

**Decision Summary Document
Pacific Fishery Management Council**

November 14-19, 2015

Council Meeting Decision Summary Documents are highlights of significant decisions made at Council meetings. Results of agenda items that do not reach a level of highlight significance are typically not described in the Decision Summary Document. For a more detailed account of Council meeting discussions, see the [Council meeting record and voting logs](#) or the [Council newsletter](#).

Enforcement Issues

Vessel Movement Monitoring Alternatives

The Council discussed the following management measures as discussed in [Agenda Item C.2, Attachment 1 - Vessel Movement Monitoring Public Scoping Document](#):

1. Monitoring Restricted Areas with Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS)
2. Removal of Derelict Crab Pots from Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs)
3. Fishery Declaration Enhancements
4. Movement of Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Fishpot Gear Across Management Lines

The Council chose to remove for further consideration Management Measure 2, citing that the current state-managed derelict crab gear programs are adequate. The Council adopted the revised purposed and need statements and recommended preliminary preferred alternatives (PPAs) for Management Measures 1, 3, and 4 as presented in the [Agenda Item C.2.a, Supplemental Enforcement Consultants Report](#) and [Agenda Item C.2.a, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel Report](#) and are summarized as follows:

Management Measure 1 PPAs:

- For limited entry (LE) Groundfish, Open Access Non-Groundfish, LE Fixed Gear, Open Access Fixed Gear (non-IFQ), Open Access Non-Groundfish Trawl (except pink shrimp trawl):
 - Alternative 2 (Increase ping rate to 4 times per hour);
 - Alternative 3 (Maintain ping rate one per hour with Electronic Monitoring System on vessel); and
 - Alternative 4 (Allow use of enhanced VMS units (non-type approved)).
- For pink shrimp trawl fishery: Alternative 1 (status quo of one ping per hour).
- For LE midwater trawl whiting: Alternative 1 (status quo of one ping per hour)
- For albacore vessels larger than 24 meters: Alternative 1 (status quo of one ping per hour).
- For drift gillnet fishery: Alternative 2 (Increase ping rate to 4 times per hour with a continuous transit requirement), but to conduct additional analysis of Alternatives 3 and 4.

Management Measure 3 PPAs:

During Gear Testing:

- Alternative 3 (Set up formal exemption process to allow only Shorebased IFQ vessels to be exempt from observer coverage for a trip that tests gear. The trip could be during an open or closed season.)
- The Council created a new Alternative 4, (containing the same provisions as Alternative 3 but for groundfish trawl vessels instead of shorebased IFQ vessels).

Whiting Fishery Declaration: Alternative 2 (allow midwater trawl vessels to change their whiting fishery declaration while at sea).

Management Measure 4 PPAs:

- Alternative 2 (allow IFQ fixed gear vessels to move pot gear from one management area to another management area during a single trip, then deploy the gear baited); and
- Alternative 3 (same as Alternative 2 but gear must be deployed non-baited).

Salmon Management

Salmon Methodology Review

The Council was encouraged by work done on the new base period for the Chinook Fishery Regulation Evaluation Model (FRAM) and approved new algorithms for addressing growth and sublegal encounters, but did not approve other FRAM updates that result in moving to a new base period. Additional co-manager review and validation of the new base period is expected to occur over the winter and the Council anticipates receiving a letter from the co-managers by February 1, 2016 regarding their findings. Due to limited supporting data and in keeping with the recommendations of the Scientific and Statistical Committee and Salmon Technical Team, the Council did not adopt new management lines at Pt. Sur or Pt. Reyes. The Council also received a proposal for an industry-sponsored test fishery in the California Klamath Management Zone and recommended that the proponents of the test fishery coordinate with the National Marine Fisheries Service- (NMFS) proposed genetic stock identification sampling in this area and provide a revised proposal for detailed review at the March 2016 Council meeting.

Salmon Management Schedule for 2016

The Council adopted the tentative 2016 salmon management schedule ([Agenda Item D.3, Attachment 1](#)) including plans for public hearings in Westport, Washington and Coos Bay, Oregon on March 28 and Fort Bragg, California on March 29. Additionally, the Council confirmed a schedule and approved membership for an ad hoc Sacramento River Winter Chinook Workgroup to develop and analyze alternative control rules for this stock. The Council and NMFS are striving to complete the review of Sacramento River winter Chinook incidental harvest policy in time for application for the 2017 salmon management process, but recognize that the schedule is aggressive and relies on a compressed timeframe with a substantial workload.

