

PACIFIC COAST SALMON PLAN AMENDMENT
MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES FOR LISTED CENTRAL VALLEY CHINOOK

I. Need and Purpose for Action

A. Current fishery management plan (FMP) Management Objectives - Three Central Valley chinook stocks are included in the FMP: Sacramento River fall chinook, Sacramento River winter chinook, and Sacramento River spring chinook. The FMP has a management objective for Sacramento River fall chinook based on the combined spawning escapement of hatchery and naturally spawning adult fall chinook. The FMP objectives for winter and spring chinook are NMFS' jeopardy standard. In the case of winter chinook the jeopardy standard is the reasonable and prudent alternative from the 1997 biological opinion. In the case of spring chinook, which was listed under the California and federal evolutionarily significant units (ESAs) in 1999, the objective is undefined. This is a result of NMFS' 2000 biological opinion, which concluded the existing winter chinook ESA requirements and the action taken in 2000 by the California Fish and Game Commission delaying the opening of the recreational seasons off San Francisco and Monterey, made additional constraints on ocean fisheries managed under the FMP unnecessary.

B. Need for Action

1. Status of the Populations - Since 1997, the spawning populations of winter chinook have increased; the preliminary estimate for the 2000 run is between 8,000 and 11,000 fish, based on the carcass survey, and about 5,500 fish based on the Red Bluff Diversion Dam count. Spawning populations of spring chinook have also increased in the Sacramento River Basin, particularly the Butte Creek run.
2. NMFS Section 7 Consultation - The 1997 biological opinion required constraints on ocean harvest sufficient to produce a 31% increase in the winter chinook adult replacement rate relative to a base period of 1989 to 1993. The opinion provided the requirement would remain in effect through the 2001 salmon seasons, and that NMFS would then reassess the need for restrictions on ocean harvest to protect winter chinook. The requirement has been implemented by the Council and NMFS based on a harvest model (WCOHM), which relies on recoveries of marked fish during the 1970s. Six years of carcass surveys are now available and the relatively large recent releases of coded wire tagged winter chinook from Livingston Stone National Fish Hatchery are beginning to provide better data on the distribution of winter chinook in ocean fisheries. This new information needs to be integrated into management methodologies.
3. Management Objectives - As winter and spring chinook populations recover and new data on the impact of ocean fisheries on the stocks become available, management objectives should be reviewed and appropriately modified. NMFS can accomplish this through the Section 7 process by issuing new biological opinions for winter and spring chinook. However, a more comprehensive set of objectives could be developed by the Council through the plan amendment process. An FMP amendment could provide near term recovery objectives as well as a framework for management following de-listing. The amendment process allows for far more participation and review by resource agencies, affected users, and other entities, such as the Salmon Technical Team (STT) and Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), than occurs under the NMFS Section 7 process.

C. Proposed Action - Develop an FMP amendment which would provide management objectives for Central Valley chinook that address the recovery and long term management needs of Sacramento River winter chinook and Central Valley spring chinook. The amendment team would include representation from state agencies, NMFS, the Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS), STT, and SSC. It would be expected the Amendment Team would coordinate with the Central Valley Technical Recovery Team, particularly with respect to new de-listing criteria the TRT will develop.

II. Components of the Amendment

- A. The amendment must include spring and winter chinook management measures that meet requirements of state and federal ESAs. An amendment would need a no-jeopardy opinion from NMFS, as occurred with Amendment 13, prior to final adoption by NMFS. Near term management goals could be based on attainment of certain spawner escapement objectives, or maximum exploitation rates, consistent with ESA recovery goals. In addressing the needs of spring and winter chinook, the amendment could modify the existing objective for Sacramento River fall chinook.
- B. The amendment should also include a framework for management of de-listed populations, whether as separate management entities or integrated under a broader scheme for Central Valley Chinook.

III. Management Objectives for Winter and Spring Chinook while Amendment is under Development

- A. NMFS will issue a new biological opinion prior to approving the 2002 seasons that will provide incidental take authorization for ocean fisheries with respect to Sacramento River winter and spring chinook while the plan amendment is being developed. The opinion will summarize much of the newly available information on stock status and harvest impacts.
- B. The opinion will continue the winter chinook protection measures of recent years. The requirements, however, will not be expressed in terms of an increased adult spawner replacement rate relative to a base period, and will not necessarily require use of the WCOHM for implementation. The opinion will be similar to the 1990 opinion in that it will place restrictions on the opening dates of recreational and commercial fisheries off California and provide minimum size limit restrictions in fisheries prior to May.

PFMC
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