Pacific Fishery Management Council ***NEWS RELEASE***

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Pacific Fishery Management Council Celebrates Rebuilding of West Coast Groundfish Stocks

Yelloweye Rockfish Declared Rebuilt, Marking a Major Milestone in Sustainable Fisheries Management

Portland, OR — The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has announced a major conservation success: the rebuilding of the yelloweye rockfish stock, one of the most long-lived species on the West Coast. In addition, the latest stock assessment for California quillback rockfish indicates that stock was never overfished. With this announcement, all groundfish species that were once considered overfished have been rebuilt—an achievement that underscores decades of collaborative, science-based management, and the long-standing commitment of West Coast fishing stakeholders and communities to sustainable fishing. This announcement concludes conservation efforts that began near the turn of the last century, resulting in over two decades of highly restrictive fishing regulations, and hundreds of millions of dollars in lost economic opportunity to rebuild several overfished groundfish stocks.

“The rebuilding of yelloweye rockfish represents not just a victory for science and management, but for the people and coastal communities who worked tirelessly to bring these species back,” said Council Chair Pete Hassemer. “This milestone shows that when we work together—fishermen, scientists, managers, and conservationists—we can have abundant oceans and sustainable fisheries.”

The yelloweye rockfish was declared overfished by the Council in 2002. Since then, the Council, NOAA Fisheries, and stakeholders have implemented a comprehensive rebuilding plan that reduced harvests, improved catch monitoring, and protected key habitats. After more than two decades of steady progress, the latest stock assessment confirms that yelloweye rockfish have recovered to desired levels.

This success builds on a long track record of recovery within the groundfish fishery. Since the early 2000s, 11 groundfish species have been declared rebuilt, transforming the West Coast groundfish fishery into a model of sustainability.

“This is a story of hope,” said Merrick Burden, Executive Director of the Council. “It demonstrates that through science and collaboration, we can ensure that future generations will benefit from our remarkable fishery resources.”

The Council will continue to work with partners to sustain the progress made, ensuring that the West Coast groundfish fishery remains one of the most sustainably managed in the world.

For more information, visit www.pcouncil.org.