

DECISION SUMMARY DOCUMENT
PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 12-17, 2013

PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGEMENT

Pacific Halibut Bycatch Estimate

The Council approved estimates of Pacific halibut mortality in 2012 and adjustments in estimates for prior years, for transmittal by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to the International Pacific Halibut Commission for use in establishing the 2014 total allowable catch (see <http://tinyurl.com/n6yljms>).

2014 Pacific Halibut Regulations

For purposes of public review, the Council adopted alternatives for changes to the 2014 Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) and annual fishery regulations affecting recreational fisheries for Washington, Oregon, and California. This includes a proposal to establish a new subarea management line in the CSP at the Oregon/California border, creating a separate California subarea with its own CSP allocation. The Oregon portion, between Humbug Mountain and the Oregon/California border, would be subsumed into the Central Oregon Coast Subarea and thus subject to the regulations proposed in that area, or become a new area (Southern Oregon Subarea). Details can be found on the Council blog (<http://tinyurl.com/ph6nnwq>), with final decisions scheduled for the November 2013 Council meeting.

SALMON MANAGEMENT

2013 Salmon Methodology Review

The Council approved the following list of final topics for the 2013 Salmon Methodology Review:

- 1) Review performance of and develop alternatives to the Yaquina River marine survival rate index used in 2013 for the Oregon coastal natural coho matrix control rule,
- 2) Evaluate alternative forecast methodologies for the Sacramento fall Chinook index,
- 3) Develop Conservation Objectives, Annual Catch Limits, and Status Determination Criteria for Willapa Bay coho,
- 4) Develop Lower Columbia natural coho matrix control rules,
- 5) Develop Conservation Objectives for Southern Oregon coastal Chinook,
- 6) Develop a standardized methodology for calculating Age 2 Chinook forecasts,
- 7) Incorporate estimates of legal and sublegal Chinook fishery encounters from recent sampling information into Fishery Regulation Assessment Model (FRAM) base period type data, and

8) Incorporate a progress report on the development of a new Chinook FRAM base period and modifications to FRAM algorithms on assessing sublegal and legal encounters and changes in minimum size limits.

The review is scheduled for October 1-3, 2013 in Portland, Oregon.

The Council also reviewed information on the harvest control rule for Sacramento River winter Chinook and remains interested in exploring alternatives that provide for an incidental catch at all abundance levels while achieving the same level of conservation benefit to the stock. NMFS anticipates noticing a public comment period on the control rule that would encompass at least one Council meeting, most likely in March or April 2014.

Fishery Management Plan Amendment 18 - Update of Essential Fish Habitat for Salmon

The Council adopted changes to Pacific salmon Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), based on the EFH review. These changes include several 4th field Hydrologic Units that will gain, lose, or have modified EFH designations. The Council also adopted a modified set of criteria to determine whether a dam should be the upstream extent of EFH, clarified the marine EFH description, amended the list of impassable dams, adopted five Habitat Areas of Particular Concern, updated the descriptions of fishing and non-fishing impacts, and adopted a process in which some changes can be made to EFH without having to amend the Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

Lower Columbia River Double-Crested Cormorant Management Plan

The Council tasked Council staff to send a letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding the environmental impact statement (EIS) process looking at problems associated with the substantial increase in the population of double-crested cormorants nesting on Sand Island in the Columbia River estuary. The letter is to urge: (1) a full and complete accounting and analysis of the effects on salmonid stocks in the juvenile-outmigrant and subsequent adult life stages, (2) scheduling the release of the EIS well in advance of the Council's April 2014 Council meeting, and (3) scheduling the open comment period to encompass the April 2014 Council meeting and the two weeks thereafter so as to allow for consideration by the Council process at that meeting.

HABITAT

Current Habitat Issues

The Council approved the draft letter to the Department of Energy ([Agenda Item F.1.a, Attachment 3](#)) on the environmental effects of offshore wind energy development, with the addition of a reference on the importance of working with the fishing industry in advance to site projects appropriately. The Council also directed staff to look into the implications of a Council seat on the Oregon Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Task Force, and to look into deadlines for comment on the U.S.-Canada Columbia River Treaty.

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT

Sablefish Permit Stacking Program Review

The Council adopted a calendar for proceeding with a sablefish program review that does not include an ad hoc review committee but includes a consideration of a revision to the methods for determining the number of permits any one entity controls under an accelerated schedule that calls for final Council action taken at the June 2014 Council meeting. The Council will notice consideration at the November 2013 Council meeting for any additional issues to be addressed in an accelerated program review. In the event there are not a large number of significant new issues selected by the Council at the November Council meeting for further review, all issues may be scheduled for final action at the June 2014 Council meeting and the program review will be considered completed. Should the Council select a significant number of new issues to be included for potential change, the new issues may be placed on a delayed schedule calling for final action after the June 2014 Council meeting.

