# STAFF REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO 2026 HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND ALLOCATIONS FOR SHORTSPINE THORNYHEAD, PETRALE SOLE, AND CANARY ROCKFISH

Based on the proposed 2026 catch only updates for shortspine thornyhead, petrale sole, and canary rockfish (Agenda Item G.8, Supplemental Attachments 2-4), the following tables show the proposed changes to the harvest specifications and resulting allocations for 2026.

Note that all values that were assigned a tonnage by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) (i.e., off-the-top deductions, at-sea set asides, and the non-trawl allocation for Petrale sole) are shown to stay status quo. Regarding set-asides, the groundfish fishery management plan (FMP) defines set-asides as follows:

> Set-aside is the amount of yield of an actively managed stock or stock complex that is deducted from an ACL or sector allocation. A set-aside deducted from an ACL is designed to accommodate catch in Tribal fisheries, research fisheries, exempted fishing permit [EFP] activities, and bycatch in non-groundfish fisheries. A set-aside deducted from a sector allocation is designed to accommodate catch for a portion of the sector where within-sector allocations are not specified (e.g., set-asides for the at-sea whiting sectors for many stocks are deducted from formal trawl allocations to accommodate expected bycatch)

For the off-the-top deductions (tribal, incidental open access [IOA], EFP, and research), these values are estimated at the beginning of each groundfish harvest specification and management measure process. Off-the-top amounts for research and IOA fisheries are generally based on a rolling 10-year maximum of research and IOA mortality whereas tribal and EFP set-asides are based on requests. The Council does not directly manage these fisheries and has not identified specific management measures in the instance where a set-aside is exceeded, with the exception that EFPs may be stopped by the National Marine Fisheries Service if a set-aside for a species is reached.

The management options for at-sea set-asides are defined at §660.150(c)(2)(i)(B)(1) and § 660.160(c)(3)(i) for the mothership and catcher processor sectors, respectively. In brief, inseason action on set-asides is narrow and is applicable if, at minimum, one of the three criteria is met:

> "At-sea sector set-asides of non-whiting groundfish species will be managed on an annual basis unless there is a risk of a harvest specification being exceeded, unforeseen impact on other fisheries, or conservation concerns, in which case inseason action may be taken. Set-asides may be adjusted through the biennial specifications and management measures process as necessary."

## Shortspine Thornyhead

Agenda Item G.8, Supplemental Attachment 2 has two projections for consideration for 2026 for shortspine thornyhead. Request 2 is the 2026 catch only projection and applies the current acceptable biological catch (ABC) harvest control rule (HCR) (Table 2 of Supplemental Attachment 2). This applies a category 2 sigma value and a P* of 0.45. Request 3 applies an alternative ABC HCR that is a phase-in approach where the ABC value is set closer to the overfishing limit (OFL) (Table 3 of Supplemental Attachment 2). The following table shows the resulting increases from each 2026 catch only projection request.

Table 1: Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for 2026 compared to results of catch-only projection requests. All values are in metric tons unless noted.

| | | **Request 2: 2026 HCR** | | **Request 3: Alternative HCR (Phase-In)** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Current (2026)** | **Harvest Specifications** | **Difference** | **Harvest Specifications** | **Difference** |
| OFL | 961.08 | 970 | 8.92 | 970 | 8.92 |
| ABC | 831.33 | 839 | 7.67 | 902 | 70.67 |
| Annual Catch Limit (ACL) | 824.77 | 834 | 9.23 | 897 | 72.23 |
| EFP/Research/IOA | 22 | 22 | 0 | 22 | 0 |
| Tribal | 50 | 50 | 0 | 50 | 0 |
| Fishery Harvest Guideline (HG) | 752.77 | 762 | 9.23 | 825 | 72.23 |
| Trawl % | 71% | 71% | | 71% | |
| Trawl Allocation | 534.5 | 541.0 | 6.6 | 585.8 | 51.3 |
| At-Sea Set Aside | 70.0 | 70.0 | 0.0 | 70.0 | 0.0 |
| Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Allocation | 464.5 | 471.0 | 6.6 | 515.8 | 51.3 |
| IFQ Annual Vessel Limit (AVL, lbs) | 92157.5 | 93457.8 | 1300.3 | 102332.9 | 10175.4 |
| Non-Trawl % | 29% | 29% | | 29% | |
| Non-Trawl Allocation | 218.3 | 221.0 | 2.7 | 239.3 | 20.9 |

