NORTHERN COMMITTEE
Third Regular Session
11-13 September 2007
Tokyo, Japan

SUMMARY RECORD

1. The Third Regular Session of the Northern Committee took place at Tokyo, Japan, on 11th- 13th September 2007. The Meeting was attended by members from Canada, China, Cook Islands, Japan, Republic of Korea, Philippines, United States of America, and Chinese Taipei. Observers from Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, and Vanuatu participated in the meeting. The Secretariat of the WCPFC also attended as did a representative of the secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA). The list of meeting participants is included at Attachment A.

AGENDA ITEM 1. OPENING OF MEETING

Welcome

2. Masanori Miyahara, Chair of the Committee, opened the meeting.

3. On behalf of Japan, Akira Nakamae, Deputy Director-General of Fisheries Agency of Japan welcomed all participants. His welcome address was attached as Attachment B

Adoption of agenda

4. The draft provisional agenda, as amended, was adopted (Attachment C). The documents that supported the meeting are posted on the WCPFC website.

Selection of Chair

5. In accordance with Rule 8 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure, Masanori Miyahara of Japan was selected to be recommended to the Commission as the Chair of the Northern Committee for the next two regular sessions.

Meeting arrangements

6. The Chair briefed the Session arrangements for the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 2. CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Report from the 7th International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean

7. The ISC Chairman, Gary Sakagawa, presented a report on the recent work and findings of the ISC including the outcomes of the seventh meeting of the ISC, at Busan, Korea, July 25-30, 2007, the report of which is available at www.ISC.ac.affrc.go.jp. He noted that the responsibilities of the ISC are for stocks north of the equator. Achievements included the successful convening of eight working group workshops, the completion of two full stock assessments (albacore and striped marlin), one updated stock assessment (Pacific bluefin tuna), planning for full stock assessments for Pacific bluefin tuna and swordfish by 2010 and completed administrative tasks including a revision of the ISC charter, the ISC/WCPFC MoU and finalizing the ISC Operations Manual.

North Pacific albacore

8. Max Stocker (Canada), chair of the ISC Albacore Working Group, presented an overview of the North Pacific albacore stock assessment (including ISC conservation advice) conducted in 2006 using the VPA-2BOX model and data from 1966-2005. A summary of his presentation is at Attachment D.

9. The USA queried the relationship between CPUE and biomass, noting that the assessment shows the biomass is the second highest of record but that CPUE is declining for all fisheries. Max Stocker explained the high biomass is a result of strong 2001 and 2003 year classes and that if current high fishing mortality is maintained biomass will decline. He also noted difficulty in explaining the retrospective pattern that fishing mortality was consistently under-estimated and that biomass was over estimated but hoped that the decision to use the forward projecting model stock synthesis II for future assessments should help reduce these uncertainties.

Pacific bluefin tuna

10. Yukio Takeuchi (Japan), summarized the activities of the ISC Pacific Bluefin Tuna Working Group (PBFWG) during 2006-2007. A summary of his presentation is at Attachment E.

North Pacific swordfish

11. Gary Sakagawa reported that there is no assessment available for swordfish in 2007 but that a major assessment is planned 2009. He reported that the Billfish WG is collaborating with the organizers of the World Fisheries Congress, which is scheduled for

Yokohama, Japan in 2008. The contribution will focus on stock structure and stock exchange.

North Pacific striped marlin

12. Before commencing his presentation Gary Sakagawa reminded the meeting of the research needs, particularly in relation to biological research, in respect of all stocks that fall under the mandate of the ISC. He noted that much of the current information on biological parameters is quite old.

13. A summary of Gary Sakagawa's presentation in relation to North Pacific striped marlin is at Attachment F.

14. In response to a question from the Chair, it was explained that it would require a 30-40% decrease in current fishing effort if reduction of the current fishing mortality of 0.72 to 0.44 or an equivalent biological reference point of F20% is targeted. In considering data gaps the Committee noted reports from the Commission's science service provider and data manager that distant water and offshore longline fleets consistently under-report billfish because it is mostly taken as by-catch and is not a target species.

15. The Committee recognized that striped marlin has not been designated as a northern stock. However, noting the result of the scientific assessment conducted by ISC, the Committee considered it appropriate to provide comments to the Commission in relation to this species.

Report of the Third Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC3), 13-24 August 2007, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

16. The Northern Committee noted the draft summary report of the Third Regular Session of the Scientific Committee prepared by the Secretariat.

Conservation and management measures for the northern stocks

Pacific Bluefin

17. Recalling the commitment from the Second Regular Session of the Northern Committee in 2006, the Chairman invited CCMs provided reports on national-level actions that they had taken in response to the concerns about the status of the stock. Summaries of action included:

- Japan: Catches are mostly confined to the EEZ and it established an internal conference, supported by Government, to promote consultation between industry, scientists and administrators to improve data collection and discuss management options.
- Chinese Taipei: Reported that it is planning to improve data quality – including through an increase in the personnel dedicated to data collection from the fishery. The number of fishing vessels that ever caught pacific bluefin has declined.

- The Philippines: No Philippine flag vessels targeting Pacific bluefin although several vessels that might be targeting bluefin, and claiming Philippine flag, are currently under investigation.
- USA: Bluefin is not currently a major fishery for US fleets. It is taken opportunistically in purse seine fisheries for sardines throughout the year.
- Korea: Not a target species for Korean fleets. However, they are getting caught by purse seiners for mackerel mostly in coastal areas in southern part of Korean peninsula.

18. The Chairman noted that Mexico also supports a significant fishery for Pacific bluefin but does not participate in the Northern Committee. He suggested that the Secretariat write to IATTC and ask that the discussions of the Northern Committee in relation to Pacific bluefin be relayed to Mexico.

19. In relation to possible management options for Pacific bluefin, some were of the view that, as a precautionary measure, some effort limitation was required – even as a voluntary measure as an interim arrangement. Others considered that, as a full assessment of the stock was scheduled for 2008, consideration of any management action could be postponed until the results of that assessment were available without adverse implications for the stock. It was also noted that the ISC had recommended no increase in fishing mortality and some CCMs considered that the Northern Committee needed to be seen to be responding to this advice.

20. The Committee agreed to consider conservation and management measures for Pacific bluefin at the Fourth Regular Session based on the results of stock assessment to be conducted in 2008. Until that time, the Committee advised its members to make best efforts, on a voluntary basis, not to increase the fishing mortality rate of Pacific bluefin (i.e. catch or effort), while requesting them to collect and submit to the ISC scientific data required for better stock assessment.

North Pacific Albacore

21. The Northern Committee recalled the obligation described in Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 2005-03 for CCMs not to increase fishing effort for North Pacific albacore. The Chairman invited CCMs provided reports on national-level actions that they had taken in response to this commitment. Summaries of action included:

- Japan: North Pacific albacore is taken by purse seine, longline and pole and line fleets which are subject to strict capacity and other controls. Japan noted that the catch of these fleets is declining.
- Chinese Taipei: Consistent with the advice of the ISC Chinese Taipei reported it is constraining fishing effort to 2004 levels.
- USA: Albacore is taken in surface troll fisheries and the Hawaiian longline fishery both of which are closely monitored. Research effort is underway to obtain an accurate measure for current effort in these fisheries.
- Korea: Albacore is not a target species for Korean fleets. It is taken by longliners

as a by-catch.

- Canada: reported that its troll fleet is 95% compliant with the logsheet reporting requirements for this fishery and that recent effort has decreased from 220 to 171 vessels.
- Vanuatu: reported that less than 40 Vanuatu flag longliners are active in this fishery and that there is no intention to increase vessel numbers.

22. The Chair invited CCMs to participate in an informal discussion on reference points. This was in recognition of the decision at last year's meeting to adopt a biological reference point for North Pacific albacore at this year's meeting.

23. The subsequent informal discussion reflected on the ISC advice that spawning stock biomass for North Pacific albacore is estimated to be at the historically second highest and that in general catches are declining. It was also noted that current F is high relative to commonly used F reference points. On this basis it was questioned whether immediate management action for North Pacific albacore was necessary. The discussion also recalled that Annex II of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and Article 6 of the WCPF Convention require management action based on a determination of stock-specific reference points. In the light of concerns about the long term status of North Pacific albacore, particularly if the assessment proved to be overly optimistic in terms of the current status of this stock, some CCMs suggested that the ISC be requested to investigate alternative reference points for highly migratory fish stocks in the North Pacific including management strategies that take into account possible fishery impacts by gear type and areas that might be considered by fishery managers. It was noted that the report of the ISC Albacore WG in 2005 outlined the data requirements and processes associated with biological reference points. This could provide a basis for a "road map" for further consideration of biological reference points and management strategies for North Pacific stocks.

24. Taking account of the ISC 7 report, the Committee agreed to maintain the existing CMM requiring CCMs not to increase fishing effort for north Pacific albacore. The Committee discussed the reference points for this stock, but did not reached conclusion. It was agreed to continue the discussion on reference points in future NC meetings.

25. The USA suggested the introduction of a concept of an interim management objective for this stock, that is in essence to maintain the spawning stock biomass (SSB) in the range of its historical fluctuation until the reference points are established. The Committee welcomed this US suggestion and urged the concerned members to jointly elaborate the concept inter-sessionally and present a concrete proposal to NC4. ISC is requested to present its view on this concept to NC4. It was noted that it was desirable for the concerned members to complete such inter-sessional work before the ISC Albacore WG meeting in February 2008 so that it can review specifics of the concept. Close cooperation is required with IATTC on this matter.

26. To improve stock assessment and fishery management of north Pacific albacore, the

Committee further agreed to request ISC to provide information and advice on data availability and the impact of any data limitations on the stock assessment, as well as to produce a so-called "Kobe chart" for this stock.

North Pacific Swordfish

27. The Northern Committee considered no action was required at this Session in respect of North Pacific swordfish.

Conservation and management measures for other species

Bigeye and yellowfin tuna

28. The Northern Committee noted that discussion on these species would be taken up elsewhere in the Commission.

Sharks

29. The Committee noted that discussion on sharks would be taken up elsewhere in the Commission and will discuss implementation of CMMs, if appropriate, at the next Session of the Committee.

Seabirds

30. The Committee noted that discussion on seabirds would be taken up elsewhere in the Commission and will discuss implementation of CMMs, if appropriate, at the next Session of the Committee.

Status of striped marlin as a northern stock

31. Noting the decision of the Scientific Committee to defer the consideration on the designation of striped marlin as a "northern stock" on the basis of lack of information on the distribution of the biomass of this stock the Northern Committee decided to re-new its request to the Commission for the Scientific Committee to review available information that might support the designation of striped marlin as a "northern stock".

Conservation considerations for striped marlin

32. Based on the recent stock assessment, there is a clear need for the Commission to pay close attention to North Pacific striped marlin and to urgently consider appropriate management action. Although striped marlin has not yet been formally designated a northern stock, it is clearly an important resource in the northern portion of the Convention Area – it is caught primarily in the northern fisheries that the members of the Northern Committee have a special interest in.

33. The Northern Committee considered appropriate management strategies for striped marlin and acknowledged that since it is mostly taken incidentally, strategies aimed at reducing the catchability of striped marlin in fisheries directed at other species may be appropriate.

