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2026

NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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E Staff Tasking

October 2026 Council Meeting
Action Memo

Council Staff: Diana Evans, Anna Henry
Action Required: 1. Review Committees, Plan Teams, and upcoming meetings
2. Discuss prioritization
3. Provide direction on tasking priorities, scheduling, and future meetings

BACKGROUND

Committees and Plan Teams Membership and Upcoming Meetings

Membership

Posted on the eAgenda is an open [call for nominations](#) for **2027 SSC and Advisory Panel members**, accepting nominations through October 31, 2026. The Council will discuss SSC/AP appointments at the December 2026 Council meeting.

Status of future advisory group meetings

The following Committee and Plan Team meetings are currently anticipated:

Advisory Group	Dates and location	Draft agenda topics (<i>may change</i>)
Joint Protocol Committee	October 16, 2026 Anchorage, AK	● Overview of NPFMC measures to protect habitat and mitigate adverse impacts of trawl fisheries.
Charter Halibut Management Committee	October 21, 2026 Virtual	● Receive final 2025 harvest estimates / preliminary harvest estimates for 2026 ● Recommend charter management measures for analysis
BSAI Crab Plan Team	November 5, 2026 Virtual	● NSRKC specifications ● AIGKC proposed model runs ● SAFE Guidelines
Joint BSAI/GOA Groundfish Plan Teams	Nov 16-20, 2026 Seattle, WA and virtual	● Review Ecosystem Status Reports (ESRs) ● Stock assessment review and final specifications for groundfish
Charter Halibut Management Committee	TBD December, 2026 Anchorage, AK and virtual	● Recommend 2027 charter management measures

Crab and Scallop Plan Team Merger

Staff are continuing to coordinate the specifics of the merger of the BSAI Crab Plan Team and Alaska Scallop Plan Teams in accordance with the Council's June recommendation. We will provide updates including the new plan team name, membership and other logistical details as they progress.

Staff Review of Committee Terms of Reference

Beginning in February 2024, the Council expressed interest in having clearly articulated Terms of Reference (TORs) for all of its committees, and through 2025 adopted or revised TORs for all committees. Staff are conducting a comprehensive review of these TORs and have developed some minor recommendations for items to revisit for consistency or specificity. As these items are identified, staff recommendations for potential updates to TORs will be reviewed by individual committees, followed by Council review and final approval. The Council will review updated TORs for the Executive/Finance Committee during executive session at this meeting.

Ecosystem Committee Report

The Ecosystem Committee is meeting October 5th and 6th. The Committee eAgenda is linked for reference, however the Council will receive the October Ecosystem Committee report at the December meeting as part of the groundfish management priorities agenda item.

Tasking and Scheduling

Posted on the eAgenda is an updated version of the 3-meeting outlook. The eAgenda also includes updated versions of Council staff responsibilities, and the groundfish workplan, as background.

Upcoming Council meetings

The next three Council meetings are all scheduled to be held in-person: December 2026 at the Egan Center in Anchorage, AK, February/March 2027 at the Marriott Hotel in Anchorage, AK and May 2027 at the Renaissance Hotel in Seattle, WA. Please note that there is a unique schedule for the December meeting: the SSC will be meeting for 4 days (November 30-December 3), the AP will not start until Wednesday, December 2 and the Council meeting will not start until Friday, December 4. There will also be a reception celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Magnuson Stevens Act on Thursday, December 3 from 6-8pm at the Anchorage Museum, so attendees can view the current exhibit [Arctic Marine Science: Sikuliaq to Shore](#).

Cook Inlet Salmon Scheduling

In 2025 and 2026 the Council recommended annual harvest specifications for the Cook Inlet exclusive economic zone (EEZ) salmon fishery at the February meeting. NMFS has informed the Council that the 2027 schedule of a later February/early March meeting does not allow sufficient time for NMFS to publish proposed and final harvest specifications in the Federal Register prior to the start of the salmon fishing season on June 21, 2027 (see 50 CFR 679.118(e)(1)). Therefore, following a process similar to that used for groundfish harvest specifications, the Council will need to recommend proposed salmon harvest specifications at its December 2026 meeting based on the previous year's SAFE report, consistent with the SSC-approved recommendations from February 2026. The Council and SSC will then review and evaluate any new data and assessments at the regularly scheduled February 2027 meeting, and any necessary revisions can be incorporated into the final rule. Future versions of the 3-meeting outlook and December schedule will reflect a Council only agenda item of proposed specifications for Cook Inlet Salmon.

GOA Tanner Crab Initial Review progress update

At the June meeting, the Council requested staff provide an update on the progress on GOA Tanner crab protection measures analysis and any pertinent information relevant to future scheduling. At this point

staff believe the analysis is on track for initial review at the February 2027 meeting. While quantitative modeling of fleet displacement scenarios is not expected in this version of the analysis due to data limitations, this analysis will utilize previously unavailable data from the NMFS Catch in Areas 2.0 database to allow for higher resolution displays of catch and CPUE that will support a qualitative analysis.

February 2027 SSC is overscheduled

The 3-meeting outlook currently has the SSC overscheduled in February. There is not sufficient agenda time for the SSC to review Final specifications for Cook Inlet Salmon, Initial Reviews of GOA Tanner crab protection measures and Bering Sea Herring PSC limit adjustment, and Progress updates on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) 5-year review. Due to these time constraints, and pending the Council's prioritization discussion at this meeting, staff recommend moving the Initial Review of Bering Sea Herring PSC limit adjustment off of the February agenda. This agenda item is a better candidate for rescheduling than others as the Council has not yet spent meeting time reviewing it and it would not impact timelines external to the Council process. Cook Inlet salmon specifications cannot be rescheduled without impacting the start of the fishing season. Federal regulations require Councils review and revise EFH components every 5 years, currently scheduled for 2028. While the timeline may still be possible without the SSC receiving progress updates in February 2027, this SSC review is an important sequential step in the review process. Finally, the Council has already spent significant time reviewing GOA Tanner crab protection measures and it would be most efficient to continue current progress on this action.

Prioritization Discussion

The Council will be following up on the prioritization discussion that began earlier this meeting during B reports and making any recommendations under Staff Tasking. Note that relevant information for the Council's prioritization discussion is provided in the [NPFMC Management Priorities-- Framework for Council Discussion](#), posted under B1, as well as the B2 NMFS Management Report which includes information on NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division Prioritization, and National NMFS priorities (including specific information regarding the action to Eliminate the IFQ deduction for bled sablefish that has not yet been scheduled).

Proposals and Public Comment

Written public comments that have been submitted to the Council are available on the eAgenda.