

# Draft SSC Report

# February 2026



**C1 Pacific Cod Assessment**

# C1 GOA Groundfish Harvest Specifications

## Pacific Cod

- Out-of-cycle operational update assessment, in response to December 2025 Council motion
- The SSC commends the AFSC and all the analysts for producing the SAFE and associated documents on an abbreviated timeline
- The SSC recognizes that taking up the GOA Pacific cod assessment out of cycle is a unique circumstance, but notes the danger of prioritizing assessments based on perceived trends. This approach, if repeated, can inadvertently create bias in the entire management system that was not anticipated in the FMP.

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## Pacific Cod

- The SSC **recommends** Model 24.0, the 2024 approved base model, in agreement with author and GPT
- Tier 3b
- GOA Pacific cod is not subject to overfishing in 2024, and not overfished or approaching an overfished condition in 2025
- The SSC **recommends** setting ABC at maxABC, in agreement with the author and GPT
  - OFL = 49,782 t, ABC = 41,520 t in 2026
  - OFL = 38,812 t, ABC = 32,209 t in 2027

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- The SSC ***supports*** a revised approach to estimating biomass by region and the resulting subarea apportionments:

	<u>Western</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Eastern</u>	<u>Total</u>
Area apportionment	24.8%	69.2%	6.0%	100%
2026 apportionment	10,297	28,732	2,491	41,520
2027 apportionment	7,987	22,289	1,933	32,209

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- Elevated risk (level 2) was identified in the risk table category for Ecosystem Considerations
  - Unfavorable environmental conditions similar to early “Blob” years imply an increased risk of poor recruitment and reduced growth and survival of Pacific cod in coming years
  - The SSC **recommends** carefully monitoring Pacific cod, especially if warm conditions continue
- In light of emerging information about the migratory behavior of Pacific cod, the SSC **highlights** the need to re-consider the assessment and management of Pacific cod in the Alaska region