platform. This report will be continuously available and will monitor species based on several factors to help inform the future appropriateness of having species in the EC category. The GMT may then provide updates to the Council from this report as frequently as each March of even years, to be scheduled on an as-needed basis. An inaugural report from the GMT will be scheduled for the Council's agenda in March of 2028. After 2028, the GMT will review and discuss the EC mortality report in advance of March of even years, requesting an agenda item be scheduled as needed.

The report will include the following:

- Total mortality, total landings, ex-vessel revenue (adjusted for inflation) of EC species from each sector and summed across all sectors
- Percent change in total mortality from the previous year and as a proportion relative to the average value in years before and after EC designation
- Mortality as a percent of the most recent annual catch limit (if available)
- Flexibility for the GMT to update these metrics as needed

The Council recommends updating COP 9 Schedule 1 to incorporate this reporting process into the groundfish management and activity cycle, incorporating proposed changes below from [Attachment 1](#). Exact language for COPs will be adopted by the Council in a separate agenda item at a future meeting.

#### March of Even Years

The GMT provides a report on mortality and catch of EC species. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), GMT, and Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) meet to consider/review new information related to defining groundfish stocks and EC species and provide recommendations

to inform Council action on stock definitions and EC species designation, as appropriate. The Council scopes revisions to groundfish EC species and groundfish stock definitions as appropriate. The Council scopes revisions to groundfish EC species and groundfish stock definitions and adopts, for public review, a range of alternatives for defining and/or revising EC species designations and groundfish stock(s) definitions for the next biennial period, as applicable. Species flagged for further review by the Council will undergo a full 10-Factor Analysis.

#### June of Even Years

The SSC, GMT, and GAP meet to consider/review scoping material, including a review of the 10 Factors to identify whether species are in need of conservation and management in the Exclusive Economic Zone, if flagged for review in March of the same year, to define groundfish stocks, designate EC species, and provide recommendations to inform the Council preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) decisions for stock definitions and EC designations, as appropriate. Council adopts a PPA for revisions to groundfish stock definitions and EC designations, as appropriate.

The SSC, GMT, and GAP meet to consider/review scoping material, including a review of the 10 Factors to identify whether species are in need of conservation and management in the Exclusive Economic Zone; if flagged for review in March of the same year, to define groundfish stocks, designate EC species, and provide recommendations to inform the Council PPA decisions for stock definitions and EC designations, as appropriate. Council adopts a PPA for revisions to groundfish stock definitions and EC designations, as appropriate.

#### September of Even Years

The SSC, GMT, and GAP meet to consider/review the Council's groundfish stock definition and/or EC species PPA and provide recommendations to inform the Council Final Preferred Alternative decisions for stock definitions and EC designations, as appropriate. Council adopts a Final Preferred Alternative for revisions to groundfish stock definitions, as appropriate.

## **2. Moving Trawl Gear Exempted Fishing Permit into Regulations; Updating Declaration Requirements; Removing Duplicative Recreational Regulations – Final Action - Todd Phillips**

### **c. Council Action: Adopt Final Preferred Alternatives and Fishery Management Plan Revisions**

**Motion 5:** Council adopt the recommendations of the GMT as presented in [H.2.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, September 2026](#).

Heather Hall/Lynn Mattes (Motion 5 carried unanimously)

**Staff Summary:** The Council considered [three actions](#) for final action and an amendment to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) under this agenda item. The first action concerns the trawl gear exempted fishing permits (EFP). The Council adopted the preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) as their final preferred alternative (FPA) to transition the midwater trawl north of 40° 10' N. lat. and the bottom trawl between 40° 10' and 42° N. lat. trawl EFP into

regulation. This decision would allow midwater trawl vessels north of 40° 10' N. lat. to fish outside of primary whiting season and the bottom trawl vessels to fish shoreward of the 100 fathoms depth contour between 42° N. lat. and 40° 10' N. lat. with any legal small footrope gear, including selective flatfish trawl gear, to harvest groundfish.

