Pacific Fishery Management Council

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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 13, 2026

TO: Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel, Ad Hoc Ecosystem Workgroup, and Interested Persons

FROM: Gilly Lyons, Staff Officer

SUBJECT: March 2026 Council meeting

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and its Advisory Bodies will meet March 3-9, 2026, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Sacramento in Sacramento, CA. The Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel (EAS) and Ad Hoc Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) will meet **in person** on Wednesday and Thursday, March 4 and 5. There are two Ecosystem topics scheduled on the Council agenda for Thursday, March 5, and Sunday, March 8, as described below.

E.1 California Current Ecosystem Annual Status Report and 2026 Science Review Topics

The California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Team (CCIEA) has produced the 2025-2026 California Current Ecosystem Status Report (ESR) and appendices (Agenda Item E.1.a, CCIEA Team Report 1). There will be an online briefing (in advance of the Council meeting) by Drs. Mary Hunsicker and Andrew Leising on this year's ESR on February 25 at 8:30 a.m. You are encouraged to attend. Drs. Hunsicker and Leising will also meet with the EAS and EWG in joint session at the March meeting to further review and discuss the ESR.

In previous years you have made recommendations for changes or improvements to the report, as summarized most recently in Appendix W of the 2025-26 ESR. You may wish to do so again this year. Agenda Item E.1 is on the Council's agenda for Thursday, March 5.

E.2 Special Project 3: Workshop to Develop New Fishing Systems

Under this agenda item, the Council will consider a proposal for a workshop focused on the design of innovative fishing systems to target Highly Migratory Species (HMS) on the West Coast, with an emphasis on identifying concepts that could be developed and tested via Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs) or research pathways. This workshop would be a component of Special Project 3 – one of three projects for which the Council has received dedicated funding – and would seek to support the goals of the Council's HMS Roadmap, primarily those associated with developing and testing new fishing gears, methods, and practices that have the potential to be low-bycatch, economically viable, and adaptive to the California Current Ecosystem's dynamic and variable environmental conditions.

The EAS and EWG should consider providing recommendations or suggested modifications to the workshop proposal. Agenda Item E.2 is on the Council's agenda for Sunday, March 8.

Other Items

In addition to the two Ecosystem Management agenda items above, the EWG is scheduled to discuss **Agenda Item D.9** under Groundfish Management, 2027-28 Stock Assessment Terms of Reference – Scoping. The EWG may wish to provide scoping recommendations on the Terms of Reference (TOR) for 2027-28 Groundfish stock assessments, particularly with regard to the incorporation of risk tables. Agenda Item D.9 is on the Council's agenda for Saturday, March 7.

The EAS and EWG may also wish to draft reports for **Agenda Item I.3**, Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning, to comment on the scheduling of Ecosystem and other items on future Council Meeting agendas. Agenda Item I.3 is on the Council's agenda for Monday, March 9.

Additionally, the EAS and EWG's advisory body agendas for this meeting each include a discussion and planning item related to future Council meetings; this is an opportunity to review issues and items that appear on the Year-at-a-Glance agenda that may benefit from more in-depth discussion, especially while the EAS and EWG are meeting in person. Topics that the EAS and EWG may wish to cover during this item include Council Special Projects (primarily Special Projects 1 and 2, which are next on the Council's agenda in April and June, respectively); a review and update of the Fishery Ecosystem Plan Initiatives Appendix, particularly in conjunction with the September meeting; and consideration of the Groundfish Risk Management Framework item tentatively scheduled for November.

In addition to the enclosed briefing materials, you may obtain electronic copies of all the meeting materials on the Council's website. We also post supplemental briefing materials on our website as they become available after distribution of the Advance Briefing Book. Please visit the March 2026 Meeting webpage to access these materials. Public comment is available in electronic form only through the Council's e-portal.

As always, thank you very much for your service to the Council process.

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Enclosures:

1. Agenda Item A.3: Council Meeting Agenda
2. Agenda Items E: Ecosystem Management
3. Agenda Items D: Groundfish Management
4. Agenda Items I: Administrative Matters
5. EAS and EWG Meeting Agendas
6. Informational Reports
7. Hotel Information and Council Roster

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