



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Pete Hassemer, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 29, 2025

TO: Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, Groundfish Management Team, and Groundfish Interested Persons

FROM: Mr. Todd Phillips, Groundfish Staff Officer

SUBJECT: September 2025 Council Meeting Materials

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet [September 21-24, 2025](#). The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) will convene their sessions via webinar starting Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. Their scheduled sessions will adjourn on September 21, 2025. The GMT and GAP may have ad hoc sessions on September 22 and 23. These sessions will be posted on the [advisory body meeting](#) page. Instructions for joining online meetings will be posted on the [September meeting webpage](#). All meetings are open to the public and at least one opportunity for public comment has been scheduled for each meeting day.

The Council will consider several important groundfish agenda items and related matters of interest at this meeting. The briefing book materials attached to this memorandum provide detailed information for these items on the Council's September 2025 agenda. The following agenda items summarized below may be of particular interest to the GMT and GAP.

PACIFIC HALIBUT

E.1 Preliminary Catch Sharing Plan and Regulations for Implementation in 2025

Under this agenda item, the Council will consider revisions to Pacific Halibut Commercial and Recreational Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) and regulations for the 2026 season. Final action for establishing the 2026 Pacific halibut fisheries is scheduled for the November 2025 Council meeting. The GAP should consider recommending modifications to the CSP, as appropriate

GROUNDFISH

G.2 Phase 2 Stock Definitions Final Preferred Alternative

This agenda item is the continuation of the larger Phase 2 action. The Council considered all 86 groundfish species in June and adopted final preferred alternative (FPA) and stock definitions for a total of 40 species. For a review of the June decisions, please see the [June Decision Document](#). This agenda item is specific to the remaining 42 groundfish species. At their June meeting, the

Council adopted its preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) for 40 species and directed additional analysis for two others (for which PPA had been adopted in March 2025). In June, seven species (or stocks of species¹) were adopted under Alternative 1 and thus identified as in need of conservation and management in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Stock definitions were proposed for four of these species that did not already have their stocks defined. A total of 26 species or stocks of species were adopted under Alternative 2, which identifies them as not in need of conservation and management in the EEZ and would remove them from the fishery management plan (FMP). The Council adopted Alternative 3 for 12 species, which designates them as ecosystem component (EC) species in the FMP. These species would remain in the FMP, and limited management measures could apply, but would likely not be actively managed. The GAP and GMT should review the final version of the analyses and make recommendations to support an FPA regarding all 42 species considered under this action. In developing their statements, the GMT and GAP should consider offering detailed comments regarding the nine species/stocks of species adopted under Alternative 1 as PPA and rationale for requiring conservation and management in the EEZ.

G.3 Adopt Stock Assessments

At this meeting, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will review the five benchmark assessments and Stock Assessment Review panel reports, two update assessments, and six catch-only projections. The SSC Groundfish Subcommittee will provide recommendations to the full SSC (see reports from their August 12-13 review). The SSC is expected to make recommendations to the Council regarding these assessments relative to best scientific information available and use in fishery management. Based on the SSC's recommendations, the Council will consider adopting the assessments or, if appropriate, recommend an assessment(s) go to through the Supplemental Review Process scheduled in October 2025. The GMT and GAP should consider the assessments and catch-only projections and comment as appropriate.

G.4 Stock Assessment Methodology Topic Selection – Final Topics

This agenda item concerns selecting methodology review topics proposed for use in future stock assessments. The Council will consider recommendations on any new proposed groundfish methodologies and adopt topics which merit a formal methodology review in 2026. If endorsed, these new methodologies would be available for the upcoming cycle of stock assessments in 2027. The GMT and GAP may review any documents and provide recommendations, as appropriate, for this agenda item.

G.5 Trawl Catch Share Program- Preliminary

The Magnuson-Stevens Act indicates that catch share programs should be reviewed at least once every seven years after the first review is completed (Section 303A(c)(i)(G)). To avoid overlap with heavy workload on the biennial specifications, at the end of its first review, the Council specified a six-year cycle for future reviews, with reviews to start on even-numbered years. The Council began discussing the second catch share review in September 2022, however, work was delayed due to the Council's ongoing consideration of a gear switching limitation. The Council took action on gear switching at its March 2024 Council meeting and the Council provided

¹ Note, 'stocks' in this context applies to both those already defined (under Amendment 31), as well as the potential range of stock definition Options for each species adopted by the Council in March 2025 ([Agenda Item H.6, Supplemental Revised Attachment 1, March 2025](#)).

guidance on the scope and focus of the trawl catch share review in September 2024. Specifically, the review document will look at the program performance of the trawl catch share program and provide a diagnosis of why the program does not appear to be meeting its economic goals and objectives. This would include factors related to program design and those outside of the Council process and would have a high priority focus on the non-whiting bottom trawl sector.

The GAP and the GMT should review the preliminary draft of the trawl catch share program review (Attachment 1) and provide any feedback on the preliminary findings. The Council is scheduled to finalize the trawl catch share review in November 2025, where the initial diagnosis portion of the review will be brought back for consideration by the Council.