The second action concerns changing fishing declarations during a trip. The Council adopted their PPA as FPA to allow midwater trawl vessels to change fishing declarations while at sea. Specifically, vessels targeting shoreside Pacific whiting could change fishing declarations while at sea to target midwater rockfish (or vice versa) and mothership sector catcher vessels could change declarations at sea to move from a whiting target to the targeting of midwater rockfish. Monitoring type declarations (i.e., electronic monitoring or observer) could not be changed while at sea and vessels will need to sort catch by sector and report catch on separate fish tickets (as applicable).

The third action concerns the sale of recreational fish waste, which is expected to require an FMP and regulatory amendment. The Council determined additional work needed to be completed on this action, per the recommendations of [NMFS](#) and the [GMT](#). The states and NMFS will work together to better develop the action and return to the Council at a later meeting, tentatively scheduled in March 2028, to consider adopting an FPA.

The Council adopted an [amendment to the FMP](#) which addresses the language changes necessary to comport to action 1 and administrative corrections to Chapter 3.

### **3. Inseason Adjustments for 2026 and Technical Corrections for 2027-28 – Final Action - Todd Phillips**

#### **c. Council Action: Adopt Final Inseason Adjustments for 2026 and Technical Corrections to the 2027-28 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures, as Appropriate**

**Motion 6:** Council adopt 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](#).

Lynn Mattes/Heather Hall (Motion 6 carried unanimously)

**Staff Summary:** The Council was notified by Council Staff in [Attachment 1](#) that the 2027 and 2028 overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) for the Oregon/Washington vermilion rockfish stock adopted in June 2026 was in error. Briefly, the harvest specifications for this stock were representative of the 2021 stock assessment and not the most recent catch projections from 2025. This error also affected the calculation of the Shelf Rockfish Complex North of 40° 10' N. lat. OFL, ABC, and annual catch limit, as the harvest specifications of complexes are the sum of harvest specification contributions of the components. The [Scientific and Statistical Committee](#) reviewed the error and endorsed the corrected OFL/ABC of the Oregon/Washington vermilion rockfish stock and the Shelf Rockfish Complex North of 40° 10' N. lat., which was subsequently adopted by the Council. The correction increases OFL/ABCs for the stock and stock complex by approximately 0.2 and 0.3 mt for 2027 and 2028, respectively.

The Council did not receive any inseason adjustment requests at this meeting.

## **I. Highly Migratory Species Management**

### **1. Special Project 1: If, Then Management Measures for Bluefin Tuna Trip Limits - Kerry Griffin, Gilly Lyons**

#### **c. Council Action: Adopt Purpose and Need, Range of Alternatives**

**Motion 7:** Council staff work with NMFS and states to further develop the trip limit options in [Agenda Item I.1, Attachment 1](#), for Council consideration at the November meeting, taking into account AB reports and state reports from this September meeting.

Jaime Diamond/Rebecca Lent

**Amendment 1:** Revise motion to read: “Council staff work with NMFS and states to further develop the trip limit options in [Agenda Item I.1, Attachment 1](#), except sub-option durable trip limit options, for Council consideration at the November meeting, taking into account AB reports and state reports from this September meeting”.

Pete Hassemer/Rebecca Lent (Amendment 1 carried, Ms. Ridings and Ms. Brady voted no)

Motion 7, as amended, carried; Ms. Ridings and Ms. Brady voted no

**Staff Summary:** The Council considered information and options for potential modifications of Pacific bluefin tuna trip limits and directed staff to work with NMFS and states to further develop the trip limit options in Agenda Item I.1, [Attachment 1](#) (except the sub-option of durable trip limits) for further Council consideration at the November 2026 meeting. This topic will be scheduled under the Highly Migratory Species International Matters agenda item.

