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**DECISIONS OF THE  
PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
NOVEMBER 2-7, 2011**

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**SALMON MANAGEMENT**

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**2011 SALMON METHODOLOGY REVIEW**

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The Council adopted a cohort reconstruction analysis and a harvest model for Sacramento River Winter Chinook for use in the 2012 ocean salmon management process.

The Council also approved the methodology used to develop and assess alternatives for an abundance-based management framework for wild Lower Columbia River tule fall Chinook, and recommended NMFS use the following stepped total exploitation rates as the ESA consultation standard for 2012 and beyond:

- 0.30 at a lower Columbia River hatchery stock (LRH) forecasted abundance of less than 30,000,
- 0.35 at an LRH forecast abundance of 30,000 to 40,000,
- 0.38 at an LRH forecast abundance of 40,000 to 85,000, and
- 0.41 at an LRH forecast abundance of greater than 85,000.

The Council also adopted a cyclic three year review process of this abundance based approach, and directed further analysis of mark selective fishery bias adjustments for consideration in the 2012 methodology review process.

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**Preseason Salmon Management Schedule for 2012**

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The Council adopted the following Council-sponsored hearing locations and dates:

- Westport, Washington – March 26;
- Coos Bay, Oregon – March 26;
- Eureka, California – March 27.

Other state-sponsored meetings are expected to be announced at the March 2012 Council meeting. The Council also approved the schedule and process for developing 2012 ocean salmon management measures as described in [Agenda Item C.2.a, Attachment 1, November 2011](#). The Salmon Technical Team meeting to develop preseason forecasts and to draft Preseason Report I will occur February 21-24; as a result, Preseason Report I will be distributed separately from the advance Briefing Book for the March 2012 Council meeting.

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## **2012 Pacific Halibut Fishery Regulations**

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The Council adopted the following changes to the Area 2A Pacific halibut catch sharing plan affecting sport fisheries:

### **Washington South Coast Subarea**

Open the fishery on the first Sunday in May, to remain open for three consecutive Sundays and Tuesdays. If sufficient quota remains, the fishery will continue on Sundays and/or Tuesdays until the quota is reached.

### **Columbia River Subarea**

Allocate 80 percent of the subarea quota to the May-July period and 20 percent to the August-September period; change the Oregon contribution to the subarea quota to be equal to the Washington contribution.

### **Oregon Central Coast Subarea**

Change the allocation of the subarea quota to 63 percent for the spring fishery, 25 percent for the summer fishery, and 12 percent to the nearshore fishery; allow remaining quota from the spring fishery to be transferred to either the summer fishery quota or the nearshore fishery quota.

### **South of Humber Mt. Subareas**

The Council did not make any changes to the catch sharing plan for this subarea in 2012, but did agree to develop catch estimates for this subarea and to work with the International Pacific Halibut Commission in 2012 to identify suitable habitat areas and relative abundance information for Pacific halibut south of the Oregon/California border, for ultimate inclusion in the coastwide stock assessment process. Information potentially usable in future stock assessments, and alternatives of possible management changes for 2013, will be considered by the Council process at the September 2012 Council meeting.

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## **GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT**

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### **Stock Assessments for 2013-2014 Groundfish Fisheries**

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The Council adopted new revised assessments for bocaccio, darkblotched rockfish, and widow rockfish as recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee. The widow rockfish assessment indicates the stock has been successfully rebuilt with a spawning biomass depletion above the target of 40 percent of initial biomass. The Council also adopted six new rebuilding analyses for overfished species. These assessments and rebuilding analyses will be used to decide groundfish harvest specifications and management measures for 2013 and 2014 groundfish fisheries.

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## **Review of Exempted Fishing Permits for 2013-2014 Groundfish Fisheries**

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The Council preliminarily adopted the three exempted fishing permits (EFP) proposed for 2013 and 2014 for public review, under the proviso that EFP sponsors address the concerns raised by the Enforcement Consultants regarding these EFP activities, as well as some concerns raised by the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) and the Groundfish Management Team (GMT). The Council also added a range of EFP total catch limits as recommended by the GMT and GAP. Further, the Council tasked the Scientific and Statistical Committee to evaluate the study design of the EFP sponsored by the Central California Sustainable Groundfish Association. The Council will consider final adoption of these three EFPs at the June 2012 Council meeting, pending public and advisory body comments and recommendations.

