



## Pacific Fishery Management Council *NEWS RELEASE*

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### WEST COAST SALMON SEASON DATES SET

VANCOUVER, Wa. – The Pacific Fishery Management Council today adopted ocean salmon seasons that provide recreational and commercial opportunities coastwide. The adopted salmon fisheries off the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington achieve conservation goals for a multitude of individual salmon stocks and provide for freshwater fisheries.

The recommendation will be forwarded to the National Marine Fisheries Service for approval by May 1, 2016.

“It has been difficult for the Council, its advisors, fishery stakeholders and the public to balance fishing opportunities on harvestable Sacramento and Columbia River fall Chinook stocks with the severe conservation needs we are facing with many coho stocks and Sacramento River winter Chinook,” said Acting Council Executive Director Chuck Tracy. “But the Council has recommended commercial and recreational ocean salmon seasons in Washington, Oregon, and California this year that provide important protections for stocks of concern.”

“We have made the tough decisions and implemented fishery restrictions to give salmon stocks their best chance of rebounding from the effects of the drought and El Niño,” said Council Vice-Chair Herb Pollard.

## **Washington and Northern Oregon (North of Cape Falcon)**

Fisheries north of Cape Falcon (near Nehalem in northern Oregon) depend largely on Columbia River Chinook and coho stocks. Columbia River fall Chinook returns are expected to return at high levels, and Columbia River coho are expected to return at reduced but moderate levels in 2016. However, coastal Washington and Puget Sound coho abundance is dramatically reduced from recent years, and some wild coho stocks are expected to return at very low levels. In response, the Council has been challenged with shaping fisheries to provide access to relatively abundant Chinook stocks while protecting natural coho populations.

North of Cape Falcon, there is an overall non-Indian total allowable catch of 70,000 Chinook coastwide (compared to 131,000 last year) and 18,900 marked hatchery coho in the area off the Columbia River (compared to 170,000 last year).

### *Recreational Fisheries*

The recreational fishery north of Cape Falcon does not include a mark-selective Chinook season this year, but opens to all salmon on July 1 and ends in late August or when Chinook or coho quotas are reached. Recreational fisheries in all port areas will have access to 35,000 Chinook (compared to over 50,000 Chinook last year), but coho retention is only allowed in ocean areas off the Columbia River with a modest quota of 18,900 (compared to 150,800 last year). For details, please see the season descriptions on the Council website at [www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org).

### *Commercial Fisheries*

Tribal and non-Indian ocean commercial fisheries are designed to provide harvest opportunity on strong Chinook returns primarily destined for the Columbia River while avoiding coho stocks of concern. Coho retention is prohibited in all commercial fisheries north of Cape Falcon this year.

Non-Indian ocean commercial fisheries north of Cape Falcon include traditional, but reduced, Chinook seasons in the spring (May-June) and summer (July-August), and any coho caught in the commercial fishery must be released. The Chinook quota of 19,100 in the spring is approximately half of the 2015 quota, while the summer season Chinook quota is similar to last year at 23,400 Chinook.

Tribal ocean Chinook fisheries north of Cape Falcon are reduced from 2015 levels with a quota of 40,000 fish (compared to 60,000 last year).

## **California and Oregon South of Cape Falcon, Oregon**

An expected abundance of roughly 300,000 Sacramento River fall Chinook (compared to 650,000 last year), combined with modest coho expectations for the Columbia River, will support recreational and commercial opportunities for ocean salmon fisheries off Oregon and much of California. The 2015 Columbia River coho abundance forecast in 2016 is over 500,000 fish (compared to over 800,000 last year) and will allow for recreational coho opportunities this summer.

The Klamath River fall Chinook abundance forecast for 2016 is substantially lower than recent years and the primary reason for fishery constraints in Oregon and California. Long running drought conditions, coupled with suboptimal ocean conditions, have raised serious concerns for Sacramento River winter Chinook salmon, which are listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act and have experienced very low survival as juveniles in 2014 and 2015. Fisheries south of Point Arena, California, particularly recreational fisheries in the greater Monterey Bay region, will continue to experience late-season reductions to minimize interactions with winter Chinook.

### *Recreational Fisheries*

Recreational fisheries in California and southern Oregon are primarily focused on Chinook salmon and include openings in May, June, July, August, and the Labor Day weekend, in the Brookings/ Crescent City/Eureka area. Fisheries further south all opened on April 2 and will continue through November 13 in the Fort Bragg area, through October 31 in the San Francisco area, through July 15 from Pigeon Point to Point Sur, and through May 31 south of Point Sur.

Recreational fisheries off the central Oregon coast will allow Chinook retention from March 15 through October 31. Coho fisheries consist of a 26,000 mark-selective coho quota fishery in mid-summer from Cape Falcon to the Oregon/California border (compared to 55,000 last year) and a 7,500 non-mark selective coho quota fishery in September, open from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain (compared to 12,500 last year).

### *Commercial Fisheries*

Commercial fisheries from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain, Oregon opened on April 8 and will run through October 31 with intermittent closures to reduce impacts on Klamath fall Chinook. Fisheries in the Humbug Mountain-to-California-border area will

be open April 8 through May, with Chinook quota fisheries in June (720) and July (200). Fisheries from the California border to Humboldt South Jetty will open on September 9 with a 1,000 Chinook quota (compared to 3,000 last year).

Between Horse Mountain and Point Arena (in the Fort Bragg area), commercial Chinook salmon fisheries will be open June 13 to 30, August 3 to 27, and September 1 to 30.

In the area from Point Arena to Pigeon Point (San Francisco), the season will be open May 6 to 31, June 13 to 30, August 3 to 28, and during the month of September. From Pigeon Point to the Mexico border (Monterey), the Chinook season will be open in May and June. There will also be a season from Point Reyes to Point San Pedro, open October 3 to 7 and 10 to 14.

### **Management Process**

The Council developed the management measures after several weeks spent reviewing three season alternatives. The review process included input by Federal and state fishery scientists and fishing industry members; public testimony, and three public hearings in coastal communities. The Council received additional scientific information and took public testimony before taking final action. The decision will be forwarded to the National Marine Fisheries Service for approval and implementation.

In addition, the coastal states will decide on compatible freshwater fishery regulations at their respective Commission hearings.

### **Council Role**

The Pacific Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils established by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 for the purpose of managing fisheries 3-200 miles offshore of the United States of America coastline. The Pacific Council recommends management measures for fisheries off the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington.

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## On the Web

- Pacific Fishery Management Council: <http://www.pcouncil.org>
- Draft Alternative for 2016 salmon management: <http://tinyurl.com/salmon2016>
- Final Alternatives and analyses of the biological and socioeconomic impacts will be posted on the Council web page in the near future.
- Description of 2016 salmon management process:  
<http://www.pcouncil.org/salmon/current-season-management/>
- April 2015 salmon press release, for comparison: <http://tinyurl.com/htct6yv>
- Fact sheet: Salmon: <http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Salmon-Oct-2015.pdf>
- Fact sheet: Common Terms Used in Salmon Management:  
<http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Common-salmon-terms-Oct-2015.pdf>