## **J. Coastal Pelagic Species Management**

### **1. Fishery Management Plan Amendment: Management Provisions for the Revised Sardine Stock - Katrina Bernaus**

#### **c. Council Action: Adopt Range of Alternatives and a Preliminary Preferred Alternative, if possible**

**Motion 10:** With the goal of maintaining the current harvest approach and adapting it to the new science on stock structure, and expecting a benchmark assessment and workload planning discussions in 2028, I move that the Council:

- Adopt the Range of Alternatives for Actions 2 and 3 of the Pacific Sardine FMP Amendment reflected in [Agenda Item J.1, Attachment 3](#) with the following additions:
  - Modify Action 2, Alternative 1 based on the recommendations in [Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1](#).
    - A static approach to MSST, including a range between 65,000 mt and a higher value of 150,000 mt;
    - A formulaic approach to MSST that reflects the SSC’s recommendations;
  - Analyze a higher (314,400 mt) and lower (50,000 mt) CUTOFF value as part of Action 3, as recommended in [Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental CPSAS Report 1](#).
- Adopt the following as the Preliminary Preferred Alternatives:

- Action 2 (Pacific Sardine Status Determination Criteria and Related Reference Points and Control Rules)
  - Alternative 1 Section 2.3.1 Option 2 - Formulaic Overfished Status Determination Criteria, where MSST is set to a value between B10% and B30%, or a reasonable proxy based on BSIA, as described in [Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1](#);
    - Section 2.3.2 Overfishing Status Determination Criteria and Control Rules

|              |                                        |
|--------------|----------------------------------------|
| OFL          | BIOMASS * EMSY * DISTRIBUTION          |
| ABC          | BIOMASS * BUFFER * EMSY * DISTRIBUTION |
| DISTRIBUTION | 1                                      |

- Action 3 (Harvest Control Rules for Pacific Sardine)
  - Alternative 1 (Stock specific HCRs) with values described in [Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental CPSMT Report 1](#)
- Request that NOAA Fisheries increase its efforts with other Federal government agencies, Tribal partners, and state governments where applicable, to improve scientific capacity for Pacific sardine in Mexico.
- Conduct additional analyses, a Management Strategy Evaluation or similar process, as indicated by the results of the assessment.

Aja Szumylo/Pete Hassemer (Motion 10 carried, Ms. Brady voted no)

Amendment 1: I amend to remove the selection of a PPA.

Briana Brady/Corey Ridings (Amendment 1 failed; Ms. Svensson, Mr. Sones, Ms. Kiefer, Ms. Szumylo, Mr. Lackey, Ms. Diamond, Mr. Hassemer voted no, Mr. Lindsey abstained)

**Staff Summary:** The Council adopted a range of alternatives (ROA) and preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) for Actions 2 and 3 of the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) FMP amendment (as described in [Attachment 3](#)). These actions within the FMP amendment would implement certain management provisions (harvest control rules and reference points) for the newly-defined stock of Pacific sardine. The Council's motion includes the stated objective that this amendment would maintain the Council's current harvest approach and adapt that approach to the newly-available science on Pacific sardine stock structure. The Council's September decision builds upon a previously adopted interim final preferred alternative (iFPA) which would redefine the Pacific sardine stock to a coastwide U.S. stock (Action 1 within the amendment).

#### Action 2: ROA for Pacific Sardine Status Determination Criteria and Related Reference Points and Control Rules

**No Action** – *No status determination criteria or related reference points and control rules would be adopted for the U.S. stock of Pacific sardine.*

**Alternative 1 (PPA, with select options as noted)** – *Status determination criteria would be adopted for the U.S. stock of Pacific sardine, per the framework outlined in Table 1.*

Table 1.

