

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON METHODOLOGY REVIEW PROCESS
AND PRELIMINARY TOPIC SELECTION FOR 2013

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) participated in the Workshop on the current and alternative management strategies pursuant to the Biological Opinion on Sacramento winter run Chinook (SWRC) and on the potential for abundance-based management of California Coastal Chinook salmon in joint session with the Salmon Technical Team. Noting that the thorough, peer-reviewed analysis on winter run management strategies showed virtually no difference in the risk of extinction among several control rules, we wonder at the choice of the current control rule that would cut fishing to zero at low SWRC populations with little apparent benefit to the long-term survival of the winter run. Rather than include this issue as a methodology topic for 2013, the SAS recommends the Council to formally request that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) revisit the existing control rule, with an eye towards preserving flexibility and opportunity in the fishery on targeted stocks without jeopardizing the survival of SRWC.

While disappointed that insufficient data exists to implement direct management for California Coastal Chinook, the SAS was encouraged by the program initiatives presented by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife which are intended to collect data required to properly inform and develop an abundance-based approach for management of California Coastal Chinook.

The SAS remains supportive of the development of an abundance-based management approach for California Coastal Chinook, but does not feel the issue is ready for formal methodology review until more data become available. The SAS recommends that the Council schedule periodic workshops, during the March or April Council meetings, to review progress by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, NMFS, and others in developing the information necessary for management of this evolutionarily significant unit. Scheduling of workshops will depend on program development, but should occur no less than biennially to keep Council and agency focus on this important management strategy.

The SAS also supports moving forward with review of the abundance-based matrix for management of Columbia River coho.