Approve Stock Assessments

The Council adopted new full assessments for aurora rockfish, rougheye/blackspotted rockfish, shortspine thornyhead, longspine thornyhead, and cowcod for use in management decision-making in 2015 and beyond. Additionally, the Council adopted a new assessment for Pacific sanddab to be used only for deciding stock status (and not harvest specifications) as recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). The new stock assessments show the stock to be in a healthy status, except for cowcod, which has been in an overfished status since 1999; however, the cowcod abundance continues to increase toward the rebuilding goal. The Council cancelled the previously scheduled "mop-up panel" review scheduled for late September, and will consider adopting data-moderate assessments for brown rockfish, copper rockfish, and China rockfish at the November Council meeting in Costa Mesa, California. The Council tasked the SSC Groundfish Subcommittee to review a data-moderate assessment for China rockfish with an alternative area stratification at 42° N. latitude and slightly revised data-moderate assessments for brown and copper rockfish limited to south of 42° N. latitude

Science Improvements for the Next Groundfish Management Cycle

The Council adopted the following science activities as the highest priorities towards improving management of groundfish in the next management cycle:

- 1) The recommendations as shown in [Agenda Item G.4.c, Supplemental SSC Report](#) relative to priority workshops, for consideration by the Northwest and Southwest Science Centers to sponsor;
- 2) Further examination by the GMT on the spatial analysis of exploitation detailed in [Agenda Item G.4.c, Supplemental GMT Report](#);
- 3) Continuing ongoing collaboration between the GMT and the SSC to improve socioeconomic analyses; and
- 4) Surveys in non-trawlable areas using non-extractive and hook and line methods to assess groundfish species.

Further, as a general statement of priority, the Council tasked Council staff with transmitting all advisory body reports under this agenda item to the NMFS Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers for their consideration in workload planning over the next year.

Consideration of Inseason Adjustments

The Council considered information on the status of 2013 groundfish fisheries and adopted increases in the sablefish trip limits for the limited entry and open access fixed gear fisheries north of 36° N. latitude and for the open access fixed gear fishery south of 36° N. latitude. Additionally, trip limit increases for deeper nearshore rockfish were adopted for the limited entry and open access fixed gear fishery south of 40°10' N. latitude. For more information, see the Council blog at <http://tinyurl.com/pnnz3m6>. The Council also recommended that NMFS issue the eligible 2012 surplus carryover (20 mt) to the 2013 shorebased IFQ fishery as soon as possible.

Consideration of Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) Boundary Modifications

The Council reaffirmed their April action to establish a trawl RCA configuration between 40°10' and 48°10' N. latitude with a 100 fm shoreward boundary and 150 fm seaward boundary beginning in Period 6 in 2013 through 2014.

Initial Actions for Setting 2015-2016 Groundfish Fisheries

The Council adopted the overfishing limits, stock category designations, biomass variance values (sigmas to determine acceptable biological catches (ABCs)), and a new target harvest rate (F_{MSY}) for elasmobranchs (assessed sharks and skates), as recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) in [Agenda Item G.7.b, Supplemental SSC Report](#). The Council also adopted the range of ABCs in [Agenda Item G.7.a, Supplemental Attachment 5](#) (revised by the change in the shortspine and longspine thornyheads recommended by the SSC) varied by abundance over-prediction probabilities (P^* values) ranging from 0.25 to 0.45 for detailed analysis. The Council also forwarded those management measures recommended by the Groundfish Management Team, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for preliminary analysis. Final 2015 and 2016 harvest specifications will be decided in April 2014 and management measures will be decided at the Council meeting in June 2014, with refinement of preliminary decisions on each of these scheduled for the November 2013 Council meeting.

Consider Stock Complex Aggregations

The Council considered alternatives for restructuring four groundfish stock complexes, and decided to advance considerations for the Other Fish complex to the November 2013 Council meeting for a final decision on inclusion in the 2015-16 cycle and moving further analysis and consideration of the other three complex restructuring possibilities to the next biennial cycle. The list of species and alternatives considered for changes to the Other Fish complex are detailed in [Agenda Item G.8.b, Supplemental GMT Report 7](#).

Trawl Rationalization Trailing Actions Scoping, Process, and Prioritization

The Council decided to move forward with the trailing action priorities recommended by the GAP for a trawl flexibility rule. However, due to workload constraints and a desire to proceed in a comprehensive and efficient manner, the next action on those priorities will not occur until the June 2014 Council meeting, at that time further prioritization may occur. The Council will have an agenda item on the Adaptive Management Program (AMP) at its March Council meeting, at which time it will continue the discussion of the AMP about extending the AMP quota pounds pass-through (currently set to expire after 2014) for additional years.

