



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 four or five times per year. This issue reports on the decisions made at the March and April 2014 Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings. The Council 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>. The public comment deadline for the June Council meeting is May 23; email pfmc.comments@noaa.gov.

SALMON

Commercial and recreational ocean salmon fisheries for 2014 will provide ample seasons coastwide. Over 600,000 Sacramento fall Chinook, combined with improved coho expectations for the Columbia River, will support recreational and commercial opportunities off California and Oregon. Improved hatchery coho forecasts will allow for recreational coho opportunities and possibly incidental retention in commercial Chinook fisheries. Columbia River fall Chinook returns are expected to return at near-record levels, while Columbia River hatchery coho are substantially higher than recent years. However, fisheries are constrained by measures to conserve Chinook stocks in Puget Sound and coho in the Fraser River Basin. For more, see <http://tinyurl.com/m623m92>.

PACIFIC HALIBUT

Incidental halibut landings for the 2014-2015 salmon troll fishery are limited to no more than one Pacific halibut per each four Chinook, except one halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 12 halibut landed per trip. These limits are in effect through December 31, 2014 and April 1-30, 2015. The Council also adopted halibut landing restrictions for the primary fixed gear sablefish fishery north of Pt. Chehalis, Washington from April 1, 2014 to October 31, 2014 (<http://tinyurl.com/nv85un4>).

GROUND FISH

In April, the Council adopted final 2015 and 2016 overfishing limits, acceptable biological catches, and annual catch limits (ACLs) for groundfish. Notable changes to ACLs for 2015 and 2016 include 50,000 metric tons (mt) for Dover sole, 2,000 mt for widow rockfish, and 2,101 mt for spiny dogfish in 2015 and 2,085 mt in 2016. (Spiny dogfish will be managed outside of a complex using these stock-specific ACLs). The ACL for cowcod south of 40°10' N. lat. (which is overfished) is 10 mt. In June, the Council will decide on a new target year to rebuild cowcod. Final action on 2015-2016 groundfish management is scheduled for June. **Pacific whiting:** The Council adopted a yield set-aside of 1,500 mt of Pacific whiting to accommodate 2014 research activities and incidental bycatch in the pink shrimp fishery. **Sablefish:** In June the Council will finalize its review of the limited entry fixed gear groundfish program, consider requiring electronic reporting of some or all sablefish landings, and consider modifying the criteria for determining which limited entry fixed gear permits count against an owner's three permit control. **Electronic monitoring:** A Groundfish Electronic Monitoring meeting is scheduled for May 7-8 in Seattle, Washington to further refine options for each fleet sector. **Rockfish barotrauma:** The Council adopted new, lower depth-based mortality rates for cowcod, canary rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish that are discarded in recreational fisheries using descending devices to mitigate barotrauma. This will reduce discard mortality in the recreational fishery. **Inseason adjustments:** The Council recommended that NMFS issue the maximum surplus carryover (up to 10 percent) for all non-whiting species in the

shorebased individual fishing quota trawl groundfish fishery. **In June** the Council will begin a comprehensive process to set priorities for new management measures it will develop in the coming years.

SARDINES

The 2014-2015 ACL for sardines was set at 23,293 mt, before a 500 mt per period incidental allowance, and an anticipated Quinault tribal harvest of 4,000 mt. Allocations are: Period 1 (July 1-Sept 14) = 7,218 mt; Period 2 (Sept 15-Dec 31) = 4,323 mt; Period 3 (Jan 1-June 30) = 6,252 mt. Any uncaught allocation from Periods 1 and 2 will be rolled into the subsequent period, but uncaught allocation from Period 3 will not be rolled over. The Council adopted a mixed load allowance of up to 45% sardines caught in other coastal pelagic species fisheries, after directed fishing has closed.

ECOSYSTEMS AND HABITAT

Forage fish: The Council approved alternatives for protecting un-fished and unmanaged forage fish, and discussed how to incorporate these protections. Measures to protect forage species may be added to each of the Council's four fishery management plans. The Council will discuss this next in September. **Ecosystem reports:** The Council discussed the current State of the California Current Ecosystem report and other recent work done on the status of the ecosystem. The reports are available at <http://tinyurl.com/lphwf9b>. **Habitat letters:** The Council sent a letter drafted by the Habitat Committee to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management about the Pacific Marine Energy Center South Energy Test Site project (<http://tinyurl.com/lpycf6z>); a letter to KZO Sea Farms regarding their proposed aquaculture operations (<http://tinyurl.com/kuwbgmv>); and a letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the Coleman National Fish Hatchery release plan (<http://tinyurl.com/mhjerwv>).

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES

The Council discussed changes to the swordfish drift gillnet fishery to make it more environmentally and economically sustainable. The Council will consider experimental fishing permits for the transitional drift gillnet fishery in September. The Council's Highly Migratory Species teams are working on a transition plan that would allow a reasonable flow of swordfish to domestic markets.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The Council has been discussing House and Senate discussion drafts for reauthorizing the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which dictates how fisheries are managed in the U.S. The Act may be reauthorized this year. For more information, see <http://tinyurl.com/lkqfxgx>.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled for June 20-25, 2014 in Garden Grove, California.