34. Taking into account the recommendation made by ISC7 to reduce the fishing mortality rate on striped marlin, the Northern Committee advises its members to make every effort, on a voluntary basis, not to increase their respective current fishing mortality rates (i.e. catch or effort) on striped marlin in the North Pacific, and to reduce them to the extent practicable. This voluntary undertaking should continue until the Commission agrees upon effective conservation and management measures for striped marlin in the North Pacific. At future meetings of the Northern Committee, members will review the efforts made under this voluntary program.

35. NC2 recommended that the Commission designate striped marlin as a northern stock based on the stock being mostly in the area north of 20 degrees north latitude.

36. The WCPFC Scientific Committee reviewed a paper prepared by the Secretariat illustrating the northern distribution of the stock based on catch data. However, the SC could not reach a conclusion with respect to the designation of striped marlin as a northern stock, citing the lack of evidence that the stock biomass lies mostly north of 20 degrees north.

37. NC3 discussed the SC3's finding regarding striped marlin and reaffirmed its recommendation for the Commission to seek advice from the Scientific Committee that striped marlin be designated a northern stock. The ISC is invited to provide relevant information to the Scientific Committee in relation to this matter.

38. To begin the process of developing effective conservation and management measures for striped marlin in the North Pacific, the NC3 recommends that the Commission task the Northern Committee to convene a working group that would include fisheries managers, gear technology experts and fishermen, as well as scientists. Among other things, this working group would be tasked with the following:

- Examine the effects of fishery management measures already taken or to be taken by members, including reductions in fishing capacity and fishing effort in fisheries that catch striped marlin, on catches and fishing mortality rates of striped marlin.

- Examine existing fisheries data to characterize spatial and temporal patterns of striped marlin catches and catchability.

- Examine fish behavior and fishing technologies in order to identify potential strategies to reduce striped marlin catches without unduly affecting catches of target species and while minimizing adverse impacts on fishermen.

- Identify potential research, including experimental designs, that would be useful in identifying effective ways to reduce the catchability of striped marlin in various fisheries.

- Consider any possible way to further encourage fishermen to work with scientists and managers to develop and comply with practical measures in a cooperative and forward-looking manner.

39. To assist the working group in performing these tasks, members of the Northern Committee and ISC should provide any relevant fisheries data and research, as well as descriptive information about their fisheries that take striped marlin that reveal as much detail as possible on gear configurations and fishing patterns and practices.

40. This working group is tasked with completing its work in time for presentation at the 2008 Scientific Committee and Northern Committee meetings.

AGENDA ITEM 3. DATA

Review of the status of data and data gaps for northern stocks

41. Gary Sakagawa reminded the Committee of the need for new research effort to generate additional biological data to help reduce some of the current uncertainties associated with stock assessments.

42. The Executive Director, Andrew Wright, noted information contained in the report of ISC7 and the Statistics Specialist Working Group at the Third Regular Session of the Scientific Committee in August relating to data and data gaps. ISC7 had identified current gasps to include; reporting coverage for some domestic fleets, mis-identification of species, particularly billfish species, the length of time (3 years in some cases) some CCMs required to compile data, the challenges posed by IUU fishing and the absence of data concerning those operations, a focus on target stocks and limited data collection effort for non-target stocks and lack of information on discards reporting. He noted also the appeal from the Scientific Committee for improved collaboration with industry in research activities, particularly among offshore and distant water longline fleets through the return of tags.

43. The Committee's attention was drawn to the data coverage paper prepared by the Commission's data manage service provider, SPC-OFP, that identified specific gaps in the Commission's data discussed at the Scientific Committee meeting. The paper, WCPFC-SC3-ST SWG IP3, is available on the Commission's website. Although the Committee noted the need to adopt a holistic and balanced approach to addressing the full range of data gaps that currently exist it was noted that these data gaps, in one form or another, apply to northern stocks. It was noted that the Scientific Committee has recommended that the Secretariat establish a service on its website that profiles data gaps and provides a reporting schedule to assist CCMs meet their data reporting obligations to the Commission.

44. The Executive Director provided a summary table of data received from CCMs in response to CMM-2005-03. While the table would be refined in advance of the Third Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee to ensure information was as complete as possible, the Northern Committee considered the table a useful record of data submission that should be provided to the Committee at its Regular Sessions to facilitate monitoring of the implementation of the Measure. The representative from the Cook Islands noted that it had submitted data as required but that the Commission was still developing procedures to process data submitted in differing logbook formats.

AGENDA ITEM 4. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Work Programme for 2008-2011

45. The Committee adopted the revised 2008-2012 work programme at Attachment G.

AGENDA ITEM 5. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

ISC

46. The Northern Committee noted with satisfaction the conclusion of the MoU between ISC and WCPFC.

IATTC

47. The Northern Committee reviewed the range of issues that was discussed at the First Consultation between the Secretariats of the IATTC and WCPFC, as provided for under the MoU. It was noted that there is significant potential for mutually beneficial collaboration on scientific and fisheries research and that, while information and data exchange should be promoted between the two Commissions, this could only occur once the appropriate protocols had been considered and approved by the two Commissions. The Committee noted particular sensitivities in relation to MCS information and data that would require careful consideration. The Committee noted a Second Consultation between the Secretariats of the two organizations was scheduled to coincide with the next annual session of WCPFC at Guam in December.

Proposed review of interim arrangements for scientific structure and function

48. The Northern Committee noted the proposed revised oversight arrangements and schedule for the review that was developed by the Third Regular Session of the Scientific Committee and that will be considered at the forthcoming annual session of the Commission in December.

AGENDA ITEM 6. OTHER MATTERS

Administrative arrangements for the Committee

Secretariat functions and costs

49. The proposal from Japan to establish secretariat services for the Northern Committee was deferred to the next annual session of the Northern Committee.

Rules of Procedure

50. Noting comments tabled by Japan, the Northern Committee deferred further consideration of Rules of Procedure for the Northern Committee to a future session of the Committee.

Next meeting

51. The Fourth Regular Session of the NC will meet 9-11 September 2008 at Tokyo, Japan.

Other business

52. The Committee was advised that the Commission received 2007 monthly catch data for Vanuatu flagged vessels on September 13, 2007 for the area north of 20 degrees north. The Executive Director noted that the Commission had also received operational data in various formats in August 2007. On this basis, the Committee granted provisional membership status to Vanuatu subject to review and approval by the members of the Committee of the data received from Vanuatu.

AGENDA ITEM 7. REPORT TO THE COMMISSION

Adoption of the report of the Third Regular Session of the Northern Committee and recommendations to the Commission

53. The Northern Committee adopted the Summary Report of its Third Regular Session.

AGENDA ITEM 8. CLOSE OF MEETING

Closing of the meeting

54. The meeting closed at 1100 h on Thursday 13 September 2007.

Attachment A

Provisional PARTICIPANT'S LIST

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Attachment B

NORTHERN COMMITTEE
Third Regular Session
11-13 September 2007
Tokyo, Japan

OPENING STATEMENT
Akira Nakamae
Deputy-Director General
Fisheries Agency of Japan

Mr. Chairman, Executive Secretary, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the government of Japan, let me welcome all of you to Japan and to the third meeting of the Northern Committee of WCPFC. It is our great pleasure to host this important meeting again. This year, our welcome extends particularly to the delegation from the new member of the Committee.

As you are fully aware, the function of the Northern Committee is to make recommendations on the formulation of conservation and management measures in respect of stocks which occur mostly in the North Pacific. Therefore, sustainable management of the northern stocks will be the main topic of the discussion of this week. Since the Northern Committee consists of the coastal as well as fishing members in the region, I am convinced that the development of sound and rational recommendations balancing the establishment of a stronger stock management and the sustainable development of fisheries will further increase the value of the Committee in the WCPFC framework.

I was informed that there was a substantial discussion at the Commission last year in Samoa regarding the area of the competence of the Northern Committee. Naturally, the activities of the Northern Committee should be conducted in accordance with the Convention. Having said so, it should be well remembered that the reason why the Northern Committee is established is that the characteristics of the environment and fisheries of the Pacific Ocean north of 20 degree north are very different from those of the rest of Pacific. Therefore, I strongly believe that the Northern Committee should make proactive inputs, following active discussions, in order for the Commission to adopt conservation and management measures taking well account into the situation of the region.

Needless to say, the North Pacific is *the* most important ocean for Japanese tuna industry. Therefore, it is obvious that the Japanese government is committed to the establishment of sustainable tuna fisheries in the region through active participation for the Northern Committee. Japan believes that further vitalization of the Northern Committee is essential to do so, thus Japan has dispatched Dr. Ziro Suzuki to the Secretariat to assist its activities regarding the Northern Committee, and Japan is prepared to discuss further the issues regarding the function of Secretariat this week. I seek for your positive consideration of the Japanese proposals. Let me also confirm in this occasion that Japan is prepared to host the future Northern Committee meetings as well.

Since the area of application of the Northern Committee is rather limited, all of the issues are practical, not theoretical, to everybody here and I have no doubts that this meeting of the Northern Committee will be as lively as the previous ones. Since the recommendations of the Northern Committee can be adopted only by consensus, all participants must make their best efforts to achieve resolutions which are acceptable and implementable to all stakeholders, by understanding each other with cooperative spirits and wider perspective.

In closing, let me make my best wishes for you to have a fruitful 3-day meeting and a comfortable and enjoyable stay in Japan.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Attachment C

NORTHERN COMMITTEE
Third Regular Session
11-13 September 2007
Tokyo, Japan

AGENDA

WCPFC/NC3/03 Rev.1
11th September 2007

AGENDA ITEM 1. OPENING OF MEETING
1.1 Welcome
1.2 Adoption of agenda
1.3 Selection of Chair
1.4 Meeting arrangements

AGENDA ITEM 2. CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES
2.1 Report from the 7th ISC
2.2 Report of the Third Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC3)
2.3 Conservation and management measures for the northern stocks
2.3.1 Northern Pacific Bluefin
2.3.2 North Pacific Albacore (CMM-2005-03)
2.3.3 North Pacific Swordfish (CMM-2006-03)
2.4 Conservation and management measures for other species
2.4.1 Bigeye and yellowfin tuna (CMM-2006-01)
2.4.2 Sharks (CMM-2006-05)
2.4.3 Seabirds (CMM-2006-02)
2.5 Status of striped marlin as a northern stock
2.6 Conservation considerations for striped marlin

AGENDA ITEM 3. DATA
3.1 Review of the status of data and data gaps for northern stocks

AGENDA ITEM 4. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME
4.1 Work Programme for 2008-2011

AGENDA ITEM 5. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS
5.1 ISC
5.2 IATTC
5.3 Proposed review of interim arrangements for scientific structure and function

AGENDA ITEM 6. OTHER MATTERS

6.1 Administrative arrangements for the Committee

6.1.1 Secretariat functions and costs

6.1.2 Rules of Procedure

6.2 Next meeting

6.3 Other business

AGENDA ITEM 7. REPORT TO THE COMMISSION

7.1 Adoption of the report of the Third Regular Session of the Northern Committee and recommendations to the Commission

AGENDA ITEM 8. CLOSE OF MEETING

8.1 Closing of the meeting

Attachment D

Summary of presentation in relation to North Pacific albacore

1. Spawning stock biomass (SSB) shows fluctuations around the modeled time series average (1966-06) 100,000 mt. The 2006 stock assessment indicated that SSB increased from 73,500 mt (2002) to 153,300 mt (2006) and is projected to increase to 165,800 mt in 2007. The increase is attributable to strong year classes in 2001 and 2003. The estimated spawning stock size in 2006 of 153,300 mt is approximately 53% above the overall time series average (1966-2005). Projections (2007-20), using an average productivity of 27.75 million fish, and F equal to 0.75 (average 2002-2004), indicate that the SSB will reach equilibrium by 2015 at 92,600 mt (90% CI=62,700-129,300 mt).