Habitat

Current Habitat Issues

The Council approved sending the Habitat Committee's proposed letter regarding expansion of the Coast Seafoods aquaculture operation in Humboldt Bay ([Agenda Item E.1, Supplemental Attachment 4](#)) to the Humboldt Bay Harbor District, with some edits.

Highly Migratory Species Management

Swordfish Fishery Management Policy Connections

The Council reiterated its recommendation to NMFS to issue an exempted fishing permit (EFP) to test the use of modified large mesh drift gillnet (DGN) gear for fishing by two boats inside the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area (PLCA), with fishing triggered at times and areas by favorable oceanographic conditions—for example, when jellyfish (and theoretically sea turtle) abundance has greatly diminished and swordfish abundance is high. The EFP will test generally whether “eco-set triggered fishing” can result in substantially higher swordfish catch and far less bycatch. The Council confirmed it is their intent that if this initial small-scale testing proved successful, it would lead to a subsequent EFP with more vessels in order to gather a higher volume of scientific data. If innovations tested by this and subsequent EFPs prove successful in reliably demonstrating superior target catch and lower bycatch than the current full fleet DGN fishery, this should lead to allowing DGN vessels to access all or portions of the PLCA at times when swordfish catch rates are higher and protected species bycatch is lower. The Council also stated the expectation that any future fishery that includes all or portions of the PLCA would operate under protected species hard caps like those adopted by the Council in September 2015. In consideration of NMFS' heightened focus on leatherback turtles, the Council directed further work on estimating the global benefits to leatherback turtles that could be provided by a significantly better performing DGN fishery replacing foreign-caught swordfish in the U.S. marketplace.

The Council also recognized the promise of deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) to be an economically viable low/no bycatch gear for catching swordfish. For that reason, the Council expressed its interest to move forward rapidly to authorize DSBG under the Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan while considering the need for a permitting regime to regulate use of this gear.

Initiating a Council process to authorize shallow-set longline gear outside the Exclusive Economic Zone was given lower priority, but still judged to be important in recognition that Hawaii-permitted shallow-set longline vessels are currently landing significant amounts of swordfish on the West Coast.

Coastal Pelagic Species Management

Pacific Sardine Distribution Workshop

The Council considered the report on the August 2015 Pacific Sardine Distribution Workshop, which reviewed several potential alternatives to the current distribution term in the Pacific sardine harvest control rule. While there are potential alternative approaches to determining the average long-term distribution of the northern subpopulation of Pacific sardine that could be explored further, the Council accepted the conclusion that no currently-available alternative is superior to the existing distribution term and did not schedule further consideration of changing the distribution term at this time. However, the Council did task Council staff with recommending better coastwide stock abundance research and estimation cooperation at the upcoming Tri-National Sardine Forum and promoting the display of the kind of variable “decision tables” currently presented for whiting abundance forecasts, as an element in the next sardine stock assessment.

Anchovy General Status Overview

The Council requested the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) finalize their initial planning to conduct a stock assessment of northern anchovy in time to be presented at the November 2016 Council meeting, including plans to convene a scientific workshop to be held in Spring 2016 designed to develop the optimum approach for this stock assessment. The Council requested participation in the spring workshop include members from the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT), and Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel, and possibly Council members.

The Council also asked the CPSMT to explore alternative management and policy approaches, and report back to the Council in Fall 2016. The Council also tasked Council staff with placing consideration of moving to more active management of anchovy fishing seasons on a future Council meeting agenda.

2016 Methodology Review Preliminary Topic Selection Including Data-Limited Assessment Methods

The Council considered two proposals for methodology reviews in 2016: the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Southern California Aerial Survey, and the SWFSC acoustic-trawl survey. Based on SSC recommendations, the Council determined that the proposed sampling approaches of the CDFW aerial survey for coastal pelagic species would need to be improved prior to a formal methodology review. The SWFSC did not feel a methodology of the past SAKE acoustic-trawl survey methodology was appropriate at this time, given various critical changes being implemented in the 2016 spring and summer surveys. This methodology review could happen in the 2017 cycle.

Groundfish Management

Preliminary Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) Approval

The Council approved for further consideration in the 2017-2018 management cycle the EFP proposed by The Nature Conservancy for testing lingcod selective pot gear, with the condition that activity be limited to those waters westward of a line approximating the 75 fathom depth contour. Additionally, it agreed with the NMFS recommendation to expand the number of vessels participating in the fixed gear electronic monitoring EFPs, but recommended a limit of no more than 20 additional vessels. Further, NMFS will consider extending the electronic monitoring EFPs past the 2015/2016 cycle and report back to the Council at a future meeting.

