

PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION ACTIVITIES
PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL BRIEFING PAPER

In 1999, U.S. and Canadian negotiators reached a comprehensive agreement that resolved long-standing disputes relating to Pacific salmon and the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The agreement established abundance-based fishing regimes for the major salmon intercepting fisheries in the U.S. and Canada. These regimes, which allow catches in fisheries to vary from year-to-year, are designed to implement the conservation and harvest sharing principles of the Pacific Salmon Treaty. Larger catches are allowed when abundance is higher and catches are constrained in years when abundance is down.

Relative to coho salmon, the 1999 U.S. and Canada agreement essentially represented a commitment to develop a rules-based regime to conserve naturally spawning coho stocks. The regime was to encompass boundary area fisheries in southern British Columbia and Washington State.

As many of you already know, the Pacific Salmon Commission's (PSC) deliberations on coho were concluded on February 14 after several months of intensive bilateral negotiations. The Southern Coho Management Plan adopted by the PSC reflects a commitment to constrain total fishing mortality rates on key management units of naturally spawning coho originating in southern British Columbia, Puget Sound and the Washington Coast. The Plan provides for domestic managers to establish target exploitation rates that are associated with categorical (*Low, Moderate, and Abundant*) status determinations for each management unit and specifies how those exploitation rates will be shared between the Parties. The objective is to implement a multi-year agreement that outlines a basic management framework for key U.S. and Canadian coho management units. The key U.S. coho management units include: U.S. Outside Management Units – Quillayute, Hoh, Queets, Grays Harbor; U.S. Inside Management Units – Skagit, Stillaguamish, Snohomish, Hood Canal, Strait of Juan de Fuca. The key Canadian Management Units include: Interior Fraser (including Thompson), Lower Fraser, Strait of Georgia Mainland, Strait of Georgia Vancouver Island. The exploitation rate constraints included in the Plan extend beyond the boundary area fisheries specified in the 1999 Agreement and now include all fisheries that harvest these management units.

The Plan has been transmitted to the governments of the United States and Canada with the expectation that it will be forwarded to domestic managers for implementation. Consequently, for 2002 and the following six seasons, specific bilateral constraints for coho salmon will enter into Council deliberations. The Council and other U.S. domestic managers will be required to plan their fisheries within specified exploitation rates limits for U.S. and Canadian management units. Preliminary information suggests the total allowable exploitation rate by U.S. fisheries on Canadian management units is likely to be 10% in 2002 and that Canadian fisheries will continue to be constrained by conservation concerns for Interior Fraser coho. The status of U.S. management units and target exploitation rates will be identified during domestic preseason planning processes. The Council should now proceed on structuring its fishing regimes focused on addressing our domestic coho conservation issues in a manner that is consistent with the new bilateral coho management plan. It is my understanding the Salmon Technical Team intends to incorporate this PSC compliance assessment into the output reports from the new Council adopted coho FRAM model for the 2002 fisheries.

PFMC
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