

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PRELIMINARY SELECTION OF METHODOLOGY REVIEW TOPICS

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) recommends inclusion of two items on the preliminary list of methodology review topics, as described below:

A. Examine a sub-area boundary in the California portion of the Klamath Zone, with a management line at the Klamath River Mouth

CDFW and the Pacific Fishery Management Council have received public testimony from commercial trollers based in Crescent City, California asking to evaluate alternative management boundary lines for the California portion of the Klamath Management Zone (currently defined as the ocean area between the Oregon/California border and Horse Mountain). Since 1996, ocean troll fisheries have been restricted to areas north of Humboldt South Jetty (Figure 1). Many in the industry believe that Klamath River fall Chinook age-4 ocean harvest impacts could differ between salmon caught within the Crescent City port area fishery versus those caught below in the Eureka port area.

The age-4 Klamath River fall Chinook ocean harvest rate is used as a proxy for ESA-listed California Coastal Chinook, and frequently constrains ocean salmon troll fisheries in this area. Although other geographical boundaries have been used in the past to differentiate Crescent City from Eureka port areas (e.g., Point St. George, False Klamath Rock, Big Lagoon), CDFW believes the Klamath River mouth would be the most effective as the management boundary due to the year-round commercial fishery closure of the Klamath Control Zone (Figure 2). The middle of the Klamath Control Zone would be the official management line (41°32'48" N. lat.) and would be used when fishing beyond 12 nautical miles from shore.

Since 1982, almost 11,600 CWTs have been collected during the monitoring of commercial fisheries in the California KMZ. Most of these CWTs were recovered during the 1980s when commercial fishing in the KMZ was relatively unconstrained. It is hoped that these data, combined with information from catch records (e.g., fishing block data reported on landing receipts), sampler data sheets, GPS coordinates from GSI studies, and other pertinent data will help segregate historical landings between these two ports.

Consideration of Future Test Fisheries

Existing data may be insufficient to adequately inform ocean fishery management decisions; thus test fisheries may be needed in the future to collect CWTs and other biological data from the two proposed sub-management areas. Conversely, existing data may suggest a new management boundary is warranted, resulting in the need to explicitly evaluate the appropriateness of such a boundary. Council Operating Procedures 18 defines the protocol for industry sponsored salmon test fishery proposals, including specifications of proposal contents and timeline.

Proposals received three weeks in advance of the Pacific Fishery Management Council November meeting may be considered for the following fishing season. Thus, a proposed test fishery could be implemented no earlier than May 2016, provided complete proposals are received by the Council not later than October 24, 2015 and are approved during the April 2016 meeting. CDFW recommends that the purpose of any proposed KMZ test fishery would be to determine if fishery impacts, including age-4 Klamath River fall Chinook ocean harvest rates, differ between the two areas on a temporal basis.

