

## QUEETS RIVER COHO STATUS REVIEW

Situation: The failure to achieve spawning escapement goals for three consecutive years triggers an overfishing concern under Amendment 14 to the *Pacific Coast Salmon Plan* (implemented September 2000). The Salmon Technical Team (STT) is responsible for determining the status of such a stock and developing recommendations for management measures to ensure the stock is not overfished. The Habitat Steering Group (HSG) is responsible for reviewing the status of essential fish habitat (EFH) for the stock and making recommendations for any needed restoration and enhancement measures. Attachment 1 contains an excerpt from Amendment 14 which details the overfishing concern procedures.

Natural spawning escapements of Queets coho did not fall within the range established as the maximum sustainable yield goal in Amendment 14 (5,800-14,500 naturally spawning adults) for 1997-1999. In addition, the preseason projection for 2000 indicated the stock would again fall short of the established goal. With that information at its June 2000 meeting, the Council requested Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Quinault Indian Nation to take the lead in assembling pertinent data to help the STT complete an assessment of Queets coho by September 2001.

Since the November 2000 Council meeting, estimates for the 2000 spawning escapement of Queets coho and abundance projections for 2001 have become available. The current estimates demonstrate the 2000 return was greater than expected and was within the goal range (8,100 wild and supplemental adults). The 2001 return is expected to be sufficient to also meet the spawning escapement goal this year.

As requested by the Council, the STT has developed a stock assessment report for Queets coho, (Exhibit D.6.b, STT Report) a draft of the report was reviewed by the Washington co-managers, and their comments (Exhibit D.6.b, Attachments 1, 2, and 3) were incorporated into the final report. The STT will brief the Council on the results of the report and make recommendations for appropriate Council action.

### **Council Action:**

1. Consider the STT stock assessment report and recommendations to prevent overfishing and assure rebuilding of Queets coho.
2. Identify Council management recommendations for Queets coho that will avoid overfishing and assure stock levels that allow achievement of the fishery management plan (FMP) conservation objective within the shortest time possible, considering biological, social, economic, and international treaty constraints.
3. Provide direction as necessary to the HSG regarding assessment of any identified habitat issues affecting abundance or productivity of Queets coho.

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Excerpt from the *Pacific Coast Salmon Plan* (2000), (Exhibit D.6, Attachment 1).
2. Queets Coho Stock Assessment, (Exhibit D.6.b, STT Report).
3. Quinault Indian Nation Comments on Draft Queets Coho Stock Assessment, (Exhibit D.6.b, Attachment 1).
4. Makah Fisheries Management Comments on Draft Queets Coho Stock Assessment, (Exhibit D.6.b, Attachment 2).
5. WDFW Comments on Draft Queets Coho Stock Assessment, (Exhibit D.6.b, Attachment 3).