Final Approval of Stock Assessments

The Council adopted new full assessments for black rockfish off California, Oregon, and Washington (see [Agenda Item I.3, Attachment 1](#)), which indicate the stocks are approaching or above target biomass levels. These assessments will inform management decisions for groundfish fisheries in 2017 and beyond.

Biennial Harvest Specifications for 2017-18 Groundfish Management Including Final Overfishing Limits and Acceptable Biological Catches

The Council adopted final overfishing limits endorsed by the SSC (see [Agenda Item I.4.a, Supplemental SSC Report](#)); final acceptable biological catches and final annual catch limits (ACLs) for all stocks and complexes other than those for black rockfish in California, California scorpionfish, canary rockfish, darkblotched rockfish, and widow rockfish as depicted in [Agenda Item I.4, Supplemental REVISED Attachment 2](#); and decided a range of alternative ACLs for detailed analysis for black rockfish in California, California scorpionfish, canary rockfish, darkblotched rockfish, and widow rockfish. The Council is scheduled to adopt all remaining final 2017 and 2018 harvest specifications at their April 2016 meeting in Vancouver, Washington.

Whiting Electronic Monitoring Final Alternative and Regulations

The Council made the following changes to the final preferred alternative for electronic monitoring for the whiting fishery as described in Table 2-1 of [Agenda Item I.5, Attachment 1](#):

- The Council's preferred alternative is now Alternative 3. Rather than Alternative 2, which requires video recording as the data source to replace data collected by human observers, logbooks would be required, with video recordings used to audit the accuracy of logbooks; the Council adopted 100 percent auditing to be required until changed.
- The Council confirmed their preferred option that a third party provider would conduct video reviews and that the industry would be responsible for paying for the review. The payment responsibility provision is a change from the prior policy that directed NMFS (or their agent) to conduct and pay for video reviews until a third party provider certification process was established in regulation.

- The Council removed the Discard Species List Adjustment option because the whiting fishery will be a maximized retention fishery whereby no discard would be allowed. This negates the need for an allowable discard species list and a Council mechanism to adjust the list in the future. Should this option be needed in the future, the Council will revisit the issue,
- The Council also required that discard logbooks and state logbooks be postmarked and submitted to Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission within 24 hours of landing.
- Under discard accounting for the mothership fishery, the Council revised their preferred Discard Accounting from Option D (Deduct "unintentional minor" Discards Preseason) to Option A (Estimate Discard with EM and Count against IFQ).
- No regulations were finalized via the deeming process at this Council meeting.

During the Workload and Future Meeting Planning agenda item, the Council scheduled final deeming of detailed Code of Federal Regulations- (CFR) style whiting fishery regulations for the April 2016 Council meeting. The Council also adjusted the schedule for reaching finality on fixed gear electronic monitoring (EM) regulations and bottom trawl EM regulations by (1) scheduling an EFP results update for the March 2016 Council meeting to cover both remaining sectors, (2) scheduling deeming of CFR-style fixed gear regulations for the April 2016 Council meeting, and (3) scheduling the next consideration of bottom trawl EM regulations for the November 2016 Council meeting.

Blackgill-Slope Complex Final Reallocation and Accumulation Limits

The Council took final action to remove blackgill rockfish from the Slope Rockfish complex south of 40° 10' N. latitude and reallocate blackgill rockfish and the remaining species in the southern Slope Rockfish complex to trawl and non-trawl sectors according to the sharing described in [Agenda Item I.6, Attachment 1](#), Alternative 1. No change was made to accumulation limits for these species. Implementation of this initiative is tentatively scheduled for January 1, 2018.

Stock Assessment Prioritization for the 2019-20 Management Cycle

The Council adopted a new stock assessment prioritization planning process to inform decisions on groundfish stock assessments to be conducted in 2017 to inform management decisions for fisheries in 2019 and beyond. The Council is scheduled to use this new process when deciding groundfish stock assessment priorities for 2017 assessments at the April and June meetings next year.

Consideration of Inseason Adjustments

The Council considered the progress to date of the shorebased individual fishing quota program and recommended big skate trip limits for 2016 as 5,000 pounds/2 months for Period 1, 25,000 pounds/2 months for Period 2, 30,000 pounds/2 months for Period 3, 35,000 pounds/2 months for Period 4, 10,000 pounds/2 months for Period 5, and 5,000 pounds/2 months for Period 6.

