

Stock Assessment Process Review Adjustments for 2027

Pacific Fishery Management Council

Garden Grove, California

November 2026

Council Tasks

- **Review and discuss short term actions** and whether the actions have been addressed
- Clarify the definition of “**non-fishing community.**”
- Discuss whether **different tools** are needed to communicate with “non-fishing communities” compared to the tools used to communicate with the general public.
- Identify any **additional tools** that should be explored for the “non-fishing community.”

Council's June 2026 Motion

Council's June Motion for 2027

- Proceed with all “Clarity In Process Navigation” items in 1a in [Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 2](#)
- Pre-assessment engagement
 - Expand pre-assessment workshops to include update assessments
 - Expand pre-assessments workshop focus to emphasize stakeholder information, including review of fishery prosecution, and stakeholder input on fishery dependent data used in assessments.
- Develop a plan for sharing assessment results with stakeholders once the assessment is finished but before the Stock Assessment Review (STAR) panel.
- Add an additional Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) or GAP-recommended representative to the STAR panel process (amendment to the Terms of Reference).
- Task Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) with elaborating on improved communication with Council regarding BSIA determinations
- Explore the development of communication tools that support the non-fishery community

Council's June Motion for Long-term Items

- Refine pause/offramp mechanism:
 - Have staff work with appropriate NMFS staff to develop a discussion paper that explores how a pause/offramp could work and remain consistent with Magnuson-Stevens Act.
 - Develop a technical referral protocol that standardizes when the SSC should re-review materials.
 - Detail circumstances when an assessment process should entirely halt.
 - Detail pathways for catch limit setting when the SSC cannot reach a BSIA determination, or when finalizing an assessment that needs additional evaluation that will conclude after the specifications cycle.
- Explore a centralized data portal
- Explore the implementation of the continuum of stock assessments.
- Explore additional communication and educational opportunities for non-expert participants.

2027 Stock Assessment Review Changes

Clarity In Process Navigation Actions

- Create **plain-language visual maps** of the full assessment cycle
 - (1a-i: posted to the [website](#) and placed in the TOR)
- Continue and improve clarity of **one-page assessment summaries**
 - (1a-ii: communicated with NMFS)
- **Simplify** TOR introductions and clarify when and how they are developed
 - (1a-iii: communicated with NMFS & posted to [website](#))
- Publish “**How to Engage**” **guide**, specifying when and how stakeholders and the public will be engaged
 - (1a-iv: posted to [website](#) and placed in the TOR)
- Develop and maintain **audience-specific communication tools** that explicitly support the non-fishing community (e.g., plain-language process overviews, short summaries, and navigation aids)
 - (1a-v: posted to [website](#))

Pacific Fishery Management Council Stock Assessment Workflow

**Stock Assessment
Prioritization, Planning,
& Selection**



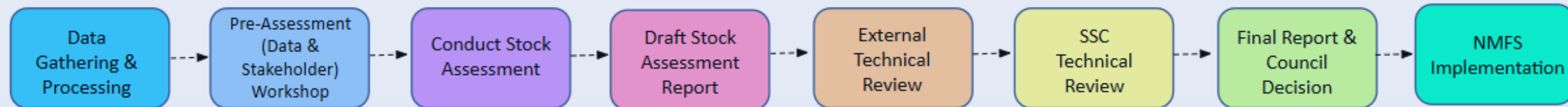
Biennial Management Cycle

Data Exploration

Model Development & Refinement

Scientific Review

Management



Management Track Assessment

Scheduled assessments that produce estimates of stock status and catch limit advice for use within a specific biennial management cycle

Research Track Assessment

Assessments that need a comprehensive overhaul or other research requiring considerable investment beyond a biennial cycle to evaluate big changes before future management track use

Data-Rich Assessment

Benchmark Assessment

What: statistical age- or size-structured models capable of estimating year-class strength within biennial cycle

How: estimate OFL using rigorous scientific evaluation of new data, methodologies, or modeling approaches

Resources: high

BSIA: reviewed externally by STAR Panel before SSC review and determination

Update Assessment

What: a streamlined approach to update stock status using a previously approved stock assessment with new information

How: estimate OFL by rerunning the assessment model including new years for existing data sources

Resources: moderate/high

BSIA: reviewed by the GFSC before SSC review and determination

Unforeseen complexities arise

Data-Moderate Assessment

What: an approach that includes length and/or abundance trend information

How: estimate OFL using models that exclude age composition data

Resources: moderate

BSIA: reviewed by SSC review, though situations arise that require an additional external (STAR) review panel

