

**PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
DECISIONS AT THE NOVEMBER 2005 MEETING**

Coastal Pelagic Species Management

Pacific Sardine Stock Assessment and Harvest Guideline for 2006

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) adopted a harvest guideline of 118,937 mt for the 2006 season, to be managed under the terms of the current allocation arrangements.

Alternatives Analysis for Krill Management

The Council approved a range of krill fishing alternatives for public review and additional analysis, including a preliminary preferred alternative to identify krill as a prohibited species in the Exclusive Economic Zone. The proposed krill management measures will be implemented as Amendment 12 to the coastal pelagic species fishery management plan (FMP). The Council is anticipated to take final action on a preferred alternative to manage fisheries for krill at the March 2006 Council meeting. The full range of approved alternatives will be posted on the Council website in the near future.

Pacific Halibut Management

Proposed Changes to the Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Regulations

The Council adopted the following changes to the Area 2A Pacific halibut catch sharing plan affecting Oregon and Washington sport fisheries.

1. For the Oregon Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. all-depth recreational summer fishery, allow an increase in the daily bag limit to two fish after Labor Day subsequent to consultation with the International Pacific Halibut Commission, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.
2. Increase the Oregon possession limit on land from two daily limits to three daily limits statewide.
3. For the Columbia River subarea, increase the allocation to this subarea from Oregon to 5.0% of the Oregon/California sport allocation; the Washington contribution is unchanged. The season will be split with the early season given 70% of the subarea allocation, open seven days per week, beginning May 1 through the earlier of the early season quota or the third Sunday in July. Any remaining quota will be added to the remaining 30% of the subarea quota for the late season, which will be open Friday through Sunday beginning the first Friday in August through the earlier of the overall subarea quota or September 30. If there is insufficient quota for another day of fishing in the Columbia River subarea, any remaining quota may be transferred to another Oregon or Washington subarea in proportion to the contributing state.
4. For the Columbia River subarea, prohibit retention of groundfish with a halibut on board, except sablefish or Pacific cod when allowed under groundfish regulations.

5. For the Washington South Coast subarea, remove reference to the automatic seven days per week season beginning July 1, and specify that the northern nearshore area will reopen to accommodate incidental halibut catch on Fridays and Saturdays only.
6. For the Washington South Coast subarea, modify the definition of the northern nearshore area to: *from 47°25.00' N. latitude south to 46°58.00' N. latitude, and east of 124°30.00' W. longitude.*
7. For the Washington North Coast subarea May fishery, reduce the number of days open per week from five consecutive days (Tuesday-Saturday) to three staggered days (Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday); for the June fishery reduce the number of days open from five days to two staggered days (Thursday and Saturday).
8. For the Washington North Coast subarea June fishery, specify the opening date as the first Thursday after June 17.

Habitat

Current Habitat Issues

The Council recommended using the quick response procedure to finalize a response letter to the Bureau of Reclamation regarding Klamath River essential fish habitat (EFH) issues.

The Council deferred action until June 2006 on considering development of a policy document outlining EFH consultation issues associated with non-fishing impacts.

Salmon Management

Salmon Methodology Review

The Council directed the Model Evaluation Workgroup to continue with the Fishery Regulation Assessment Model documentation assignment and incorporate the recommendations of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC).

The Council also accepted the SSC recommendations for the Columbia River Technical Advisory Committee to evaluate the use of Columbia River fall chinook ocean abundance forecasts, but did not approve their use for 2006 Council fisheries.

Preseason Salmon Management Schedule for 2006

The Council adopted the following Council-sponsored hearing locations and dates: Westport, Washington – March 27; Coos Bay, Oregon – March 27; Santa Rosa, California – March 28. Other state-sponsored meetings will be considered at the March 2006 Council meeting. The Council also approved the schedule and process for developing 2006 ocean salmon management measures as described in [Agenda Item G.2.a, Attachment 1, November 2005](#).

Klamath River Fall Chinook Conservation Objective

The Council approved initiating a Salmon FMP amendment to consider changing the conservation objective for Klamath River fall Chinook, with a focus on allowing a *de minimus* fishery impact when the escapement objective of 35,000 natural spawners cannot be achieved with a normal fishery management response. The FMP amendment process requires at least three meetings, with the first being a scoping session, the second to adopt a range of alternatives and the third to take final action. The scoping session will determine an appropriate range of issues to be addressed in the amendment process. The scoping session will occur at the March 2006 Council meeting in Seattle, Washington. The schedule for the other meetings will be determined at the scoping session.