Biennial Management Measures for 2017-18

The Council took final action to reclassify the big skate designation in the Fishery Management Plan from an ecosystem component species to a species actively managed in the fishery

beginning in 2017. Big skate would be managed using stock-specific harvest specifications with cumulative landing limits and a sorting requirement.

Further, the Council provided guidance to facilitate analysis of the integrated alternatives, which combines the ACL alternatives and adjustments to routine management measures. The Council also forwarded several new management measures for analysis. The Council set a clear priority for the routine matters necessary to achieve a January 1 start of the fishery, and that analysis of new management measures are second-tier priorities, with an overriding priority that the aggregate of routine and accomplishable new management measures achieve the target of a January 1, 2017 fishery start.

Pacific Halibut Management

Final 2016 Catch Sharing Plan (CSP) and Management Measures and Preliminary Sablefish Fishery Incidental Landing Regulations

The Council took final action on the 2016 CSP and regulations including the following: In Washington, the status quo measures will remain except that the season opening date in the north coast subarea will be the first Saturday in May ([Agenda Item J.1.a, WDFW Report, November 2015](#)). The season structure would maintain the Thursday and Saturday openings during the second week in May and the management closure already in place during the third week in May. In Oregon, status quo measures will continue except that the Central Oregon Coast Subarea nearshore season opening date will be June 1, with the season running 7 days per week until October 31, or until the allocation is attained ([Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental ODFW Report, November 2015](#)). Further, retention of other species of flatfish, Pacific cod, and sablefish when halibut fishing in the Southern Oregon Subarea will be allowed. In California, the same approach used in 2015 to establish the recreational season structure and inseason management processes will be used in 2016 as described in [Agenda Item I.1.a, CDFW Report, September 2015](#). The Council also recommended minor corrections for the CSP and codified regulations proposed by NMFS ([Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 2](#)).

Additionally, the Council selected a preliminary preferred alternative which would provide NMFS the automatic action authority to prohibit retention of halibut in the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington. The automatic action would occur upon posting of the notice by the International Pacific Halibut Commission on its website that the halibut quota for this fishery has been reached. Closures will also be announced on the NMFS halibut hotline. The Council is scheduled to take final action on this measure at the March 2016 Council meeting.

Administrative Matters

Legislative Matters

The Council approved sending the proposed letter ([Agenda Item F.2, Supplemental Attachment 2](#)) on California drought legislation to Reps. Huffman and Thompson, with the edits listed in the Legislative Committee report ([Agenda Item F.2.a](#)).

Fiscal Matters

The Council approved a Provisional CY 2016 Operating Budget of \$4,767,288, and tasked the Executive Director with pursuing additional funding for six special projects not funded by routine funding.

Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

The Council modified Council Operating Procedure 6 by increasing the Public at-large seats from one to two seats.

The Council made the following advisory body appointments:

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL

California Commercial (3 Positions)

- Mr. Richie Ashley
- Mr. David Haworth
- Mr. Nick Jurlin

Oregon Commercial (1 Position)

- Mr. Ryan Kapp

Washington Commercial (1 Position)

Mr. Robert Zuanich

California Processor (1 Position)

Ms. Diane Pleschner-Steele

Oregon Processor (1 Position)

Mr. Mike Okoniewski

Washington Processor (1 Position)

Mr. Albert Carter

California Sport/Charter (1 Position)

Mr. Steve Crooke

Conservation

Ms. Gillian Lyons

ECOSYSTEM ADVISORY SUBPANEL (9 POSITIONS)

California (3 At-large Positions)

Dr. Pete Adams

Ms. Kathy Fosmark

Oregon (3 At-large Positions)

Mr. Ben Enticknap

Mr. Frank Warrens
Mr. Scott McMullen
Washington (3 At-large Positions)
Mr. Paul B. Dye
Dr. Terrie Klinger
Mr. Nate Stone

GROUNDFISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL (21 Positions)

