

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS - FINAL ACTION

In this report, the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) details the action items that have been brought to the GMT for Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) consideration for changes to be implemented in 2026. Scorecards for Chinook salmon, canary rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish are included in Appendix 1. The GMT is aware of the Council limitations to adopt inseason adjustments at this meeting due to ramifications from the Federal furlough (see Agenda item [A.4, Supplemental Executive Directors Report](#)). The GMT understands that in order to adopt the proposed adjustments for the start of 2026, the Council would need to take final action via an additional Council meeting scheduled by the end of this year (i.e., 2025). **If the Council schedules a December meeting, the GMT recommends a groundfish inseason adjustment item (i.e., canary rockfish) be on the agenda to consider adoption of the Action Items below.** The GMT does not see merit in scheduling the additional December meeting if it would only include the canary rockfish action item proposed here. In that case, the GMT can revisit the action item in March 2026. It is the GMT's understanding that the Pacific whiting set-aside can be implemented without the December meeting.

Recommendations:

- **If the Council schedules a December meeting, the GMT recommends a groundfish inseason adjustment item (i.e., canary rockfish) be on the agenda to consider adoption of the Action Items below.**
- **For inseason action, the GMT recommends:**
 - **Set the 2025 Pacific whiting set-aside for research and the pink shrimp fishery at 750 mt, the same as in 2025.**
 - **The GMT recommends Option 2 of increasing the limited entry fixed gear (LEFG) canary rockfish trip limit north and south of 40° 10' N. lat. to 4,000 lbs per two months and the open access (OA) canary rockfish trip limits north and south of 40° 10' N. lat. to 2,000 lbs per two months (Table 1).**

Action Items

Pacific Whiting Set-Aside

As part of this inseason action, the Council is tasked with selecting a value for the Pacific whiting set-aside to accommodate mortality in research and the pink shrimp fishery. This set-aside has been 750 metric tons (mt) since 2021, and annual mortality in those sectors has been well below that value since 2018 with the exception of 2021 ([Agenda Item F.6, Attachment 1, November 2025](#)). The majority of the 828 mt taken in 2021 was due to a research project focused on testing methods to distinguish Pacific whiting from mixed Pacific whiting and rockfish aggregations to improve future estimation of Pacific whiting biomass. To our knowledge, the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) does not plan to conduct any specific research projects in 2026 that would result in unusually large amounts of Pacific whiting research catch. **The GMT recommends setting the 2025 Pacific whiting set-aside for research and the pink shrimp fishery at 750 mt, the same as in 2025.**

Commercial Non-Trawl Canary Rockfish Trip Limit Adjustment

The GMT received a request to increase the OA and LEFG trip limits for canary rockfish coastwide beginning in 2026. Currently, trip limits are divided at 40°10' N. lat., with different trip limits in each area; however, the request proposed equivalent trip limits north and south of 40°10' N. lat. limits consistent with the species' coastwide stock definition. The request is aimed at improving access to other shelf rockfish species, reducing regulatory discards, increasing attainment of the canary rockfish commercial non-trawl harvest guideline (HG), and simplifying regulatory complexity.

As background, in November 2023 the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) recommended reducing canary rockfish trip limits for both LEFG and OA fisheries, north and south of 40°10' N. lat., by approximately 25 percent ([Agenda Item E.3.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1, November 2023](#)) in response to the 2023 stock assessment. Due to those precautionary reductions, as of October 28, 2025, total canary rockfish landings are 9.6 mt in the LEFG sector and 17.8 mt in the OA sector. Combined, commercial non-trawl mortality represents 54 percent (27.4 mt) of the 50.7 mt allocation prior to the emergency rule. Along with the low attainment, discard mortality in the commercial fixed gear sector has increased approximately six-fold in 2024, relative to 2023 ([G.1.b NWFSC Report 2: Groundfish Mortality Table](#)). Participants are approaching their trip limits in 2025, with 11 vessels landing 80 percent or more of their trip limit in one or more periods. These data suggest that current limits are constraining fishing opportunities, increasing regulatory discards, and that a trip limit increase could reduce waste and improve attainment without posing a risk to the HG.

In September, the Council recommended that National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) implement an emergency rule to revise the 2026 harvest specifications for canary rockfish, shortspine thornyhead, and petrale sole. These revised specifications were endorsed by the Scientific and Statistical Committee and recommended to be distributed proportionally among sectors, excluding research and incidental open access ([Agenda Item G.8.a, Supplemental GAP Report 1](#)). The canary rockfish 2026 commercial non-trawl allocation will increase from 50.8 mt to 55.7 mt, providing an additional 4.9 mt to the fishery. This increase along with the inseason request and justification warrants an updated analysis to determine whether trip limits should be adjusted to support increased utilization.

The GMT analyzed two options for revising trip limits:

1. Option 1: Increase the trip limit in the area north of 40° 10' N. lat. to be consistent with that in the area south of 40° 10' N. lat.
2. Option 2: Set trip limits that are equivalent coastwide with 4,000 lbs per two months for LEFG and 2,000 lbs per two months for OA.

