SALMON MANAGEMENT OPTION HEARING SUMMARY

Date: March 31, 2009
Location: Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California
Hearing Officer: Mr. Dan Wolford
Other Council Members:
NMFS: Mr. Mark Helvey
Ms. Jennifer Isé
Coast Guard: LT Scott Parkhurst
Council Staff: Mr. Chuck Tracy

Attendance: 65
Testifying: 15

Organizations Represented: Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, Trinity River Guide Association,; Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations; Klamath Management Zone Coalition, American Fisheries Foundation

Synopsis of Testimony

Of the 15 people testifying:

- 12 commented primarily on the recreational fishery.
- 1 commented on both the recreational and commercial fisheries.
- 2 commented primarily on other issues.

Special Opening Remarks

Mr. Wolford gave a brief overview of the meeting process and objectives. Mr. Chuck Tracy gave a brief overview of the recreational and commercial options and associated biological impacts.

Commercial Troll Comments

- One person favored Option III (closed) for Oregon commercial fisheries.
Recreational Comments

California Klamath Management Zone
- 13 people preferred Option I.
- Two people recommended increasing the days open by five days, from August 24 to September 9.

Klamath River Fishery
- Two people recommended reducing the allocation to about 10,000 and passing the remainder through to spawning escapement.

Other Comments
- One person recommended setting a spawning escapement objective for 2009 at 50,000 adult natural area spawners
- One person recommended the Council consider a no fishing option for Oregon recreational fisheries.

Written Statements (Attached)

Vina Free
Chuck Chastaine
Tim Machado
Jim Yarnell
Steve Huber
Bryce Kenny
Ben Doane, Klamath Zone Coalition

PFMC
04/5/09
This is when it will change.

Save our habitats!
I am Chuck, I have been a fisherman all my life. Since moving to California
I have fished Monterey Bay, the Sacremento River & San Francisco Bay to the Klamath River Basin.
In the 25 years I have been there I have seen the result of all the previous years of
government "mismanagement" of all the water that sustain
an enormous fishing that for thousands of years sup-
stant the livelihood of all "indigenous species." Toward
this point the idea "we" the "substances people" are faced
again with the same old thing that result of the
herd of the same people that had been so long.
I feel that the least that others power that effect should do
is allow us subsistence fisherman...
to be able to catch at least the amount of fish that would justify our investment in boat, gear, fuel, fishing license, coast guard equipment, etc., not to mention thehurst Community for having a boat. We the fishermen did not create this situation, but we are the ones that are paying the bigger price.

Thank you.

Your cycle 60 and 1 off
opt 1 better than 0

[Signature]

[Signature]
GOOD EVENING MEMBERS OF THE PFMC. MY NAME IS TIM MACHADO AND I AM A SPORT FISHERMAN OF THE NORTH COAST, ALSO A MEMBER OF THE HUMBOLDT AREA SALTWATER ANGLERS AND THE KLAMATH MANAGEMENT ZONE FISHERIES COALITION.

I FULLY SUPPORT THE SHORT OPTION 1 CHINOOK FISHERY IN THE CALIFORNIA KMZ. THE MODELS PROVIDED BY THE PFMC SCIENTIFIC TEAMS SHOW AN IMPACT OF ONLY 18 SACRAMENTO RIVER FALL CHINOOK FOR SUCH A SEASON. THIS IMPACT ON THE RETURNING RUN TO THE SACRAMENTO RIVER IS WITHIN THE ESCAPEMENT GUIDELINES AND STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT GIVEN THE MARGIN OF ERROR IN THE MODEL. THANK YOU
Good evening Council Members and staff. I am speaking on behalf of Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers, an incorporated non profit organization. We represent saltwater anglers in Humboldt and adjacent counties. Perhaps it would be illustrative if I read our mission statement to provide you insight into our organization. The Mission Statement of Humboldt Area Saltwater Anglers is:

- To represent the North Coast fishing community's historic and ongoing right to sport fish along the Northern California coast.
- To advocate reasonable and rational sport fishing seasons and regulations.
- To educate our members and the general public about the economic and cultural contributions of sport fishing to our local economies.
- To promote sustainable stewardship of the resource.

Our goal is to have healthy, vibrant salmon runs of both wild and hatchery salmon on all rivers sustaining lengthy seasons for recreational and commercial fishermen in the ocean as well as sustainable harvest within the rivers. Achieving this goal provides very significant economic benefits to the local coastal and inland communities.

We understand that currently the fish stocks will not sustain our goal and our efforts strive to rebuild the fishery. In 2008 there was a total closure of ocean recreational and commercial salmon seasons within California in an effort to protect the Sacramento Fall Run Chinook. The 2008 returns to the Sacramento system were roughly half of the minimum escapement target of 122,000. 2009's forecast is brighter with a projected return of 122,196, but far below historical or desirable levels.

