



The LINE. A Publication of the Pacific Fishery Management Council

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The Line is a summary of West Coast fisheries news, for fishermen, published five times per year. This issue reports on the decisions made at the March 2013 Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting. The Council (www.pcouncil.org) recommends commercial & recreational fishery management measures for Federal waters off the coasts of Washington, Oregon & California. The Council has five public meetings a year. All Council recommendations are subject to approval by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). To sign up for our full newsletter and other notices, go to <http://tinyurl.com/3s5edce>.

SALMON.

At its March meeting, the Council reviewed ocean salmon fisheries from 2012 and planned for 2013 fisheries. Three alternatives were adopted for public review (see Council website, www.pcouncil.org). The Council will set salmon seasons for the May 1, 2013 through April 30, 2014 season at its April 5-11, 2013 meeting in Portland, Oregon. Favoring fishing opportunity later in 2013, the Council asked National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to delay the March 15 opening of the Cape Falcon to Oregon/California border commercial fishery until April 1, 2013, and to delay the April 16, 2013 opening of the Fort Bragg, California commercial fishery until May 1, 2013. Abundance forecasts for Chinook are relatively strong, and coho abundance forecasts are moderate, so salmon opportunity in 2013 should generally be good.

HALIBUT.

The Council adopted a range of Pacific halibut landing limits in the salmon troll fishery for 2013 and 2014 for public review (<http://tinyurl.com/bbecvrt>). In 2014, retention would be allowed starting April 1. For the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, the Council adopted the range of Pacific halibut landing limits for 2013 and 2014 shown at <http://tinyurl.com/alkrms7>. If the 2014 Pacific halibut total allowable catch is high enough to provide for an allocation for this fishery, retention would be allowed starting April 1. The International Pacific Halibut Commission also recommended changes to the licensing process and application deadlines to accommodate the earlier retention date for both fisheries (<http://tinyurl.com/b83z8k3>).

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES (TUNAS, SWORDFISH, ETC.)

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is looking at recent research on leatherback sea turtle habitat use in terms of potential changes to the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area, in order to reduce interactions between fishing vessels and sea turtles. NMFS also has two projects evaluating alternative swordfish gears, including deep-set longline and buoy gear, that may reduce interactions with sea turtles and other protected species compared to drift gillnet gear. The Council is considering allowing limited, trial drift gillnet fishing in a triangular area south of Pt. Sur, between 12 and 100 miles from shore, in the Conservation Area. During the trial period, vessels would be required to carry onboard observers and vessel monitoring system units. The Council is looking at other aspects of the drift gillnet fishery, including the use of "hard caps" on sea turtle take. The Council also recommended a system of national catch limits for bluefin tuna on the high seas in order to end overfishing of that species and rebuild the stock.

ROCKFISH, FLATFISH, WHITING AND OTHER GROUND FISH.

The Council recommended issuing the maximum eligible surplus carryover (up to 10%) for all non-whiting species in the shorebased individual fishing quota fishery. The Council also recommended moving the shoreward trawl rockfish conservation area boundary from 75 to 100 fm between 40°10' and 48°10' N. latitude for Period 2.

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES (SARDINES, ANCHOVIES, MACKEREL, ETC.)

The Council recommended that NMFS issue an exempted fishing permit proposed by the Northwest Aerial Sardine Survey. The survey, which has been conducted since 2008, will take place in July and August. Any of the 3,000 metric ton set-aside that is not utilized will be re-allocated to the third period directed fishery.

HABITAT.

A large number of salmon are expected to return to the Klamath River this year, while at the same time there may be relatively little water to greet them. The Council is asking the Department of the Interior to provide enough water in the Klamath to prevent a fish kill like the one that occurred in 2002. The Council (and other organizations) made a similar request last year, and additional water was supplied for the fish.

OTHER BUSINESS.

The Council approved its Research and Data Needs Document, which outlines its needs for information to be used in management. • The Council appointed Sgt. Dan Chadwick to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife position on the Enforcement Consultants; Scott Grunder to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game position on the Habitat Committee; Steve Copps to the Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat Review Committee; and Calvin Frank to the Washington Coast tribal fisher vacancy on the Salmon Advisory Subpanel. • The Council is also looking for candidates for the vacant California seat on its Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel. Applications are due by May 28. • The Coast Guard has developed a new website (FishSafeWest.info) which provides information and tools fishermen are likely to find quite helpful, particularly with respect to dockside safety inspections.

NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled for April 5-11, 2013 in Portland, Oregon. The agenda can be found at <http://www.pcouncil.org/resources/archives/briefing-books/march-2013-briefing-book/>. For more information, call toll-free 866-806-7204.