2. The population is being fished at roughly $F_{17\%}$ (i.e., $F_{2002\text{-}2004}$ = 0.75). This result is similar to the 2004 assessment. F_{cur} (0.75) is high relative to commonly used F reference points. The Albacore WG had expressed concern at the decline in total albacore catch since 2002. As a result, ISC recommended:

> "Previous scientific advice, based on the 2004 stock assessment, recommended that current fishing mortality rate (F) should not be increased. It was noted that management objectives for the IATTC and WCPFC are based on maintaining population levels which produce maximum sustainable yield. Due to updating, and improvements and refinements in data and models used in the 2006 stock assessment, it is now recognized that F_{cur} (0.75) is high relative to most of the F reference points (Table 1). On the other hand, the same analysis indicates that the current estimate of the SSB is the second highest in history but that keeping the current F would gradually reduce the SSB to the long-term average by the mid 2010s. Therefore, the recommendation of not increasing F from current level (F_{cur}(2002-2004)=0.75) is still valid. However, with the projection based on the continued current high F the fishing mortality rate will have to be reduced. The degree to which, when and how reductions should occur will depend on which reference points are selected and the desired probability and practicability of success of attaining these reference points in a time frame to be agreed. The ISC requires additional guidance on these issues from the management authorities in a timely manner to work further on these issues."

Table 1. Results from equilibrium analysis of biological reference points (BRP) for North Pacific albacore associated with Model D1: (a) candidate target and limit reference points; (b) corresponding fishing mortality rates (F, yr-1); (c) current F (2002-04) relative to target F or limit F reference points; (d) MSY proxy or equilibrium catch (1,000 mt); and (e) SSBMSY proxy or equilibrium SSB (1,000 mt). The current F (0.75) reflects the fully-selected F (observed for age groups 8 and 9+) from the mean (geometric) of F-at-age estimates from 2002-04. All catch and SSB estimates are based on the assumption of constant recruitment of 27.75 million fish per year. All SSB statistics are based on the assumption of a 'May 1' reference spawning date.

Candidate Target Reference Points	Target F (yr^{-1})	Ratio of Current F To Target F	MSY Proxy (1,000 mt)	SSB_{MSY} Proxy (1,000 mt)
$F_{40\%}$	0.32	2.31	75	226
$F_{35\%}$	0.38	1.97	79	198
$F_{0.1}$	0.45	1.68	83	171
$F_{30\%}$	0.45	1.67	83	169
Candidate Limit Reference Points	Limit F (yr-1)	Ratio of Current F To Limit F	Equilibrium Catch (1,000 mt)	Equilibrium SSB (1,000 mt)
$F_{20\%}$	0.65	1.16	91	113
F_{Max}	2.07	0.36	100	10
$F_{SSB\text{-Min}}$	0.81	0.93	94	83
$F_{SSB\text{-}10\%}$	0.70	1.07	92	102
$F_{SSB\text{-}25\%}$	0.66	1.14	91	110

Attachment E

Summary of presentation in relation to Pacific bluefin

1. The total catch for this species indicated considerable fluctuation in the past between 8,500 mt in 1990 and 38,000 mt in 1956. Recent catches are relatively higher and the average for the past 5 years was about 22,000 mt. The last assessment was conducted in January 2006. ISC plenary indicated concerns on several uncertainties of the assessment results.

2. In order to answer these concerns, a data preparatory meeting was held in May 2007, and comprehensive data reviews for various fisheries, mostly in the western Pacific. WG members also promoted biological studies, in particular, the growth of older fish and data review for various fisheries.

3. Another meeting was held in July 2007 in Korea. In this meeting fishery information with regards to the strength of the 2001 year class (which would have consisted of the major part of adult stock) was investigated using the available size data. Consequently, the future prospect of this stock appears to be less optimistic, though it was considered premature to draw any conclusion on this point.

4. The ISC plenary in July 2007 kept the same management advice as last year, that is: "Noting the uncertainty in the assessments, the ISC Plenary agreed with the WG recommendation that bluefin tuna fishing mortality should not be increased above recent levels as a precautionary measure."

5. The next full stock assessment will take place in May 2008.

Attachment F

Summary of the presentation in relation to North Pacific striped marlin

1. Gary Sakagawa commenced his presentation for North Pacific striped marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*) with reference to the conservation advice from the ISC which is: "While further guidance from the management authority is necessary, including guidance on reference points and the desirable degree of reduction, the fishing mortality rate of striped marlin (which can be converted into effort or catch in management) should be reduced from the current level (2003 or before), taking into consideration various factors associated with this species and its fishery. Until appropriate measures in this regard are taken, the fishing mortality rate should not be increased."

2. This advice was based on the work of the ISC Billfish Working Group's North Pacific striped marlin stock assessment that was undertaken using the Stock Synthesis 2 model. He noted the movement of striped marlin between temperate and sub-tropical areas throughout its life. As a result it is difficult to describe the biomass distribution for this stock throughout its range. Two assessment model scenarios were developed to bound the uncertainty in the steepness of the stock recruitment relationship; these were i) the maternal effect scenario in which recruitment is governed by a Beverton-Holt stock-recruitment curve (steepness h=0.7) and ii) the environmentally-driven recruitment scenario in which recruitment varies about its mean (h=1.0). Yield- and spawning biomass-per recruit biological reference points and stock projections at $F_{40\%}$, $F_{20\%}$ and F_{Curr} (2001-2003) fishing mortality rates were calculated using the YPR and AGEPRO modules of the NOAA Fisheries Toolbox (http://nft.nefsc.noaa.gov/).

3. It was reported that spawning biomass has declined from around 40,000 mt in the early-1970s to about 5,000 mt in the early 2000s. Spawning biomass in 2003 was estimated to be 14-15% of the 1970 level depending upon model scenario. Recruitment estimates also exhibited a long-term decline since the 1970s. Recent average recruitment (1996-2003) is roughly one-half of the long-term average (1965-2003) under both model scenarios. Stock projections from 2004 through 2009 based on re-sampling the distribution of recent average recruitment indicate that both spawning biomass and landings will continue to decline if the current fishing mortality rate (average of $F_{2001\text{-}F2003}$) is maintained, regardless of model scenario.

4. Fishing mortality has increased more than three-fold, from roughly F=0.20 in the early 1970s to over F=0.6 in the early 2000s. The current fishing mortality rate exceeds the F20% reference point by roughly 60% under both model scenarios. It was also noted that the current fishing mortality rate corresponds to maintaining only 9% of maximum spawning potential (F9%). The Billfish WG expressed concern that current catches are at record low levels.

Attachment G

NORTHERN COMMITTEE
Third Regular Session

11-13 September 2007
Tokyo, Japan

Work Programme for the Northern Committee (as revised by the Third Regular Session)

Work areas	5-year objectives	1-year tasks				
	2008-2012	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
1. Northern stocks						
a. Monitor status; consider management action	Review status and take action as needed for:[1]					
	North Pacific albacore	Consider interim management objectives and ISC advice				
		Obtain scientific advice and make recommendations for reference points for NP albacore	Obtain and review a full assessment.			

[1] In the event that the Commission, in accordance with paragraph 5 of Annex I of the Commission Rules of Procedure, adds additional stocks, such as the northern stock of striped marlin, to the list of stocks understood to be "northern stocks", this work programme will be revised to include periodic status reviews and consideration of management action for such stocks.

Work areas	5-year objectives	1-year tasks				
	2008-2012	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	Pacific bluefin tuna	Obtain and review the status of the stock based on provisional stock assessment from ISC. Review reports from CCMs on their domestic management measures, and consider management action	Obtain and review available stock assessment (ISC, w/ WCPFC data) and consider management action.	Obtain and review a full assessment .		
	Swordfish		Obtain and review complete assessment (ISC) and consider management action			
	Striped marlin (if agreed by the Scientific Committee and Commission).	Review outcomes of the WG to consider alternative management options. CCMs report on voluntary constraints in relation to fishing mortality rate (i.e. catch or effort)				
b. Data	Achieve timely submission of complete data needed for assessments, formulation of measures, and review of Commission decisions	CCMs participating in the NC submit complete data on fisheries for northern stocks to the Commission Encourage submission to Commission of PBF data from all CCMs and make available to ISC				
	Consider systems to validate catch data					
2. Non-target, associated, dependent species						
a. Seabirds	Consider appropriate	Develop recommendation for				

Work areas	5-year objectives	1-year tasks				
	2008-2012	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	implementation of methods to minimize catch and mortality.	implementation of mitigation measures adopted by Commission and review implementation of CMM-2006-02 in the northern area.				
b. Sea turtles	Consider appropriate implementation of methods to minimize catch and mortality.	NC CCMs submit mitigation research results to the Commission, for compilation by Commission	Review mitigation research results and consider management action			
c. Sharks	Consider appropriate implementation for CMM-2006-05 in the northern area.	Review implementation for CMM-2006-05 in the northern area.				
3. Review effectiveness of decisions	Annually review effectiveness of conservation and management measures and resolutions applicable to fisheries for northern stocks	Review effectiveness of NP albacore measure (CMM 2005-03)	Review effectiveness of NP albacore measure (CMM 2005-03)			
4. Cooperation with other organisations						
a. ISC	Develop recommendations to Commission for requests to ISC for assessments, analyses, and advice in support of conservation and management measures Facilitate provision of data needed for assessments to					

Work areas	5-year objectives	1-year tasks				
	2008-2012	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
b. IATTC	ISC Following Article 22.4, consult to facilitate consistent management measures throughout the respective ranges of the northern stocks	Following paragraph 8 of CMM 2005-03, initiate consultation to maintain consistent measures for NP albacore				

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Reaching the point of no return

By: DAVE DOWNEY - Staff Writer

Report says 20 percent of federally managed ocean species overfished

SAN DIEGO -- Along the West Coast, populations of 10 species of ocean fish, such as the yellowfin tuna and canary rockfish, have dwindled to historically low levels or are being depleted rapidly by overfishing, according to a report released Wednesday by the conservation group Environment California.

Those species represent 20 percent of the 49 marine fisheries managed by the federal government in waters that are three to 200 miles off the coasts of California, Oregon and Washington. Most of the species swim up and down the West Coast, including in the waters off of San Diego County.

While acknowledging some species are in decline, fishing enthusiasts say they worry that an overreaction to the problem could put them on the sidelines.

"We are facing a huge overfishing problem," said Aida Navarro, wildlife conservation program manager for the environmental group Wildcoast, in a downtown San Diego news conference held to discuss the report. "We are taking too many fish out of the ocean."

