

SALMON TECHNICAL TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISIONS TO THE PRESEASON PROCESS

On June 3, 1999, the Salmon Technical Team (STT) convened to discuss ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of preseason planning processes. The Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) chairman and two other SAS members also contributed to the STT deliberations. As management constraints have increased, the development of initial management options and final season recommendations have become more complex and difficult to manage. This year, the Council significantly modified its tentative regulations late on Friday afternoon of the April meeting. The final analysis for submission to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) was delayed while confusion and frustration were added for fishery representatives and the public. The STT is concerned that such delays in the process pose high risk of error in analysis, increase difficulty of communicating impacts, and may result in a requirement for involved inseason or emergency actions.

The STT intends to make several changes in its internal procedures to enhance the presentation of fishery management and impact information in Preseason Report I. In addition, the STT offers a number of recommendations for Council consideration (1) expanding the function of certain agency and fishery representative meetings prior to March, (2) crafting consistent and functional options at the March Council meeting, and (3) adding agency and fishery representative interaction between the March and April Council meetings.

Preseason Report I

The STT intends to modify Preseason Report I by adding more detailed information regarding the impact assessment of the previous year's management measures on current year stock abundance forecasts. A format will be designed to add important model outputs for Klamath River fall chinook, and a fishery-by-fishery breakdown of expected impacts on Sacramento River winter chinook and Oregon coastal natural (OCN) coho.^{1/}

The STT also intends to review the text of the Postseason Review and Preseason Report I to reduce the content to the information relevant and necessary to Council deliberations. (STT members will review proposed drafts of the changes at the STT meeting in November.)

Management Agency and Fishery Representative Meetings

Prior to the March Council meeting, each state has been hosting a meeting with its fishery constituents to discuss abundance projections and possible seasons for the coming year. The STT believes these meetings are important to the timely development of management options and encourages the states to give continued emphasis to this interaction. In light of the problems experienced this April in the development of regulations off California, the STT suggests that California consider committing part of their meeting or adding a second day to more fully discuss management priorities for the season, commercial-recreational allocation, and key issues that must be resolved prior to final Council action in April.

March Council Meeting

The STT believes that significant improvement in the preseason process could be achieved by providing more explicit information and a common understanding to guide the development of consistent and functional March options. For example, the 1999 options off California gave little to no indication that a

1/ The STT discussed running the chinook Fishery Regulation Assessment Model (FRAM) to provide more detailed impacts on Columbia River and Puget Sound chinook stocks in Preseason Report I. However, at this time, the ability to recalibrate the chinook FRAM before the March Council meeting is highly uncertain. Pertinent agency and tribal managers should be encouraged to have the chinook FRAM ready to run as early as possible, no later than the first day of the March Council meeting.

significant allocation problem concerning commercial-recreational impacts on Sacramento River winter chinook existed. The STT realizes that due to the complexity of the process and the difference in needs of the various areas (e.g., north and south of Cape Falcon, and the Klamath Management Zone), it may not be possible to set exacting requirements and guidelines for each and every option. However, thoughtful public deliberations on the options would be greatly facilitated by explicitly stating the option's objectives and priorities.

The STT suggests that the Council:

1. Work toward identifying a preferred option on Friday of the March Council meeting. Generally, Option I should include the SAS's priority seasons and management measures. Options II and III would be used to show seasons in which one group or the other gets more or less of its priorities, to illustrate the effect of other management measures (e.g., variations in bag limits for recreational fisheries) or to allow for different inside/outside allocations (e.g., options north of Cape Falcon). All options would be required to meet basic conservation requirements.
2. Instruct the SAS representatives to clearly identify their fishery priorities (e.g., first two fish, continuous season between Point X and Y, etc.) and engage in negotiations as necessary to resolve conflicts among gear groups and areas to arrive at cohesive and coordinated options.
3. Provide specific guidance for the allowable level of impacts on OCN coho and priorities for the allocation of impacts on critical stocks (e.g., Klamath River fall chinook, Sacramento River winter chinook, Snake River fall chinook, etc.) on the first day of the March meeting. Council staff can modify the option tables to insure that these objectives are clearly identified and addressed. Each time the Council reviews the options, it should review and amend this guidance on the objectives and priorities.
4. Avoid adopting more than three options. Council and SAS representatives seem to operate on the perception that they are precluded from adopting a measure in April if it is not included in the March options. Council staff advises that the public comment period extends to the public input on the first day of the Council meeting. This is after the SAS has developed its April recommendation to the Council. The Council should request guidance from its legal counsel to clarify what changes to the options the Council may consider at the April meeting. Variations to proposed measures can be noted with the seasons without crafting a new option. Several examples of this occurred in the 1999 options and functioned without adding additional confusion to the impact tables or final adoption of management measures (e.g., clarification that the Klamath Management Zone ocean sport share would be 17%, a potential May test fishery off Fort Bragg).

Between March and April Council Meetings

The STT recommends that California consider having structured agency and fishery representative meetings between the March and April Council meetings to refine the March options. The meetings would be similar in function to the North of Cape Falcon Forum, and should be completed prior to the public hearings.

April Meeting

With more focused preparation, the probability of completing the process on time at the April meeting should be greatly increased. The STT suggests that the Council adopt the final management measures on Thursday afternoon of the April meeting instead of Friday. This would assure that the STT would be able to complete its final assessments, including model runs and impact tables, prior to the end of the Council meeting, and thus shorten the time required before recommendations can be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce. For this strategy to work, the Council would have to make it clear that, short of some unexpected and significant glitch, the final adoption would not be continued on Friday. The STT recognizes that shortening the process may pose some difficulties, especially for fisheries north of Cape Falcon which include extensive coordination among many tribal and nontribal entities.

PFMC
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