

**Decision Summary Document**  
**Pacific Fishery Management Council**  
**September 15-20, 2016**

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](#).

## **Habitat**

### **Current Habitat Issues**

The Council directed the Habitat Committee (HC) to draft a comment letter on the Coast Seafoods Expansion Project, if relevant and to the extent possible, for the November briefing book. The Council also directed the HC to develop scoping comments on the Columbia/Snake River Biological Opinion for inclusion in the November briefing book, at which time the HC and Council could reconsider if a request for an extension of the comment deadline is warranted. The Council recommended that the HC review its Council Operating Procedures to explore whether there might be ways to facilitate commenting on issues when comment deadlines do not coincide with Council meetings.

## **Ecosystem-Based Management**

### **Fishery Ecosystem Plan Coordinated Ecosystem Indicator Review Initiative**

The Council requested the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers' California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Team to review the recommendations found in the advisory body reports submitted under this agenda item. The Assessment Team would determine which recommendations could be incorporated into the 2017 Annual State of the California Current Ecosystem Report and those that should be addressed in subsequent reports, including Fishery Management Plan-specific or other focal-area reports. The Council also endorsed consideration of ecosystem-level goals and objectives, which would be taken up in the 5-year review of the Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plan tentatively scheduled to begin in 2018.

### **Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management Roadmap**

The Council directed staff to prepare a comment letter on the draft NMFS Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management Roadmap document based on advisory body recommendations, pertinent public comments, and Council discussion.

# Coastal Pelagic Species Management

## Minimum Stock Size Thresholds Report

The Council elected to maintain the current minimum stock size thresholds (MSSTs) for coastal pelagic species (CPS) stocks, and asked the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Southwest Fisheries Science Center to further explore methods for developing MSSTs for Pacific sardine, Pacific mackerel, the northern sub-stock of northern anchovy, the central sub-stock of northern anchovy, and jack mackerel based on the guidance provided by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) [report](#) and as data become available.

## Stock Assessment Workshop Report

The Council heard a report on the May 2016 Stock Assessment Workshop on potential methods for assessing data-limited West Coast CPS stocks. The Council endorsed the recommendations in section 6 of the [report](#), and identified the central subpopulation of northern anchovy as a priority stock for assessment.

## Anchovy Management Update

The Council was briefed on current and potential management approaches of CPS stocks presented in a [white paper](#) developed by the CPSMT and considered information that could potentially affect future management of anchovy stocks. The Council also received an update on the 2016 anchovy fishery in the Columbia River area which has experienced a substantial increase in landings. Regarding future management, the Council requested the results of an October meeting to review anchovy abundance information be brought back in November to inform a consideration of changing the anchovy harvest specifications, management measures, and management category. For the 2016 fishery in the Columbia River, the Council asked the states to report on any management action considered or implemented, and for the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) to track and compile information regarding the status of the northern subpopulation of northern anchovy, and report back to the Council at the November 2016 meeting.

## Artisanal Fishery Management Issue Scoping

The Council considered a CPSMT [report](#) on potential mechanisms and scope to accommodate small-scale CPS fishing, when directed CPS fisheries are closed. The Council asked the CPSMT to develop alternatives, consistent with the scope described in the CPSMT [supplemental report](#) to be presented at the November 2016 Council meeting.

# Groundfish Management

## Methodology Review Preliminary Topic Selection

The Council adopted the topics recommended by the SSC ([Agenda Item F.2.a, Supplemental SSC Report](#)) and the Groundfish Management Team ([Agenda Item F.2.a, Supplemental GMT Report](#)) for formal methodology review. This is a preliminary decision for public review. The Council will

decide those topics that will undergo a formal methodology review by the SSC at their November meeting in Garden Grove, California.

### **2017-2018 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures**

The Council confirmed their actions taken to adopt final 2017 and 2018 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures in June 2016 as interpreted by Council and NMFS staff (see [Agenda Item F.3, Situation Summary](#)). Specifically: 1) that the southern Slope Rockfish complex include the contribution from blackgill rockfish (with a harvest guideline for southern blackgill rockfish) in the interim until Amendment 26 is implemented and; 2) to manage yellowtail rockfish north of 40° 10' N. latitude with stock-specific fixed gear trip limits and maintain the existing 200 lbs/month limit for the remaining species.