Kevin Hovel, associate professor of biology at San Diego State University, added, "We are reaching the point of no return in doing irreparable harm to our oceans."

Event organizers said the report's release was timed to influence the development of new fishing regulations in response to 2006 amendments to the 1976 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Management Act, the main law governing this country's marine fisheries.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council, which manages West Coast fishing for the National Marine Fisheries Service, is scheduled to discuss new catch limits when it meets in November in San Diego.

Local fishing enthusiasts have expressed concern recently about the possibility that federal and state officials will curb their fishing privilege as they implement the amended federal law to create marine wildlife reserves in state waters within 3 miles of the shoreline.

Blue Water Tackle owner Kent Sliger in Solana Beach said earlier this fall that he wants to conserve fish species as much as anybody, "but there are extreme environmental groups who want to close it off to everybody."

Reached Wednesday afternoon, Tom Raftican, president of the 40,000-member United Anglers of Southern California, which represents recreational fishermen who throw their lines in the water from the shore and from boats, said his group supports reasonable limits.

"As recreational fishermen, we're strong advocates for good conservation," Raftican said. "We're looking to build

healthy populations."

Debbie Moguillansky, a San Diego member of Environment California, said not only should the council adopt sound catch limits that protect species and help them rebound, it should respond to violations by halting fishing or slashing limits for subsequent seasons.

At the same time, the conservationists and the professor stressed that they were not at all trying to shut down commercial or recreational fishing.

"The species that we are trying to preserve here is the fisherman," Navarro said, after the news conference. "If there are no fish, there are no fishermen."

But Hovel said the interests of the imperiled species should come first.

"The first consideration in decision making must be science, and not politics or special interests," he said."Managers should weigh the costs of being proactive now against the cost of having to shut down fisheries in the future when species collapse."

The report states that past overfishing has put seven Pacific species in a precarious position.

For example, just 9 percent of the original population of canary rockfish remains, and the report estimates it will take 66 years to restore the species to even 40 percent of the historical level.

Also remaining are 11 percent of the bocaccio, 17 percent of the cowcod, darkblotched rockfish and yelloweye rockfish, 23 percent of the Pacific Ocean perch and 31 percent of the widow rockfish that live along the U.S. West Coast.

The report says in addition that bigeye tuna, yellowfin tuna and petrale sole are being caught so fast that their numbers are declining rapidly.

Locally, there is growing concern about the spiny lobster, which is not one of the 10 mentioned in the report, Hovel said.

"The vast majority of spiny lobsters in this state are taken out of Point Loma," he said. "We haven't seen a crash in the lobster population in San Diego. But we are seeing signs that they are being overfished."

Hovel said the number and size of lobsters being caught along the San Diego County coast are beginning to decline.

The report says recreational saltwater fishing pumps about $3 billion a year into the West Coast economy.

-- Contact staff writer Dave Downey at (760) 745-6611, Ext. 2623, or ddowney@nctimes.com.

Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Initiative

NOAA's MRIP Initiative is designed to work with partners and constituents in addressing the need for creating a national database of saltwater recreational fishing data that will serve requirements of legislative mandates. The Operations Team for the Initiative is developing project proposals for priority issues, such as creating a saltwater angler registry and implementing the next generation of the recreational fisheries survey. Information on the MRIP Initiative and activities so far are described in the following attachments. Further information can be found at the MRIB website: http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/mrii/index.html.

Reference Materials:

1. Overview of the Marine Recreational Information Program Initiative
2. Marine Recreational Information Program Initiative: FY 2007 Progress Report

Marine Recreational Information Program Initiative

Working together to become the trusted source for saltwater recreational fishing data

New regulatory mandates have led to ever-greater demands for more timely and accurate data on saltwater recreational fishing. An initiative is underway to build a new program to improve the collection, analysis, and use of recreational saltwater fishing information.

Bringing the Best Minds Together

NOAA Fisheries oversees several data collection and analysis programs to track a host of factors affecting fisheries populations, ranging from commercial discards to recreational fishing catch rates to habitat quality. The combination of all this information gives policy-makers the information they need to make sound conservation decisions.

Today, NOAA Fisheries, state natural resource agencies, and community partners are working together to revamp saltwater angler surveys, which are among the most important data collection tools. Because so much has changed since NOAA Fisheries launched its original recreational fishing data program, the agency is bringing the best minds together, inside and outside the agency, to develop a new survey program to meet the needs of today's fisheries managers. The idea is to address ever-greater demands for more timely and accurate data on saltwater recreational fishing.

Answering the Important Questions

NOAA Fisheries' original recreational fishing data program, the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Surveys, will be phased out over the next several years. The new program is called the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). Quite simply, the new survey will better answer these fundamental questions: Who fishes? What's being caught? How many fish are caught? Where and when are they caught? In addition, a new saltwater angler registry will give the agency a more definitive pool of survey participants to call upon, at the same time giving saltwater anglers better representation in the decision-making process.

Looking Out on the Horizon

The new Marine Recreational Information Program is designed to improve the methodology of collection and analysis of saltwater recreational fishing data. Ultimately, it will help decision-makers gain a far better understanding of saltwater recreational fishing's relationship to fisheries conservation.

Beyond the numbers, the Marine Recreational Information Program also will help all of us who care about the health of ocean fisheries and the sport of fishing to pass on these strong conservation values to future generations

Partnering for the Common Good

The most important federal law related to ocean fisheries is the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Under this law, NOAA Fisheries oversees a network of authorities who regularly monitor the health of hundreds of ocean fisheries. They use this information to decide how many fish can be taken commercially and recreationally without negatively affecting the long-term health of individual fisheries. They also ensure appropriate measures are taken to recover fisheries in trouble.

State governments also have an important role in conserving ocean fisheries because many saltwater fish thrive in coastal areas or migrate inland. Since many fish also migrate across state boundaries, the federal-state partnership approach is imperative in ensuring the health of these fisheries.

Countless private organizations have strong interests in protecting ocean fisheries, too. Sometimes partners' interests conflict, creating intense debate and challenging decision-making about fisheries conservation. But this does not take away from partners' roles as strong advocates for fisheries conservation who have valuable expertise, perspectives, and resources to share.

MRIP Initiative
c/o NOAA Fisheries Service, Office of Science & Technology
1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910
Tel: (301) 713-9501 Fax: (301) 713-2384
Web: http://www.st.nmfs.gov/mrii/

Marine Recreational Information Program Initiative

FY 2007 Progress Report

Submitted by the Executive Steering Committee
September 2007

Executive Summary

Surveys on saltwater anglers' catch and effort give managers vital information on recreational fishing's impact on fisheries and values to our society. After nearly a year of getting the right pieces and organizational structures in place, the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) initiative got into full swing in 2007. The best minds from state and federal government and the fishing community have been assembled to develop a new program that will serve as the most trusted source of saltwater recreational fishing data.

Scientific Guidance and Congressional Mandate

Frequent calls to better address recreational data needs led to a formal scientific review and a definitive legislative mandate.

National Research Council *(April 2006)*
The panel of independent scientists advised NOAA Fisheries and the states to rethink the way they carry out recreational fishing surveys to improve their transparency, effectiveness, and applicability to today's fishery management practices. Among the National Research Council's specific recommendations was to create a comprehensive national database of saltwater anglers.

Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act *(January 2007)*
This legislation, the primary fisheries law for U.S. ocean waters, outlined two ways for improving the way recreational fishing information is collected and analyzed. The first is by creating an angler registry, essentially a phonebook of saltwater fishermen, and the second is by upgrading the existing recreational fisheries surveys.

Major Activities

The MRIP Initiative was created to address the National Research Council recommendations and Magnuson-Stevens Act mandates. Over the past year, the following major activities have taken place:

1. Got the right people on the bus. Understanding the importance of working collaboratively with partners and constituents, the Executive Steering Committee appointed two prominent figures in marine fisheries management (Pres Pate and Gordon Colvin) to MRIP Initiative leadership positions. This "people first" philosophy carried over to the creation of the work groups and teams. Respected members from the scientific, management, and fishing communities representing coastal fisheries from Alaska to Florida were invited to lend their expertise to the initiative by participating on the work groups and teams.

2. Prepared a game plan. Working in consultation with representatives from the states, councils, commissions, and recreational fishing community, we created a Development Plan for the MRIP Initiative. The plan outlines the organizational structure and decision-making process that is inclusive and transparent.

3. Allocated funding. Dr. Hogarth demonstrated his support for improving recreational data by dedicating almost $2 million to the Initiative this year.

4. Brought people together. In August, the Operations Team hosted a workshop of experts in St. Pete Beach, Florida. It was an important first step in planning next steps to address the NRC recommendations and the MSA mandates. Two key outputs of the workshop were identifying the highest priority issues highlighted by the scientists at the National Research Council and initiating the planning process to address these issues.

For more information about the Development Plan, work group rosters, and the St. Pete Workshop proceedings, visit our website at: http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/mrii

MRIP Initiative
Work Groups and Charges

Analysis
Test assumptions, determine appropriate methodological changes to reduce bias in the estimates, and assess sample sizes and survey approaches needed to provide the levels of resolution required by managers and scientists.

Data Management and Standards
Develop a common set of minimum data elements, set national and regional standards for coding systems, and improve coordination between federal, state, and regional survey programs.

Design
Develop and test new data collection methodologies that will be incorporated into new surveys that are statistically robust, adaptive to changing fisheries management needs, and responsive to constituent concerns.

For-Hire
Enhance the accuracy, timeliness, and accountability of data and statistics obtained from the for-hire sector.

Highly Migratory Species
Examine opportunities to expand data collections programs targeting HMS anglers.

Next Steps

The St. Pete Workshop was a major milestone marking the first meeting of the work groups and teams. After months of getting the right pieces in place, the work groups have now begun the hard work of designing what the next generation recreational information system will look like. Here are three things to keep aware of this fall:

1. Project Proposals –The work groups will continue to flesh out project proposals designed to address those priority issues identified at the St. Pete Workshop in August. Proposals will be submitted to the Operations Team for review by October 15. Final proposals should be approved by the Executive Steering Committee by the end of the year so work groups can begin implementation in January 2008.

2. Proposed Rule on the National Saltwater Angler Registry – The National Saltwater Angler Registry Team is collaborating with the states to establish criteria on national registry

requirements and state exemptions. NOAA Fisheries will release the proposed rule later this fall. A formal public comment period will follow the proposed rule's release.

3. Sharing Information – It is imperative that our partners and constituents stay informed about MRIP Initiative activities. Members of the Executive Steering Committee and Operations and National Registry Teams are hitting the road this fall for a number of face-to-face meetings. Below are just a few of the places they will be:

September
American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting
Maryland Saltwater Sportsmen's Association members meeting
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission Meeting
NOAA Fisheries Magnuson-Stevens Act Implementation Workshop

October
Hawaii Fishing and Seafood Festival and Fishers Forum
American Sportfishing Association's Sportfishing Summit
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Meeting
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Constituent Briefing
Pacific RecFin Meeting

November
Coastal Conservation Association Media Summit
NOAA Fisheries Leadership Council Meeting

If you would like to schedule a speaker for a meeting or event in your area, please contact Forbes Darby at forbes.darby@noaa.gov or call (301) 713-9501.