Marine Protected Areas

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS)

The Council elected to not forward any proposed fishing regulations for the CINMS under the regulatory authority of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. Instead, the Council passed a motion to develop regulations that achieve the stated goals and objectives of the CINMS under the aggregate of the various Council FMP authorities and complimentary State laws. A progress report is scheduled for the March 2006 Council meeting in Seattle, Washington.

Groundfish Management

Stock Assessments and Rebuilding Analyses for 2007-2008 Groundfish Fisheries

The Council adopted new stock assessments for canary rockfish, lingcod, and petrale sole and new rebuilding analyses for bocaccio, canary rockfish, cowcod, darkblotched rockfish, Pacific ocean perch, widow rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish. The coastwide lingcod stock is now successfully rebuilt based on the new stock assessment, four years prior to the target year, and will be removed from the listing of overfished stocks.

Management Recommendations for 2007-2008 Groundfish Fisheries

The Council adopted recommended acceptable biological catch specifications and a range of optimum yield specifications for 2007 and 2008 groundfish fisheries. Additionally, the Council decided to pursue FMP Amendment 16-4 to review all groundfish rebuilding plans towards the goal for each plan to "rebuild the stock in as short a time as possible while considering the needs of fishing communities."

The Council gave guidance on the types of analyses, allocations, and alternative management measures they would like to consider for 2007-2008 groundfish fisheries. They delegated further refinement of management measure alternatives for analysis to the Groundfish Allocation Committee, which is scheduled to meet November 14-15, 2005 and the week of February 6, 2006. The Council also passed a motion to explore conducting a full assessment of the coastwide yelloweye rockfish stock due to

shortcomings in the current assessment, but added an imposed upper limit of 27 mt for 2007-2008 fisheries in the case a full assessment shows higher abundance.

Off-Year Science Improvements

The Council tasked Council staff to work with the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) to convene a workshop to evaluate the 2005 assessment process, to occur in the relatively near future. The Council also recommended the NWFSC bring to the March Council meeting a listing and review of off-year science improvement ideas shown in the SSC, Groundfish Management Team (GMT), Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, and NWFSC reports, with priority attention to a Recreational Fishery Information Network (RecFIN) workshop that would include a coincident RecFIN Oversight Committee meeting.

Amendment 18 (Bycatch) and Work Plan Practicability Analysis

The Council took final action to adopt the Amendment 18 text for Secretarial review. They reviewed the practicability analysis provided by NMFS and provided guidance for further revision of the draft work plan.

Amendment 19 (Essential Fish Habitat)

The Council took final action to adopt the Amendment 19 text for Secretarial review. They made changes in the text consistent with their decision on proposed fishing regulations for the CINMS. Areas in the CINMS originally proposed to be closed to all fishing will be closed to bottom contact gear under Magnuson-Stevens Act authority. They provided perspectives to NMFS on draft regulatory language to be considered prior to publishing the proposed rule.

Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) Applications for 2006

The Council recommended three EFPs for 2006 to be issued by NMFS. A coastwide shoreside whiting EFP that allows for full retention in that fishery was recommended under the presumption that federal funding will be forthcoming with respect to observer and sampling necessities. A California shoreside whiting EFP that tests the efficacy of an earlier start date for that fishery south of 40°30' N. latitude was recommended as proposed, with the addition of a requirement for DNA analysis of any salmon catch. The Council considered a California spot prawn trawl EFP designed to test various bycatch excluder devices, and recommended this EFP for 2006 with the addition of eight provisions recommended by the GMT.

Management Measures for Spiny Dogfish and Pacific Cod for 2006

The Council took final action on trip limits for spiny dogfish and Pacific cod for 2006 fisheries to be implemented on March 1. The trip limits vary by fishing period, species, and gear type and will be posted on the Council website in the near future.

Expansion of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)

The Council adopted a preferred alternative to expand the VMS monitoring system to all commercial vessels that take and retain, possess or land federally-managed groundfish species taken in federal waters or in state waters prior to transiting federal waters. To enhance enforcement of closed areas for the protection of groundfish essential fish habitat (EFH), the Council preferred alternative also requires VMS for all non-groundfish trawl vessels including those targeting pink shrimp, California halibut, sea cucumber, and ridgeback prawn. Implementation of these requirements is recommended to coincide with implementation of Amendment 19 to the Groundfish FMP but no sooner than January 1, 2007.

