

KLAMATH RIVER FALL CHINOOK STOCK ASSESSMENT
AND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

At its March 2007 meeting, the Council confirmed that Klamath River fall Chinook (KRFC) had failed to meet the 35,000 adult natural spawning escapement objective for the third consecutive year, triggering an Overfishing Concern as specified in the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP) (Agenda Item D.3.a, Attachment 1). The Council directed the Salmon Technical Team (STT) to develop an assessment of the KRFC stock, as required by the FMP, in coordination with the Hoopa and Yurok tribes, the Habitat Committee (HC), and other relevant state and federal agency personnel. The assessment was to appraise fishing impacts, determine the cause of the escapement shortfalls, and assess the significance of stock depression with regard to achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) on a continuing basis. Further, the FMP tasks the STT and HC to provide recommendations to the Council to assure the conservation objective is met and identify actions to recover the stock.

The STT designated a subcommittee to work with tribal and other agency personnel to complete the assessment. A preliminary draft was submitted to the Council at its September 2007 meeting, and the subcommittee met on several occasions since then to complete the report (Agenda Item D.3.b, STT Stock Assessment).

Based on the direction provided in the FMP (Attachment 1), the Council will review the STT report. Then, utilizing that report and other pertinent advisory body comments, the Council will adopt its recommended actions to ensure the stock's conservation objective will be met in the future. If necessary, the action could include a specific rebuilding plan to ensure recovery to the levels that reflect MSY or other criteria. Specifically, the Council's action should:

1. Specify actions that ensure the current conservation objective or a new stock recovery objective is met. Those actions should be reflected in the Council's annual management measures, and may be incorporated into a formal rebuilding plan. The stock assessment recommendations for stock recovery are tied to criteria defining an end to the Overfishing Concern.
2. Specify criteria to define the end of the current Overfishing Concern. The Council must determine if the default rebuilding feature of the FMP is adequate to end the current Overfishing Concern, or if additional criteria, as recommended in the STT assessment, should be met in this specific case. The default criterion of achieving the conservation objective for KRFC was met in 2007 with a natural spawning escapement of 59,731 adults. The STT Assessment recommends additional requirements to end the current Overfishing Concern, including achieving the conservation objective in three of four consecutive years and achieving the best current estimate of maximum sustainable yield stock size (40,700 natural spawners) at least once.
3. Consider action on other recommendations in the stock assessment. There are a total of 13 recommendations in the stock assessment concerning fishery management, hatchery practices, research, and restoration and enhancement measures.

4. Identify how the Council's actions are to be implemented. Implementation of the Council's decisions may require action in the annual regulations or through a fishery management plan amendment. If the Council determines a special rebuilding plan beyond the default rebuilding feature in the FMP is necessary to rebuild the stock, the Council should specify the process by which those actions would be formalized (e.g., formal plan amendment, technical amendment, regulatory amendment, etc.) and provide direction for initiating the process.

Council Action:

1. **Review Agenda Item D.3.a, Attachment 1 and pertinent advisory body comments.**
2. **Specify actions to ensure the KRFC conservation objective is met.**
3. **Specify criteria to determine the end of the Overfishing Concern for KRFC.**
4. **Consider action on other recommendations in the stock assessment.**
5. **Specify how implementation of the Council's actions will be achieved, depending on the decisions under Council Actions 2 through 4 above.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item D.3.a, Attachment 1: Excerpt from the Pacific Coast Salmon Plan.
2. Agenda Item D.3.b, KRFC Stock Assessment: Assessment of factors affecting natural area escapement shortfall of Klamath River fall Chinook salmon in 2004-2006.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Salmon Technical Team Assessment
- c. Agency and Tribal Comments
- d. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- e. Public Comment
- f. **Council Action:** Direct Necessary Actions Required by the Salmon Fishery Management Plan

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