GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS FOR 2026-27 INCLUDING WHITING ACL OFF THE TOP DEDUCTIONS

In this report, the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) details the action items that have been brought to the GMT for the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) consideration regarding changes to be implemented for the remainder of 2026 and for 2027. Scorecards are available in Appendix 1 for Chinook salmon, canary rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish.

Recommendations:

- **The GMT recommends setting the 2027 Pacific whiting set-aside for both research and the pink shrimp fishery at a total of 1,500 mt.**
- **The GMT recommends Option 2 in Table 1. This option would maintain present-day Open Access and Limited Entry sub-trip limits for vermilion/sunset rockfish south of 34° 27′ N. lat. into 2027.**

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, except for 2021 (Agenda Item G.6 Attachment 1 November 2026). 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 estimations of Pacific whiting biomass. To our knowledge, the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) does not plan to conduct any specific research projects in 2027 that would result in unusually large amounts of Pacific whiting research catch. However, the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) highlighted a potential scientific research project to test active exclusion devices, and this project is expected to result in additional Pacific whiting mortality in 2027. To accommodate this project, **the GMT recommends setting the 2027 Pacific whiting set-aside for both research and the pink shrimp fishery at a total of 1,500 mt,** which is an increase from the 750 mt set-aside in 2026.

The West Coast Groundfish Observer Program ceased deploying observers in the pink shrimp fishery after 2024, so we will lack at-sea discard information in this fishery from 2025 onward. Therefore, the set-aside for this sector should be precautionary.

Vermilion/Sunset Rockfish South of 34°27′ N. lat. Sub-Trip Limits for 2027

In June, the Council reduced the Limited Entry (LE) and Open Access (OA) sub-trip limits for vermilion/sunset rockfish south of 34°27′ N. lat. (LES and OAS) for the remainder of 2026, in response to increased effort and landings that were projected to exceed the 100 mt informal sharing agreement for commercial non-trawl. The June inseason action applies only to 2026 and would not roll over into the new biennium. The 2027-2028 harvest specifications and management measures rulemaking package was developed prior to the June action and contains the previous higher LES and OAS sub-trip limits (3,000 lbs. and 900 lbs. per two months, respectively). Without Council action at this meeting, the vermilion/sunset rockfish trip limits south of 34°27′ N.

lat. would revert to these higher limits on January 1, 2027. Therefore, the GMT re-analyzed the recommendation from the June meeting to adjust the 2027 sub-trip limits for vermilion/sunset rockfish south of 34°27′ N. lat.

The GMT projected 2027 vermilion/sunset rockfish non-trawl landings as shown in Table 1. **The GMT recommends Option 2 in Table 1.** This option would maintain present-day Open Access and Limited Entry sub-trip limits for vermilion/sunset rockfish south of 34° 27′ N. lat. into 2027. The GMT will continue to monitor vermilion/sunset rockfish mortality throughout the year and will recommend additional adjustments, as necessary.

Table 1. Projected vermilion/sunset rockfish non-trawl (NT) landings, discards, and total mortality in 2027. C = between 40° 10′ N. lat. and 34° 27′ N. lat.; S = south of 34° 27′ N. lat. Bolded content represents the GMT's recommendation. Values are rounded to the nearest integer and therefore the sum of each cell may not represent the total.

Option	Sector	Trip Limit	Landings Projection (mt)	Est. Total Landings (mt)	Est. Discard Mortality (mt)	Est. Total Mortality (mt)
Opt. 1 (27-28 SPEX Status Quo)	LEC	500 lbs./ 2 mos.	4	104	4	108
	OAC	300 lbs./ 2 mos.	17			
	LES	3,000 lbs./ 2 mos.	45			
	OAS	900 lbs./ 2 mos.	39			
Opt. 2 (present-day limits)	**LEC**	**500 lbs./ 2 mos.**	**4**	**102**	**4**	**105**
	OAC	**300 lbs./ 2 mos.**	**17**			
	LES	**2,500 lbs./ 2 mos.**	**44**			
	OAS	**750 lbs./ 2 mos.**	**37**			

Informational Items

Tribal Report – Sablefish Fishery Concerns

The GMT received a presentation from representatives of the Makah Tribe and would like to extend its thanks to the Tribe for bringing these items of concern to the attention of the Council and its groundfish advisory bodies. At the discretion of the Council, the GMT is prepared to begin an over-winter exploratory analysis of the requests outlined in the Makah Tribe's presentation. These requests, as stated by Makah representatives, are provided below for clarity. The GMT could then come to the March 2027 meeting with response options to discuss with the GAP and present to the Council, dependent on the results of this analysis. The GMT defers to the Council as to where is best to revisit this item in March.

