

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON SALMON METHODOLOGY REVIEW

Mr. Jim Packer and Mr. Larrie LaVoy of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) presented a progress report to a joint meeting of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Salmon Subcommittee and the Salmon Technical Team (STT) on changes to the Coho Fishery Regulation Assessment Model (FRAM) for the 2004 management season. This meeting was held on October 23, 2003 in Portland.

The Coho FRAM is being changed bilaterally through the Coho Technical Committee of the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC), so it can be used by the PSC for its coho abundance-based management agreement with Canada. The changes include a re-definition of some Canadian fishery strata, changes to the stocks representing Canadian production regions, and the addition of new coded-wire tag data and escapement estimates for some Canadian stocks. The use of a common model by the PSC and Council will be important for consistency and to keep the model developers' workload reasonable.

At the time of the meeting on October 23 the changes to the model base period data were still being evaluated and error checked. The model development process puts the Council in a difficult position this year. The model base period data will continue to be modified and reviewed by the Coho Technical Committee of the PSC until mid February. Although the PSC has said they will use abundance-based management for coho in 2004, it is not certain they will approve the modified coho FRAM for use. The Council preseason salmon management process requires that a model be in place by mid-February. This leaves no time for the Council to react to the PSC decision. In effect, for 2004 the Council is bound by the actions of the PSC. The SSC and STT can appraise the Council of changes in modeled impacts that affect Council decisions, but the Council has little choice but to accept the model as adopted by the PSC. In future years a mechanism and time schedule for inter-jurisdictional coordination of model changes needs to be established.

A progress report by the Model Evaluation Workgroup (MEW) was also presented at the meeting. A draft document, "Fishery Regulation Assessment Model (FRAM) – An Overview for Chinook and Coho," was submitted for review. This document was designed to provide a non-technical overview of the two FRAMs. The level of detail presented in the draft was sufficient for an overview; however, a technical manual that describes in detail the algorithms and methods used in FRAM and its supporting data analysis programs is needed. The SSC recommends the overview document be finalized as quickly as possible and work on the User's Manual and Programmer's Guide started.