

PROPOSED KLAMATH RIVER FALL CHINOOK REBUILDING STRATEGY

Klamath River fall Chinook (KRFC) failed to meet the Council's conservation objective of at least 35,000 adult natural spawners in 2004, 2005, and 2006. When a stock fails to meet its conservation objective for three consecutive years an Overfishing Concern is triggered under the terms of the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Specific actions required by the FMP when an Overfishing Concern is triggered include directing the Salmon Technical Team (STT) to work with state and tribal fishery managers to complete an assessment of the stock and the pertinent factors causing the stock depression, and directing the habitat committee to work with government habitat experts to review essential fish habitat (EFH) status affecting the stock. After review of the stock and EFH assessments, the Council is required to recommend actions to: 1) end any excessive fishing mortality; 2) specify criteria for determining the end of the Overfishing Concern; 3) achieve the conservation objective of the stock; and 4) specify actions necessary to rebuild the stock. The STT completed a stock assessment, which was presented to the Council in March 2008, and included a number of recommendations intended to address the required actions identified above.

Section 3.1.2 of the FMP states:

"... The applicable annual objectives of Council-adopted rebuilding programs developed in response to an overfishing concern or the requirements of consultation standards promulgated by NMFS under the ESA may be employed without plan amendment to assure timely implementation. All of these changes will be documented during the Council's preseason planning process."

The Council adopted for public review a proposed set of recommendations, based on those presented in the STT stock assessment, to be implemented through the annual management measures and a regulatory amendment beginning with the 2008 ocean fishery management measures. The Council will take public comment on the proposed regulatory amendment at the public hearings and during the April Council meeting prior to taking final action.

Council Proposed KRFC Rebuilding Strategy

1. Consider the Overfishing Concern of KRFC ended when a natural spawning escapement of at least 35,000 adults is achieved in three out of four consecutive years or when a natural spawning escapement of at least 40,700 adult KRFC is achieved in two consecutive years.
2. Target a natural spawning escapement of 40,700 adult KRFC until the Overfishing Concern is ended (the rebuilding period). When implementing *de minimis* fisheries during the rebuilding period, provide for an age-4 ocean impact rate of no more than 10 percent when preseason stock abundance forecasts result in pre-fishing spawning escapement projections of less than about 54,000.
3. No further modifications in parameterizing the Klamath Ocean Harvest Model (KOHM) components are recommended at this time.

4. During periods of stock rebuilding, fall fishing opportunity in areas impacting KRFC abundance should be restricted.
5. The practice of reopening the upper Klamath and Trinity rivers to recreational fishing once hatchery egg take goals are met should be suspended during rebuilding periods or when an Overfishing Concern is imminent.
6. All river fishery strata should be sampled at a minimum sampling rate of 20 percent for catch and biological information, including coded-wire tags (CWTs) used to estimate impact on natural area spawners and returns of hatchery fish.
7. No change to the current FMP conservation objective for KRFC.
8. Encourage implementation of a 25 percent constant fractional marking program at Iron Gate Hatchery.
9. Encourage further research on disease issues in the Klamath Basin as they relate to population dynamics and fishery management.
10. Encourage expanded studies of tributary and mainstem production and survival rates of KRFC.
11. Encourage studies of early-life marine survival rates for KRFC.
12. Continued Council involvement in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process, and consideration of Council recommendations by FERC.

Additional information on the recommendations contained in the STT stock assessment and the analyses that support them can be found in the stock assessment, which was distributed as Agenda Item D.3.b, KRFC Stock Assessment in the Council's March 2008 briefing book (http://www.pcouncil.org/bb/2008/0308/D3b_KRFC.pdf), or upon request from the Council office (pfmc.comments@noaa.gov).

PFMC
03/21/08