### **Scoping of Trawl Sector Quota Pounds Trading**

The Council provided guidance to Council staff regarding future consideration of this agenda item. Specifically, the Council retained the agenda item for further scoping in June 2017 and recommended that the ideas presented in [Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 1](#), the [GAP](#) Report, the [GMT](#) Report, and comments from the public be considered in light of the information being gathered during the Trawl Catch Share Program and Intersector Allocation 5-Year review. In June 2017, the Council will receive a staff report regarding how these two separate actions may inform a path forward to better-achieve optimum yields in the trawl sectors.

### **5-Year Catch Share Program and Intersector Allocation Review Update**

Under an accelerated calendar for the catch share review adopted by the Council, the review is scheduled to be finished by November 2017, at which time the Council would adopt ranges of alternatives for priority follow-on action(s). Action(s) would be analyzed over the winter of 2017-2018, with the intent of scheduling final action in the spring. The Council also requested the Northwest Fishery Science Center's Economic Data Collection Program (EDC) meet with the newly-appointed ad hoc Community Advisory Board (CAB) and other interested parties to further inform them about the EDC data and results. The update of the catch share review description will be completed at the November Council 2016 meeting. Additionally, at the November meeting, the Council will consider a schedule for moving ahead with the review of intersector allocations specified in the groundfish fishery management plan.

### **Inseason Management Final Action**

The Council considered the progress of the groundfish fishery to date (see [Agenda Item F.6.a, Supplemental GMT Report](#)) and determined that no inseason adjustments to management measures were necessary at this time.

### **Amendment 21 At-Sea Sector Set-Asides Final Action**

The Council adopted Alternative 1 as provided in [Agenda Item F.7.a, WDFW Report](#) to manage the allocated amounts of darkblotched rockfish and Pacific ocean perch to the at-sea whiting sectors as set-asides rather than as total catch limits. The Council also recommended giving NMFS inseason authority to automatically close the 2017 or 2018 at-sea whiting fisheries in the

event the species-specific set-aside amounts plus the buffer amounts are anticipated to be exceeded.

#### **Mid-Biennium Annual Catch Limit Adjustment and Rebuilding Harvest Rate Adjustment Policies**

The Council directed staff to prepare strawman alternatives exploring a Groundfish Fishery Management Plan provision to allow increases in harvest specifications in the second year of a groundfish management cycle in cases where a new stock assessment indicates a stock's status and its available harvest have substantially improved, and an increase in harvest one year earlier than anticipated could mitigate problems in the fishery. The Council directed development of alternatives with application to overfished species only as well as to overfished species and other constraining stocks. Further guidance was given to exclude automatic actions to implement a mid-biennium harvest increase and clarification that default harvest control rules would inform any increase in harvest specifications. The Council is scheduled to adopt a range of alternatives and a preliminary preferred alternative at their November meeting in Garden Grove, California.

The Council decided to take no action at this time on the proposed rebuilding harvest rate adjustment strategy for rebuilding stocks.

## **Salmon Management**

#### **Sacramento River Winter Chinook Harvest Control Rule Update**

The Council received an update on progress towards the development of a new harvest control rule including the development of a new predictor of Sacramento River winter Chinook abundance. The Council also reviewed and approved a draft range of alternative control rules for initial consideration and potential future adjustment. The Council does not anticipate that a new control rule will be available for 2017 ocean salmon fishery management, and plans to continue work on recommendations for a new control rule to be used in 2018 and beyond.

#### **Salmon Methodology Review**

The Council approved the proposed forecasting methodology for Sacramento River winter Chinook as a final topic for the 2016 salmon methodology review. The methodology review is tentatively scheduled for a one-day meeting on October 18, 2016, in Portland, Oregon. The Council did not include the two preliminary topics on the Chinook Fishery Regulation Assessment Model (FRAM) for methodology review in 2016. Rather, the Council recommended scheduling an informational update on the new Chinook FRAM base period for the November 2016 Council meeting in Garden Grove, California.

