

9/13/14

35417 N. Dalton Road
Deer Park, WA 99006
September 13, 2014

Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Re: September 13, 2014, PFMC Agenda Item H.1 Unmanaged Forage Fish Protection Initiative

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Please include this public comment under Agenda Item H.1. I represent Spokane Audubon Society, its officers, directors and approximately 150 members. We are dedicated to protecting birds and their habitats and are associated with 24 other active Audubon chapters within Washington State--a network representing nearly 22,000 concerned citizens.

The regulatory issues before the Council offer an opportunity to incorporate previously unmanaged forage fish--the little fish that are a big deal in the web of life for marine mammals, sea birds, sharks, tuna, and other larger and anadromous predator fish like salmon and steelhead that populate our inland waters as well as the ocean where they grow to maturity. Accordingly we urge your approval of Final Management Option 2.2.1 to incorporate all forage fish on an ecosystem scale for each existing fishery management plan under your jurisdiction.

These forage fish apparently constitute 37 per cent of commercial catch world wide; and 90 per cent of that catch is utilized for other than human consumption. It follows, then, that the Council will set reasonable limits on forage fishing and focus on conservation, sustainability and non-commercial species--all for the health of forage fish stocks themselves as well as for continued species diversity and ecosystem function in the California Current.

Also, please note: this week's published projections indicate that half of the birds living on this continent will lose significant parts of their habitats by 2050 from climate change and associated environmental threats unless action is taken. Further, starvation and extinction for sea birds, larger predator fish and marine mammals are also likely without sustainable forage fish.

Please help avert this crisis: adopt Option 2.2.1. Your service with extremely complex matters and for the sometimes thankless work you assume are appreciated. We look forward to progress details.

Very truly yours,

SPOKANE AUDUBON SOCIETY

By Mary Jokela