



Pacific Fishery Management Council *NEWS RELEASE*

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PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL CHOOSES OPTIONS FOR 2016 SALMON SEASON

Sacramento, California – The Pacific Fishery Management Council yesterday adopted three public review alternatives for the 2016 salmon season off the West Coast of the United States. The Council will select a final alternative at their next meeting in Vancouver, Washington on April 9-14. Detailed information about season starting dates, areas open, and catch limits for all three alternatives are available on the Council’s website at www.pcouncil.org or <http://tinyurl.com/salmon2016>.

“The mix of salmon runs this year is unusual,” said outgoing Executive Director Donald McIsaac. “In the north, the return of fall Chinook to the Columbia River is forecast to be exceptionally high again, but expectations for wild coho runs to the Washington Coast and Puget Sound areas can only be described as disastrous. In the south, the Sacramento River fall Chinook are healthy, but Klamath River fall Chinook are so poor that the Council’s policy calls for a low ‘*de minimis*’ catch in ocean fisheries.”

“This will be a challenging year for salmon fisheries. Several key stocks are less abundant than usual due to environmental conditions like the California drought and El Niño, which have affected ocean abundance for some stocks. However, there are alternatives that provide opportunities for both commercial and recreational salmon fishing coastwide,” said Council Vice-Chair Herb Pollard.

Northern Oregon and Washington (north of Cape Falcon)

Sport season alternatives

Ocean sport fishery options north of Cape Falcon in Oregon and off the Washington coast are focused on Chinook salmon this year, with mark-selective Chinook fishing alternatives for June; and July-August fisheries, which are not mark-selective. Chinook recreational quotas range from 30,000 to 58,600. For coho, one alternative allows modest coastwide opportunity for 37,800 hatchery coho in July and August. One alternative permits limited coho fishing only in the Columbia River area between Cape Falcon and Leadbetter Point, with a coho quota of 14,700 hatchery coho that starts in late June and runs into September. One alternative is closed to all non-Indian recreational and commercial fishing north of Cape Falcon in response to concerns over extremely low forecasts. In a year like this, it is appropriate to see the effects of complete protection for key Washington coastal and Puget Sound wild coho stocks.

Commercial season options

Non-Indian ocean commercial fishery alternatives north of Cape Falcon include traditional Chinook seasons between May and September. Chinook quotas for all areas and times range from 30,000 to 56,000, compared to 67,000 in 2015. Only one commercial fishery alternative allows retention of coho, with a quota of 7,200 marked coho (compared to 19,200 in 2015).

Tribal ocean fisheries north of Cape Falcon

Alternative Chinook and coho quotas for tribal ocean fisheries range from quotas of 30,000 to 50,000 for Chinook salmon, while coho quotas range from 0 to 40,000. Seasons open May 1 and run through August or September 15. The zero coho quota alternative for the tribal ocean fishery reflects concern over the very low forecasts for key Washington coastal and Puget Sound wild coho stocks.

California and southern Oregon (south of Cape Falcon)

Sport season options

California ocean sport fishing alternatives provide seasons that range from fairly continuous traditional seasons to more conservative alternatives with mid-season closures or shortened seasons to protect Klamath River fall Chinook or Sacramento River winter Chinook.

Chinook directed Klamath Management Zone alternatives (Humbug Mt., Oregon to Horse Mt., California) generally open in May and run through Labor Day (except that

one alternative closes August 31), and all alternatives have closed periods to reduce impacts on Klamath River fall Chinook.

Alternatives for Oregon Chinook fishing in the Tillamook, Newport, and Coos Bay areas all open March 15 and run either continuously through October 31 or are closed May through August.

Oregon ocean recreational alternatives include mark-selective coho fishing seasons starting in June or July and run through July or into early August in the area between Cape Falcon and the Oregon/California border. Quotas range from 15,000 to 30,000 marked coho. In addition, non-mark-selective fisheries are proposed for the area between Cape Falcon and Humbug Mt. in September with quotas ranging from 6,000 to 10,000 coho.

Commercial season options

From the north, commercial Chinook salmon season alternatives in the Tillamook, Newport, and Coos Bay area open April 8 and run through September or October but have several closed periods.

Oregon season alternatives in the Brookings area of the Klamath Management Zone are generally open for Chinook most of April and May, and one alternative includes small quota fisheries in June, July, and August.

California commercial season alternatives in the Klamath Management Zone north of the Humboldt South Jetty include two small quota (3,000 and 1,000) fisheries in September, and one alternative with no fishing.

Commercial season alternatives south of the Klamath Management Zone are generally closed in July to protect Klamath fall Chinook. Open periods are all or part of May, and depending on the area, all or parts of June, August, and September, with fewer open periods to the south to protect Sacramento River winter Chinook.

Management Process

Public hearings to receive input on the options are scheduled for March 28 in Westport, Washington and Coos Bay, Oregon; and for March 29 in Fort Bragg, California. The Council will consult with scientists, hear public comment, and revise preliminary decisions until it chooses a final option at its meeting April 9-14 in Vancouver, Washington.

At its April meeting in Vancouver, the Council will narrow these options to a single season recommendation to be forwarded to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for their final approval before May 1.

All Council meetings are open to the public.

Council Role

The Pacific Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils established by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 for the purpose of managing fisheries 3-200 miles offshore of the United States of America coastline. The Pacific Council recommends management measures for fisheries off the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington.

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On the Web

- Pacific Fishery Management Council: <http://www.pcouncil.org>
- Draft Alternative for 2016 salmon management: <http://tinyurl.com/salmon2016>
- Final Alternatives and analyses of the biological and socioeconomic impacts will be posted on the Council web page in the near future.
- Description of 2016 salmon management process: <http://www.pcouncil.org/salmon/current-season-management/>
- Fact sheet: Salmon: <http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Salmon-Oct-2015.pdf>
- Fact sheet: Common Terms Used in Salmon Management: <http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Common-salmon-terms-Oct-2015.pdf>