

## KFMC RECOMMENDATIONS TO PFMC<sup>1</sup>

The KFMC met February 22-23 and March 4-5, 2001 to discuss management of Klamath River fall chinook for 2001. A summary of our discussions and recommendations follow.

### **Issue 1: Larger than predicted escapement of age-3 fish in 2000**

The KFMC discussed the large escapement of age-3 spawners in the Klamath basin with the Klamath River Technical Team (KRTAT). They report that the abundance of age-3 fish was 273 percent of the pre-season prediction, and the age-4 abundance was slightly above the pre-season prediction. Good ocean environmental conditions probably contributed to above average survival of the 1997 brood. The ocean survivors of this cohort will return as age-4 fish this year. The natural component of the escapement was only 46% compared to a pre-season prediction of 70% natural spawners. This was due to a very large hatchery component.

The run of adult fish entering Iron Gate Hatchery was the largest ever at 71,600 fish. The run into Bogus Creek, located adjacent to the hatchery, was 34,700 adult fish, the second largest on record for that stream. A larger run occurred in the Creek in 1995 (45,200), in part because the hatchery was not prepared to process all of the returning fish in that year and had to preclude entrance into the hatchery receiving facility. This resulted in hatchery fish spawning naturally and being considered part of the natural spawning escapement. Trinity River Hatchery also received an above average number of adult fish (26,000) in 2000.

The naturally spawning escapement into the Klamath basin was 82,500 fish, well above the natural escapement floor of 35,000 adult spawners. However, discounting Bogus Creek, the naturally spawning run totaled only 47,800 fish.

Our stock projection models were updated to include these new data points.

### **Issue 2: Ocean abundance and spawning escapement projections for 2001**

The KFMC discussed using the age-specific stock projections for determining biological and fishery harvest goals for 2001. For only the second time since 1990, the data indicate the stock should be managed to exceed the escapement floor of 35,000 naturally spawning adult fish (47,000 natural spawners; 74,600 including hatchery fish) pursuant to Amendment 9 of the Framework Management Plan of the PFMC. The age-3 projection of 93,500 fish is one of the lowest on record while the age-4 projection of 197,600 is the second highest. The age-5 projection is about 1000 fish. The estimated proportion of natural spawners based on the recent five years of data is 63 percent. The preliminary fishery harvest levels based on these estimates are 77,300 fish each for the tribal and non-tribal fisheries. The non-tribal harvest would be allocated 11,600 to the river sport fishery (15 percent based on the California Fish and Game Commission letter discussed below) and 65,700 for the ocean fisheries. Absent Endangered Species Act constraints, the age-4 ocean harvest rate would be 0.25, including catches made prior to May 1.

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<sup>1</sup>Adopted by KFMC March 5, 2001

The KFMC discussed using more conservative parameters for determining biological and fishery harvest goals for this year. This was done with the intent of better ensuring that our escapement goal for naturally spawning fish will be met (at the expense of fishery goals). Specifically, 1) the KRTAT analyzed the effect of applying the age-3 maturation rate observed for the 1992 brood to the 1997 brood; and/or applying the proportion of natural spawners observed in 2000, rather than the 5-year average. The 1992 brood maturation rate was used because it was the highest age-3 maturation rate for a "power brood" on record (the other power broods are 1983-85). 2) We considered using only the 2000 proportion of natural spawners because of the predominance of age-3 fish in the run last year and the projected dominance of age-4 fish (fish of the same cohort-- in the run this year).

The KRTAT presented an analysis of the two modified parameters discussed above and concluded the risk of not meeting the natural escapement floor for the basin under the proposed harvest levels is very low. In part, this is because we are managing for a natural escapement in 2001 of 47,000 adult fish, 12,000 fish over the floor. Of the two parameters in question, the KRTAT and KFMC agreed that the method used to project the proportion of fish that will return to natural areas needs further analysis. However, no change in the current methodology (5-year average) is recommended for this year. The KFMC voted to accept the KRTAT stock projection report and to recommend that the PFMC and its advisory bodies use that report for projecting ocean abundance of Klamath fall chinook and the proportion of fish that will return to natural areas in 2001.

Our recommendations regarding allocation of the non-tribal share of Klamath fall chinook follow.

### **Issue 3: Allocation of fish to the river sport fishery**

In a February 14, 2001 letter, the California Fish and Game Commission advised the KFMC and PFMC to set aside 15 percent of the non-tribal share of the allowable harvest of Klamath River fall chinook for the river sport fishery, and, in the event that ocean fisheries were unable to harvest their full preseason allotment, that any surplus be made available to the river sport fishery. Based on the Commission letter, the preliminary allocation of adult fish to the river sport fishery is 11,600 fish (the final allocation will be possible after the ocean fishing regulations are determined).

The KFMC discussed the likelihood that a significant number of fish will be transferred from the ocean fisheries to the river sport fishery if ESA constraints prevent ocean fisheries from fully accessing their share. South of Horse Mountain, the ocean fisheries will be constrained by Sacramento winter chinook, California coastal chinook and Oregon coastal natural coho (OCN), while fisheries between Horse Mountain and Cape Falcon will be constrained by California coastal chinook, OCN coho, and Rogue-Klamath coho. Any such transfers should be clearly shown in the options that are prepared for public hearings.

It appears likely that the river sport fishery will have more harvestable fish available than it can use. The KFMC will continue to discuss disposition of any projected surplus of fish in the river sport allocation.

#### **Issue 4: Allocation of fish to the KMZ sport fishery**

The KFMC again agrees that 17% of the ocean share of Klamath River fall chinook should be allocated to the KMZ sport fishery. To achieve its allocation, the fishery should be managed based on time and area closures, minimum size limits, and bag and possession limits. The KFMC supports analysis of the regulation options that were recently developed by the Klamath Management Zone Coalition.

#### **Issue 5: Allocation of fish to the CA and OR troll fisheries**

The KFMC recognizes that ESA constraints may have a greater influence on ocean fishing regulations than the allowable harvest of Klamath fall chinook. The KFMC recommends that 2000 commercial regulations be used as the base for developing 2001 regulations. In 2000 the allowable harvest rate for age-4 fish was 13.8%. In 2001, the rate may be higher, depending on ESA constraints. The SAS representatives from California and Oregon, in consultation with KFMC representatives, should negotiate how these fish can be utilized in 2001.