Fixed Gear (3 At-large)
Mr. Robert Alverson
Ms. Michele Longo-Eder
Mr. Gerry Richter
Bottom Trawl (1 Position)
Mr. Travis Hunter
Midwater Trawl (1 Position)
Mr. Jeff Lackey
At-large Trawl (2 Positions)
Mr. Kevin L Dunn
Mr. Brent Paine
Open Access South of Cape Mendocino (1 Position)
Mr. Daniel Platt
Open Access North of Cape Mendocino (1 Position)
Mr. Jeffrey Miles
Processors (2 At-large Positions)
Ms. Susan Chambers
Mr. Tom Libby
At-Sea Processor (1 Position)
Mr. Daniel A. Waldeck
California Charter South of Point Conception (1 Position)
Mr. Louis Zimm
California Charter North of Point Conception (1 Position)
Mr. Robert Ingles
Oregon Charter (1 Position)
Mr. Tyler Turner
Washington Charter (1 Position)
Mr. Robert Mirante
Sport Fisheries (3 At-large Positions)
Mr. John Holloway
Mr. Kevin Lanier
Mr. Tom Marking
Conservation (1 Position)
Mr. Shems Jud
Tribal Fisher (1 Position)
Mr. Steve Joner

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL

Commercial Troll (1 Position)

Mr. Wayne Heikkila

Commercial Purse Seine (1 Position)

Mr. August Felando

Commercial Gillnet (1 Position)

Mr. Arthur Lorton

Commercial Fisheries (3 At-large Positions)

Mr. Douglas Fricke

Mr. William Sutton

Mr. Gary Burke

Processor South of Cape Mendocino (1 Position)

Mr. Dave Rudie

Processor North of Cape Mendocino (1 Position)

Mr. A. Pierre Marchand

California Charter Boat (1 Position)

Mr. Mike Thompson

Washington/Oregon Charter Boat (1 Position)

Ms. Linda Buell

Private Sport (1 Position)

Mr. Bob Osborne

Conservation (1 Position)

Mr. Charles Farwell

Public At-large (1 Position)

Ms. Pamela Tom

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL (15 POSITIONS)

California Troller (1 Position)

Mr. Dave Bitts,

Oregon Troller (1 Position)

Mr. Paul Heikkila

Washington Troller (1 Position)

Mr. Jim Olson

Commercial Gillnet Fishery (1 Position)

Mr. Greg Johnson

Processor (1 Position)

Mr. Gerald Reinholdt

California Charter Boat (1 Position)

Mr. John Atkinson

Oregon Charter Boat (1 Position)

Mr. Mike Sorenson

Washington Charter Boat (1 Position)

Mr. Butch Smith

California Sport Fisher (1 Position)

Mr. Marc Gorelnik
Oregon Sport Fisher (1 Position)
Mr. Richard Heap
Washington Sport Fisher (1 Position)
Mr. Steve Watrous
Idaho Sport Fisher (1 Position)
Mr. Richard Scully
Washington Tribal (1 Position)
Mr. Calvin Frank
California Tribal (1 Position)
Mr. George Kautsky
Conservation (1 Position)
Mr. Jim Hie

HABITAT COMMITTEE (7 POSITIONS)

Commercial Fishing Industry (1 Position)
Mr. Joel Kawahara
Sport Fishing Industry (1 Position)
Ms. Liz Hamilton
Conservation (1 Position)
Dr. Douglas DeHart
California Tribal (1 Position)
Mr. Dave Hillemeier
Public At-large (2 Positions)
Mr. Fred Jurick
Mr. Stephen Scheiblauser

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

At-Large (7 Positions)
Dr. Evelyn Brown
Dr. Micheal Harte
Dr. Dan Holland
Dr. John Field
Dr. André E. Punt
Dr. William Satterthwaite
Dr. Aaron Berger
California Fish and Wildlife (1 Position)
Mr. John Budrick

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM

California Fish and Wildlife (1 Position)
Mr. Andre Klein

AD HOC SACRAMENTO RIVER WINTER CHINOOK WORKGROUP

California Fish and Wildlife (2 Positions)

Mr. Brett Kormos

Mr. Jason Roberts

NMFS WCR (2 Positions)

Dr. Peter Dygert

Mr. Jeromy Jording

NMFS SWFSC (2 Positions)

Dr. Michael O'Farrell

Mr. Michael Mohr

NMFS NWFSC (1 Position)

Dr. Eli Holmes

USFWS (1 Position)

Mr. Jim Smith

Ad Hoc Groundfish Electronic Monitoring Technical Advisory Committee

Mr. Dan Erickson replaced Ms. Maggie Sommer in the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Seat

Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning

The next meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled for March 8-14, 2016 in Sacramento, California. A single-page draft proposed agenda summary is available on the Council website and a draft detailed proposed agenda will be available in early December.

PFMC

11/23/15