

SALMON FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT ISSUES

Situation: Proposals for amending the Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP) are under consideration for the following subjects:

1. Incorporation of the Oregon coastal natural coho (OCN) Work Group matrix for OCN conservation objectives.
2. Developing a coho allocation schedule for fisheries south of Cape Falcon.
3. Development of conservation objectives for Sacramento River winter and spring chinook.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is developing a technical appendix to the OCN Work Group matrix as recommended by the Council at its November 2000 meeting (Exhibit C.7.a, Attachment 1), when it accepted the matrix as expert scientific advice. ODFW is considering completing the technical appendix and submitting the matrix as a technical amendment through the salmon methodology review process.

ODFW is also considering sponsoring an FMP amendment to address allocation issues associated with the selective coho fisheries south of Cape Falcon in general, and the OCN Work Group matrix in particular.

The Sacramento River Winter and Spring Chinook Workgroup met twice this fall to continue analysis of fishery effects on the two stocks. The Workgroup report (Exhibit C.7.b) includes updates of cohort analyses and impact rates, and a proposed management framework for winter chinook.

In addition to the issues above currently under consideration, the Council should be aware of other potential FMP amendment issues, including:

4. Puget Sound and Washington coastal natural coho conservation objectives.
5. Puget Sound chinook conservation objectives.
6. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.
7. Essential fish habitat (EFH) updates.

Conservation objectives for Puget Sound and Washington coastal natural coho in the salmon FMP are based on maximum sustainable yield (MSY) spawner escapement goals. The FMP states that annual objectives may differ from the FMP objectives if agreed to by the parties to *U.S. v. Washington* and *Hoh v. Baldrige*. However, these annual management objectives do not reflect the criteria for a conservation alert or an overfishing concern as defined in the Salmon FMP. Exploitation rate management objectives for these natural coho stocks have been developed through procedures established in U.S. District Court and the 2002 Pacific Salmon Commission agreement for southern coho. If the parties believe these objectives are likely to remain in effect for a long period, the Council should consider an FMP amendment to incorporate the objectives, which would reduce the risk of stocks meeting the annual (exploitation rate) objective and not the FMP objective, and subsequently triggering a conservation alert or an overfishing concern.

A similar situation is occurring for Puget Sound chinook (Endangered Species Act [ESA] threatened), with FMP objectives different from those in the State/Tribal Puget Sound Resource Management Plan (RMP), which was granted an exemption under Section 4(d) of the ESA. Because Puget Sound chinook are listed under the ESA, and are also exploitation rate exceptions to the conservation alert and overfishing concerns in the FMP, the need to address the discrepancy between the FMP and the RMP is less urgent than the case for Puget Sound coho. However, it would be desirable to have consistent management objectives between the FMP and RMP, especially if the evolutionarily significant units was delisted.

Each year, the Council has been required by NMFS to prepare a NEPA analysis of the annual ocean salmon management measures. A draft analysis is prepared before the Council takes final action at the April meeting, and the analysis must be completed prior to implementation of the management measures on May 1, which significantly impacts Council Staff workload. Recently, the analysis had consisted of an Environmental Assessment (EA), which has essentially restated the information presented in the Preseason Reports. An amendment to the FMP specifying the criteria requiring additional NEPA analysis could substantially streamline the process, and preclude the need for an annual EA.

Several updates to EFH designations have been suggested to the Council, most of which have little effect on Council management, but impact other agencies required to consult with NMFS on EFH issues. At the time of the next FMP amendment process, the Council may wish to consider including an update of EFH designations.

Council Action:

- 1. Provide guidance to ODFW for the development of FMP amendments for OCN coho conservation objectives and coho allocation south of Cape Falcon.**
- 2. Consider the recommendations of the Sacramento River Winter Chinook and Spring Chinook Workgroup, and in particular, provide guidance for continued development of a management matrix for winter chinook.**
- 3. Discuss the merits and timing of FMP amendments for Puget Sound and Washington coastal natural coho and Puget Sound chinook conservation objectives, NEPA requirements, and EFH designations.**

Reference Materials:

1. Exhibit C.7.a, Attachment 1: November 2000 minutes excerpt on the Final Report of the Oregon Coastal Natural Coho Work Group.
2. Exhibit C.7.b, SRWSC Workgroup Report: Recommendations for developing fishery management plan conservation objectives for Sacramento River winter chinook and Sacramento River spring chinook.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Report of the Sacramento River Winter/Spring Workgroup
- c. Proposals of the Agencies and Tribes
- d. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- e. Public Comment
- f. Council Discussion and Guidance

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