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

In June, the Council adopted a process and schedule for the 2027-28 groundfish fisheries harvest specifications and management measures (see [Agenda Item E.8, Attachment 1, June 2025](#)). The Council will begin considering groundfish harvest specifications and management measures for the next biennium at this meeting. Specific Council's tasks include adopting overfishing limits (OFL), a range of acceptable biological catches (ABC), a preliminary range of annual catch limits (ACL), and identifying a preliminary range of management measures for 2027-28 groundfish fisheries, as appropriate. The GAP and GMT should discuss and offer alternative harvest control rules for Council consideration. Additionally, the GMT and GAP should consider recommending management measures adjustments that will address the needs of the fishery for inclusion in this process, as the Council is expected to task the GMT with scoping management measures as part of their October meeting.

G.7 Inseason Adjustments – Final Action

This agenda item will consider progress to date of the groundfish fisheries as well as routine inseason adjustments to the 2025 fisheries, as necessary, to achieve Council objectives for the fishery. Additionally, in June 2025, the Council requested Northwest Fisheries Science Center, in conjunction with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region, to add 2026 catch projections to the 2027-28 catch-only assessment updates currently being completed for petrale sole, shortspine thornyhead, and canary rockfish. The Council recommended that, if possible, Council staff and NMFS develop ad hoc acceptable biological catch control rules for SSC and Council consideration at the September 2025 meeting. The GMT and GAP should recommend any inseason adjustments and could consider recommendations related to the catch projections of the three aforementioned species.

CROSS FMP

H.1 Adaptive Management and Flexibility - Scoping

The objective of the Adaptive Management and Flexibility project is to identify and apply management innovations and process improvements that allow for more timely and efficient responses to changing environmental conditions and unexpected events. At the April 2025 Council meeting, the Council discussed [several tools and approaches](#). Attachment 1 under this agenda item provides further discussion of an implementation framework and potential suite of actions that the Council could consider advancing. The Council also prioritized the Groundfish FMP for an evaluation of these tools; that work is currently being taken up under the [Groundfish Harvest Specifications Flexibility action](#). During their discussions of this agenda item, the GMT and GAP may wish to provide feedback on Attachment 1 as well as identify additional challenges in their

respective FMPs and/or any actions, measures, and processes that could benefit from more nimble and adaptive approaches.

H.2 Council Response to Executive Orders and Administration Updates.

Under this agenda item, the Council will adopt its final priorities in response to Executive Order (EO) 14276, *Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness*. Identified actions should stabilize markets, improve access, enhance economic profitability, and prevent closures. The EO also directs the Council to commit to a work plan with dates for final Council action and NMFS implementation, and identified actions are expected to appear in the Office of Management and Budget's Unified Agenda. In June 2025, the Council adopted preliminary priorities and directed staff to evaluate which measures best meet the EO criteria. Staff recommends submitting a letter to NMFS highlighting overarching priorities common across the FMPs, along with a matrix of specific regulatory actions, amendments, and exempted fishing permits (Attachments 5 and 6). In addition, several Council members propose a separate letter to the Secretary of Commerce identifying broader actions beyond the EO that could strengthen seafood competitiveness (Agenda Item H.2.a). Input from Advisory Bodies should reference the Year-at-a-Glance and evaluate whether Attachments 5 and 6 are complete, given the EO requirement to commit to a work plan with dates for final Council action and NMFS implementation. Advisory Subpanels will be given a set of framing questions to facilitate their response on Agenda Item H.2.a.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

I.3 Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

Council Operating Procedures (COP) 27 describes the triggers for allocation reviews for the Council's FMPs. Through recent Council actions (Intersector Allocation Review and the Limited Entry Fixed Gear Actions), Council staff have identified some administrative updates. The GAP and GMT should review the proposed changes and provide feedback.

Other Items

The following are additional pre-Council meeting briefings that may be of interest:

- The GMT will host a [work session](#) to discuss the 2027-28 harvest specifications and management measures on Tuesday September 2, 2025 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time.
- The GAP and GMT will host a joint pre-September Council meeting [webinar](#) to discuss items on the Council's September agenda on Tuesday, September 9, 2025 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time.
- The SSC will host a [webinar meeting](#) to review the stock assessments and stock assessment and review (STAR) panel reports for yellowtail rockfish north of 40°10' N. lat., California quillback rockfish, and chilipepper rockfish on September 3, 2025 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time.
- The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Program will host a session on Friday, September 19, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time on the GAP webinar to provide an update of their report and take questions and feedback from attendees.

This mailing includes the enclosures listed below. Please review these briefing materials in advance to facilitate an efficient meeting week. Please note that the Council will continue to

encourage participants to obtain briefing book materials via our website. Printed materials are not available at the meeting, unless requested.

Thank you for your commitment to the Council process and management of Pacific groundfish fisheries.

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Enclosures include:

1. Agenda Item A. – Council Meeting Agenda and Executive Director’s Report
2. Agenda Item B.1 – Open Public Comment
3. Agenda Item E – Pacific Halibut Administrative
4. Agenda Item G – Groundfish Management
5. Agenda Item H – Cross FMP
6. Agenda Item I – Administrative
7. Enforcement Consultants Agenda
8. GAP Agenda
9. GMT Agenda
10. SSC Agenda and Draft Minutes
11. Informational Reports
12. General Information and Council Roster

PPMC

08/26/25