Data-Limited Assessment

What: a simplified, precautionary method used for fish stocks that are lacking substantial biological data

How: estimate relative changes in catch using records of total catch and, in some cases, information on a stock's growth, reproduction, and death rates

Resources: moderate/low

BSIA: reviewed and determined by the SSC

Catch-Only Projections

What: a projection applied to an approved assessment using recent catch data

How: estimate OFL by adding realized catches as the removals for years since the last assessment and project the model forward to current

Resources: low

BSIA: reviewed and determined by the SSC

Empirical Indicators

What: an indicator or set of indicators derived directly from fishery or survey data

How: select indicators to use in lieu of a stock assessment model to guide decisions about relative population or ecosystem changes and OFLs

Resources: low/moderate

BSIA: reviewed and determined by the SSC

Examples: catch reports; ecosystem reports; index-based methods

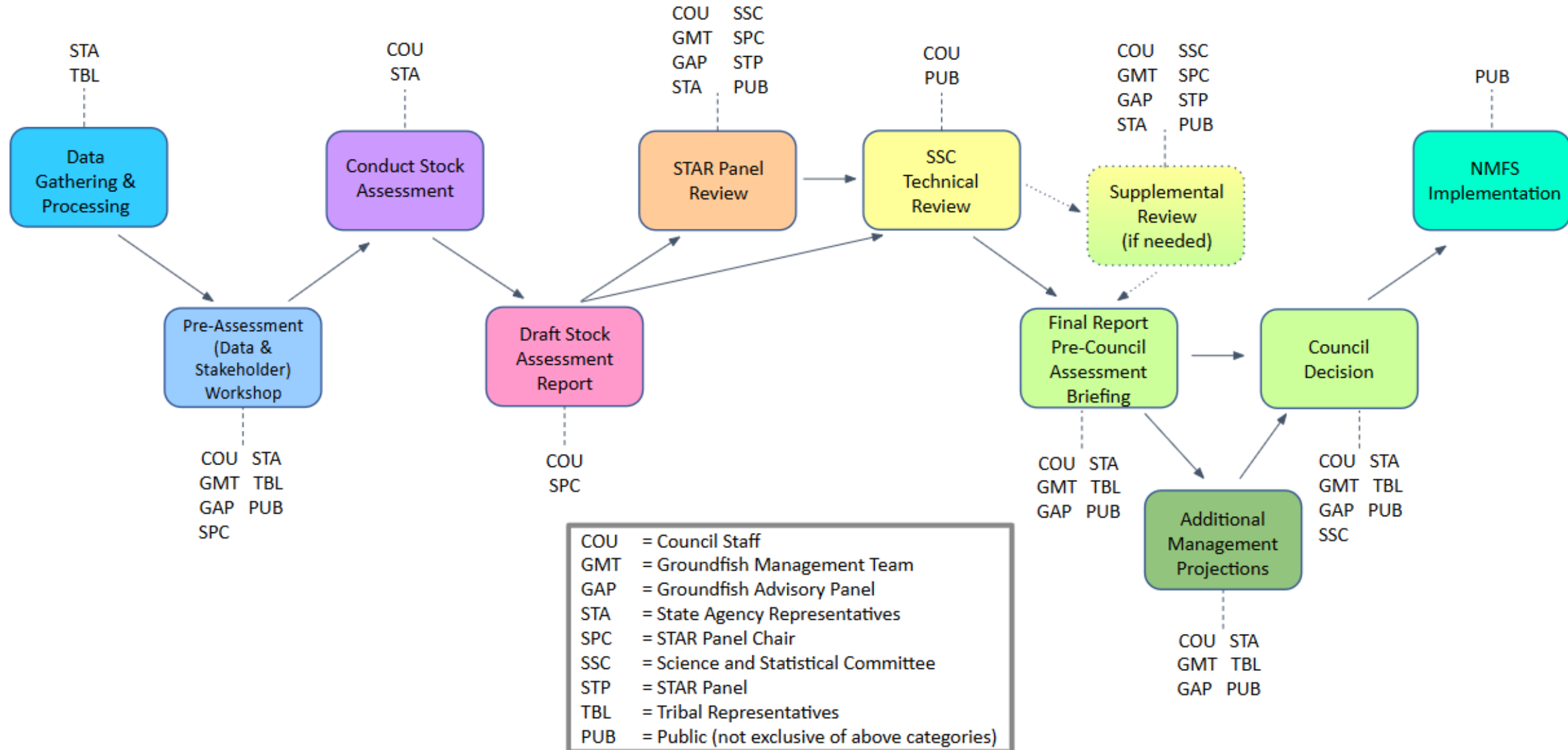
OFL – overfishing limit

BSIA – best scientific information available

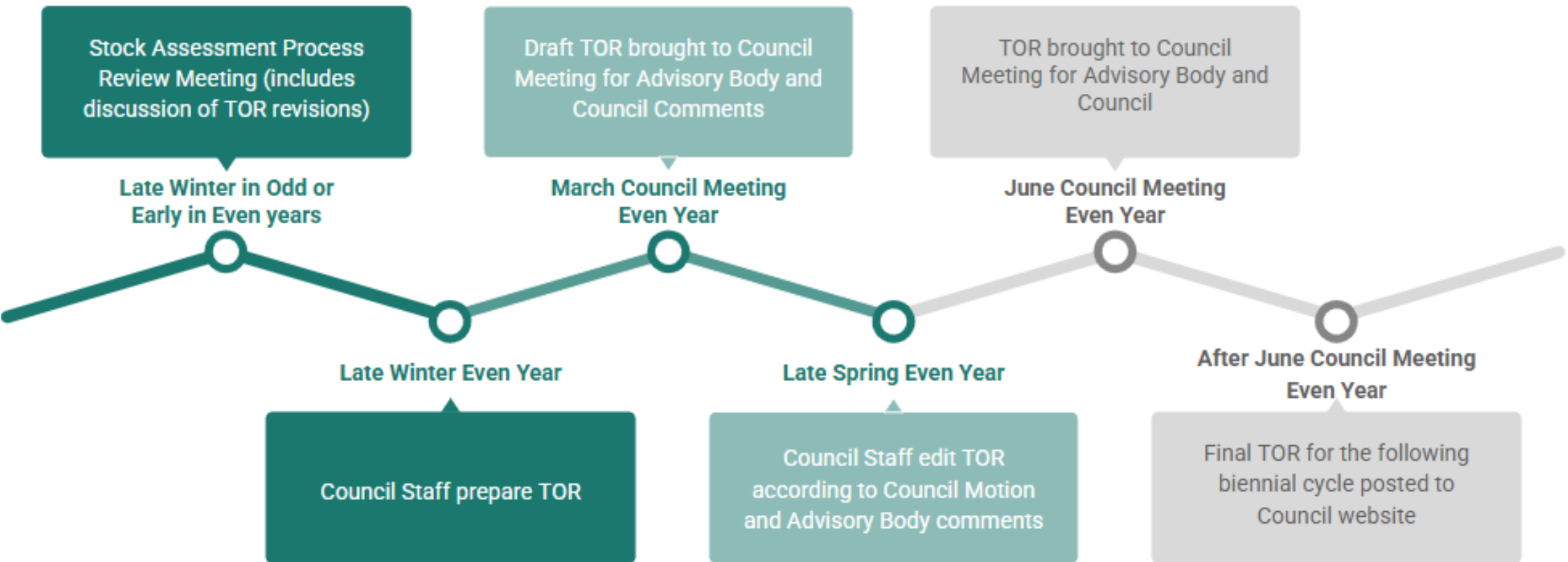
GFSC – groundfish subcommittee of the SSC

SSC – scientific and statistical committee

Engagement Opportunities During Biennial Stock Assessment Development and Review



Timeline for Groundfish Stock Assessment Terms of Reference (TOR) Development



Council's June Motion for 2027

- Pre-assessment engagement
 - Expand pre-assessment workshops to **include update assessments**
 - *Added to the TOR. Considered under Agenda Item G.5 at this meeting.*
 - Expand pre-assessments workshop focus to **emphasize stakeholder information**, including review of fishery prosecution, and stakeholder input on fishery dependent data used in assessments.
 - *Added to the TOR. Considered under Agenda Item G.5 at this meeting.*
 - *Added to the TOR under Agenda Item G.5, GAP authored document about fishery information.*

Council's June Motion for 2027

- Develop a plan for sharing assessment results with stakeholders once the assessment is finished but before the Stock Assessment Review (STAR) panel.
 - *Stock Assessment documents and files are available on the [PAM site](#) 2 weeks prior to the start of the STAR Panel. An e-blast may be added.*
- Add an additional Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) or GAP-recommended representative to the STAR panel process (amendment to the Terms of Reference).
 - *Added to the TOR. Considered under Agenda Item G.5 at this meeting.*
- Task Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) with elaborating on improved communication with Council regarding BSIA determinations
 - *Ongoing and has been communicated with the SSC.*

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