

PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION SUMMARY REVIEW

Chinook and coho issues dominated the discussions of the Southern Panel during the 2004-05 PSC cycle. The structuring and performance of fisheries north and south of the U.S./Canadian border were discussed in detail.

Relative to the interest of the Pacific Fishery Management Council, there were two issues addressed. First, the pre-season planning targets and the issue of rounding impact estimates to the nearest whole number. The Canadian delegation took issue that the U.S. within its preseason process last year rounded the estimated impact on Thompson coho from 10.4 to 10 percent. It is their position that the target is 10.0 and this should be the modeling result from the regulation package constructed pre-season. A letter from Larry Rutter, the U.S. federal PSC Commissioner, will be providing the Pacific Council clarification on this issue for our domestic planning process this season.

The second issue involved the changing fishing pattern within the Canadian chinook fisheries off the West Coast of Vancouver Island. The shift in the seasonal catch distribution pattern of this fishery and its potential affect on U.S. stocks was discussed with the Canadian representatives. A commitment was made to further develop stock composition estimates regarding this new fishing pattern. Dialogue is continuing relative to the implications associated with this fishing pattern shift. There are some concerns by the southern U.S. representatives with the recent increased landings in the WCVI fisheries. For 2004, the preliminary information from DFO indicates that these fisheries exceeded the target levels by a significant amount.

The 2005 Manager-to-Manager meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday, March 15, at the Upper Skagit Resort and Conference Center. The intent is to exchange preseason expectations of stock status and anticipated fishery structure that can readily be incorporated into model inputs. It is anticipated that the Canadian stock status and fishery structure will be similar to last year. Thompson coho remains in critical status and conservation concerns still exist over the lower Georgia Strait and WCVI chinook stocks. These conservation concerns will shape the 2005 Canadian fisheries.

The co-managers will confer with the Salmon Technical Team regarding the information that is received at the March 15th meeting with Canadian representatives. It is anticipated that any new information obtained on the Canadian fishing levels and structure will be incorporated into our domestic pre-season planning efforts as appropriate.

The Manager-to-Manager meeting will be reported at the April Council meeting.