The Council directed Council staff to write a letter to Dr. Hogarth strongly recommending provisions within a reauthorized MSA allowing state enforcement entities access to VMS information and the ability prosecute violations of federal regulations in state courts. Finally, the Council requested NMFS continue to investigate mechanisms that could allow vessels to drift within closed areas while not fishing.

Update on Trawl Individual Quota (TIQ) Process and Consideration of Additional Community Protection Options

The Council adopted the recommendations contained in the Trawl Individual Quota Committee Report with the exception of the recommendation to add an alternative that would include individual processing quotas as part of a two-pie system. The adopted report included an option that would set aside a certain amount of groundfish each year for collaboratives of quota share holders which provide proposals that would benefit communities. Another of the adopted options would create a community advisory panel as part of the Council process. Finally, the report included, and the Council adopted, a recommendation to drop from the analysis an alternative that would have created a trawl individual quota program only for overfished species.

Inseason Adjustments

The Council adopted final inseason adjustments for 2005 and 2006 involving several species and fishery sectors. These adjustments to ongoing and upcoming groundfish fisheries will be posted on the Council website, www.pcouncil.org, in the near future. The Council also adopted a recommendation to NMFS for an emergency rule lowering the 2006 optimum yield for Darkblotched Rockfish from 294 mt to 200 mt.

Highly Migratory Species Management

Proposed Protocol for Reviewing EFPs for Highly Migratory Species

The Council took final action to adopt the interim and permanent protocols as a Council Operating Procedure that were recommended by the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT).

The Council approved for public review the EFP application submitted by Mr. Pete Dupuy and reviewed under this agenda item.

Drift Gillnet Management

The Council adopted for public review a range of alternatives for the drift gillnet northern time/area closure, based on recommendations from the HMSMT and Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS). The Council also approved for public review an EFP that involves drift gillnet fishing inside the current time/area closer.

Albacore Management Planning

The Council directed the HMSMT

- with input from the HMSAS, to determine a baseline level of historical fishing effort in the West Coast albacore troll fishery, which would facilitate implementing measures consistent with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission Northern Albacore Resolution and
- to scope management reference points for albacore, bigeye tuna, and bluefin tuna with review by the SSC and assistance from NMFS Southwest Fishery Science Center scientists.

The Council directed Council staff

- to prepare a letter to the U.S. delegation to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) summarizing Council recommendations at the upcoming WCPFC meeting and
- to prepare a letter to the U.S. Coast Guard and NMFS regarding concerns about illegal unreported and unregulated fisheries, and enforcement under the WCPFC convention.

Bigeye Tuna Overfishing Response

The Council deferred consideration of this agenda item until the March 2006 Council meeting.

Administrative Matters

Regulatory Streamlining Program

The Council tasked the Council staff with developing a draft regional operating agreement to implement Regulatory Streamlining Principals with NMFS Northwest and Southwest Regions, for Council review at the March 2006 Council meeting. They discussed two

future actions as potential candidates for applying Regulatory Streamlining Program principles: (1) Amendment 15 to the Salmon FMP (Klamath fall Chinook escapement objective) and (2) limiting groundfish open access fisheries.

Legislative Matters

The Council directed staff to work with members of the Legislative Committee (LC) to schedule a meeting of the LC in late-November or early-December. This timeframe is in response to anticipated draft bills and proposed hearings regarding MSA reauthorization. Council staff will circulate a draft of the LC report for Council review and approval as soon as feasible after the meeting. Details of the meeting will be posted on the Council web site in the near future.

Appointments to Advisory Bodies, Standing Committees, and Other Forums

The Council made the following appointments to its advisory bodies:

Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel

Processor seat – Mr. Mike Okoniewski.

Conservation seat – Mr. Ben Enticknap

Groundfish Allocation Committee

Whiting Sector Non-Voting Advisor seat – Mr. Dale Myer.

Habitat Committee

Idaho Fish and Game seat – Dr. Charles Petrosky.

Draft March 2006 Council Meeting Agenda

The Council adopted a draft agenda for the March 2006 Council meeting to be held March 5-10, 2006 in Seattle, Washington. The draft agenda will be available on the Council website www.pcouncil.org during the month of February 2006.

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