Conclusion

We all understand that good quality information is fundamental to informed decision-making, but the types of changes being discussed right now to bring the data more in sync with management's needs will not happen overnight. Those involved with today's tough management choices cannot postpone decisions while this effort is underway. With that understanding, everyone involved with the MRIP Initiative is operating with a sense of urgency.

On January 1, 2009, NOAA Fisheries will deliver to Congress a comprehensive plan for the new Marine Recreational Information Program, the next generation recreational survey program. The Executive Steering Committee is committed to meeting this aggressive timetable, but not at the expense of leaving our partners and constituents behind. For the MRIP to be successful and to truly become the trusted source of information it needs to be, it will require the continued active support of our partners and constituents.

MRIP Initiative Timeline

Summer 2005
NOAA Fisheries hires the National Academy of Sciences' National Research Council to provide an independent scientific review of the government's saltwater recreational data collection programs.

April 2006
National Research Council releases their independent report calling for NOAA and the states to address serious flaws by redesigning the angler surveys.

September 2006
Biologists, fisheries commissioners, and state managers meet in Denver, Colorado to discuss regional and national recreational fisheries statistics requirements. NOAA Fisheries tasked with preparing a blueprint to address the National Research Council recommendations.

October 2006
The Executive Steering Committee is formed to lead the joint initiative to improve data.

November 2006
The Executive Steering Committee hosts a series of regional constituent conference calls to get angler input on how best to move forward.

January 2007
Magnuson-Stevens Act is reauthorized. The new law calls for a new data program and an angler registry to be in place by January 2009.

February 2007
The Executive Steering Committee unveils the Development Plan outlining the MRIP initiative's inclusive organizational structure and transparent decision-making process.

March 2007
Operations Team formed to serve as the logistical and working arm of the Executive Steering Committee.

April 2007
The Operations Team identifies a preliminary list of priority issues and critical needs from the list of over 200 recommendations identified by the National Research Council.

July 2007
Five interdisciplinary work groups are established to look at various aspects of a new angler data collection program including analysis, data management and standards, design, for-hire, and highly migratory species. In addition, a team is also created to design and implement the national saltwater angler registry.

August 2007
Work teams meet for the first time at a workshop in St. Pete Beach, Florida to begin developing research projects that address the highest priority recommendations from the National Research Council and Magnuson-Stevens Act.

September 2007
Registry team completes a development plan for the Registry Program and submits a proposed registry implementation approach to the Executive Steering Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CONTENT AND FORMAT OF RecFIN WEBSITE
PFMC Scientific and Statistical Committee
October 2007

I. Background

In June 2007, the Council tasked the SSC with providing recommendations to the RecFIN Technical Committee regarding needed improvements to the content and format of the RecFIN website. The recommendations provided here are based on the SSC's experience with stock assessment and regulatory analysis and involvement in activities such as STAR Panels, the June 2004 RecFIN CPUE Workshop and the August 2006 RecFIN Workshop. The recommendations focus on information needs and (to a lesser extent) ways to organize information on the website. Advice from other Council advisory bodies (e.g., Groundfish Management Team) will likely also be needed to ensure that Council needs with which the SSC is less familiar (e.g., in-season monitoring) are addressed as well.

The SSC notes that substantive improvements to current website design and content will require dedicated organization and collaboration, considerable time commitment, and strong web development expertise. The intent of this document is to provide a starting point for discussion with the RecFIN Technical Committee regarding areas of potential website improvement; the extent to which such improvements are constrained by available data and documentation; a process for accomplishing improvements; the relative roles of the SSC, the RecFIN Technical Committee and other entities in this process; and next steps that will be taken to get the work underway.

RecFIN includes a number of surveys that are conducted for diverse reasons with diverse methods, and that vary in their temporal and spatial coverage. RecFIN data address multiple management needs (e.g., stock assessment, regulatory analysis, fishery status reports), and are of interest to the angling and general public as well. In order to address Council needs, the website should provide not only access to data but also the metadata needed to properly understand and interpret the data. Users can currently access RecFIN data through queries and downloads of various types of data files. In addition to refining and expanding these existing methods of access, a third method is needed – namely, standardized tables that provide annual estimates of aggregate effort, and retained and released catch. Section II focuses on ways to facilitate user understanding and use of the website, Section III on documentation of survey methods and estimates, Section IV on current and proposed methods of data access (tables, queries and sample data files), and Section V on the desirability of including other types of information on the website.

II. Website "Users Manual"

Given the many types of RecFIN data and the many potential uses of these data, a website "users manual" is needed that provides users with a quick orientation to the contents of the website and guidance that allows them to efficiently navigate the website. Some potential topics for inclusion in manual:

- Itemization of RecFIN surveys covered on the website
- Itemization of non-RecFIN surveys also covered on the website (if any). For instance, salmon catch/effort sampling programs are currently conducted outside the purview of RecFIN. To what extent are the results of these programs included on the RecFIN website? If not included, does the website provide links to these other programs?
- Itemization of non-survey information available on website (if any). One example of useful non-survey data not currently provided on the website are state fishery regulations.
- Instructions on various methods of accessing survey data (e.g., tables, queries, sample data files)
- General policies that affect website content - e.g., State estimates superseding MRFSS estimates

III. Documentation of Surveys and Variables of Interest

III.A. Surveys

In addition to the itemization of surveys provided in the users manual, it would be helpful if the website provided a comparative overview of all surveys in terms of their coverage (e.g., years, areas, modes, species/trip types). Gaps in coverage (e.g., years, areas, modes, species/trip types not covered by any survey) should be explicitly noted. Survey-specific documentation should include (1) survey objective, (2) survey coverage, (3) whether coverage is incomplete relative to objective (e.g., noncoverage of private access sites), (4) sampling methods, and (5) questionnaires. Changes made over time in coverage, methods and questionnaire content should be noted. The current content of the RecFIN website will need to be augmented with additional information to provide the level of documentation suggested here.

III.B. Variables of Interest

The website currently provides documentation of sampling and estimation methods associated with each RecFIN survey. However, users are often less interested in specific surveys than in specific variables (e.g., effort, retained catch, released catch) which are often constructed by combining results across multiple surveys (e.g., estimation of aggregate catch based on aggregate effort from one survey and CPUE from another survey). To facilitate proper interpretation of such data, it would be helpful if the website provided documentation on (1) which surveys are used to estimate each variable, (2) how estimates from multiple surveys are combined to produce estimates of each variable, and (3) how comprehensively each variable is covered in terms of years, areas, modes, and species/trip types.

Metadata for each variable of interest should include the following: (1) formulas used to calculate relevant statistics (e.g., means, totals, variances), (2) methods used to impute values for missing or sparse data (e.g., pooling, borrowing from adjacent cells), (3) estimation programs, (4) identification of missing or incomplete cells (e.g., missing waves in reports of annual catch or effort, missing species in reports of total catch), and (5) caveats (e.g., noncomparability of MRFSS and CRFS estimates). Development of such metadata will require that survey documentation currently provided on the website be augmented with other sources of information.

III.C. Code Lists and Maps

Survey and variable documentation as described in Sections III.A. and III.B should also include species, trip type and site code lists as appropriate.

- Species codes should be accompanied by taxonomic and common names and mapped to meaningful species complexes (e.g., taxonomic groups, management groups).
- Trip types should be defined (target species, species accounting for plurality of landings, presence of particular species in landings, etc.)
- Site codes should be accompanied by a site description (e.g., Pacifica Pier) and identified by lat/long coordinates, zipcode, city and state. Maps should be provided that layer site locations over relevant county, state and management area boundaries.

Code lists and maps are useful not only for survey and variable documentation but also to facilitate user understanding and interpretation of tables, queries and sample data files (as discussed below in Section IV). Some code lists are currently provided on the website in various states of completeness.

IV. Accessing Survey Results

IV.A. Catch and Effort Tables

As indicated in Section II, a helpful addition to the website would be standardized tables, updated annually, that provide estimates of effort, retained and released catch (stratified by year, state, mode, species/trip type and other variables that are meaningful to users). Such tables would be useful for regulatory analysis and fishery status reports, as well as serve as a source of fishery information to the public.

A list of useful standardized tables should be devised, based on input from users. Once constructed, these tables should be listed together somewhere on the website to provide users an overview of the types of tabular information available to them. Values in each table that do not represent complete coverage of particular cells (e.g., missing waves in reports of annual catch or effort, missing species in reports of total catch) should be flagged. Appropriate caveats should be noted (e.g., non-comparability of MRFSS and CRFS estimates). Links to area maps and species code/trip type/site code lists (see Section III.C) should be provided as appropriate. Each table should have a table creation date and version number.

IV.B. Queries

Queries of various types are available on the RecFIN website that provide estimates of effort and retained and released catch. Existing queries should be reviewed to determine whether they are meeting user needs. Values provided by each query that do not represent complete coverage (e.g., missing waves in reports of annual catch or effort, missing species in reports of total catch) should be flagged. Appropriate caveats should be noted (e.g., non-comparability of MRFSS and CRFS estimates). Links to area maps and species code/trip type/site code lists (see Section III.C) should be provided as appropriate. Results from each query should be dated. The flags and caveats that currently accompany queries of the RecFIN website consist mostly of terse warnings that provide little information regarding the source or context of the problem being flagged.

IV.C. Sample Data Files

Sample data files of various types (e.g., for bag limit analysis, catch-effort GLM analysis, length frequency analysis) are available on the website or via individual requests to RecFIN. Existing files should be reviewed to determine whether enhancements are needed, and additional file needs (including specific content) should be identified, based on input from users. For instance, vessel trip files that provide detailed information on trip characteristics (e.g., mean depth fished, boat size, number of anglers, retained and released fish) would be useful for stock assessment and regulatory analysis. All available standardized data files should be listed together on the website to provide users with an overview of the types of sample data available to them.

Metadata for each file should include: (1) a description of file contents, (2) estimation methods for constructed variables included in the file, and (3) appropriate caveats (pertaining to changes in survey methods or coverage over time, representativeness and completeness of data). File description should include variable name, variable format, variable description (if categorical variable, the definition of each category), units (e.g., pounds, # fish, angler days, boat days) and missing value codes. Links to area maps and species code/trip type/site code lists should be provided as needed (see Section III.C). Each file should have a file creation date and version number.

V. Other Information Needs

The utility of the RecFIN website would be enhanced by the addition of various types of non-survey and pre-RecFIN survey information. For instance:

- Tables that describe fishery regulations (e.g., bag limits, size limits, season/area/gear restrictions) by state, species and year would be useful for stock assessment and regulatory analysis. Given the increasing complexity of regulations, the SSC requests RecFIN input regarding the extent to which comprehensible summaries of regulations

can be provided.

- The Council has identified historical catch reconstructions for groundfish species as a high-priority 2008 activity. It would be helpful if these reconstructions were made available to stock assessment authors on the RecFIN website.

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6125

WEB SITE: http://commerce.senate.gov
PHONE: (202) 224–5115

October 19, 2007

The Honorable Condoleeza Rice
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

Later this month, delegations from the United States, Japan, Russia, and Korea will be participating in the Third Inter-Governmental Meeting on Management of High Seas Bottom Fisheries in the North Western Pacific Ocean. Representatives from these four nations are preparing to discuss the Interim Measures, adopted at the Second Inter-Governmental Meeting in Busan last February, and the long-term agreement for sustainable management of these fisheries.