| FMP Element                           | Specification                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Management Strategy                   | More intensive (i.e., general harvest control rule)                                                                              |
| Overfished SDC                        | Biomass < MSST                                                                                                                   |
| Static Specification of MSST          | Option i: MSST = 65,000 mt age 1+ biomass or reasonable proxy<br>Option ii. MSST = 150,000 mt age 1+ biomass or reasonable proxy |
| Formulaic Specification of MSST (PPA) | $MSST = 10\%B_0 - 30\%B_0$ where X% is determined upon BSIA or other reasonable proxy                                            |
| Overfishing SDC                       | Catch > OFL                                                                                                                      |
| OFL                                   | $BIOMASS * E_{MSY} * DISTRIBUTION$                                                                                               |
| ABC                                   | $BIOMASS * BUFFER * E_{MSY} * DISTRIBUTION$ Where BUFFER is comprised of P* and sigma                                            |
| DISTRIBUTION                          | 1                                                                                                                                |

Action 3: ROA for Harvest Control Rules for Pacific Sardine:

**No Action** – *No harvest control rules from the CPS FMP would be specified to be applied to the U.S. Pacific sardine stock.*

**Alternative 1 (PPA, with select options as noted)** – *Harvest control rules would be specified in the CPS FMP to be applied to the U.S. Pacific sardine stock, within the CPS FMP framework. During the annual harvest specifications process (upcoming cycle scheduled for April 2027) the Council may set harvest specifications based on those outlined in Table 2 in order to prevent overfishing and achieve optimum yield.*

Table 2.

| FMP Element         | Specification  |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Management Strategy | More intensive |

|                         |                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ACL                     | Less than or equal to the ABC based on data available for the specifications cycle                           |
| ACT                     | Less than or equal to the ACL based on data available for the specifications cycle                           |
| Accountability measures | Recommended based on data available for the specifications cycle                                             |
| HG                      | $H = (\text{BIOMASS} - \text{CUTOFF}) * \text{FRACTION} * \text{DISTRIBUTION}$ (not to exceed MAXCAT or ACL) |
| CUTOFF                  | Option i. 50,000 mt Option ii. 150,000 mt ( <b>PPA</b> ) Option iii. 314,400 mt                              |
| FRACTION                | Equal to EMSY                                                                                                |
| DISTRIBUTION            | 1                                                                                                            |
| MAXCAT                  | 200,000 mt                                                                                                   |

Additional Council Requests:

- NOAA Fisheries to increase its efforts with other Federal government agencies, Tribal partners, and state governments where applicable, to improve scientific capacity for Pacific sardine in Mexico.
- Conduct additional analyses, a Management Strategy Evaluation or similar process, as soon as possible based on available resources, indicated by the results of the next benchmark assessment of the U.S. Pacific sardine stock. The Council continues to expect review of a benchmark assessment for the U.S. Pacific sardine stock and further workload planning discussions related to Pacific sardine management in 2028.

## 2. Stock Assessment Terms of Reference - Katrina Bernaus

### c. Council Action: Adopt Preliminary Stock Assessment Terms of Reference, Provide Guidance, as Appropriate

**Motion 11:** Council adopt draft terms of reference for the CPS Stock Assessment Terms of Reference as presented in [J.2, Attachment 2](#) with staff to complete minor edits and to include the SSC edits recommended in [J.2.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1](#). My motion does not include additional action on [J.2, Attachment 3](#), because there have been no revisions.

Sharon Kiefer/Corey Niles (Motion 11 withdrawn with consent of the second)

**Motion 12:** Council adopt as final the terms of reference for the CPS Stock Assessment as presented in [J.2, Attachment 2](#) with staff to complete minor edits and to include the SSC edits

recommended in [J.2.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1](#). My motion does not include additional action on [J.2, Attachment 3](#), because there have been no revisions.  
Sharon Kiefer/Briana Brady (Motion 12 carried unanimously)

**Staff Summary:** The Council adopted a final Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessment Review Process. Staff will update the draft TOR presented to the Council ([Attachment 2](#)) with minor edits, per the SSC's recommendation ([Supplemental SSC Report 1](#)), and post the final version to the [Council website](#).

## INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

[Informational Report 1:](#) West Coast Take Reduction Team Information Updates September 2026  
[Informational Report 2a:](#) Estimated Discard and Catch of Groundfish Species in the 2025 U.S. West Coast Fisheries  
[Informational Report 2b:](#) GEMM Data (Excel File)  
[Informational Report 3:](#) NMFS Report on Recently Published Groundfish Rulemaking & Workload  
[Informational Report 4:](#) Seafood Executive Order Correspondence to PFMC  
[Informational Report 5:](#) Permit Applications and Consultation Requests – Deep Seabed Hard Minerals Mining  
[Supplemental Informational Report 6:](#) Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness  
[Supplemental Informational Report 7:](#) Mini Ecosystem Status Report Infographic

## VOTING LOG

**Motion 1:** Adopt [Agenda Item A.4, September 16-21, 2026, Council Meeting Agenda](#).  
Sharon Kiefer/David Sones (Motion 1 carried unanimously)

**Motion 2:** Council:

- Adopt the recommendations in [Agenda Item C.3, Supplemental Attachment 5](#) to refine the scope of the Council's Special Projects.
- Advance the actions in [Agenda Item C.3, Supplemental Attachment 5](#) specified under a no-cost extension of the current Inflation Reduction Act grant, to be completed by December 31, 2027.

Corey Ridings/Jaime Diamond (Motion 2 carried unanimously)

**Motion 3:** Council adopt for public review, status quo directed commercial fisheries season structure and the proposals for the recreational fisheries in the WDFW and ODFW reports under this agenda item (Agenda Item F.1.a, [WDFW Report 1](#) and Supplemental [ODFW Report 1](#), September 2026).

Heather Hall/Lynn Mattes (Motion 3 carried unanimously)

**Motion 4:** The Council, direct the GMT to work with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to develop an ecosystem component (EC) species mortality report on PacFIN.

The report would serve as a regular update on the status of EC species mortality that is available on the public platform.

Schedule an inaugural report to the Council for March 2028 but don't set a recurring agenda item at this time. This does not preclude the GMT from providing more frequent updates to the Council as needed.

The metrics for the inaugural report should be limited to total mortality, total landings, and ex-vessel revenue (adjusted for inflation) reported for each sector as well as summed across all sectors. Total mortality and total landings should also be provided as a percent change from the previous year, and as a proportion relative to the average value in years before and after the species was declared an EC species as recommended by the GMT. For species formerly requiring conservation and management, mortality should be provided as a percent of the most recent ACL.

Given that the report will be a new product, the GMT has flexibility to update the report as needed between now and March 2028.

In updating COP 9, refer to [Attachment 1](#), Section 3 to incorporate EC species mortality review into the regular review process of the GMT to capture their role of tracking catch and regularly reporting issues to the Council.

To facilitate timely input to the Council, each biennium the GMT should review and discuss the EC species mortality report well in advance of the March meeting to allow sufficient time to request an agenda item to be scheduled if there is something to flag for the Council.

Heather Hall/Lynn Mattes (Motion 4 carried unanimously)

**Motion 5:** Council adopt the recommendations of the GMT as presented in [H.2.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, September 2026](#).

Heather Hall/Lynn Mattes (Motion 5 carried unanimously)

**Motion 6:** Council adopt 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](#).

Lynn Mattes/Heather Hall (Motion 6 carried unanimously)

**Motion 7:** Council staff work with NMFS and states to further develop the trip limit options in [Agenda Item I.1, Attachment 1](#), except sub-option durable trip limit options, for Council consideration at the November meeting, taking into account AB reports and state reports from this September meeting.

Jaime Diamond/Rebecca Lent (Motion 7, as amended, carried; Ms. Ridings and Ms. Brady voted no)

**Motion 8:** Council adopt the Budget Committee recommendations as presented in [Supplemental Budget Committee Report 1](#) for Agenda Item D.2.a.

