

HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2027-28 (PART 2)

Under this agenda item, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduled to consider management measures necessary for 2027-28 groundfish fisheries to achieve the goals and objectives of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). In general, management measures applicable are those characterized as routine. Key decisions at this meeting include adopting preliminary off-the-top deductions from annual catch limits (ACL) and determining if any trawl/non-trawl allocation adjustments should be considered. The Council could also consider new management measures, i.e., those that have not been previously analyzed, as part of their decision-making; however, as discussed at the September 2025 Council meeting, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will likely not include them in the 2027-28 harvest specifications and management measure rulemaking package.

The management measures the Council adopts under this agenda item will be analyzed during the overwinter period by the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and Council staff. To facilitate an efficient overwinter analysis, this agenda item has several specific tasks for the Council to complete.

First, while it is expected the Council will adopt all interim harvest specifications under Agenda Item F.3, if any stocks or stock complex harvest specifications are left undecided at the conclusion of Agenda Item F.3, the Council should adopt all remaining harvest specifications under this agenda item.

Second, the Council will need to identify preliminary ACL off-the-top deductions, which account for groundfish mortality resulting from Pacific Coast Treaty Tribal harvest, scientific research, non-groundfish fisheries, and exempted fishing permits (EFP). This decision will allow the harvest guideline to be calculated and yield amounts distributed to the fishery for detailed analysis. This decision point creates the needed step of the process to identify the fishery harvest guideline for stocks and stock complexes. Related to the off-the-top deductions, the Council may identify modifications to the at-sea whiting fishery set-asides as part of this action. This will assist the analysis of the trawl fishery.

Third, the Council should adopt preliminary biennial allocations under this agenda item, as it is an opportunity for the Council to contemplate adjustments to biennial trawl/non-trawl sector allocations. While adjustments to formal allocations may be considered in the 2027-28 biennial process, any change will require an FMP amendment, which could be categorized as a new management measure and potentially delay their implementation. Biennial allocations are considered routine and do not require an FMP amendment. If the Council recommends trawl/non-trawl allocation adjustments for detailed analysis, identification of specific trawl/non trawl allocation percentage adjustments for investigation will expediate the overwinter analytical process.

Lastly, the Council could also consider adopting a range of management measures necessary to implement the 2027-28 harvest specifications not identified above. These management measures include such items as Groundfish Conservation Area adjustments, trip limits, etc.

Staff have provided an Action Item Checklist (Attachment 1) that summarizes the categories of management measures under consideration at this meeting. The GMT and the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) are expected to provide statements to the Council regarding their recommendations to the Council regarding management measure adjustments for the 2027-28 biennium at this meeting. It is anticipated that the GMT and GAP will utilize the checklist as a basis for their recommendations.

At the March 2026 Council meeting, the Council will be given an update regarding the overwinter analyses and will have the opportunity to provide additional guidance to the GMT and Staff, as appropriate. The analysis of management measures adopted under this item will be provided at the April 2026 Council meeting. At that meeting, the Council is scheduled to adopt a preliminary preferred suite of management measures. After a public review period, the Council will take final action on 2027-28 biennial management measures at the June 2026 Council meeting, with implementation scheduled for January 1, 2027.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt remaining harvest specifications, as necessary.**
- 2. Adopt ACL deductions, at-sea set-asides for the Pacific whiting at-sea fishery, and annual catch targets for analysis, as appropriate.**
- 3. Adopt preliminary two-year allocations for analysis, as appropriate.**
- 4. Provide guidance and adopt a range of management measures for more detailed analysis.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.8, Attachment 1: 2027-28 Action Item Checklist.
2. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- F.8 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures Todd Phillips/Marlene A. Bellman
for 2027-28 (*Part 2*)
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Remaining Harvest Specifications, as Necessary; Adopt Preliminary Two-Year Allocations and a Range of Alternative Management Measures for Detailed Analysis