## Petrale Sole

Agenda Item G.8, Supplemental Attachment 3 has a single catch only projection for 2026 (Table 2) which applies the default HCR for 2026. Currently, the ACL in 2026 is proposed to be set using the 40-10 adjustment as the stock was estimated to be in the precautionary zone. However, with the catch only projection, the stock is estimated to be above B40% and therefore the ACL would be set equal to the ABC. The allocation structure for petrale sole was set by the Council to be 30 mt to non-trawl (estimated to cover the necessary mortality) and the remainder to the trawl fishery. The table therefore shows an increase to only the shorebased IFQ fishery (as the at-sea set-aside is also maintained).

Table 2: Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for 2026 compared to results of catch-only projection requests. All values are in metric tons unless noted.

| | **Current (2026)** | **Request 2 (Default HCR)** | **Difference** |
|---|---|---|---|
| OFL | 2424 | 2676 | 252 |
| ABC | 2255 | 2489 | 234 |
| ACL | 2238 | 2489 | 251 |
| EFP/Research/IOA | 28.5 | 28.5 | 0 |
| Tribal | 290 | 290 | 0 |
| Fishery HG | 1919.5 | 2170.5 | 251 |
| Trawl Allocation | 1889.5 | 2140.5 | 251.0 |
| At-Sea Set Aside | 5.0 | 5.0 | 0.0 |
| IFQ Allocation | 1884.5 | 2135.5 | 251.0 |
| IFQ AVL (lbs) | 186957.3 | 211858.5 | 24901.2 |
| Non-Trawl Allocation | 30.0 | 30.0 | 0.0 |

## Canary Rockfish

Agenda Item G.8, Supplemental Attachment 4 has two projections for consideration for 2026 for canary rockfish. Request 2 is the 2026 catch only projection and applies the current ACL HCR, where the 40-10 adjustment is applied as the stock is estimated to be in the precautionary zone (Table 2). Request 3 applies an alternative ACL HCR in which no 40-10 rule is applied (Table 3).

Table 3: Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for 2026 compared to results of catch-only projection requests. All values are in metric tons unless noted.

| | | Request 2 (Default HCR) | | Request 3 (Alt HCR, no 40-10 Rule applied) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Current (2026) | Harvest Specifications | Difference | Harvest Specifications | Difference |
| OFL | 655 | 673 | 18 | 673 | 18 |
| ABC | 609 | 626 | 17 | 626 | 17 |
| ACL | 573 | 593 | 21 | 626 | 54 |
| EFP/Research/IOA | 12.9 | 12.9 | 0 | 12.9 | 0 |
| Tribal | 50 | 50 | 0 | 50 | 0 |
| Fishery HG | 509.6 | 530.1 | 20.5 | 563.1 | 53.5 |
| Trawl % | 72.3% | 72.3% | 0 | 72.3% | 0 |
| Trawl Allocation | 368.4 | 383.3 | 14.8 | 407.1 | 38.7 |
| At-Sea Set Aside | 20.0 | 20.0 | 0.0 | 20.0 | 0.0 |
| IFQ | 348.4 | 363.3 | 14.8 | 387.1 | 38.7 |
| IFQ (AVL, lbs) | 76818.0 | 80085.5 | 3267.6 | 85345.5 | 8527.6 |
| Non-Trawl % | 27.7% | 27.7% | 0 | 27.7% | 0 |
| Non-Trawl Allocation | 141.2 | 146.8 | 5.7 | 156.0 | 14.8 |
| WA Recreational | 17.4 | 18.1 | 0.7 | 19.2 | 1.8 |
| OR Recreational | 26.1 | 27.2 | 1.1 | 28.9 | 2.8 |
| CA Recreational | 46.9 | 48.8 | 1.9 | 51.8 | 4.9 |

PFMC
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