I want to thank the PFMC members, its staff and fish and game personnel from each state for their diligent efforts in preparation for and at the Seattle meetings. While in Seattle I worked with the Klamath Management Zone Fisheries Coalition and Oregon representatives to craft options that would model with the minimal impact upon the Sacramento Fall Run Chinook and utilize some of the projected abundance of three year old Klamath fish. While at the same time allowing Oregon anglers the ability to fish for the abundant Coho fish stocks. Throughout the week there was a collaborative effort between California and Oregon to design seasons that would protect the Sacramento fish while providing as much opportunity to anglers in each state and to provide the maximum economic benefit to the coastal communities.
Of the three options voted on by the Council only one calls for a limited 10 day season in late August and early September. The fishing option has a limited effect upon the 2009 Sacramento Fall Run Chinook totaling just 18 fish for the August fishery. It is my belief that the benefits of a limited and late 10 day season within the Klamath Management Zone is worth the slight impact upon 2009 Sacramento Fall Run Chinook return.

The limited season will allow California ocean anglers an opportunity to fish for salmon providing a significant benefit to businesses directly related to sport fishing as well as non related businesses. Our communities can use all the assistance possible during these difficult times.

I would ask you to keep the seasons within the KMZ the same for both Oregon and California and support the limited 10 day ocean Chinook season.

I would also like to publicly thank Dan Woolford for his motion and the Council's support of sending a letter to the California Fish and Game Commission stating their opposition for a 2009 Sacramento River fishery. The impacts on Sacramento Fall Run Chinook are just too great.

In conclusion, I recommend that you support the limited recreational Chinook season within the KMZ as it will provide economic benefits to depressed local communities while having minimal effects upon the 2009 Sacramento Fall Run Chinook returns.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

This is also supported by Northcoast Fishermen's Association and Jim Martin representing RFA.
Steve Huber Guide Service

From: E. B. Duggan [yen2fish@netzero.net]
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2009 8:40 AM
To: 'Steve Huber'
Subject: My ideas

Steve here is some corrections or changes to your letter I thought would help.

Trinity River Guide Association

The Trinity River Guide Association was formed in 2008 to help enhance and protect the Klamath-Trinity River basin fisheries. Our group is very concerned about the 2008 Chinook salmon season natural escapement goal not being met by 11 to 26% depending upon which escapement number is used (35,000/40,700). The Klamath, Trinity, Smith and Sacramento Rivers will have a salmon season again for 2009. Although the Sacramento River will have another very limited two month season.

We would like to see the base escapement increased to 50,000 fish to increase the probability of making the 40,700 intended floor escapement. Continuing to miss the escapement minimum floor will decrease future fishing quotas to the point of the possibility of NO IN-RIVER SPORT FISHING. This could devastate the In-River economy. We believe this could easily be done by using PFMC 2008 Harvest Quotas and use the extra fish for natural escapement.

With the Ocean Commercial Fishing being closed two consecutive years the open fish market for salmon has seen values skyrocket. A 20lbs salmon on the open market, the value has increased to $125.00+. High salmon values increases fishing pressure and will need added enforcement to insure escapement goals are met. We cannot afford to be two years behind on escapement. Why not take care of this in 2009, before we have to reach the 2010 season in a panic mode to fix this. The proposed totals have given a chance to play it on the safe side. Please address these issues and thank you for your time. TRG

3/31/2009
J. Bryce Kenny  
462 Ocean Ave.  
P.O. Box 361  
Trinidad, CA 95570  

March 31, 2009  

Dan Wolford  
Chuck Tracy  
Mark Helvey  
Pacific Fisheries Management Council  
Red Lion Inn  
1929 Fourth Street  
Eureka, CA 95501  

Hand Delivered  

Re: Public Comment on Fishing Season for 2009  

Gentlemen:  

Please allow me to comment in writing since I am not able to attend tonight’s scheduled meeting in person.  

I urge you to approve the 10 day sport salmon season that is one of the options under consideration this year.  

I have lived in Trinidad, California, for over thirty years. It is a natural harbor that has undoubtedly been used as an access point to the ocean for as long as human beings have been present there. When I settled in Trinidad, it wasn’t long before salmon fishing became an important part of my life. In more recent years, the health benefits of eating plenty of wild Chinook Salmon have become an important collateral reason why I look forward to the annual sport season each year. It was a big disappointment, and a dramatic change in my diet, when, for the first time ever, no sport salmon season at all was allowed last year.  

I have always fished with a small boat and eat everything I catch. When properly smoked, salmon can be frozen and eaten all winter. A few years ago, I rolled up my sleeves and a friend and I built a new wooden 18 foot Pacific Dory. My 10
year old son helped, and it was a fine thing to watch and be part of. He has been my fishing partner since then, and it is one of the joys of growing up near the Pacific Ocean for him, and no small source of satisfaction and enjoyment for me. I intentionally built my boat so it could be launched directly from the beach, so that I can fish regardless of whether the present dock and boat launcher continue to be there or not. I view catching and preserving my own fish much the same way the native peoples originally here, and elsewhere in the world, view the gathering of food.