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## **Trawl Rationalization Trailing Actions**

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The Council will continue to move forward with a target of implementing action on the following issues by January 1, 2013, with further action at the March and April 2013 Council meetings:

- cost recovery,
- risk pool and lender safe harbors from the control rule,
- other lender issues,
- regulations to allow entry of new West Coast observer providers,
- trawl and fixed gear permit stacking,
- a revision to the thirty-day deficit opt-out provision,
- double filing of co-op reports,
- moving the whiting season start date, and
- allowing multiple gears on board a vessel on the same trip and miscellaneous revisions to gear regulations, including chafing gear.

Additionally, the Council tasked the Executive Director with submitting a formal comment letter to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) by November 8 regarding the 2012 specifications, recommending adjustments be made to address industry concerns about working with the new lingcod management line at 42 degrees N. latitude. Lastly, NMFS announced that in the near future it will make public information on who owns quota shares and quota pounds.

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## **Consideration of Inseason Adjustments for 2011 and 2012 Fisheries**

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The Council considered recent information on fisheries and determined no action was necessary for 2011.

For 2012, the Council adopted modifications to the trawl rockfish conservation area boundaries; fixed gear trip limits, including limits for sablefish; and restrictions to lingcod fisheries in Washington. More detailed information on these modifications can be found on the Council's blog located at <http://www.pcouncil.org/2011/11/17454/gf-inseason-nov2011/>.

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**Biennial Management Process for 2013-2014 Groundfish Fisheries**

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The Council reaffirmed their intent to reduce the scope and number of changes to status quo harvest specifications and management measures for 2013-2014, so as to allow for an orderly start to the groundfish fishery on January 1, 2013.

The Council adopted final overfishing limits (OFLs), final acceptable biological catches (ABCs), and preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) annual catch limits (ACLs) for groundfish stocks and stock complexes with a few changes to status quo. One significant change involves widow rockfish management, as a result of its full rebuilding and removal from the overfished designation; thus the Council selected significantly higher ACLs and a fishery management plan amendment for within trawl sector allocation, for further analysis. The Council adopted only a few new management measures for analysis. For more detailed information on these decisions, please see the Council blog <http://www.pcouncil.org/2011/11/17475/nov2011-gf-actions/>.

Results of the detailed analyses will be presented at the April 2012 Council meeting, where the Council is scheduled to develop final preferred ACLs and a preliminary preferred suite of 2013-2014 management measures. After a public review period, the Council will take final action at the June 2012 Council meeting.

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**COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES (CPS) MANAGEMENT**

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**Pacific Sardine Assessment Management Measures for 2012**

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The Council adopted the Assessment of the Pacific sardine resource for U.S. Management in 2012 as described in Agenda Item F.2.b, Supplemental Attachment 8, with a biomass estimate of 988,385 metric tons (mt), and an overfishing limit of 154,781 mt; an acceptable biological catch of 141,289 mt; and an annual catch limit of 141,289 mt; and an annual catch target (ACT), also known as the Harvest Guideline, of 109,409 mt. The table below shows the distribution of the ACT.

ACT = 109,409 mt. Subtracting a Tribal Set Aside of up to 9,000 mt and an Exempted Fishing Permit set aside of 3,000 mt provides at least 97,409 mt for the non-tribal general fishery as follows:				
	Jan 1- Jun 30	Jul 1- Sep 14	Sep 15 – Dec 31	Total
Seasonal Allocation (mt)	34,093 (35%)	38,964 (40%)	24,352 (25%)	97,409
Incidental Set Aside (mt)	1,000	1,000	1,000	3,000
Adjusted Allocation (mt)	33,093	37,964	23,352	94,409
Incidental catch limits during closed periods and rollover provisions for quota overages and underages remain the same as prior years.				

