

# COUNCIL DECISIONS AT THE MARCH 2001 MEETING

## Salmon Management

### **Inseason Management Recommendations for Openings Prior to May 1**

The Council adopted an opening date of April 1 as a recommended inseason change for both the commercial troll and recreational fisheries from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain. If adopted by NMFS as expected, this would result in the same inseason change as has occurred in each of the last two years. All gear and bag limits remain the same as were in place in 2000 and the Tillamook Bay control zone will be subject to closure under State regulations.

### **Appointment of Officers for March Salmon Hearings**

The Council appointed the following officers to the three salmon hearings on salmon season options: for the hearing March 26 at The Chateau Westport, Jim Lone, Bill Robinson, Phil Anderson, and Jim Harp; for the hearing March 26 at the Coos Bay Red Lion Hotel, Hans Radtke and Burnie Bohn; for the hearing at the Eureka Red Lion Hotel, L. B. Boydston and Jim Caito.

### **Adoption of 2001 Management Options for Public Review**

The Council adopted three options for salmon seasons off California, Oregon, and Washington. All options meet or exceed conservation thresholds for salmon stocks listed under the Endangered Species Act or are otherwise at a status warranting concerns about depressed spawning escapements. With a few minor changes, the season dates, quotas, size limits and miscellaneous regulations are as described in "Exhibit B.9.b, Supplemental STT Report, March 2001."

## Habitat Issues

### **Ongoing and New Habitat Issues**

The Council approved a letter from Jim Lone to Mr. Todd Olson, Project Manager for PacifiCorp, regarding FERC re-licensing of the Klamath Hydroelectric Project. The Council also approved using the post-meeting "rapid-response" letter authorization process for two additional letters: one dealing with the Klamath River ESA Biological Assessment of in-river flows; and one dealing with the Council perspective on the National Artificial Reef Plan.

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## Groundfish Management

### Exempted Fishing Permit Applications

The Council adopted maximum levels of allowable take by industry vessels participating in the NMFS slope survey and research efforts during 2001. These amounts, a very minor percentage (<2%) of the year 2000 total OY level, are: 131.7 mt of Dover sole, 34.7 mt of sablefish, 23.8 mt of longspine thornyhead, and 4.7 mt of shortspine thornyhead.

### Future Groundfish Management Process and Schedule

The Council directed the SSC, GMT and GAP advisory bodies to analyze four alternatives to the status quo groundfish management process and schedule for a report at the April Council meeting. Two alternatives involve moving to a three meeting process for development of annual regulations. Two other alternatives involve changing to a multi-year regulatory approach with a four meeting process.

### Implementation of the Groundfish Strategic Plan

The Council re-emphasized support of the capacity reduction elements of the groundfish Strategic Plan. They also authorized the "rapid response" mechanism for a letter from the chair stating so, with regard to any inquiries to the buyback proposal currently under Congressional consideration. Further, the Council expressed the intent to move the results of the two recent Strategic Plan Oversight Committee meetings forward to Council advisory bodies for comment at the April Council Meeting.

## Highly Migratory Species Management

### First Draft of the HMS Fishery Management Plan

The Council provided direction on a variety of refinements to the first draft of the Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan. The only significant option to be deleted from further consideration was the option to allow the sale of recreationally caught fish. The HMS Plan Development Team will incorporate the Council-directed refinements, expand on existing and include new analyses of options, and prepare a second draft the Council will consider for release as a public review draft at the June Council meeting.

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## **Pacific Halibut Management**

### **Proposed 2001 Incidental Catch Regulations for the Troll Salmon Fishery and Sablefish Longline Fishery North of Point Chehalis**

The Council adopted various options for public review prior to selection of a preferred option at the April Council meeting. The two options in the salmon troll fishery are (1) one halibut per three chinook landed and a 35 halibut trip limit and (2) one halibut per two chinook landed and a 50 halibut trip limit; both of these options allow one halibut without meeting the minimum chinook threshold. One sablefish longline option allows one halibut for every 300 dressed pounds of sablefish, with up to two additional halibut allowed as a poundage calculation buffer. Other options for the sablefish fishery include direct allocations of incidentally taken halibut based on permits or vessels, with possible weighting of such allocations by catch tier on vessel length.

## **Administrative and Other Matters**

### **Appointments of Remaining Vacancies to Advisory Bodies for 2001 through 2003**

The Council appointed Dr. Andre Punt to the SSC, Dr. Paul Crone to the CPSMT, and August Felando to the HMSAS.

### **April 2001 Council Meeting Agenda**

The Council reviewed staff workload priorities and adopted a draft agenda for the April meeting. The draft agenda will be available on the Council Website ([www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org)) by March 15.