While I understand the need to protect the Sacramento River stocks, it would seem that a brief ten day season in late August would have almost no chance of significantly impacting the run on the Sacramento River. It would also give guys like me and my son a chance to get out and get some fish for the coming winter. Many of the local businesses also depend on the trade from anglers who visit Trinidad for the salmon fishing.

I hope you allow common sense to guide you in your decision this year. If you do, I would expect that the limited ten day season should be allowed.

Thank you for all the hard work you put into your involvement with the Management Council, and for your time and attention to my letter.

Very Truly Yours,

[Signature]

J. Bryce Kenny
Good evening. My name is Ben Doane and I am speaking on behalf of the Klamath Management Zone Fisheries Coalition, Inc. I sit on the Board of the KMZFC and am tasked with representing the California portion KMZFC at PFMC meetings.

"The corporation’s goal is to improve (the) economics of the ports and communities within the Klamath Management Zone ........"

The first two objectives of the coalition are:
1. Keep ocean salmon sport fishing season(s) open from Memorial Day to Labor Day.
2. To have uniform sport regulations within the Klamath Management Zone (between states).

Now that I have identified the Klamath Management Zone Fisheries Coalition’s (Coalition) goal and some of the primary objectives, let me speak to the issues and factors that are involved in the development of the 2009 salmon season within the KMZ.

The Klamath River’s projected Chinook salmon ocean abundance in the fall of 2009 is 505,700. 474,900 of the ocean abundance are projected to be three year old fish, 25,200 are projected to be four year old fish and the remaining 5600 fish are projected to be five year old fish. (Source: PFMC PRESEASON REPORT I, Stock Abundance Analysis for 2009 Ocean Salmon Fisheries, February 2009) While the majority of the three year old fish are usually not large enough to meet the commercial troll size requirements, they are prime fish in the sport fishery.

The projected ocean abundance of Coho salmon on the Oregon coast is expected to exceed 1 million fish. While some Oregon natural Coho stocks are marginal, the balance of the Oregon natural Coho stocks and hatchery Coho stocks spawning were more abundant in 2008 than the previous three years. (Source: PFMC REVIEW OF 2008 OCEAN SALMON FISHERIES, February 2009).

If one only considered the above information, one would conclude that there are sufficient Klamath River Fall Chinook available to sustain a reasonable late summer to early fall Chinook salmon fishery in both the California and Oregon KMZ. Additionally, the projected abundance of Oregon’s Coho stocks should support a late June through early September directed marked (hatchery) Coho fishery. Marked hatchery Coho constitute 51% of the Coho stock off of Brookings in the Oregon KMZ in June, factoring down to 43% in July and 38% in August. (Source: PFMC PRESEASON REPORT I, Stock Abundance Analysis for 2009 Ocean Salmon Fisheries, February 2009).
The negative issue this year, as it was in 2008, is the dismal return of Sacramento River Fall Chinook (SRFC). Based upon the escapement in 2008, the projected return to the Sacramento River in the fall of 2009 is 122,196 SRFC. That is 196 fish above the minimum conservation goal for the river. As a result, those of us that wish to fish in the KMZ and the balance of the Oregon coast south of Cape Falcon, have to consider our impact on those 196 SRFC.

At the outset of the PFMC March 2009 Council meeting in Seattle, the SRFC impact for the commercial seasons, genetic stock index survey and sports seasons combined was as great as 1,210 fish, well above the allowable 196 fish. Throughout the week and up and until Thursday, March 12th, the impacts remained high, only falling to about 242 impacts on Thursday morning. Only late in the process on Thursday with the abandonment of the Genetic Stock Index (GSI) commercial troll survey in Oregon did the impact on SRFC fall below the magic number of 196 fish. The options then left on the table were the California KMZ Option 1, the Oregon South of Falcon directed Coho fishery and the Oregon KMZ Chinook fishery, Oregon’s Option 2. These options had a total impact of 147 SRFC. That left 49 SRFC on the table and no opportunity at the March Council meeting to introduce an ocean sport fishing season option to utilize those remaining impacts.

Absent the late withdrawal of the Oregon GSI both the California and Oregon KMZ could have fished an additional five days in August without exceeding the 196 fish impact on SRFC. While five days may not seem like a great deal, when the only potential season we may have is a ten day season, the additional five days would make our season 50% longer. Those five days would provide for a potential 50% greater financial return for those businesses that depend upon fishing, in whole or in part, for their livelihood.

As the California Representative for the Coalition, I request that the representatives of the PFMC and NMFS consider modifying California Option 1 and Oregon Option 2 to provide a Chinook salmon ocean sport season in both the California and Oregon KMZ from August 24, 2009 until September 7, 2009. Based upon the PFMC Salmon Technical Team’s calculations in their PRESEASON REPORT II, Analysis of Preliminary Salmon Management Options for the 2009 Ocean Fisheries, March 2009, the total SRFC impact would be 190 fish for the above requested option.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of the KMZ salmon season option modification requested.