

INITIAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE ACTIONS FOR 2027-28

In June, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) adopted a process and schedule for deciding harvest specifications and management measures for 2027-2028 groundfish fisheries (see [Agenda Item E.8, Supplemental Revised Attachment 1, June 2025](#)). The sequence of decision-making is scheduled so that new regulations can be implemented on January 1, 2027. Based on this schedule, the Council will begin deciding groundfish harvest specifications and providing input on new management measures for 2027-28 groundfish fisheries at this meeting.

Harvest Specifications

Under this agenda item, the Council is tasked with adopting interim final preferred overfishing limits (OFLs) for managed groundfish, where possible. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will review the proposed OFLs, stock categories, and sigma values (σ – *scientific uncertainty*), and make their recommendations to the Council. Under Amendment 24, the default harvest control rules (HCR) are applied to the best scientific information available (BSIA) to determine the 2027 and 2028 OFLs, acceptable biological catches (ABC), and annual catch limits (ACL). A supplemental attachment will provide the proposed 2027 and 2028 OFLs, ABCs based on the Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC) default sigmas for each stock category and the Council's overfishing probabilities (P^* s – *probability of overfishing*) from the 2025-26 management cycle, and ACLs that comport with the Council's default HCRs. A second supplemental attachment will provide any harvest specification projections for 2027 and beyond for select stocks where projections were unavailable.

While the Council could adopt default HCRs for all groundfish, including preliminary preferred alternatives for ACLs, it may also consider alternative HCRs (e.g., alternative HCRs for newly assessed species and species with updated projections). If there is a desire to depart from default HCRs, the Council should adopt a preliminary range of alternative HCRs, including a range of P^* values and ABCs to be considered for more detailed analysis.

The SSC will review the proposed OFLs, stock categories, and sigma values, and make their recommendations. In the event it is necessary to further review any assessment or new projections, the SSC's Groundfish Subcommittee is scheduled to convene a supplemental review panel prior to the November Council meeting. The Council must adopt a final range of ACLs in November to facilitate the Groundfish Management Team's (GMT) overwinter analytical work.

Preliminary Range of Management Measures

This agenda item also provides the Council an opportunity to adopt a preliminary list of management measures. In the biennial process, the Council regularly adjusts routine management measures to attain but not exceed ACLs. Routine measures are described in the [Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan](#) as well as in regulation. In brief, management measures such as trip limits, bag limits, etc. are considered routine. Under this agenda item, the Council

could consider directing the GMT to scope modifications to routine management measures as a part of their October work session.

Staff will provide a supplemental document (*Supplemental Agenda Item G.6, Attachment 3*) describing the distribution of ACLs to the fishery sectors under default HCRs and status quo management measures. The goal of this document is to inform the Council regarding the estimated harvest amounts for each sector that could be expected under default HCRs and provide an opportunity for the Council to consider routine management measures to task the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to investigate during their October work session.

In relation to potential management measures for the 2027-28 biennium, the Council directed the GMT to investigate three measures at their June 2025 meeting: 1) canary rockfish allocations, 2) species-specific trip limits for the shelf rockfish complex north of 40°10' N. lat., and 3) changes in the California recreational fishery to remove Rockfish Conservation Areas in favor of sub-bag limits. The GMT has drafted two reports on these topics. GMT Report 1 provides information on canary rockfish allocations and GMT Report 2 discusses species-specific trip limits for complexes north of 40°10' N. lat as well as California recreational fishery changes.

This agenda item is also an opportunity for the Council to signal their interest in a preliminary list of new management measures for analysis. New measures are those measures for which the impacts have not been previously analyzed and/or those that have not been previously implemented in regulation. Adopting a preliminary range of new management measures and providing initial guidance at this meeting will allow the GMT to scope the analytical requirements and anticipated workload at their October work session.

However, it is important to emphasize that while the Council could direct the GMT and Council staff to explore new management measures, those measures are unlikely to move forward as a part of this action. At the June 2025 Council meeting, NMFS informed the Council that inclusion of any the new management measures the 2027-28 process has the potential to jeopardize implementation of the 2027-28 harvest specification and management measures regulatory package. NMFS will be available to discuss this aspect further with the Council at this meeting.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt interim final 2027-28 OFLs, stock categories (and sigmas), and P*s, where possible.**
- 2. For groundfish where alternative HCRs are to be considered, adopt a preliminary range of P* values, ABCs, and ACLs for detailed analysis.**
- 3. Adopt a preliminary range of potential management measures for scoping by the GMT at their October 2025 work, as applicable.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item G.6.a, GMT Report 1: Groundfish Management Team Report on the History of Canary Rockfish Allocations.
2. Agenda Item G.6.a, GMT Report 2: Groundfish Management Team Report on Initial Harvest

Specifications and Management Measures Actions For 2027-28.

3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

G.6 Initial Harvest Specifications and Management Measure Actions for 2027-28

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- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
- b. Public Comment
- c. **Council Action:** Adopt Interim Final Overfishing Limits, a Range of P*/Acceptable Biological Catches, and Annual Catch Limits for Stocks that may Depart from Default Harvest Control Rules; Adopt a Preliminary List of Potential Management Measures Necessary to Implement Harvest Specifications to be Included in the 2027-28 Regulation Process

PFMC

08/26/25