

Council Communications Discussion

Ecosystem Committee, October 5-6, 2026

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EC Communications Discussion Topics

1. Update on Harvest Control Rules work, and communications and engagement strategy planning
2. Harvest specifications fact sheets and next steps
3. Other Council communications opportunities



Context: May 2026 Ecosystem Committee Recommendations

Ecosystem Committee May [Report](#)

The EC recommended making information about the harvest specification process and the incorporation of uncertainty more publicly accessible and available on the Council website, and requested use of the Council's Inflation Reduction Act funding to support additional public-facing outreach products such as short 1-2 page flyers. The EC recommended they have a role in review and refinement to help products be in a form that the public understands.



Context: June 2026 Council Motion (excerpt)

Council Motion E2:
Climate Resiliency Work Plan - Harvest Control Rules
June 9, 2026

The Council approves the following next steps: (excerpt)

Engagement and Communication Strategy: Per the Ecosystem Committee recommendations, develop plain language materials related to the Council's climate resilience work, including the current system to set overfishing and catch limits and the new harvest control rule work



Harvest Control Rules Update

EZ Harvest Control Rules
JUNE 2026

Risk and Uncertainty in the Groundfish and Crab Harvest Specifications Process and Development of Alternative Harvest Control Rules May 2026¹

The Committee and Council reviewed the [HCR May 2026](#) discussion paper

Council direction in June 2026:

Support for continued HCR work leading to Council discussion in May 2027 beginning with request for Joint Groundfish Plan Team review of draft results

Support the objectives provided by staff for purposes of the synthesis and initial review of performance metrics used to determine how alternative HCRs perform compared to status quo.

Priority on evaluations for pollock and Pacific cod (BSAI and GOA) and Alaska sablefish.

Develop communication and engagement strategy

Address SSC recommendations from 2025-2026



Project Update

Per Council direction Council staff are working on an engagement strategy. Our starting point is to focus upon our Status Quo process (more details next slide)

Timeline for the HCR science has shifted, CLIM HCR final results are expected in Fall of 2027

Staff are working on what to bring forward in May 2027 to the SSC/AP/Council

- **We will discuss possible items with the SSC this week for both broader HCR work as well as Sablefish specific HCRs**
- **Meanwhile working with AFSC on their engagement strategy for stakeholder feedback on CLIM results. Target for Spring 2027, details under development**
 - **More information in early November for the November Groundfish Plan Team meeting week of November 16th**

Draft results of status quo simulations for pollock, cod and (separately) sablefish MSE indicate that under most circumstances **current HCRs are robust over time**. Some changes could improve longer term for some stocks but changes are likely not necessary for all stocks.

Sablefish MSE stakeholder meeting schedule for 2027 (January/February TBD), possibly include results and overview/next steps in a May discussion paper



Communications and Engagement Strategy

Focus on our current process:

- **How and where is our process robust to environmental changes** and where adjustments are already available (through risk tables, assessment changes) to accommodate changing conditions
- **Efforts we are currently focusing on:**
 - Specifications 101 Wednesday evening
 - Draft Fact sheets posted to EC agenda
 - Focus on creating materials that useful for more than one meeting

We are seeking EC feedback on the current strategy, utility of evening sessions and fact sheets. Specifically:

- **What more can we do? Additional virtual sessions? Follow up session in December?**
Specific topics for which our focus could help provide resources for stakeholder?



Harvest Specifications Materials

5 fact sheets posted to [eAgenda](#):

- Intro to the NPFMC Harvest Specifications Process
- The Annual Groundfish Harvest Specifications Process
- NS2/Best Scientific Information Available
- Harvest Control Rules and the Groundfish Tier System
- Ecosystem Information in the Harvest Specifications Process

Next steps

- EC discussion and feedback
- Final staff review
- Post materials to website
- Add text to harvest specifications page

DRAFT FOR REVIEW
September 2026



Introduction to the NPFMC Harvest Specifications Process *Balancing Opportunity and Risk*

Key Terms

MSA: The Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) is the primary law governing the management of fisheries in U.S. Federal waters (3-200 nm). It establishes the system of U.S. Regional Fishery Management Councils, including NPFMC, tasked with making recommendations for fishery conservation and management.

National Standards: The MSA includes ten National Standards, with which all management recommendations must be consistent.

National Standard 1: Conservation and management measures shall prevent overfishing while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery for the United States fishing industry.

National Standard 2: Conservation and management measures shall be based upon the best scientific information available.

Harvest specifications refers to the Council's annual process of recommending scientifically-based catch limits for managed stocks. Through this process, managers balance the mandates of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), the National Standards (NS) and the NS guidelines to optimize fisheries yield, use the best scientific information available, provide benefits to the public, and maintain the long term sustainability of fish stocks and fishing communities.

Accounting for uncertainty and risk

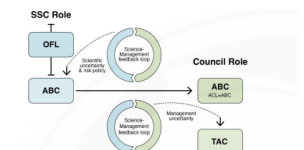
The harvest specifications process is a structured approach to considering *uncertainty* and *risk* in setting harvest levels. Uncertainty and risk can be reduced and accounted for, but not eliminated entirely.