In negotiating the terms of the long-term agreement, the United States should propose and advance a position that would promote sustainable fisheries throughout the high seas of the North Pacific. Achieving this goal would require a significant expansion of the geographic scope of the agreement and modification of the terms contained in the Interim Measures. While I understand that these Interim Measures were crafted to meet the requirements of United Nations General Assembly Resolution (UNGA) 61/105 to address bottom fishing in the high seas, I strongly believe that these are too narrow for meeting the United States' best interests in conserving high seas fisheries resources and combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing among all gear types throughout the North Pacific.

The upcoming negotiations to develop the long-term agreement provide a valuable opportunity for the United States to pursue a more comprehensive fisheries management framework for the North Pacific. This long-term agreement should be simple in structure. It should include mechanisms to identify existing fisheries, establish a registry for vessels operating in those fisheries, create a process for developing and approving management plans for new fisheries, and define and prohibit IUU fishing in the North Pacific. In accomplishing these objectives the new agreement should seek coordination or integration with existing international arrangements to ensure effective and efficient use of resources, especially scientific and enforcement arrangements. Additionally, it should avoid the use of vague terms or principles that are not clearly defined and easily implemented. To advance these objectives, I strongly urge the United States to propose a long-term agreement that contains the following provisions:

First, the long-term agreement should cover the entire North Pacific, although such an expansion of geographic scope would only be appropriate if the other elements of this package are also part of the new arrangement. If that is possible, then the boundary should be northward of the latitude that defines the northern boundary of the new South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization and from Asia to the Americas. An agreement that covers a smaller area would have the undesirable effect of leaving unregulated geographic gaps, which could serve to attract future fishing effort. Although there are now few fisheries outside Statistical Area 61 on the high seas, we should anticipate that new fisheries may emerge in other areas as ocean habitat conditions change, species' ranges shift, new markets develop, or other events cause fishing effort to move to areas not currently under regulation.

Second, the long-term agreement should direct nations to develop a registry of current fishing vessels and vessel owners operating in the high seas of the North Pacific, and it should allow these vessels to continue fishing at their current effort levels subject to data collection efforts. The goals of this provision are (1) to simplify enforcement efforts on the high seas and facilitate quick identification of unregistered vessels engaging in IUU fishing and (2) to enable nations to assess and monitor the fishing activities of those vessels that have a history of fishing on the high seas. The registry should also provide clear mechanisms to gather and analyze critical data such as harvest and effort levels for each species; ultimately, these data will help inform subsequent decisions about conserving and managing species for sustainability.

Third, the agreement should prohibit all new fishing in the high seas of the North Pacific until member nations develop and implement a management plan for the desired fishery. It is important to emphasize that this prohibition would extent to all fishing methods (including, but not limited to, bottom fishing) and species not covered by an existing agreement. Management plans for new fisheries authorized under this agreement would be customized for the unique conditions of each such fishery, and measures contained within each plan could establish appropriate catch and bycatch limits; harvest allocations; requirements for observers, monitoring, data collection and reporting; enforcement mechanisms; habitat conservation measures; and other elements necessary for sustaining the emerging fishery.

And finally, the new agreement should avoid using vague or ill defined terms or principles, such as ecosystem management, precautionary approach, or vulnerable marine ecosystems. I would strongly suggest that these terms or principles not be included as requirements in the new agreement. Rather, it would be more productive to specifically identify the types of habitats to be protected as seamounts, hydrothermal vents, or concentrations of cold water corals. This would be consistent with the guidance we provided recently in the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

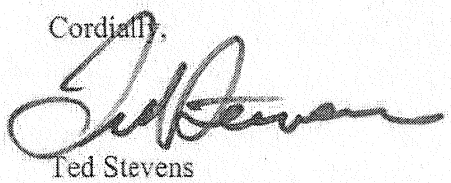
The long-term agreement I envision would establish a very simple, efficient framework for allowing member nations to track existing fishing and properly manage future fisheries. It would not require the creation of a new Regional Fishery Management Organization (RFMO) and associated bureaucracies, nor would it mandate changes to domestic fishing within member nations' Exclusive Economic Zones. Perhaps more importantly, it would not supercede or alter any existing agreements or RFMOs currently operating in the North Pacific, such as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, the North Pacific Anadromous Fisheries Commission, and the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea. While these other agreements would not be subject to any terms of this new agreement, however, member nations should not be prevented from seeking ways to leverage the enforcement and data collection networks of the existing agreements in order to create greater efficiencies for all agreements.

While negotiating an agreement based on the above provisions would require member nations to expand the scope and reach of the Interim Measures, I firmly believe that doing so would better serve the United States' interests in promoting sustainable international fisheries and combating IUU fishing. At the same time, this type of long-term agreement would still meet the requirements of UNGA Resolution 61-105, by encompassing bottom fishing and allowing for management plans that address any habitat issues relevant for fishing in a certain area, while reaching further to address all currently unregulated methods of fishing, all species potentially subject to fishing, and any management plan provisions necessary for conserving and managing fish stocks.

I thank you for considering these issues as the United States delegation prepares for the Third Inter-Governmental Meeting and subsequent meetings devoted to negotiating a comprehensive international fisheries management agreement for the North Pacific. I look forward to working with you to see this vision become a reality in the near future.

With best regards,

Cordially,



Ted Stevens

Western
Pacific
Regional
Fishery
Management
Council

October 18, 2007

Dr. Donald McIsaac, Ph.D
Executive Director
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Ste. 101
Portland, OR 97220-1384

Dear Dr. McIsaac,

We received your letter (9/20/07) that provided scoping comments on the proposed Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for potential regulatory modification for the Hawaii-based swordfish shallow-set longline fishery. We understand from your letter that the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) is undergoing a regulatory development process for a potential high seas limited entry longline fishery, and that you have requested that whatever proposed action is recommended by the PFMC on this issue that it not be precluded by actions taken by the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (WPFMC).

We appreciate the PFMC's apparent intent to develop a high seas longline fishery, however, we also do not want potential modification of our management regime precluded by currently intangible alternatives under preliminary consideration by the PFMC. For this reason, the WPFMC, at its 139th meeting held last week (October 9-12, 2007) recommended that a potential West Coast-based longline fishery be considered, if applicable, in the cumulative impacts section of the DSEIS, but not considered as a component of the WPFMC's proposed action to be selected by the Council at its March 2008 meeting.

WPFMC staffers are currently writing the DSEIS and we would appreciate knowing the PFMC proposed action as soon as possible so as to include the expected level of fishing effort and anticipated impacts of a potential West Coast-based high seas longline fishery in the cumulative impacts section of the DSEIS.

Please call me if you wish to discuss this issue in greater detail.

Sincerely,

Kitty M. Simonds
Executive Director

STATUS REPORT OF THE 2007 OCEAN SALMON FISHERIES OFF WASHINGTON, OREGON, and CALIFORNIA.

Preliminary Data Through October 31, 2007.

Fishery and Area	Season Dates	Effort Days Fished	CHINOOK Catch	CHINOOK Quota	CHINOOK Percent	COHO[a/] Catch	COHO[a/] Quota	COHO[a/] Percent
COMMERCIAL								
Treaty Indian[b/]	*5/1-6/30*	230	14,944	21,500	70%		Non-Retention	
	7/1-9/4	355	9,900	15,500	64%	40,304	38,000	106%
Non-Indian North of Cape Falcon[c/]	*5/1-6/26*	833	11,069	10,850	102%		Non-Retention	
	7/1-9/16	717	4,731	5,092	93%	16,796	22,400	75%
Cape Falcon - Humbug Mt.	*4/10-8/28*	3,674	27,693	None	NA		Non-Retention	
	9/10-10/31	400	1,000	None	NA		Non-Retention	
	8/15-9/13	Included Above		None	NA	5,719	10,000	57%
Humbug Mt. - OR/CA Border	*4/10-5/31*	9	23	NA	NA		Non-Retention	
	6/1-6.30	142	744	1,600	47%		Non-Retention	
	7/11-7/31	95	1,155	1,600	72%		Non-Retention	
	8/1-8/14	94	1,518	1,800	84%		Non-Retention	
	9/6-9/30	69	408	1,000	41%		Non-Retention	
OR/CA Border - Humboldt S. Jetty	*9/10-9/12*	350	8,700	6,000	145%		Non-Retention	
Horse Mt. - Pt. Arena	*4/9-4/27*	100	700	2,000	35%		Non-Retention	
	8/1-8/29	1,000	15,200	None	NA		Non-Retention	
	9/1-9/30	100	200	None	NA		Non-Retention	
Pt. Arena - Pigeon Pt.	*5/1/-5/31*	1,300	25,900	None	NA		Non-Retention	
	7/1-8/29	3,100	45,900	None	NA		Non-Retention	
	9/1-9/30	660	2,300	None	NA		Non-Retention	
Pt. Reyes - Pt. San Pedro	*10/1-10/12*	60	200	None	NA		Non-Retention	
Pigeon Pt. - Pt. Sur	*5/1-5/31*	1,300	10,500	None	NA		Non-Retention	
	7/1-8/29	250	2,000	None	NA		Non-Retention	
	9/1-9/30	20	100	None	NA		Non-Retention	
Pt. Sur - U.S./Mexico Border	*5/1-8/31*	160	1,300	None	NA		Non-Retention	
	9/1-9/30	10	50	None	NA		Non-Retention	
RECREATIONAL								
U.S./Canada Border - Cape Alava[c/]	*7/3-9/15*	13,404	1,464	1,725	85%	10,852	12,230	89%
Cape Alava-Queets River[c/]	*7/3-9/15*	2,770	490	725	68%	2,754	2,960	93%
	9/22-10/7	425	89	100	89%	29	100	29%
Queets River - Leadbetter Pt.[c/]	*7/1-9/16*	25,801	5,231	9,400	56%	22,916	28,510	80%
Leadbetter Pt.-Cape Falcon[c/]	*7/1-9/30*	42,408	2,222	4,300	52%	65,670	71,450	92%
Cape Falcon - Humbug Mt.	*3/15-8/31*	54,633	2,122	None	NA		Included Below	
	9/1-10/31	9,300	1,050	None	NA		Non-Retention	
Cape Falcon - OR/CA border	*6/23-9/16*	Included Above and Below		NA	NA	42,262	50,000	85%
Humbug Mt. - Horse Mt. (KMZ)	*5/5 - 9/4*	28,349	21,575	None	NA		Non-Retention	
Horse Mt. - Pt. Arena (Ft. Bragg)	*2/17-8/31*	16,200	5,600	None	NA		Non-Retention	
	9/1-11/11	150	0	None	NA		Non-Retention	
Pt. Arena - Pigeon Pt. (San Francisco)	*4/7-8/31*	34,900	14,800	None	NA		Non-Retention	
	9/1-11/11	3,700	700	None	NA		Non-Retention	
Pigeon Pt. - U.S./Mexico Border	*4/1-8/31*	24,200	5,700	None	NA		Non-Retention	
	9/1-10/7	500	100	None	NA		Non-Retention	

TOTALS TO DATE	Effort 2007	Effort 2006	Effort 2005	Chinook Catch 2007	Chinook Catch 2006	Chinook Catch 2005	Coho Catch[g/] 2007	Coho Catch[g/] 2006	Coho Catch[g/] 2005
TROLL									
Treaty Indian	**585**	801	596	**24,844**	30,030	41,975	**40,304**	31,690	23,997
Washington Non-Indian	**1,235**	1,438	1,438	**14,363**	16,769	35,066	**5,887**	1,265	1,442
Oregon	**4,798**	4,197	11,388	**33,978**	33,155	250,017	**16,628**	1,414	2,618
California	**8,410**	8,156	17,018	**113,050**	68,808	340,862	**-**	-	-
Total Troll	**15,028**	14,592	30,440	**186,235**	148,762	667,920	**62,819**	34,369	28,057
RECREATIONAL									
Washington Non-Indian	**72,424**	65,263	90,595	**8,918**	10,667	36,369	**83,821**	36,087	51,770
Oregon	**84,161**	62,197	75,987	**6,274**	11,539	27,945	**60,662**	15,577	13,706
California	**100,155**	119,821	171,115	**24,385**	89,363	142,902	**-**	1,438	699
Total Recreational	**256,740**	247,281	337,697	**39,577**	111,569	207,216	**144,483**	53,102	66,175
PFMC Total	**N/A**	N/A	N/A	**225,812**	260,331	875,136	**207,302**	87,471	94,232

a/ All non-Indian coho fisheries are mark-selective except the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. commercial fishery.

b/ Treaty Indian effort is reported as landings.

c/ Numbers shown as chinook quotas for non-Indian troll and recreational fisheries North of Falcon are guidelines rather than quotas; only the total Chinook allowable catch is a quota.

