

North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Motion for C5(d) - Blackspotted Rougheye Accountability Measures
October 7, 2025

The Council initiates an FMP and regulatory amendment with the following purpose and need and alternatives:

Purpose and Need

The annual catch limit (ACL), which is equal to the acceptable biological catch (ABC), for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) blackspotted and rougheye rockfish (BSRE) stock complex has been exceeded for three of the past four years (2021 – 2024). The overfishing limit (OFL) has not been exceeded in any of these years. There has been no open directed fishery for BSRE. The species in this complex are increasingly found mixed with other target fisheries, and are caught incidentally, primarily in the Aleutian Islands Pacific Ocean perch fishery. While accountability measures are specified in the BSAI groundfish Fishery Management Plan, recent implementation of these measures has not prevented catch from exceeding the ACL. The National Standard 1 guidelines require that the system of ACLs and accountability measures be reevaluated and modified, if necessary, when an ACL is exceeded more than once in a four-year period. In accordance with the National Standard 1 guidelines, the Council is considering modifying accountability measures by adding inseason management authority for NMFS to better control harvest of groundfish stocks to prevent catch from exceeding the ACL.

Alternatives

Alternative 1. No Action, status quo.

Alternative 2. Add NMFS inseason management authority to the BSAI groundfish FMP and the GOA groundfish FMP regulations at 50 CFR 679 to allow NMFS to respond to ACL overages. This should be consistent with NMFS inseason management authority already in place for overfishing closures (50 CFR 679.20(d)(3)) and inseason adjustments (50 CFR 679.25). If NMFS determines that fishing may lead to an exceedance of an ACL more than once in a four-year period, NMFS may use inseason management authority to specify limitations or prohibitions designed to prevent an additional ACL exceedance for that species or species group.

Alternative 3. Add new NMFS inseason management authority to the BSAI groundfish FMP regulations at 50 CFR 679 as in Alternative 2, but only for the BSRE complex if an ACL is exceeded more than once in a four-year period.