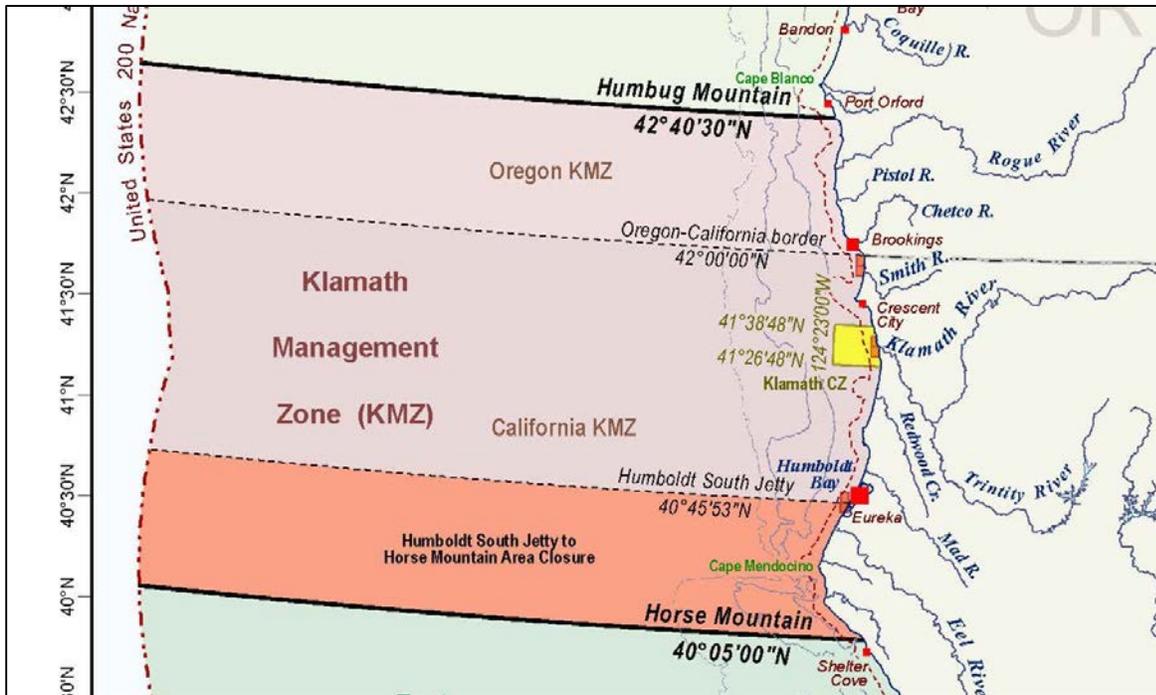


Figure 1. The Klamath Management Zone is defined as the ocean area between Humbug, Oregon and Horse Mountain, California. Commercial salmon trollers are restricted to the area north of Humboldt South Jetty in Eureka, California. (Map by WDFW for PFMC use)