There are two types of uncertainty involved in setting harvest levels:

- **Scientific uncertainty** refers to a relative lack of information or confidence in the reliability of that information. All stock assessments involve some level of uncertainty. For example: How accurate is our knowledge about how quickly a stock can grow and reproduce? How well does an assessment model reflect actual conditions?
- **Management uncertainty** refers to how well management tools can constrain harvest to a desired level. For example, what is the level of precision involved in estimating catch and discards? How quickly can this information be used for in-season management to prevent catch from reaching a specified limit?

Risk refers to the likelihood of an adverse event, and the severity of the consequences. In the context of harvest specifications, risk refers to the potential for fishing at a level that results in overfishing, and could cause a stock to be overfished. Within the bounds of the MSA and NS1 guidelines, the Council considers uncertainty and makes a policy decision about how risk tolerant or risk averse to be. The Council follows a precautionary, ecosystem-based approach to managing Federal fisheries.

Relative considerations of scientific uncertainty and risk in setting an ABC control rule (left side) and the roles of both the SSC and the Council in balancing scientific and management decisions in doing so. Also shown (to right) is the policy role in using management uncertainty considerations in recommending TAC for groundfish stocks. For crab stocks, TAC is set by ADPSC.



Steps in the Harvest Specifications Process

The harvest specifications process includes the following steps for each of the Council's Fishery Management Plans (FMP)s. The timing and division of responsibilities among the Council, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the State of Alaska varies by FMP.



Harvest Specifications Materials

- Is this format (2 page fact sheet) helpful? Are there other formats we should consider?
- Does this meet your understanding of plain language? How else can we improve accessibility?
- Are there other topics that would be helpful to summarize in this format? (e.g., crab harvest specs)

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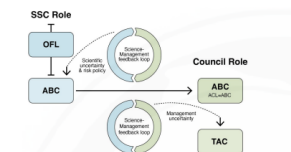
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Other Council Communications

- Recent website revisions and content reorganization
 - How we work → Navigating the Council Process (also PDF flyer with QR code)
 - How we work → Management Policies
- Are there other topics (such as substantive topics, Council process questions) for which plain language communications would be valuable?
- In what format? Web text, standalone materials, other ideas?



Navigating the North Pacific Fishery Management Council Process

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council provides scientifically-informed recommendations for managing fisheries in the Federal waters off of Alaska.

Ensuring accessibility and a transparent public process is important to us. The Council has developed a variety of multimedia resources to support public engagement in Council meetings.

Staff are always available at meetings and at support@npfmc.org.

The Council's [Navigating the Process](#) webpage provides all the resources you need to follow along and provide input on topics discussed during council meetings.

www.npfmc.org/how-we-work/navigating-the-council-process/



CONTACT NPFMC
907-271-2809 | npfmc.org



Resources for Navigating the Council Process

HOW TO STAY INFORMED OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

Check out "Our Meetings" tab on the Council homepage for:

- Council meeting calendar
- Three meeting outlook
- Future meetings

Visit our "Current or Next Council Meeting" page with key information on meeting dates and locations, and how to participate.

- **eAgenda** - What will be discussed.
- **Schedule** - Approximately when items will be discussed.
- **Pre-meeting review document** - List of briefing documents being developed, and anticipated dates posting to the eAgenda.

HOW TO JOIN OUR MEETINGS

Participate in-person or virtually in Council, Scientific and Statistical Committee, Advisory Panel, Plan Team, and Committee meetings.

- **Join via Zoom** - View the meeting and provide public testimony during the public comment period.
- **Youtube** - Video streams provide a lower-bandwidth, "listen-only" alternative to Zoom for Council, SSC, and AP meetings.
- **Text Alerts** - Sign up for alerts during meetings by texting "NPFMC" to 1-833-237-1598 for updates on the status of agenda items during meetings.

HOW TO PROVIDE COMMENTS AND TESTIMONY

We welcome written comments and oral testimony on all Council meeting agenda items. Submit written comments and/or sign up to give oral testimony through the eAgenda through our homepage. A step-by-step guide on how to sign up to give testimony can be found on our [Youtube channel](#).

When commenting, remember to 1) introduce yourself and your relationship to the fishery, 2) identify the issue you are commenting on, and 3) describe the action you would like the Council to take.

HOW TO ACCESS CURRENT AND ARCHIVED MATERIALS

The Council's electronic or eAgenda is available from our website and provides access to meeting documents including staff presentations, analytical documents, real-time council motions, meeting summaries, and committee reports.

The eAgenda also provides a searchable means to view final records for past meetings back to 1976. Video recordings of past Council meetings from 2020-present can also be found on our [Youtube channel](#). Detailed instructions and tutorials are available on our [Navigating the Process](#) page.

Phone: 907-271-2809 Web: npfmc.org Youtube: [@npfmc](https://www.youtube.com/@npfmc)