

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON COUNCIL DIRECTION ON 2016
MANAGEMENT MEASURES

In response to the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council's) request, the Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) provides this report and offers a compromise solution. The SAS met with fishery managers from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and engaged in a fruitful and spirited discussion about the recreational season alternatives in the Monterey North Management area. The SAS acknowledges the need to conserve Sacramento River winter Chinook (SRWC) and appreciates the difficult challenges fishery managers and stakeholders face in crafting protective fishing seasons.

The CDFW has presented recommendations and an analysis to the Council (Agenda Item E.1.e, Supplemental CDFW Report). The SAS recognizes that substantial effort has gone into the analysis and is grateful for the time CDFW has taken to explain its recommendations to the SAS. With one exception, the SAS completely supports the CDFW recommendation. The SAS does not agree with the July 15 end date for recreational salmon fishing in the Monterey North management area.

As useful as the CDFW analysis may be, the SAS cautions the Council against overreliance on this data. The analysis is based on the recovery of coded-wire-tags, nearly all from years of a 20" minimum retention size in the recreational fishery. Well over half of the tags come from just two brood years, 2002 and 2003, which were unusually abundant. Moreover, this analysis has not been vetted by the Scientific and Statistical Committee or Salmon Technical Team.

The CDFW analysis primarily uses data based on a 20-inch size limit. Both CDFW and stakeholders agree that a 24-inch minimum size limit reduces SRWC impacts and should be used in this management area in 2016. That was the size incorporated into the 2015 season and the state recovered no coded wire tags in the Monterey North recreational season that ran through Labor Day. It should also be noted that the Monterey region also gave up a great part of its season in 2015.

In the Monterey South area, the SAS agrees completely with the CDFW recommendation. In the Monterey North area, the SAS agrees with the loss of August 1 through September 5. The sole disagreement pertains to the last half of July in Monterey North.

The recreational fishery thrives on opportunity, much of which has already been lost to protect SRWC. July is the second most valuable month in this region. The loss of opportunity in the last half of July means the loss of \$635,000 in economic activity.

The SAS believes that a Monterey North season of April 2 through July 31 is justified. That would mark two consecutive years of deep cuts in recreational opportunity and impact. The CDFW recommendation of July 15 is based on data derived under very different conditions than exist today, both with regard to minimum retention size and SRWC abundance.

Nevertheless, in the spirit of compromise, the SAS would support a Monterey North season running through July 24 with a 24 inch minimum size limit.