TABLE IR-6. Sequence of events in ocean salmon fishery management, 2007.[a/] (Page 1 of 8)

GENERAL MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AND INSEASON CONFERENCES

Mar. 1	National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) provides the Council with a letter outlining the 2007 management guidance for stocks listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
Mar. 8	Council recommends first inseason adjustments for: 1. Commercial fisheries between Cape Falcon and the Oregon/California border to be closed March 15 through April 9 and on April 30; landing limit of no more than 100 Chinook per vessel per calendar week in April. 2. Commercial fishery between Horse Mt. and Point Arena to be closed March 15 to April 8 and April 28-30; fishery open Monday to Friday, April 9 through the earlier of April 27 of a 2,000 Chinook quota with a landing limit of no more than 20 Chinook per vessel per day, all fish caught in the area must be landed in the area, and all fish must be offloaded within 24 hours of any closure. . New regulations take effect May 1, 2007.
Mar. 9	Council adopts three commercial and recreational ocean salmon fishery management options for public review.
Mar. 13	North of Cape Falcon salmon forum meets in Lacey, Washington to initiate consideration of recommendations for treaty Indian and non-Indian salmon management options.
Mar. 26-27	Council holds public hearings on proposed 2007 management options in Westport, Washington, Coos Bay, Oregon, and Santa Rosa, California.
Mar. 27	North of Cape Falcon salmon forum meets in Lynnwood, Washington to further consider recommendations for treaty Indian and non-Indian salmon management options.
Apr. 5	Council adopts final ocean salmon fishery management recommendations for approval and implementation by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. The proposed measures comply with the salmon fishery management plan (FMP) and the current biological opinions for listed species. An emergency rule is not required for implementation.
Apr. 20	NMFS inseason conference number two results in increasing the landing limit from 20 Chinook to 30 Chinook per vessel per day in the Horse Mt. to Point Arena commercial all salmon except coho fishery effective April 23 as only 164 fish had been caught to date on the 2,000 Chinook quota.
Apr. 27	NMFS inseason conference number three results in no change to the Horse Mt. to Point Arena commercial all salmon except coho fishery. Only 635 Chinook were caught on the 2,000 Chinook quota, however additional sampling crews would not be available to monitor the fishery through April 30.
May 1	Ocean salmon seasons implemented as recommended by the Council and published in the *Federal Register* on May 3 (72 FR 24539).
June 21	NMFS inseason conference number four results in changing the U.S./Canada border to Cape Falcon, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery landing limit from 60 Chinook to 50 Chinook per vessel per open period in the area north of Leadbetter Point, effective June 23 to 26. The fishery then closes through June 30, and reopens July 1 for the all species fishery.
July 19	NMFS inseason conference number five results in no change to the Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border commercial all salmon except coho fishery, as the quota of 1,600 Chinook was projected not to be reached by July 23.
July 23	NMFS inseason conference number six results in no change to the Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border commercial all salmon except coho fishery, as the quota of 1,600 Chinook was projected not to be reached by July 27.
July 26	NMFS inseason conference number seven results in changing the U.S./Canada border to Cape Falcon, non-Indian commercial all-salmon fishery landing limit from 40 Chinook to 20 Chinook per vessel per open period in the area north of Leadbetter Point, effective July 28.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AND INSEASON CONFERENCES (continued)

Aug. 13 — NMFS inseason conference number eight results in closing to the Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border commercial all salmon except coho fishery, effective noon August 14, 2007, as the quota of 1,800 Chinook was projected to be reached.

Aug. 15 — NMFS inseason conference number nine results in two actions:
1) changing the U.S./Canada border to Cape Falcon, non-Indian commercial all-salmon fishery to include a landing and possession limit of 140 coho per open period effective, August 18, and;
2) changing the recreational fishery north of Leadbetter Point to allow fishing seven days per week in the Westport, La Push, and Neah Bay subareas effective, August 17.

Aug. 17 — NMFS inseason conference number ten results in closing the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. non-Indian commercial fishery to the retention of coho, effective August 20.

Aug. 22 — NMFS inseason conference number 11 results in two actions:
1) transferring 5,000 marked coho from the Westport ocean subarea recreational fishery to the Columbia River ocean recreational fishery at an impact neutral rate on Lower Columbia River natural coho of 0.85 resulting in increasing the Columbia River subarea quota by 4,250 to 63,050, effective, August 25, and;
2) reopening the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt. non-Indian commercial fishery to the retention of all legal sized coho, effective August 25 through August 28.

Aug. 28 — NMFS inseason conference number 12 results in no change to the Cape Falcon. to OR/CA border recreational mark selective coho fishery as the quota of 50,000 coho was projected last through Labor Day weekend.

Aug. 30 — NMFS inseason conference number 13 results in transferring 10,000 marked coho from the Westport ocean subarea recreational fishery to the Columbia River ocean recreational fishery at an impact neutral rate on Lower Columbia River natural coho of 0.84 resulting in increasing the Columbia River subarea quota by 8,400 to 71,450, and reopening the Columbia River subarea effective September 2 through the earlier of the September 30 or attainment of the subarea coho quota or north of Cape Falcon recreational Chinook quota.

Sept. 12 — NMFS inseason conference number 13 results in closing the OR/CA border to Humboldt south jetty commercial all salmon except coho fishery, effective midnight, September 12, 2007, as the quota of 6,000 Chinook was projected to be reached.

NON-INDIAN COMMERCIAL TROLL SEASONS

Apr. 9 — Horse Mountain to Point Arena, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens Monday to Friday through April 27 with a 20 Chinook per vessel per day landing limit (changed to 30 Chinook per vessel per day effective April 23); fish caught in the area must be landed in the area, and fish must be offloaded within 24 hours of any closure.

Apr. 10 — Cape Falcon to OR/CA border, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through April 29 with a 100 Chinook per vessel per calendar week landing and possession limit.

Apr. 27 — Horse Mountain to Point Arena, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes as scheduled.

Apr. 29 — Cape Falcon to OR/CA border, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes.

NON-INDIAN COMMERCIAL TROLL SEASONS (continued)

May 1	Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through June 30.
	Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through May 31.
	Pigeon Point to Point Sur, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through May 31; Chinook minimum size limit 27 inches total length.
	Point Sur to U.S./Mexico border, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through September 30; Chinook minimum size limit 27 inches total length in May, June, and September and 28 inches in July and August.
May 1-2	U.S./Canada border to Cape Falcon, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens with a 10,850 Chinook quota and a 60 Chinook per vessel landing limit north of Leadbetter Point and 40 Chinook per vessel landing limit south of Leadbetter Point for the two-day open period. The fishery reopens with the remaining quota May 5.
May 5-8	U.S./Canada border to Cape Falcon, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery reopens with the remainder of the 10,850 Chinook quota and a 60 Chinook per vessel landing limit north of Leadbetter Point and 40 Chinook per vessel landing limit south of Leadbetter Point for the four-day open period. The fishery reopens with the remaining quota May 12.
May 9	Point Arena to Pigeon Point non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through May 31; Chinook minimum size limit 27 inches total length.
May 12-Jun 12	U.S./Canada border to Cape Falcon, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery reopens Saturday to Tuesday through June 12 with the remainder of the 10,850 Chinook quota, and a 60 Chinook per vessel landing limit north of Leadbetter Point and 30 Chinook per vessel landing limit south of Leadbetter Point for each of the four-day open periods. The fishery reopens with the remaining quota June 23.
May 31	Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes. Fishery reopens June 1.
	Point Arena to Pigeon Point, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes. Fishery reopens July 1.
	Pigeon Point to Point Sur, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes. Fishery reopens July 1.
June 1	Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through June 30 or a Chinook quota of 1,600 with a 30 Chinook per vessel per day and 90 Chinook per vessel per calendar week landing and possession limit.
June 23-26	U.S./Canada border to Cape Falcon, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens with the remainder of the 10,850 Chinook quota and a 50 Chinook per vessel landing limit north of Leadbetter Point and 30 Chinook per vessel landing limit south of Leadbetter Point for the final four-day open period. The fishery will not reopen June 30.
June 30	Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes. The fishery reopens July 11.
	Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes as scheduled. The fishery reopens July 11.

NON-INDIAN COMMERCIAL TROLL SEASONS (continued)

July 1 — U.S./Canada border to Cape Falcon, non-Indian commercial all-salmon fishery opens Saturday to Tuesday through the earlier of September 16 or quotas of 4,993 Chinook (5,400 preseason guideline minus 407 overage from the May-June fishery) and 22,400 marked coho
July 1-3, 7-10, 14-17, and 21-24 with a 40 Chinook per vessel landing limit north of Leadbetter Point and 20 Chinook per vessel landing limit south of Leadbetter Point for each of the open periods.
July 28-31, August 4-7, 11-14, with a 20 Chinook per vessel landing limit both north and south of Leadbetter Point for each of the open periods.
August 18-21, 25-28, September 1-4, 8-11, and 15-16 with a 20 Chinook and 140 coho per vessel landing limit both north and south of Leadbetter Point for each of the open periods.

Point Arena to Pigeon Point, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through August 29; Chinook minimum size limit 28 inches total length.

Pigeon Point to Point Sur, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through August 29; Chinook minimum size limit 28 inches total length.

July 11 — Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through July 30.

Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through July 31 or a Chinook quota of 1,600 with a 30 Chinook per vessel per day and 90 Chinook per vessel per calendar week landing and possession limit.

July 30 — Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes. Fishery reopens August 4.

July 31 — Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes as scheduled. Fishery reopens August 1.

Aug. 1 — Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through August 29 or a Chinook quota of 1,800 with a 30 Chinook per vessel per day and 90 Chinook per vessel per calendar week landing and possession limit.

