

SALMON MANAGEMENT OPTION HEARING SUMMARY

Date:	March 26, 2001	Hearing Officer:	Mr. Jim Lone
Location:	Chateau Westport Westport, WA	Other Council Members:	Mr. Phil Anderson Mr. Jim Harp
Attendance:	30	NMFS:	Mr. Bill Robinson
Testifying:	9	Coast Guard:	LT Brian Corrigan
		Salmon Team Member:	Mr. Doug Milward
		Council Staff:	Dr. John Coon
<u>Organizations Represented:</u>			
City of Westport Washington Trollers Association Westport Charterboat Association			

Synopsis of Testimony

Of the nine people testifying:

- Four commented primarily on the commercial troll fishery.
- Four commented primarily on the recreational fishery.
- One commented on the beneficial economic aspects of both the troll and recreational fisheries.

Special Opening Remarks

Mr. Phil Anderson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), reported that a recent problem has emerged requiring additional protection of threatened mid-Hood Canal chinook which are at an especially low level this year. He noted that WDFW would prefer to maintain the ocean catch quotas and protect this stock through time and area closures off northern Washington. He requested those testifying to comment on a proposed expansion of the special Cape Flattery Control Zone south from Point of Arches to Cape Alava. This would be the same area closure that was instituted in 1999 to protect Puget Sound chinook.

Commercial Troll Comments

Commercial trollers generally supported the quota numbers in Option I with some suggested variations in the Option I seasons (see attached memo of March 26, 2001 from Washington Trollers Association [WTA]). One troller noted that the total commercial chinook quota was still too small to support the current level of licensed trollers.

With regard to the proposed expansion of the Cape Flattery Control Zone by WDFW, trollers were generally supportive, as long as the area known as the "Prairie" remained open. However, they expressed significant concern that an earlier proposal to completely close Areas 3 and 4 and require the troll fishery to be reduced to protect mid-Hood Canal chinook had been developed without any troller input and was extremely unfair and detrimental (see attached WTA memo of March 24, 2001). One troller was still concerned that in some years most of the fish would be in the Cape Flattery Control Zone and not accessible to the fishers. In such cases the Council should open the fishery on April 15 to allow trollers time to harvest the available quota.

With the prospect of drought conditions this year, one troller encouraged the Council to step forward in support of water quantity and quality to protect salmon.

Recreational Comments

All recreational fishers supported Option 1. Most agreed that the coho quota appears to provide a socially and economically rewarding season for the first time in many years. The chinook quota of 30,000 fish is a bare minimum to assure access to the coho without having to use special restrictions to limit chinook harvest. There is not yet a consensus on the starting and closing dates to achieve the longest season possible. Fishers asked that a non-selective fishery be analyzed for the month of September (see attached statement by Westport Charterboat Association [WCA]).

Written Statements (Attached)

1. WTA memo of March 26, 2001.
2. WTA memo of March 24, 2001 and attachments.
3. WCA memo of March 26, 2001.

PFMC
03/29/01

Memo

To: Pacific Fisheries Management Council

From: The Washington Trollers Association

Date: 03/26/01

Re: WTA preferred 2001 North of Falcon Troll Season

May 1 to Jun 15 - 15,000 ^{chinook} - Guideline - All Species except Coho - Cape Falcon to US Border

July 1 to Setpember 18 - 10,000 chinook/12,000 coho(non - selective) guideline, six inch or larger plug- chinook directed, 100 coho per delivery landing allowance, Leadbetter Point to US/Canada border. The fishery is continuous until 75% of guideline and then reverts to 4 days open and 3 days closed cycle.

July 19 – Area from Leadbetter Point to Queets River closes

July 20 to Sept 18 - 5000 chinook/63,000 coho(selective) guideline, all gear, Cape Falcon to Queets River. The fishery is continuous until 75% of guideline and then reverts to 4 days open and 3 days closed cycle

Memo

To: Washington Fish and Wildlife Commissioners
From: The Washington Trollers Association
CC: Dr. Jeff Koenings, Senator Sid Snyder, Representative Jim Buck, Paul Anderson
Date: 03/24/01
Re: Mid-Hood Canal Natural Chinook Stocks

On Thursday, March 22, 2001, WDFW held a meeting in Olympia to discuss impacts on Mid-Hood Canal Natural Chinook stocks. At that meeting user groups were told that ocean impacts on these stocks for the proposed 2001 ocean season were too high. The following table was presented to outline the situation.