Table 1 provides the projected canary rockfish mortality associated with each option compared to the 2026 non-trawl HG (55.7 mt) contingent on the emergency rule approval. Under Option 1, attainment of the commercial non-trawl HG is projected to increase to 68.8 percent. Under Option 2, attainment would increase to 85.6 percent. Option 2 provides a substantial buffer between projected mortality and the fishery HG, while increasing access to shelf species, reducing discards, improving HG attainment, and simplifying management. **Therefore, the GMT recommends Option 2 of increasing the LEFG canary rockfish trip limit north and south of 40° 10' N. lat.**

to 4,000 lbs per two months and the OA canary rockfish trip limits north and south of 40° 10' N. lat. to 2,000 lbs per two months (Table 1).

Table 1. Projected canary rockfish non-trawl landings, discards, and total mortality in 2026 relative to the canary rockfish non-trawl HG. Bolded row represents the GMT recommendation. NT = Non-Trawl. Attainment is compared to the 2026 non-trawl HG (55.7 mt) contingent on the emergency rule approval.

Option	Sector	Trip Limit	Landings Projection (mt)	Est. Total Landings (mt)	Est. Discard Mortality (mt)	Est. Total Mortality (mt)	NT Attain.
No Action	LEN	3,000 lbs./2 months	6.6	31.2	2.5	33.7	60.5%
	OAN	1,000 lbs./2 months	7				
	LES	3,500 lbs./2 months	5.1				
	OAS	1,500 lbs./2 months	12.5				
Opt. 1	LEN	3,500 lbs./2 months	7.7	35.8	2.5	38.3	68.8%
	OAN	1,500 lbs. 2 months	10.5				
	LES	3,500 lbs./2 months	5.1				
	OAS	1,500 lbs. 2 months	12.5				
Opt. 2	LEN	4,000 lbs./2 months	8.8	45.2	2.5	47.7	85.6%
	OAN	2,000 lbs./2 months	14				
	LES	4,000 lbs./2 months	5.8				
	OAS	2,000 lbs./2 months	16.6				

Appendix 1.

Chinook Salmon Scorecard

Table A1. 2025 Chinook salmon catch (numbers of fish) as of November 16, 2025 in relation to the sector thresholds (Source: PacFIN [IFQ021 Combined Sector Salmon Bycatch ESA Report](#)).

Sector a/	Sub-Sector	Catch To Date (# of fish)	Percent of Threshold	Total Threshold (# of fish)
Whiting	CP	1,767	16.1%	11,000
	MS	299	2.7%	
	Shoreside	682	6.2%	
	Tribal	264 b/	2.4%	
	<i>Total</i>	3,012	27.4%	
Non-Whiting	Bottom Trawl	190	3.5%	5,500
	Midwater Trawl	269	4.9%	
	Tribal	*	*	
	Fixed Gear	500 c/	9.1%	
	WA Rec			
	OR Rec			
	CA Rec			
	<i>Total</i>	959	17.4%	
All groundfish fisheries & EFPs		3,971		

* 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.

Yelloweye Rockfish Scorecard

Table A2. 2025 allocations and year-end projected mortality impacts (mt) of yelloweye rockfish as of November 14, 2025.

Sector	Sub-sector	Projection (mt)	Reference Point	Tracking Limit (mt)	Projected Percent (%) Attainment
Grand Total a/		33.7	ACL c/	56.0	60.2%
Off the top b/		14.8	Set Asides	14.8	100.0%
Trawl	CP	--	Trawl allocation	3.3	12.1%
	MS	--			
	IFQ	0.4			
	Sub Total	0.4	Trawl allocation	3.3	12.1%
Non-trawl	Non-nearshore + Nearshore	4.0	HG	7.9	50.8%
	WA Rec	2.4		9.7	24.9%
	OR Rec	3.2		8.8	36.4%
	CA Rec	8.9		11.4	78.2%
	Sub Total	18.5	HG d/	37.7	49.1%
	Non-nearshore + Nearshore	4.0	ACT	6.2	64.8%
	WA Rec	2.4		7.6	31.7%
	OR Rec	3.2		6.9	46.5%
	CA Rec	8.9		8.9	99.7%
	Sub Total	18.5	ACT	29.6	62.6%

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, 37.7 mt.

Table A3. 2025 Year-to-date estimated total mortality in metric tons (mt) with year-end harvest limits or set-asides (mt) and percent attainment for canary rockfish. Estimated mortality in all non-treaty commercial sectors are based on landings through November 16. Recreational fishery mortality (retained and discarded) is preliminary.

Sector	Estimated Mortality (mt)	Harvest Limits or Set-asides (mt)	Percent Attainment
<i>Trawl</i>	179.7	367.6	49%
--At-Sea CP	0.1	20.0	1%
--At-Sea MS	*		
--IFQ (shoreside whiting)	54.0	347.6	52%
--IFQ (non-whiting)	125.6		
<i>Non-Trawl</i>	93.9	140.7	67%
--Non-Nearshore & Nearshore	29.8	50.7	59%
--WA - Recreational a/	20.5	17.3	118%
--OR - Recreational a/	24.9	26.0	96%
--CA - Recreational b/	18.7	46.7	40%
Fishery Harvest Guideline	273.6	508.3	54%
Research and Incidental c/	12.9	12.9	100%
Treaty c/	50.0	50.0	100%
Total (Harvest Limit = ACL)	336.5	571.2	59%

* Confidential data

a/ WA and OR Recreational: Estimates are through September.

b/ CA Recreational: Estimates are through August.

c/ Full set-aside attainment is projected.

PFMC

11/17/25