Finally, the Council expressed strong support for the Southwest Fishery Science Center formal methodology review of the West Coast Vancouver Island trawl survey for potential inclusion in the next full Pacific sardine stock assessment, tentatively scheduled for Spring 2012, and tasked the Executive Director with scheduling a timely workshop to review key fishery management parameters such as  $F_{MSY}$ , productivity regime shifts in  $F_{MSY}$  application, and geographic distribution dynamics.

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## HABITAT

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### **Current Habitat Issues**

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The Council tasked the Executive Director with sending a letter to the Bureau of Reclamation on Klamath Dam removal as drafted by the Habitat Committee (Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 1) with the addition of acknowledgement of the controversial nature of the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement process.

The Council postponed further discussion of a letter to the Secretary of Commerce regarding an enhanced stakeholder process in the Salmon Endangered Species Act Columbia Basin hydropower permitting process until the March 2012 Council meeting, and accepted the NMFS offer for a detailed briefing about the current biological opinion remand process to the Habitat Committee at the March 2012 Council meeting.

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## ECOSYSTEM BASED MANAGEMENT

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### **Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Report**

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The Council heard a joint presentation from the Southwest and Northwest Fisheries Science Centers regarding pilot results from the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA). The Council was encouraged by the preliminary results and recommended continued coordination between the IEA Team and the Council's advisory bodies, including support for a proposed workshop in 2012 to further explore ways of bringing IEA products into stock assessments and Council decision making.

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### **Development of a Council Fishery Ecosystem Plan**

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The Council expressed general support for the draft outline for the Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) and the near-term process and schedule for further plan development as proposed by the Plan Development Team in [Agenda Item H.2.a, Attachment 1](#). The Council also provided guidance on further analysis examining the need and mechanisms for expanding protective measures for forage species, including further analysis of a listing of applicable species. The Council will next consider further refinement of the FEP, including species not managed under a current fishery management plan in June 2012.

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## HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES (HMS) MANAGEMENT

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### **Council Recommendations on International HMS Management**

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#### Eighth Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fishery Commission (WCPFC)

The Council made recommendations to the US delegation to the WCPFC focusing on conservation of bigeye tuna in the Western Pacific, encouraging better cooperation between the WCPFC and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), and general support for a variety of management, control, and surveillance measures under consideration by the WCPFC. Additional information will be detailed in the upcoming Council Newsletter.

#### U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty

The Council recommended that the U.S. attempt to reach agreement on reciprocal fishing privileges with Canada, at the upcoming bilateral meeting, where the U.S. delegation should detail the possible adverse impacts of the Treaty on U.S. albacore fishermen. When renegotiating the reciprocal privileges, the Council recommended advancing a position ensuring equity of benefits is an important objective, which could be addressed through the terms setting Canadian access to the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone.

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### **Consideration of Pacific Bluefin Tuna Overfishing Status**

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The Council adopted recommendations to address international overfishing of Pacific bluefin tuna as required by Section 304(i) in the Magnuson-Steven Act:

- The Council did not recommend additional domestic regulations to address the relative impact of U.S. fishing vessels, recognizing the negligible impact of U.S. vessels on the stock.
- The Council recommends that at the international level the WCPFC and IATTC to adopt and/or strengthen conservation measures to address overfishing, such as fishing mortality on juvenile fish. Further information will be detailed in the upcoming Council Newsletter.

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## ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

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### **Fiscal Matters**

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The Council approved the Budget Committee Report and adopted its recommendations for a Provisional CY 2012 Operating Budget of \$4,230,314 with contingencies in the event that the actual funding differs significantly from that which has been assumed.

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### **Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures**

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In considering advisory body and committee appointments, the Council appointed: 1) Mr. Kirk Lynn to a California Department of Fish and Game Position on the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team

and 2) Mr. Paul Dye, Dr. Terrie Klinger, and Mr. Nate Stone to the Washington at-large positions on the Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel.

Mr. Wolford, Council Chairman, appointed Ms. Gway Kirchner to act as the Council representative to the International Pacific Halibut Commission, replacing Ms. Michele Culver, and appointed Mr. Buzz Brizendine as the Council representative in the U.S.-Canada albacore treaty forum.

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### **Future Council Meeting Agenda Workload Planning**

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The next meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled for March and the agenda will be available on [www.pccouncil.org](http://www.pccouncil.org) in late January 2012.

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