Horse Mt. to Point Arena non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through August 29.

Aug. 4 — Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through August 28.

Aug. 14 — Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes at noon as the 1,800 quota is reached. Fishery reopens September 6.

Aug. 15 — Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial non-mark selective coho fishery opens through earlier of August 28 or 10,000 coho quota with a 50 coho per vessel per calendar week landing and possession limit. Fishery reopens with the remaining quota on September 10.

Aug. 18 — U.S./Canada border to Cape Falcon, non-Indian commercial all-salmon fishery 140 marked coho per vessel per open period landing limit established.

Aug. 20 — Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial non-mark selective coho fishery closes as 10,000 quota is approached. Coho retention reopens August 25.

Aug. 25 — Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial non-mark selective coho fishery reopens through August 28.

NON-INDIAN COMMERCIAL TROLL SEASONS (continued)

Aug. 28	Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes. Fishery reopens September 10.
	Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial non-mark selective coho fishery closes as scheduled. Fishery is scheduled to reopen September 10 to 13
Aug. 29	Horse Mt. to Point Arena non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes. Fishery reopens September 1.
	Point Arena to Pigeon Point, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes. Fishery reopens September 1.
	Pigeon Point to Point Sur, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes. Fishery reopens September 1.
Sept. 1	Horse Mt. to Point Arena non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through the September 30.
	Point Arena to Pigeon Point, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through September 30; Chinook minimum size limit 27 inches total length.
	Pigeon Point to Point Sur, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through September 30; Chinook minimum size limit 27 inches total length.
Sept. 6	Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through September 30 or a Chinook quota of 1,000 with a 30 Chinook per vessel per day and 90 Chinook per vessel per calendar week landing and possession limit.
Sept. 10	Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through September 13 with a 150 Chinook per vessel per calendar week landing and possession limit; Bandon High Spot Control Zone closed.
	Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial non-mark selective coho fishery opens through earlier of September 13 or the remainder of the 10,000 coho quota with a 50 coho per vessel per calendar week landing and possession limit.
	OR/CA border to Humboldt south jetty, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through September 30 or a Chinook quota of 6,000 with a 30 Chinook per vessel per day landing and possession limit.
Sept. 12	OR/CA border to Humboldt south jetty, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes as the 6,000 Chinook quota is reached.
Sept. 13	Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes. Fishery reopens October 1.
	Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial non-mark selective coho fishery closes as scheduled.
Sept. 16	U.S./Canada border to Cape Falcon, non-Indian commercial all-salmon fishery closes as scheduled.

NON-INDIAN COMMERCIAL TROLL SEASONS (continued)

Sept. 30	Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes as scheduled.
	Horse Mt. to Point Arena non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes.
	Point Arena to Pigeon Point, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes.
	Pigeon Point to Point Sur, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes.
	Point Sur to U.S./Mexico border, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes.
Oct. 1	Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through October 31 with a 75 Chinook per vessel per calendar week landing and possession limit; Bandon High Spot Control Zone closed.
	Point Reyes to Point San Pedro, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens Monday to Friday through October 12; all fish must be landed between Point Arena and Pigeon Point; Chinook minimum size limit 27 inches total length.
Oct. 12	Point Reyes to Point San Pedro, non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes.
Oct. 31	Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., non-Indian commercial all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes.

TREATY INDIAN COMMERCIAL TROLL SEASONS

May 1	All-salmon-except-coho fisheries open through the earlier of June 30 or a 21,500 Chinook quota.
June 30	All-salmon-except-coho fisheries close as scheduled.
July 1	All-salmon fisheries open through the earlier of September 15, a 15,500 Chinook quota (13,500 preseason quota plus 2,000 transfer from the May-June season), or a 38,000 non-mark-selective coho quota.
Sep. 4	The all-salmon commercial fisheries close as the 38,000 coho quota is reached.

RECREATIONAL SEASONS

Feb. 17	Horse Mt. to Point Arena, all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through November 11.
Mar. 15	Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through October 31. Cape Falcon to OR/CA border mark-selective (adipose fin clipped) coho retention allowed June 23 through September 16 (September 4 south of Humbug Mt.) with a 50,000 marked coho quota.
Apr. 7	Point Arena to Pigeon Point all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through November 11.
	Pigeon Point to the U.S./Mexico border, all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through October 7.
May 5	Humbug Mt. to Horse Mt., all-salmon-except-coho fishery opens through September 4. Cape Falcon to OR/CA border mark-selective (adipose fin clipped) coho retention allowed June 23 through September 4 (September 16 north of Humbug Mt.) with a 50,000 marked coho quota.
June 17	Cape Falcon to OR/CA border, all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery opens through the earlier of September 16 north of Humbug Mt. or September 4 south of Humbug Mt., or a quota of 50,000 marked coho.

TABLE IR-6. Sequence of events in ocean salmon fishery management, 2007.[a/] (Page 7 of 8)

RECREATIONAL SEASONS (continued)

July 1	Queets River to Leadbetter Point, all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery opens though the earlier of September 16 or a 43,510 marked coho quota (reduced to 38,510 on August 23 and to 28,510 on August 30), with a 9,400 Chinook guideline. Fishery is open Sunday to Thursday through August 17, seven days per week thereafter; daily-bag-limit of two fish, only one of which can be a Chinook. All coho must have a healed adipose fin clip. Grays Harbor Control Zone closed beginning August 1.
	Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon, all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery opens though the earlier of September 30 or a 58,800 marked coho quota, with a 4,300 Chinook guideline. Fishery is open seven days per week with a daily-bag-limit of two fish, only one of which can be a Chinook. All coho must have a healed adipose fin clip. No closure south of Tillamook Head in August.
July 3	U.S./Canada border to Cape Alava, all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery opens through the earlier of September 15 or a 12,230 coho quota, with a 1,725 Chinook guideline. Fishery is open Tuesday to Saturday through August 17, seven days per week thereafter; daily-bag-limit of two fish, only one of which can be a Chinook plus one additional pink salmon beginning August 1. All coho must have a healed adipose fin clip. No chum retention in August and September.
	Cape Alava to Queets River, all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery opens though the earlier of September 15 or a 2,960 coho quota, with a 725 Chinook guideline. Fishery is open Tuesday to Saturday through August 17, seven days per week thereafter; daily-bag-limit of two fish, only one of which can be a Chinook plus one additional pink salmon. All coho must have a healed adipose fin clip.
Aug. 25	Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon, all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery closes as the 63,050 marked coho quota is reached (58,800 preseason plus 4,250 transferred from the Westport subarea at 0.85 impact neutral rate).
Sept. 2	Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon, all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery reopens after transfer of an additional 10,000 marked coho from the Westport subarea increases the Columbia River subarea quota to 71,450 (58,800 preseason plus 4,250 transferred at an August 0.85 impact neutral rate plus 8,400 at a September impact neutral rate from the Westport subarea).
Sept. 4	Humbug Mt. to Horse Mt. all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes.
	Humbug Mt. to OR/CA border, all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery closes as scheduled.
Sept. 15	U.S./Canada border to Cape Alava, all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery closes as scheduled.
	Cape Alava to Queets River, all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery closes as scheduled.
Sept 16.	Queets River to Leadbetter Point, all-salmon non-mark-selective fishery closes as scheduled.
	Cape Falcon to OR/CA border, all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery closes as scheduled. The all-salmon-except-coho fishery reopens September 17 for the area north of Humbug Mt. and continues through October 31.
Sept. 17	Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., all-salmon-except-coho fishery reopens through October 31.
Sep. 22	La Push area (48°00'00" N. Lat. to 47°50'00" N. Lat.), all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery opens seven days per week through the earlier of October 7, or a 100 Chinook or 100 marked coho quota.
Sep. 30	Leadbetter Point to Cape Falcon, all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery closes as scheduled.
Oct. 7	La Push area, all-salmon mark-selective coho fishery closes as scheduled.
	Pigeon Point to U.S./Mexico border, all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes.

TABLE IR-6. Sequence of events in ocean salmon fishery management, 2007.[a/] (Page 8 of 8)

	RECREATIONAL SEASONS (continued)
Oct. 31	Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt., all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes.
Nov. 11	Horse Mt. to Point Arena, all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes.
	Point Arena to Pigeon Point all-salmon-except-coho fishery closes.

a/ Unless stated otherwise, season openings or modifications of restrictions are effective at 0001 hours of the listed date. Closures are effective at 2359 hours of the listed date.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

OCT 30 2007

ADMINISTRATOR
OFFICE OF
INFORMATION AND
REGULATORY AFFAIRS

John J. Sullivan, Esq.
General Counsel
US Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Suite 5870
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Sullivan,

On May 29, 2007, the Department of Commerce submitted for Executive Order 12866 review a draft proposed rule entitled "Amendment 12 to the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP)." In this proposed rule, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) would prohibit the commercial fishing of krill within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States off the Pacific coast, implementing the recommended amendments to the fishery management plan developed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

In the course of reviewing this proposal and the analysis supporting it, OIRA staff have raised concerns that the draft does not meet several of the provisions (specified below) of Executive Order 12866, as amended by Executive Order 13422. We greatly appreciate the work that NOAA has agreed to do to remedy these omissions, and, pursuant to section 6(b)(3) of Executive Order 12866, we are returning the draft proposed rule while additional analysis is conducted.

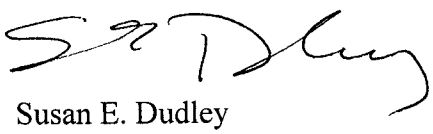
Section 1(a): Regulatory Philosophy. "Federal agencies should promulgate only such regulations as are required by law, are necessary to interpret the law, or are made necessary by compelling public need, such as material failures of private markets to protect or improve the health and safety of the public, the environment, or the well-being of the American people." However, the stated purpose of this rule, as described in the supporting analysis and against which alternatives are identified and evaluated, is not consistent with NOAA's authority to regulate the fishery under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. OIRA recognizes that in cases where there are no clear ownership rights to a natural resource, users of the resource are likely to overexploit it. However, in this case, where the resource is completely unexploited, and for which there are no known plans for exploitation, explicit identification of the core problem to be addressed is essential to the development of effective regulatory and non-regulatory solutions.

Section 1(b)(3): Identification and Assessment of Alternatives. The draft rule and analysis consider only the status quo, the preferred alternative (prohibition on the fishery), and a third alternative that would have identical long-term effect to the preferred alternative (closure of the fishery with no provisions for access). The limited alternatives identified but not assessed were evaluated strictly on their effectiveness in prohibiting all fishing.

Section 1(b)(8): Performance Objectives. The draft rule and analysis dismiss the use of performance objectives for the krill fishery, such as those used in almost all other fisheries to establish benchmarks for economically- and environmentally-sound exploitation. The foundation for rejection of performance objectives – the administrative difficulties of NOAA's usual regulatory process and the lack of scientific data – is inadequate. NOAA should reconsider the use of performance objectives in favor of strict prohibitions, even in light of limited scientific data.

We appreciate NOAA staff's willingness to examine these important questions, and are returning this rule to allow them time to do that. OIRA staff stand ready to work with your staff, and I would be happy to discuss these issues with you.

Sincerely,



Susan E. Dudley
Administrator
Office of Information
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