
D2 Planning for Fall 2026 Groundfish Stock Assessment Cycle

Report from SSC/AFSC/Council Staff Workgroup

NPFMC: Sara Cleaver, Diana Stram

AFSC: Melissa Haltuch, Chris Lunsford

February 2026



Background

- No new operational groundfish stock assessments in 2025, 1 HP
- 2026 assessments will inform 2027 and 2028 specifications
- Dec 2025, SSC recommended forming a workgroup
 - Develop report for February with groundfish assessments prioritized for 2026



SSC action items

- Review working group recommendations
- Evaluate 2026 trade off stocks that won't be assessed this year
- Recommend stocks to be brought forth in Sept/Oct and Nov/Dec



SSC criteria for prioritizing 2026 stock assessments (from Dec 2025)

- Stock assessments with a one-year cycle completed as normal
- Stock assessments with a four-year cycle shifted forward by one year
- Prioritize two-year stocks from 2025 and 2026
- Prioritize:
 - AI Pacific Cod, BSAI Yellowfin Sole, BSAI Other Rockfish, BSAI Skates
 - GOA RE/BS, GOA Shortraker, and GOA POP



Workgroup prioritization for 2026 stock assessments

Additional working group recommendations:

- Produce **Harvest Projections** in 2026 for all Tier 1-3 stocks without operational full / update assessments
- Tier 6 stocks on four-year cycle not prioritized
- Prioritize stocks that had preliminary review in fall 2025
- Prioritize availability of new survey data from 2025 or 2026
- Stocks catch/ABC ratio, lower priority for lower ratios



A	B	C	D	E	F	H	G	I	J
Stock	Region	Tier	Frequency	2026 Assessment Type	SSC Priority Dec. 2025	Catch/ABC Ratio	Proposed Full Review Sept/Oct 2025	Operational assessments that could be completed for Sept/Oct 2026 Review	Operational assessments for Nov/Dec 2026 Review
Yellowfin sole	EBS/AI	1	1	Full	x	0.34	x		x
Pacific cod	AI	3	1	Full	x	0.57			x
Pacific cod	EBS	3	1	Full		0.34			x
Pollock	EBS	3	1	Full		0.85	x		x
Pollock	Bogoslof	5	2	Update		0		x	
Northern rock sole	EBS/AI	1	2	HP		0.24			
Pollock	AI	3	2	HP		0.12			
Atka mackerel	EBS/AI	3	2	Update		0.98			x
Greenland turbot	EBS/AI	3	2	Full		0.1	x		x
Kamchatka flounder	EBS/AI	3	2	HP		0.68			
Northern rockfish	EBS/AI	3	2	HP		0.46	x		
Pacific ocean perch	EBS/AI	3	2	Update		0.9			x
Rougheye & blackspotted rockfish	EBS/AI	3	2	Update		1.12			x
Skates	EBS/AI	3, 5	2	Full	x	0.71	x		x
Alaska plaice	EBS/AI	3	4	HP		0.29			
Arrowtooth flounder	EBS/AI	3	4	HP		0.12			
Flathead sole	EBS/AI	3	4	HP		0.19			
Other rockfish	EBS/AI	5	2	Update	x	1.1			x
Shortraker rockfish	EBS/AI	5	2	Update		0.34			x
Other flatfish	EBS/AI	5	4	CR		0.18			
Octopus	EBS/AI	6	4	CR		0.05			
Sharks	EBS/AI	6	4	CR		0.46			



A	B	C	D	E	F	H	G	I	J
Stock	Region	Tier	Frequency	2026 Assessment Type	SSC Priority Dec. 2025	Catch/ABC Ratio	Proposed Full Reviewed Sept/Oct 2025	Operational assessments that could be completed for Sept/Oct 2026 Review	Operational assessments for Nov/Dec 2026 Review
Pacific cod	GOA	3	1	HP		0.59	Update done early 2026		
Pollock	GOA	3	1	Full		0.68	x		x
Dusky rockfish	GOA	3	2	HP		0.29			
Northern rockfish	GOA	3	2	Update		0.24		x	
Pacific ocean perch	GOA	3	2	Full	x	0.6	x	x	
Rougheye & blackspotted rockfish	GOA	3	2	Full	x	0.25	x	x	
Other rockfish	GOA	4, 5, 6	2	Update		0.14		x	
Shortraker rockfish	GOA	5	2	Full	x	0.54			x
Skates	GOA	5	2	Update		0.5		x	
Thornyheads	GOA	5	2	Update		NA		x	
Demersal shelf rockfish	GOA	5, 6	2	Full		NA			x
Arrowtooth flounder	GOA	3	4	Full		0.15	x	x	
Flathead sole	GOA	3	4	HP		0.03			
Rex sole	GOA	3	4	Full		0.03	x, 2025 CIE	x	
Shallow water flatfish (includ. N/S rock sole)	GOA	3, 5	4	HP		0.04	x		
Deep water flatfish (includ. Dover sole)	GOA	3, 6	4	HP		0.01			
Sharks	GOA	5, 6	4	CR		0.38			
Atka mackerel	GOA	6	4	CR		0.08			
Octopus	GOA	6	4	CR		0.2			
Sablefish	EBS/AI/GOA	3	1	Full		0.5	x		x
Grenadiers	EBS/AI/GOA	Report	4	NA		NA			
Scorpions	EBS/AI/GOA	Report	4	NA		NA			
Forage species (including Squid)	BSAI/GOA	Eco Report	2	Report					x



Trade off stocks - not assessed in 2026

Four year stocks

- GOA Atka mackerel / GOA Octopus
 - last operational 2021, catch report recommended
- GOA Shallow water flatfish
 - last operational 2021, catch report recommended
- GOA and BSAI sharks
 - Last operational 2022, catch report recommended
- BSAI Flathead sole, BSAI Arrowtooth flounder
 - Last operational 2022, harvest projection recommended



Trade off stocks - not assessed in 2026

Two year stocks

- BSAI Northern rock sole, BSAI Kamchatka flounder, AI Pollock
 - last operational 2024, harvest projection recommended
- GOA Dusky rockfish
 - last operational 2024, harvest projection recommended
- BSAI Northern rockfish
 - Last operational 2023, harvest projection recommended



Review timeline

Sept/Oct and Nov/Dec review of operational assessments

Type of assessment	September/October	November/December
Operational Full	4	10
Operational Update	5	5
Ecosystem Report	0	1
Harvest Projections	12	0



SSC action items

- Review recommendations put forth by working group
- Evaluate 2026 trade off stocks that won't be assessed this year
- Recommend stocks to be brought forth in Sept/Oct and Nov/Dec