## **Pacific Halibut Management**

#### **2017 Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Regulation Changes**

The Council adopted for public review, proposed changes to the 2017 Area 2A Catch Sharing Plan and annual fishing regulations. The changes are specific to the Washington and Oregon

recreational fisheries and are described in the reports provided by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife ([Agenda Item I.1.a, Supplemental WDFW Report, September, 2016](#)) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife ([Agenda Item I.1.a, ODFW Report, September, 2016](#)). No changes were proposed for the Southern Oregon or California sub-area recreational fisheries, or any commercial fisheries. The same approach to establish the California recreational season structure and inseason management processes used in 2016, as described in the current Catch Sharing Plan ([Agenda Item I.1, Attachment 1, September 2016](#)), will be used in 2017.

## Highly Migratory Species Management

### Update on International Issues

The Council was briefed on the proposal the U.S. is submitting for the 90th Meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) (resumed) for Pacific bluefin tuna conservation. This proposal includes the continuation of the 2015-2016 commercial limit for Pacific bluefin in the Convention Area of 600 metric tons into 2017 and 2018. It will also reflect outcomes from the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Northern Committee/IATTC Joint Working Group meeting on a long-term rebuilding plan for Pacific bluefin. The rebuilding plan identifies an initial rebuilding target of median spawning biomass (1952-2014) to be achieved by 2024, and a second rebuilding target to be achieved by 2030, which is yet to be determined. The IATTC would adopt this second rebuilding target in 2018, consistent with the outcome of the next Joint Working Group meeting in 2017. The Council supports the U.S. proposal including these rebuilding objectives with the proviso that the second rebuilding target should be set at a biomass level that approximates  $B_{MSY}$ , and will send a letter to that effect to U.S. Commissioner, Mr. Barry Thom.

The Council also emphasized that it should have the opportunity to review and comment on any domestic regulations proposed to implement any Pacific bluefin tuna Resolution adopted by the IATTC.

### Exempted Fishing Permits

The Council reviewed the revised application submitted by Mr. Dave Stephens to use deep-set buoy gear ([Agenda Item J.2, Attachment 1](#)) and recommended that NMFS issue an exempted fishing permit (EFP) for this activity. Based on Mr. Stephens' experience in using this gear type, the Council recommended that NMFS consider an observer coverage rate as low as 30 percent, which is consistent with the coverage rate for the current EFP issued to the Pflegler Institute of Environmental Research to test deep-set buoy gear.

### Biennial Harvest Specifications and Management Measures

The Council concluded that these tasks described in [Agenda Item J.3.a, Supplemental HMSMT Report 2](#) are broader in scope than could be taken up under the biennial management process; therefore, the Council initiated an FMP amendment to change the framework and process for selecting stock status determination criteria (maximum fishing mortality rate and minimum stock size threshold). The Council directed the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) to meet with the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) at the November Council

meeting to review and discuss proposed amendments to the text of the HMS FMP. Public review of proposed changes and Council final action would occur in 2017.

The Council was briefed on the Southwest Fisheries Science Center's proposed peer review process for a March 2016 [common thresher shark stock assessment](#), which would employ a panel drawn from the Center for Independent Experts. The Council asked that its SSC be given the opportunity to comment on the terms of reference that will be developed for the peer review.

The Council deferred its final response to the Center for Biological Diversity's petition for rulemaking on Pacific bluefin tuna until the November meeting to allow consideration of the results of the IATTC meeting. In the future, this topic will be addressed under the International Issues agenda topic, along with an update on the thresher shark assessment and a notice that the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean stock of striped marlin is overfished and subject to overfishing.

