

INSEASON MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPENINGS PRIOR TO MAY 1

Situation: The 1999 ocean salmon fishing regulations specify the Council will make inseason recommendations to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) at the March Council meeting for certain fisheries which may open earlier than May 1, 2000. The fisheries under consideration are the commercial and recreational fisheries off Oregon, south of Cape Falcon, and the commercial test fishery off California south of Pillar Point. Last year, the Council opened fisheries between Cape Falcon and Humbug Mountain on April 1. Three test fisheries were open under limited quotas south of Pillar Point beginning April 14.

With regard to the April test fishery off California, NMFS made the following comments in a letter to the Council last November:

At the March 2000 meeting, the Council will consider inseason recommendations for a test fishery off California in April south of Pillar Point. While NMFS strongly encourages the collection of data to provide better stock composition data for specific areas and times, the listing of Central Valley spring chinook makes it difficult for NMFS to support the use of commercial quota fisheries off California prior to May to gather samples. Preliminary analysis of the samples taken from the April 1999 test fishery off Half Moon Bay indicate that 31% of the catch consisted of Central Valley spring chinook, mostly of hatchery origin (84% of the spring chinook). Commercial test fisheries occurring prior to May 1 should be conducted through exempted fishing permits so that only the numbers of fish required for a valid sample size are taken in the test fishery.

Council Action: Provide NMFS with recommendations for inseason action to:

1. Set opening dates for any all-salmon-except-coho commercial and recreational fisheries the Council wishes to open prior to May 1 off Oregon.
2. Specify the areas, season, quota, and special regulations (based on the results of the 1999 fishery) for the commercial experimental fishery in April off California south of Pillar Point.

Reference Materials: None.

PFMC
02/22/00