Electronic Monitoring Scoping

The Council provided guidance to the Groundfish Electronic Monitoring Policy Committee (GEMPC) and the GEM Technical Advisory Committee (GEMTAC) to discuss, at the October GEM Committees meeting, a “phased in approach” for implementation of electronic monitoring (EM), starting with mid-water trawl and fixed gear fisheries, then a separate phase for bottom trawl fisheries. The Council also asked the GEM Committees to discuss the use of data logger systems as a component of the EM program, discuss alternatives for an EM program that includes species that may be discarded under maximize retention fisheries, and to explore ways to minimize discards for safety reasons. The Council requested that the Northwest Fisheries Science Center provide a report at the November 2013 Council meeting on how the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program may move forward with an EM program in place for mid-water trawl, fixed gear, and potentially bottom trawl.

ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

Update List of Fisheries

The Council took final action in adopting the updated Federal list of authorized West Coast exclusive economic zone fisheries and gear as shown in the Ecosystem Workgroup Report ([Agenda Item I.1.a, Attachment 1](#)) including the GAP recommendation to add crab loop as an authorized gear in the State Oregon for the recreational Dungeness crab fisheries and recreational crab fisheries for species other than Dungeness crab.

Unmanaged Forage Fish Protection Initiative

The Council adopted the purpose and need statement for public review as shown in [Agenda Item I.2.b Supplemental Ecosystem Workgroup Report](#) and the following list of species and identified them as species needing additional protection against development of new unmanaged fisheries: round and thread herring, mesopelagic fishes, Pacific sandlance, Pacific saury, Silversides, Osmerid smelts, and Pelagic squids (with the exception of Humboldt squid). The Council directed the Ecosystem Workgroup to develop alternatives and analysis of options which would prohibit development of new commercial fisheries on these species groups by way of amending one or more existing fishery management plans. The analysis shall include descriptions of existing directed commercial fisheries and existing incidental take levels in other commercial fisheries, and recommendations as to which existing fishery management plans are best suited for amendment.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Managing Our Nation's Fisheries 3 Conference Follow-ups and Unrelated Legislative Matters

The Council adopted 17 priority topics for potential changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) at this time, with the expectation of further analysis and consideration at a future Council meeting. Go to Council blog at <http://www.pcouncil.org/2013/09/27233/council-discusses-priorities-for-msa-reauthorization/> for more information.

The Council agreed to solicit public and tribal comment on the Makah Tribe's request for the Council to consider taking a position on changing the MSA to remove the three-term limit on the tribal seat on the Pacific Council and the requirement to submit three nominees for the position every three years, prior to the Council taking a position on this issue. Comment will be solicited for a decision at the November 2013 Council meeting regarding adding this proposal to the list of priority topics of the Pacific Council warranting further consideration.

The Council tasked the Executive Director with writing a letter to Congresswoman Herrera-Beutler stating the Council's support of H.R. 2646 and S. 1275 (the REFI Act), and the reasons for that support.

The Council also directed the Executive Director to prepare a letter supporting Legislative Committee recommendations on H.R. 69 and S. 269, including specifically the Council's interest in a dedicated seat on the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

The Council made the following appointments.

Enforcement Consultants: Cpt. Robert Puccinelli to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) seat and Lt. Cody Dunagan to the U.S. Coast Guard seat;

Habitat Committee: Ms. Jennifer Quan to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) seat;

Scientific and Statistical Committee: Dr. Andrew Cooper to the vacant at-large seat;

Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup: Ms. Alison Agness to the Protected Resources seat, Ms. Laura Todd to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service seat, Mr. Corey Niles to the WDFW seat, Dr. Caren Braby to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife seat, and Ms. Joanna Grebel to the CDFW seat, Mr. Jonathan Scordino to the Washington Coast Tribal seat, Dr. Richard Gustafson to the Fish Taxa seat, Dr. Jason Jannot to the Observer Program seat, Dr. Rhema Bjorkland to the Sea Turtle Taxa seat, Dr. Brad Hanson to the Marine Mammal Taxa seat, Dr. Thomas Good to the Seabird Taxa seat.

Mr. Phil Anderson was re-appointed as the Council Representative on the Joint Management Committee for Pacific Whiting.

Council Chair Dorothy Lowman was designated as the Council recommendation for the US Commission seat to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, for appointment at some point after the current annual cycle in such a manner that the Presidential appointment

process does not leave the seat currently held by Ms. Marija Vojkovich unfilled at any point in time.

Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning

The next meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled for November 1-6, 2013 at the Hilton Orange County, Costa Mesa, California. The current draft preliminary proposed agenda for the meeting is available at: http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Prelim_Quick_Ref_Agenda.pdf

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