Table I:

Fisheries		Appendix C #s of Fish	Option 1 #s of Fish
Canada		80.2	80.6
South of Falcon		0.5	0.5
North of Falcon	Non-	0.0	6.3
Ocean Troll	Treaty	2.9	8.0
	Treaty		
Ocean Sport		0.4	3.8
Puget Sound Treaty Troll		5.2	3.3
Puget Sound Sport 5-7		10.8	11.5
Puget Sound Sport 8-13		22.1	24.7
Out of Region Net	Non-	9.3	8.2
	Treaty	8.9	7.2
	Treaty		
SUS Pre-Terminal Exp. Rate		11.4%	13.7%
Number of additional mid-HC fish To save under Appendix C			13.4

The heading "Appendix C – Numbers of Fish" is taken from Appendix C of the new "Puget Sound Comprehensive Chinook Management Plan – Harvest Management Component".

In Appendix C trollers were zeroed out of any impacts on these stocks. This apparently was done by WDFW assuming a troll season of 5900 chinook, which is way below average, with Areas 3 and 4 closed. Areas 3 and 4 constitute the area from the Queets River north to the Canadian Border. Such a fishery regime has occurred only once in the history of the fishery. In recent years the concentration of fish has been predominately in Areas 3 and 4. WTA learned of all of this for the first time at the Thursday, March 22nd meeting. The following table shows the impacts assessed to the Washington Ocean Fishery.

Table II:

	Appendix C - #'s of Fish	Option 1 - #'s of Fish
Total Harvest	140.3	154.1
Total Non-Canadian Harvest	60.1	73.5
Non-Treaty Ocean Harvest		
Troll	0	6.3
Sport	0.4	3.8
Total	0.4	10.1
Non-Treaty Ocean Harvest Share of Total Non-Canadian Harvest		
Troll	0%	8.5%
Sport	0.7%	5.2%
Total	0.7%	13.7%

At the time it became apparent that Puget Sound Chinook stocks were to be listed, it was well known that the majority of the impacts on these stocks were in the inside fisheries. It appears that WDFW set up Appendix C to protect the inside fisheries as much as possible at the expense of the ocean fishery. Zeroing out Areas 3 and 4 to the troll fishery would be the deathblow of a viable ocean troll fishery. It is very disheartening that the troll fishery representatives were not included in any way in the development of the "Puget Sound Chinook Plan". The ocean impact is very small compared with the impacts of the inside fisheries; and it is incredible that the least impacting fishery would have to bear the brunt of the needed overall conservation effort to protect these stocks.

We would like to know what involvement the Commission and top management staff had in the development of this onerous plan. The survival of the ocean troll fishery is at stake and we intend to vigorously oppose this "Management Plan" to obtain reasonable sharing of impacts.

Minimum Fishery Regulation Regime⁹

The set of fishery regulations described in this appendix defines the co-managers' minimum fishery regulation regime. This regime will be evaluated annually, at forecast abundance for all management units, using pre-season fishery models (e.g., FRAM) to set an exploitation rate for each management unit that is expected to have spawner abundance less than its low abundance threshold. This process also will define the maximum southern U.S. exploitation rate for those management units. Southern U.S. fisheries will be structured during the pre-season planning process to achieve a modeled exploitation rate no greater than this defined rate.

This low abundance, exploitation rate objective will vary annually, dependent upon changes in the relative abundance of U.S. and Canadian chinook and in northern fishery regimes. Appendix C outcomes are sensitive to changes in effort, abundance of other species, and the relative abundance of the critical management unit(s) in comparison to the other chinook stocks.

To quantify its effect, the minimum fishery regulation regime was modeled at recent Puget Sound chinook abundance. The range of exploitation rates that resulted reflects, to some extent, the slightly increased incidental impacts associated with odd-year fisheries for pink salmon, but likely understates the range that will emerge from this modeling exercise in future years. The past circumstances do not provide certainty of capturing all possible future possibilities.

Low abundance exploitation rate objectives are summarized below (Table C-1), either as total exploitation rates or southern U.S. exploitation rates, in comparison to recovery – level objectives that apply at higher abundance. Where terminal fisheries regimes will be managed to achieve specific escapement objectives, as described in the management unit status profiles, the low abundance rate is expressed only for pre-terminal southern U.S. (SUS) fisheries.

⁹ It is important to note that this only represents the harvest management component of an overall recovery strategy. Harvest management alone cannot rebuild Puget Sound Chinook.

Table C-1. Range of exploitation rates expected with application of the Minimum Fishery Regulation Regime, under assumptions of recent year stock and species abundance.

