

LIST OF COUNCIL DECISIONS AT THE MARCH 2002 MEETING

Salmon Management

Final Review of Methodology Changes to the Klamath Ocean Harvest Model and Coho Fishery Regulation Assessment Model

The Council adopted methodological changes in two models used to develop salmon management measures. These two models are the Klamath Ocean Harvest Model and the Coho Fishery Regulation Assessment Model. Approved changes are considered substantial improvement in the technical capabilities to properly assess fishing impacts on salmon populations.

Inseason Management Recommendations for Openings Prior to May 1 off the Oregon Coast

The Council adopted the following opening dates for the area from Cape Falcon to the Oregon/California border:

Troll: March 20, 2002;

Recreational: April 1, 2002.

All gear, bag limits, and allowable species remain the same as 2001.

Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment Scoping

The Council initiated an FMP amendment process for Central Valley chinook stocks, on a schedule of completion by November 2003, with NMFS as the lead agency. The Council also voted to initiate an additional FMP amendment with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife as the lead agency, dealing with two issues: coho allocation south of Cape Falcon and allowable harvest rates for Oregon coastal natural coho. The proposed schedule for these latter two issues included scoping in June 2002 and final adoption in March 2004.

Salmon Hearings Officers

The Council appointed the following officers to the three salmon hearings on salmon season options: for the hearing April 1 at The Chateau Westport, Jim Lone, Bill Robinson, Phil Anderson, and Jim Harp; for the hearing April 1 at the Coos Bay Red Lion Hotel, Burnie Bohn and Hans Radtke; for the hearing April 2 at the Eureka Red Lion Hotel, Jim Caito and LB Boydston.

Adoption of 2002 Management Options for Public Review

The Council adopted for public review three options for salmon seasons off California, Oregon, and Washington. All options meet or exceed conservation standards for salmon stocks in the Council's Pacific Coast Salmon Plan and those listed under the Endangered Species Act. The options can be viewed on the Council web site www.pcouncil.org.

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Habitat Issues

Council Letters of Comment on External Essential Fish Habitat Issues

The Council directed the Habitat Steering Group to further refine a draft letter regarding West Coast Federal Energy Regulatory Commission hydropower re-licensing programmatic issues and to present the letter to the Council at the April meeting.

Marine Reserves

Status of National Marine Sanctuary Processes Pertaining to Marine Reserves

The State of California anticipates forwarding the environmental impact analysis documents regarding marine reserves in the Channel Islands Sanctuary area in time for initial consideration at the April Council meeting. The Council discussed ways of synthesizing a Council recommendation by the June Council meeting, noting the deadline of an August decision point by the California Fish and Game Commission for marine reserves in state waters (0-3 miles) in the Channel Islands area.

Pacific Halibut Management

Salmon Troll

The Council adopted for public review two options for landing restrictions for Pacific halibut caught incidentally in the May/June troll season:

- Option 1 Status quo: License holders may land no more than 1 halibut per each 3 chinook, except 1 halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut may be landed per trip. Halibut retained must be no less than 32 inches in total length (with head on).
- Option 2 License holders may land no more than 1 halibut per each 5 chinook, except 2 halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 50 halibut may be landed per trip. Halibut retained must be no less than 32 inches in total length (with head on).
- Option 3 In combination with either Option 1 or 2 above, close the halibut "hotspot" area, as defined in the Pacific Council Catch Sharing Plan in Washington Marine area 3; and extend the closure south to 48E00'00" for protection of yelloweye rockfish. This closure would be in effect during periods open to retention of halibut.

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Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery

The Council adopted for public review two options for landing limits on incidental halibut harvest in the fixed gear primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis:

- Option 1a: Restrict incidental halibut landings to 80 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish landed and up to two additional halibut in excess of the 80 pounds per 1,000 pound ratio per landing. Retention of halibut allowed beginning May 1.
- Option 1b: Restrict incidental halibut landings to 200 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish landed and up to two additional halibut in excess of the 200 pounds per 1,000 pound ratio per landing. Retention of halibut allowed beginning May 1.
- Option 2: In combination with either Option 1a or 1b above, restrict incidental halibut landings to a trip limit of 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut.
- Option 3: In combination with either Option 1a or 1b above, close the halibut "hotspot" area, as defined in the Pacific Council Catch Sharing Plan in Washington Marine area 3; and extend the closure south to 48E00'00" for protection of yelloweye rockfish. This closure would be in effect during periods open to retention of halibut.