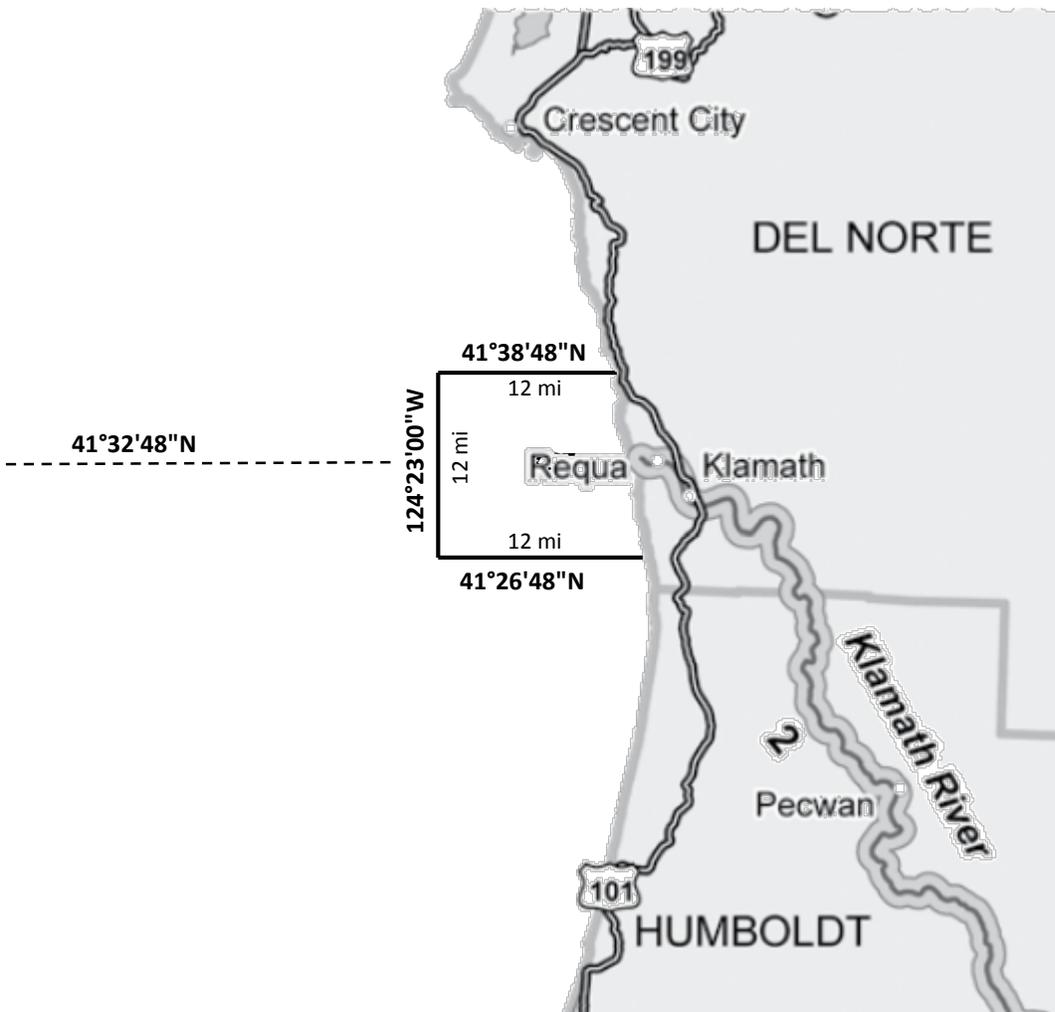


Figure 2. Klamath Control Zone (KCZ): No salmon may be taken in the ocean area surrounding the Klamath River mouth, bounded on the north by 41°38'48" N. lat. (approximately 6 nautical miles north of the Klamath River mouth), on the south by 41°26'48" N. lat. (approximately 6 nautical miles south of the Klamath River mouth), and on the west by 124°23'00" W. long (approximately 12 nautical miles off shore). The proposed new management line would extend west from the KCZ at 41°32'48" N. lat.

B. Examine a potential Point Sur management line in the winter run harvest model (WHRM) and cohort reconstruction, including how this may impact the Sacramento Index and Ocean Harvest models.

CDFW's cursory review of available coded-wire tag data, coupled with trends suggested in a number of genetic stock identification (GSI) studies, suggests that there may be considerably different winter run impact rates in fisheries within the current Monterey

Management Area (Pigeon Point to the U.S.-Mexico border) north and south of Point Sur ((36°18'00" N. lat.) and that these rates may vary by month (Figure 3). Two GSI studies have demonstrated very high winter run impact rates in these southern fisheries in the months of August and September.

For management of 2015 fisheries, CDFW examined raw coded wire tag data by time and area between the Monterey and Morro Bay/Santa Barbara port areas. However, refinement of both actual catch and fishery effort data is needed to inform the WRHM so that it may produce refined estimates of projected impacts in these two subareas. CDFW recommends that this item be included on the list for the 2015 methodology review given the critical need to examine winter run fishery impacts in a more refined manner, in support of the goal of minimizing fishery impacts in times and areas where they most likely occur.

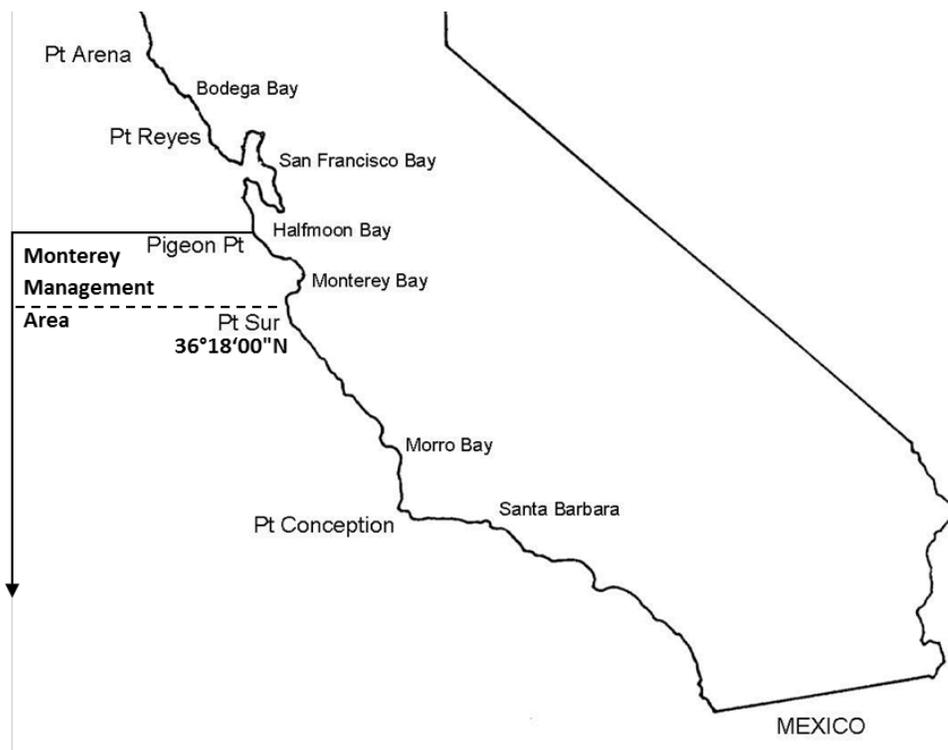


Figure 3. The Sacramento River Winter Chinook harvest control rule applies to ocean salmon fisheries south of Point Arena. The area south of Pigeon Point is modeled as a single management area referred to as the Monterey Management Area. Available data suggests Sacramento River Winter Chinook contacts above and below Point Sur (36°18'00" N. lat.) may vary.