

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON IDENTIFICATION OF
STOCKS NOT MEETING CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Mr. Dell Simmons reported to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) that three salmon stocks have failed to meet escapement goals for three or more consecutive years. These are Queets Spring/Summer Chinook, Quillayute Spring/Summer Chinook, and Klamath River fall Chinook. The Queets and Quillayute runs are exceptions to the Council's overfishing policy because they are harvested at less than a 5% exploitation rate in Council fisheries.

The failure of Klamath River fall Chinook to meet their escapement floor for three consecutive years is not a surprise. The Council has spent considerable energy and resources anticipating and preparing for this event. The draft report, "Factors affecting the low abundance of Klamath naturally-spawning fall Chinook salmon in 2004 and 2005" by the Habitat Committee, the states of Oregon and California, and the Yurok Tribe, highlights the range of freshwater habitat problems currently limiting Klamath River fall Chinook. However, the report does not specifically address the reasons for the low escapements in 2004 and 2005.

Fishery restrictions play an important role in the protection and recovery of Klamath River fall Chinook, and there have been fishery management failures leading up to the current situation. The history of Klamath fishery management and its role in contributing to the current overfishing concern should be added to the draft document. The rebuilding plan should emphasize that, ultimately, recovery is not possible without actions to improve both in-river habitat and fishery harvest management.

The Draft Report is incomplete, missing many sections including discussions of harvest management, the federal Klamath irrigation project, hatcheries, and ocean conditions. The SSC requests an opportunity to review a draft of this report in a more complete form before it is finalized.

PFMC
03/06/07