

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON
KLAMATH RIVER FALL CHINOOK CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE

The Habitat Committee (HC) commends the Salmon Technical Team (STT) for initiating an ecosystem-based approach in the analysis of Klamath fall Chinook stock recruitment. We have had minimal time to review the report and the STT was not available to present the results during the Monday HC meeting. The analysis regarding the stock/recruitment relationship is useful; however, it is not yet fully adequate because it does not consider all relevant factors relating to natural chinook survival.

As this analysis progresses, we suggest the following should be considered:

1. Freshwater survival is significantly different between hatchery and natural fall chinook, so we believe hatchery juveniles are not an appropriate surrogate for wild fish.
2. Additionally, assumptions regarding hatchery/natural dynamics can vary substantially on an annual basis, depending upon the abundance of hatchery returns and hatchery operations. These dynamics could substantially affect primary components of the stock-recruit relationship and its residuals such as spawner stock size and survival to recruits.
3. Flows should be measured at the points most critical for natural chinook rearing.
4. Additional age-specific data are needed for natural Klamath fall chinook, from areas that are most affected by flow management and the stocks that are dependent upon those flows for rearing.
5. Because water management and freshwater productivity are different for the Trinity and Klamath Rivers, we recommend that dynamics of those populations should be considered independently. Furthermore, the maintenance of substocks needs to be considered when developing conservation objectives.
6. Until sufficient data can be compiled on juvenile outmigrant survival and other habitat-correlated stock recruitment elements, it is not possible to clearly differentiate among factors affecting natural chinook productivity.

PFMC
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