SALMON MANAGEMENT OPTION HEARING SUMMARY

Date: April 1, 2002
Location: Chateau Westport
          Westport, WA

Hearing Officer: Mr. Jim Lone
Other Council Members: Mr. Phil Anderson
                       Mr. Jim Harp
NMFS: Mr. Bill Robinson
Coast Guard: LT Brian Corrigan
Salmon Team Member: Mr. Doug Milward
Council Staff: Ms. Jennifer Gilden

Organizations Represented:

Synopsis of Testimony

Of the seven people testifying:

- Three commented primarily on the commercial troll fishery.
- Two commented primarily on the recreational (charter) fishery.
- Two commented primarily on gillnet fisheries.

Special Opening Remarks

Mr. Jim Lone reported that an unusual combination of high chinook and low coho populations has resulted in increased chinook opportunity in May and June and more conservative coho opportunities during the summer months. Mr. Doug Milward (Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife) described the impact of the salmon management options on the fisheries in the area. He also explained the reason for the correction made to the Preseason Report II.

Commercial Troll Comments

A representative of the Washington Trollers Association reported on meetings involving Westport and Seattle trollers. He indicated that most trollers want a chinook fishery for the entire summer, and some would like to harvest coho off Area 1. However, their main concern is incidental catch of halibut. Most trollers prefer last year’s Option 1, which allowed one halibut per three salmon, plus one additional halibut, with a 35-halibut cap. He noted that trollers were strongly opposed to Option 3’s closure in Area 3 from 48°00” N to 48°15” N when halibut are available. The area to be closed is a very productive harvest area, particularly for chinook.

He felt the recreational fishery had a greater impact on yelloweye rockfish than the commercial troll fishery, and trollers targeting salmon and halibut in the “hot spot” area being closed encounter almost no yelloweye because of the gear used. He noted the additional 15 miles of closure, particularly inside 50 fathoms, is an excellent chinook harvest area in May, June, and July. He also emphasized that trollers had voluntarily offered the mushroom closure (Cape Flattery Control Zone) to avoid migrating Puget Sound stocks. This also closes most of the area shown by the recreational fishery to have a high abundance of yelloweye. Another troller felt the Council should revise the wording on the halibut hotspot regulation in order to clarify what actions are prohibited in the area. He added that he would like to see an option that extends the chinook season until September 30, when there is good chinook fishing on the “prairie.”
Recreational Comments

All recreational fishers present supported Option 1 north of Cape Falcon, and supported the 2 chinook limit throughout the season and a 7-day week during the May 25-June 16 chinook-only fishery. They also supported a June 30 opening for the all-species fishery. However, their highest priority is to be able to fish the entire time period and avoid an inseason closure, which requires assigning enough chinook to the fishery to ensure the full 23 days. They felt the 20,000 chinook assigned in Option 1 should be sufficient for this purpose. The recreational fishers were also concerned about opening the July-August fishery 7 days per week on August 16. In order to increase the likelihood of having the fishery open on Labor Day, they would prefer to have the 7-day week timeframe begin on August 30 rather than August 16. There was also support for a trade with the troll fishery to maximize the amount of coho available to the recreational fishery above Cape Falcon, with an exchange ratio of 4 coho per chinook.

Gillnetter Comments

The gillnetters present called for the Council to consider:

- The 2,000-chinook guideline for the traditional summer dip-in fishery, and the fact the dip-in fishery was proposed only for Willapa Bay. Grays Harbor gillnetters would like to have the dip-in fishery extended to Grays Harbor. One gillnetter noted that gillnetters lost their summer dip-in fishery to create the Buoy 10 fishery. One gillnetter felt the estimate of 25% of the catch from Willapa Bay stocks was inflated, based on a tag survey conducted in the early 1980s.

- Consider recent research on the beneficial effects of using revival boxes to reduce mortality, and possibly require trollsers to test the boxes in order to see if mortality can be reduced. Gillnetters noted that revival boxes have proved to be effective in reviving spring chinook in the Columbia River tanglenet fishery, and might reduce waste of coho and other stocks in the ocean fishery.

- Consider measures to protect Humptulips wild chinook and coho. These populations have dropped, presumably as a result of logging. A gillnetter called for increased cooperation between the Quinault Indian Nation and the state, because the Quinaults catch a large portion of these fish.

Written Statements


PFMC
04/08/02