

STATUS OF AMENDMENT 14 AND IMPLICATIONS FOR 2001
OVERFISHING CONCERNS

Situation: On June 12, 2000, Amendment 14 to the salmon fishery management plan (FMP) was officially transmitted to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) for review and implementation. The official transmittal initiates formal Secretarial review which includes a 60-day public comment period for the amendment and a 30-day public comment period for regulations implementing the amendment. Within 30 days after the close of the public comment period for the amendment, which will occur just prior to the Council's September meeting (approximately September 11), the Secretary must approve, disapprove, or partially approve the amendment. Council staff assumes the amendment will be approved or substantially approved and pertinent changes implemented for the 2001 salmon fishing season.

One of the most significant changes proposed in Amendment 14 concerns the prevention and/or ending of overfishing. At its April meeting, the Council identified that Queets wild coho could trigger an overfishing concern when Amendment 14 is implemented. Under the current FMP, Queets coho do not trigger an overfishing concern since the stock has met the annual spawner target agreed upon by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the tribes (under U.S. District Court orders) in at least one of the past three years. However, under Amendment 14, Council staff believes wild Queets coho stock would trigger an overfishing concern since it fails to meet its maximum sustainable yield (MSY) spawner escapement range of 5,800 to 14,500 natural adult spawners for the past three years. Since there is some controversy over this interpretation of Amendment 14, the Council needs to clarify its intent for triggering the overfishing concern for stocks managed north of Cape Falcon under procedures established by U.S. District Court orders. Supplemental Attachment B.4.a. provides details of the status of the Queets coho stock and the operative language from Amendment 14.

If the wild Queets coho stock is identified as triggering an overfishing concern, the Council has one year in which to develop and submit a stock rebuilding plan to end overfishing. However, waiting one full year from September 2000 would mean that a rebuilding plan would not be implemented until the 2002 salmon fishing season. In this situation, the Council may wish to anticipate the overfishing issue and request WDFW and the tribes to begin assembling the pertinent biological data to assist the Salmon Technical Team (STT) in assessing the status of the Queets coho and to develop a rebuilding plan which could be initiated in the 2001 salmon fishing season. The full overfishing concern procedure of Amendment 14 is contained in Supplemental Attachment B.4.b.

Council Action:

1. Clarify the impact of Amendment 14 with regard to triggering an overfishing concern for wild Queets coho.
2. Determine whether or not to request WDFW and the tribes to begin assembling the pertinent data to assist the STT in an overfishing review of this stock to be completed by the March 2001 Council meeting so as to allow implementation in the 2001 salmon fishing season.

Reference Materials:

1. Status of Queets Coho and Overfishing Criteria of Amendment 14 (Supplemental Attachment B.4.a.)
2. Excerpt from Section 3.2.3. (Overfishing Concern) of Amendment 14 (Supplemental Attachment B.4.b.).

PFMC
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