Groundfish Management

Pacific Whiting Harvest Levels for 2002

The Council adopted, for use in the 2002 season beginning April 1, an allowable biological catch (ABC) for whiting of 229,500 mt, a coast wide optimum yield (OY) level of 190,500 mt, a United States (U. S.) OY of 152,400 mt, and an allocation to the Makah Tribe of 25,000 mt within the U. S. OY. The Council also tasked the Executive Director with sending a letter to the appropriate federal officials requesting re-initiation of negotiations with Canada regarding international catch sharing.

Post Script: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has advised the Council they intend to disapprove the Council action on Pacific whiting harvest levels for 2002. An emergency rule will most likely provide the following levels for 2002: the coast wide ABC is 208,000 mt, the U. S. ABC is 166,000 mt, the coast wide OY is 162,000 mt, the U. S. OY is 129,600 mt, and the Makah Tribe share is 22,000 mt.

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Highly Migratory Species Management

Highly Migratory Species (HMS) FMP

The Council delayed final adoption of the HMS FMP until the November 2002 Council meeting, provided guidance to the HMS Plan Development Team for further analysis, and scheduled a progress report for the June Council meeting. The Council also modified two of the many preferred alternatives in the draft FMP.

First, the proposed new drift gill net (DGN) closure off Washington and Oregon was modified and removed from the list of preferred alternatives. There are two new alternative closure areas under consideration:

- (1) DGNs could not be used to take swordfish and sharks in any exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters less than 1,000 fm (approximately 125° 10' to 125° 30' W) off Oregon year-round, nor in the portion of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) north of 45° N Latitude; or
- (2) DGNs could not be used to take swordfish and sharks in any EEZ waters less than 1,000 fm (approximately 125° 10' to 125° 30' W) from the Oregon-California border to the Canadian border year-round.

Second, the Council modified the preferred alternative for use of pelagic longline gear within the U.S. EEZ; the new preferred alternative would impose an indefinite moratorium on pelagic long lining within the west coast U.S. EEZ with the potential for re-evaluation by the Council following completion of a bycatch reduction research program carried out under a qualified exempted fishing permit.

Coastal Pelagic Species

Mackerel Fishery

After reviewing landings information and hearing the advice of the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Advisory Subpanel, the Council encouraged NMFS to re-open the directed Pacific mackerel fishery no later than April 1, 2002.

Amendment 10

The Council adopted draft Amendment 10 to the CPS FMP for public review. The Council provided guidance to the CPS Management Team for minor changes to the draft document. Following these changes, the document will be distributed for public review. The Council anticipates taking final action on Amendment 10 at the June 2002 Council meeting.

For a copy of the public review draft of Amendment 10, please contact the Council office.

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Administrative and Other Matters

Appointments to Advisory Bodies, Standing Committees, and Other Forums

The Council filled two existing vacancies on its advisory bodies by appointing Mr. Richard Powers of Bodega Bay, California to the Northern California Charter/Sport position on the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel, and Mr. Richard Stoll of Poulsbo, Washington to the Recreational Fisher position on the Habitat Committee (HC) (formerly the Habitat Steering Group). In responding to a proposal by the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) of NMFS, the Council created a permanent new position on the HC to be filled by a scientist from the NWFSC. The first appointee to that position is Dr. Waldo Wakefield. In an additional change to the HC, Ms. Cindy LeFleur will replace Ms. Michele Robinson in the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife position.

The Council Chair announced disbanding of the Foreign Fishing Committee and the following appointments to standing committees and other forums:

Budget Committee

James Harp, Chair
Don Hansen
David Hanson
Jim Lone
Jerry Mallet
NMFS
Hans Radtke

Legislative Committee

Dave Hanson, Chair
Robert Alverson, Vice Chair
Ralph Brown
Roger Thomas

International Pacific Halibut Commission

Jim Lone

Klamath Fishery Management Council

Don Hansen

Council's Statement of Organization, Practices, and Procedures (SOPP) Documents

The Council adopted a revised draft of the Council SOPP document, which incorporated recent Department of Commerce rule changes, miscellaneous other changes reflecting legal opinions and Council convention, and reorganized a clarified content.

Research and Data Needs Process and Economic Data Plan

The Council chose to delay updating the Research and Data Needs Document and the West Coast Economic Data Plan for one year.

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April 2002 Council Meeting Draft Agenda

The Council adopted a draft agenda for the next Council meeting, April 8-12 in Portland, Oregon. The draft agenda is available on the Council website, www.pcouncil.org.