Sharon Keifer/David Sones (Motion 8 carried unanimously)

**Motion 9:** Council approve the meeting record for the 288<sup>th</sup> (June 2026) Council meeting presented in [Agenda Item D.3, Attachment 1](#).

Sharon Kiefer/Butch Smith (Motion 9 carried unanimously)

**Motion 10:** With the goal of maintaining the current harvest approach and adapting it to the new science on stock structure, and expecting a benchmark assessment and workload planning discussions in 2028, I move that the Council:

- Adopt the Range of Alternatives for Actions 2 and 3 of the Pacific Sardine FMP Amendment reflected in [Agenda Item J.1, Attachment 3](#) with the following additions:
  - Modify Action 2, Alternative 1 based on the recommendations in [Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1](#)
    - A static approach to MSST, including a range between 65,000 mt and a higher value of 150,000 mt;
    - A formulaic approach to MSST that reflects the SSC's recommendations;
  - Analyze a higher (314,400 mt) and lower (50,000 mt) CUTOFF value as part of Action 3, as recommended in [Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental CPSAS Report 1](#).
- Adopt the following as the Preliminary Preferred Alternatives:
  - Action 2 (Pacific Sardine Status Determination Criteria and Related Reference Points and Control Rules)
    - Alternative 1 Section 2.3.1 Option 2 - Formulaic Overfished Status Determination Criteria, where MSST is set to a value between B10% and B30%, or a reasonable proxy based on BSIA, as described in [Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1](#);
      - Section 2.3.2 Overfishing Status Determination Criteria and Control Rules

|              |                                        |
|--------------|----------------------------------------|
| OFL          | BIOMASS * EMSY * DISTRIBUTION          |
| ABC          | BIOMASS * BUFFER * EMSY * DISTRIBUTION |
| DISTRIBUTION | 1                                      |

- Action 3 (Harvest Control Rules for Pacific Sardine)
  - Alternative 1 (Stock specific HCRs) with values described in [Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental CPSMT Report 1](#)
- Request that NOAA Fisheries increase its efforts with other Federal government agencies, Tribal partners, and state governments where applicable, to improve scientific capacity for Pacific sardine in Mexico.
- Conduct additional analyses, a Management Strategy Evaluation or similar process, as indicated by the results of the assessment.

Aja Szumylo/Pete Hassemer (Motion 10 carried, Ms. Brady voted no)

**Motion 11:** Council adopt draft terms of reference for the CPS Stock Assessment Terms of Reference as presented in [J.2, Attachment 2](#) with staff to complete minor edits and to include the SSC edits recommended in [J.2.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1](#). My motion does not include additional action on [J.2, Attachment 3](#), because there have been no revisions.

Sharon Kiefer/Corey Niles (Motion 11 withdrawn with consent of the second)

**Motion 12:** Council adopt as final the terms of reference for the CPS Stock Assessment as presented in [J.2, Attachment 2](#) with staff to complete minor edits and to include the SSC edits recommended in [J.2.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1](#). My motion does not include additional action on [J.2, Attachment 3](#), because there have been no revisions.

Sharon Kiefer/Briana Brady (Motion 12 carried unanimously)

**Motion 13:** Council adopt:

- The adjustments to COP 1 detailed in [Agenda Item C.4, Attachment 5](#); and
- The adjustments to COP 11 detailed in [Agenda Item D.4.a, Supplemental Council Member Report 1](#), with revisions to clarify timing and responsibility for evaluating when actions are eligible for adjusted Council meeting requirements.

Aja Szumylo/Sharon Kiefer (Motion 13 carried unanimously)

## **ADJOURN**

The Council meeting adjourned on Monday, September 21, 2026, at 2:05 p.m.

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Pete Hassemer  
Council Chair

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Date