Requests as detailed by the Makah Tribe in their presentation to the Council:

1. Review how pot gear use in the Treaty Case Area (U.S. waters North of 46°53′18″ N lat.) has shifted in the last 5 years.
2. Review this information and consider how gear conflicts within the Treaty Case Area might be avoided in the future.

Appendix 1.

Chinook Salmon Scorecard

Table A1. 2026 Chinook salmon catch (numbers of fish) in relation to the sector thresholds. Source: PacFIN IFQ021 Combined Sector Salmon Bycatch ESA Report, 11/10/2026).

Sector a/	Sub-Sector	Catch To Date (# of fish)	Percent of Threshold	Total Threshold (# of fish)
Whiting	CP	3,457	31%	**11,000**
	MS	601	5%	
	Shoreside	1,278	2%	
	Tribal	264 b/	2%	
	Total	**5,627**	**51%**	
Non-Whiting	Bottom Trawl	1,810	33%	**5,500**
	Midwater Trawl	187	3%	
	Tribal	*	*	
	Fixed Gear	500 c/	9%	
	WA Rec			
	OR Rec			
	CA Rec			
	Total	**2,497**	**45%**	
All groundfish fisheries & EFPs		**8,124**		

* 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.

Canary Rockfish Scorecard

Table A2. 2026 harvest limits or set asides (mt) and current year-to-date mortality estimates (mt) of canary rockfish as of November 10, 2026.

Sector	Estimated Mortality (mt)	Harvest Limits or Set-Asides (mt)	Percent Attainment
Trawl	*152.2*	*403.6*	*38%*
--At-Sea CP	3.5	21.9	23%
--At-Sea MS	1.6		
--IFQ (shoreside whiting)	34.4	381.7	39%
--IFQ (non-whiting)	112.7		
Non-Trawl	*108.0*	*154.7*	*70%*
--Non-Nearshore & Nearshore	42.4	55.7	76%
--WA - Recreational a/	18.2	19.0	96%
--OR - Recreational b/	24	28.6	84%
--CA - Recreational c/	23.4	51.4	46%
Fishery Harvest Guideline	**260.2**	**558.3**	**47%**
Set-Asides d/	*67.6*	*67.6*	*100%*
--Research and Incidental	12.9	12.9	100%
--Treaty	54.7	54.7	100%
Total (Harvest Limit = ACL)	**327.8**	**625.9**	**52%**

*Confidential data

a/ WA catch is through the end of season

b/ OR estimates available through August 2026

c/ CRFS estimates available through August 2026

d/ Current year set-asides (tribal, research and incidental) are estimated as year-end full attainment.

Yelloweye Rockfish Scorecard

Table A3. 2026 allocations and year-end total mortality estimates (mt) of yelloweye rockfish as of November 10, 2026.

Sector	Sub-sector	Projection (mt)	Reference Point	Tracking limit (mt)	Percent Attainment
Grand Total a/			37.7	ACL c/	56.6
Off the top b/			14.8	Set-Asides	14.8
Trawl	CP	--	Trawl allocation	3.4	100%
	MS	*			
	IFQ	3.4			
	Sub Total	3.4	Trawl allocation	3.4	100%
Non-trawl	Non-nearshore + Nearshore	6.4	HG	8.1	80%
	WA Rec	1.7		9.8	17%
	OR Rec	2.3		9.0	26%
	CA Rec	9.1		11.6	78%
	Sub Total	19.5	HG d/	38.5	51%
	Non-nearshore + Nearshore	6.4	ACT	6.3	102%
	WA Rec	1.7		7.7	22%
	OR Rec	2.3		7.0	33%
	CA Rec	9.1		9.1	100%
	Sub Total	19.5	ACT	30.2	65%

* Confidential data

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, 38.5 mt.

PFMC
11/15/26