Natural Chinook Management Units	Recovery Exploitation Rate Ceiling	Appendix C Ranges
Western Strait Hoko	10% SUS ER	8 – 10% SUS ER
Elwha River	10% SUS ER	8 – 10% SUS ER
Dungeness	10% SUS ER	8 – 10% SUS ER
Mid-Hood Canal	15% pre-terminal SUS ER Terminal – 750 spawners	13–15%pre-term SUS ER +Terminal ¹
Skokomish	15% pre-terminal SUS ER Terminal – 3,150 spawners	12-15%pre-term SUS ER +Terminal ¹
Nooksack Early	Under development ²	5 – 7% SUS ER
Skagit Spring Chinook	42% Total ER	15-17%SUS or 21-23% Total ER
Skagit Summer/Fall Chinook	52% Total ER	12-17%SUS or 29-33%Total ER
Stillaguamish Summer/Fall	25% Total ER	9-10%SUS or 15-16%Total ER
Snohomish Summer/Fall	32% Total ER	19-20%SUS or 24-26% Total ER
Lake Washington Chinook Cedar River Index	15% pre-terminal SUS ER Terminal – 1,200 spawners	11-15%pre-term SUS ER +Terminal ¹
Green River Chinook	15% pre-terminal SUS ER Terminal – 5,800 spawners	10-15%pre-term SUS ER +Terminal ¹
White River Spring Chinook	17% Total ER	12%SUS or 13%Total ER
Puyallup River Chinook	50% Total ER	26%SUS or 36% Total ER
Nisqually River Chinook	1,100 spawners	Terminal ¹

- 1) The management intent is to take necessary action in the terminal and pre-terminal fisheries to achieve the low abundance threshold or to maximize the spawning escapement given the maximum regulatory effect that can be achieved for the management unit. Refer to the stock profiles for details on management intent.
- 2) The co-managers and NMFS are currently working on developing a recovery exploitation rate ceiling for this management unit. For the next two years it is not expected that the abundance of natural origin spawners will exceed the low abundance threshold. Therefore it is anticipated that southern US fisheries will be managed at impact levels generated from the application of Appendix C.

Minimum Fishery Regulation Regime

Non-Treaty Ocean Troll Fishery:

- A ceiling catch number of 5,900 chinook.
- Area 3 and 4 closed.

*North Washington Coast
2/3 of recent available troll harvest*

Non-Treaty Ocean Recreational Fisheries:

- A ceiling catch number of 3,500 chinook.
- Chinook non-retention in Areas 4 and 4B.

Treaty Troll Fishery in Area 3 & 4 modeled at 15,000 chinook —

WESTPORT CHARTERBOAT ASSOCIATION

P. O. BOX 654 • WESTPORT, WASHINGTON 98595

March 26, 2001

TO: Pacific Fishery Management Council

FR: Mark Cedergreen, Executive Director

TESTIMONY OF THE WESTPORT CHARTERBOAT ASSOCIATION ON THE 2001 SALMON SEASON OPTIONS

The Westport Charterboat Association supports Ocean Option I with respect to the Coho quota of 300,000 north of Cape Falcon and the Chinook quota of 60,000.

Given recent effort levels and fleet capacity, the recreational coho quota of 225,000 is adequate to provide ample opportunity this year for a socially and economically rewarding season in coastal fishing communities. We believe that 30,000 Chinook is a bare minimum to ensure the opportunity to catch the coho without having to resort to in-season management measures such as Chinook non-retention, particularly with none of the recent-year Chinook dampeners in place. We ask that you do everything feasible to keep the proposed Option 1 Chinook quota intact. Given that outcome, we do not support the imposition of any closed areas off Westport.

Although we desire the longest season possible, we do not yet have a consensus on start or closing dates. Starting in mid-June as opposed to July 1st has it's pros and cons. If, during that time, Chinook were the target species we could put ourselves in danger of in-season Chinook management in August. In addition, the Coho are small in June. On the other hand, effort would probably be light for the first few weeks and the alternative during that time would primarily involve being tied to the dock.

The closing date may be driven by September mark rate off Westport. If that rate becomes too low we would be turning loose a high percentage of mature natural stocks, which is not very acceptable for both biological and social reasons. We would appreciate having an analysis done on fishing non-selectively in September. This might be a solution if the impacts on natural stocks, particularly OCN's, are not too great.

We are prepared to work with WDFW staff between now and the end of the April Council meeting to finalize regulations that serve both the resource and the public.