### **Deep-Set Buoy Gear Exempted Fishing Permit Criteria to Advance Gear Authorization**

The Council:

- Accepted [Agenda Item J.4.a, Supplemental HMSMT Report](#), and [Agenda Item J.4.a, Supplemental HMSAS Report](#), under this agenda item, as useful guidance in considering future deep-set buoy gear EFP applications.
- Tasked the HMSMT to develop a deep-set buoy gear EFP application template that would simplify the completion of applications. The HMSMT will provide a proposed template for Council review and adoption at the November Council meeting.
- Tasked the HMSMT with developing criteria for deciding the appropriate observer coverage levels for all new deep-set buoy gear EFPs.
- Directed Council staff, with input from the HMSMT and HMSAS, to continue working on the framework to advance authorization of deep-set buoy gear under the Fishery Management Plan, building on the initial outline offered in the staff summary provided in [Agenda Item D.5, Attachment 1, June, 2016](#).

### **Federal Drift Gillnet Permit Amendment**

The Council approved the range of alternatives described in [Agenda Item J.5.a, HMSMT Report](#), with an amendment to Alternative 1 to clarify that the alternative would include California's existing drift gillnet (DGN) transfer requirement that the permit (whether state or Federal) be held by the individual for three years before being eligible for transfer. These alternatives are:

- **No Action Alternative (Status quo):** The Council would not move forward with creating a Federal DGN permit. DGN permitting would continue under the state of California Limited Entry permit program.
- **Alternative 1:** Federalization of DGN permitting as currently issued by the state of California. As soon as possible after Council final action, only fishers authorized to fish with large mesh DGN gear under state law would be entitled to a NMFS commercial HMS permit endorsed for DGN. That would mean that fishers who hold valid state DGN permits

on the date of Final Rule publication would be eligible to possess an HMS permit DGN endorsement. Permits could only be transferred once every three years.

## Administrative Matters

### Legislative Matters

The Council adopted the recommendations provided by the Legislative Committee in the Legislative Report ([Agenda Item G.1.a, Supplemental LC Report](#)), including completing the draft letter to Reps. Duncan Hunter and Sam Farr and incorporating the edits to the letter suggested by the Habitat Committee.

### Fiscal Matters

The Council approved the recommendations of the Budget Committee in [Agenda Item G.3.a, Supplemental BC Report](#). The BC will meet for an extended session in November to recommend a 2017 provisional budget and the potential need for additional special projects based on the most current year-at-a glance planning calendar.

### Approval of Council Meeting Record

The Council approved the June 2016 meeting record as presented in [Agenda Item G.4, Supplemental Attachment 1](#), with one clarification.

### Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

The Council appointed Mr. Larry Phillips to replace Mr. Kirt Hughes in the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife seat on the Highly Migratory Species Management Team and appointed Ms. Wendy Beeghley to replace Mr. Doug Milward in the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife seat on the Salmon Technical Team.

The Council also appointed Mr. Jim Yarnall to replace Mr. Marc Gorelnik the California Sport Fisheries seat on the Salmon Advisory Subpanel.

Council Chair Mr. Herb Pollard appointed the following representatives to the ad hoc Community Advisory Board (CAB) to engage in the 5-Year Catch Share Program review and appointed Mr. Shems Jud as the Chair of the CAB.

#### Shoreside Trawl, IFQ Program Participants

##### *Washington (1)*

- Mr. Nate Stone

##### *Oregon (2)*

- Mr. Brad Pettinger
- Mr. Mike Retherford

##### *California (2)*

- Mr. Chris Kubiak
- Ms. Michelle Norvell

Shoreside Nontrawl, IFQ Program Participant (Gear Switched) (1)

- Ms. Michele Longo-Eder

At-sea Co-op Participants

Catcher-Processor (1)

- Mr. Dan Waldeck

Mothership Processor (1)

- Mr. James Mize

Mothership Catcher Vessel (1)

- Mr. Kurt Cochran

Shoreside Buyers/Processors (3)

- Mr. Andrew Bornstein
- Mr. Jim Caito
- Mr. Mike Okoniewski

At-large (Expanded to 4 seats)

- Mr. Paul Clampitt
- Mr. Robert Dooley
- Mr. Shems Jud
- Mr. Steve Scheiblauber

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