

Pacific Council News

December 2016 | www.pcouncil.org

This newsletter reports mainly on decisions made at the November 2016 Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting held in Garden Grove, California. The Council recommends commercial & recreational fishery management measures for Federal waters off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California. All Council recommendations are subject to approval by National Marine Fisheries Service. [Sign up for other notices here](#). The Council has five public meetings a year. The public comment deadline for the March 2017 Council meeting is 5:00 p.m. on February 7; email pfmc.comments@noaa.gov.

GROUNDFISH ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT AND ROCKFISH CONSERVATION AREA CHANGES MOVE FORWARD

In November, the Council reviewed alternatives for modifying Pacific Coast groundfish essential fish habitat and trawl rockfish conservation areas, and provided the following guidance for further analysis.

Essential Fish Habitat Modifications

For waters off Washington, the Council adopted Alternative 1a (No Action) as a preliminary preferred alternative. This maintains the existing configuration of essential fish habitat conservation areas.

For waters off Oregon and California, the Council chose to continue analyzing both Alternative 1b (the Collaborative Proposal) and 1c (the Oceana et al. Proposal), with some minor modifications and additions of some areas. The Council also directed the Project Team to analyze six areas off the Oregon Coast that have been discussed as part of the Collaborative proposal, but never gained full consensus. These areas were proposed by the Midwater Trawlers Cooperative (page 32 of [supplemental public comment](#)).

Continued on next page

GROUNDFISH		Pre-season schedule set	5
Groundfish essential fish habitat moves forward	1	Changes to halibut catch sharing plan	5
Inseason management	2	HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES	
Mid-biennium harvest specs adjustment policy alternatives adopted	3	International issues	5
Catch share program and intersector allocation review discussed	3	U.S./Canada albacore treaty	7
Trawl gear modification exempted fishing permit recommended	3	Deep-set buoy gear exempted fishing permits	7
COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES		Swordfish management	8
Alternatives for small-scale fisheries adopted	4	OTHER NEWS	
Northern anchovy stock assessment and management measures	4	Methodology reviews conducted for salmon, groundfish, and coastal pelagic species	8
SALMON & HALIBUT		Habitat news	9
Council welcomes new salmon staff officer	4	Appointments	10
		Upcoming Advisory Body Meetings	10
		Next Council Meeting	11

**PACIFIC FISHERY
MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

Toll-free (866) 806-7204
www.pcouncil.org

Herb Pollard
Chair

Phil Anderson
Vice Chair

COUNCIL STAFF

Chuck Tracy
Executive Director

Mike Burner
Deputy Director

Don Hansen
Special Assistant to the Executive
Director

Kelly Ames
Groundfish, Halibut

Patricia Crouse
Administrative Officer

Kit Dahl
National Environmental Policy Act
and Highly Migratory Species

John DeVore
Groundfish

Renee Dorval
Meeting Planning, Hotels

Robin Ehlke
Salmon

Jennifer Gilden
Communications, Habitat,
Legislation

Kerry Griffin
Coastal Pelagic Species, Marine
Protected Areas, and Essential Fish
Habitat

Kim Ambert
Administrative Staff

Kris Kleinschmidt
Administrative Staff, Information
Technology

Sandra Krause
Information Technology

Jim Seger
Fishery Economics

Brett Wiedoff
Electronic Monitoring

The Council also eliminated Subject Area 2 (new essential fish habitat conservation areas within trawl rockfish conservation areas, based on priority habitats) from further consideration, but only off Oregon and California.

Rockfish Conservation Area Modifications

For waters off Washington, the preliminary preferred alternative maintains the trawl rockfish conservation area, with continued analysis of the effectiveness of discrete closed areas to reduce catch of overfished species.

For waters off Oregon and California, a combination of Alternatives 3b and 3d was adopted as the preliminary preferred alternative. This removes the trawl rockfish conservation area, but allows area closures to address unexpected catches of groundfish or protected species (primarily salmon).

In addition, the Council directed the Project Team to include corrected coordinates for Potato Bank (Southern California Bight); amend the purpose and need statement to focus on the shorebased individual fishing quota program as the primary catch control tool for quota species in the bottom trawl sector, instead of long-term rockfish conservation area closures; add methane seeps to the description of essential fish habitat components in the fishery management plan; and provide for review of the “administrative alternatives” under a separate timeline.

INSEASON MANAGEMENT FOR GROUND FISH

In November the Council discussed an error identified after the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposed rule for 2017 and 2018 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures was published. The management line used to manage sablefish was incorrectly identified as 34° 27' N. lat. rather than 36° N. lat. As a result, the 2017-2018 sablefish ACLs were set at 15.1 percent in the south and 84.9 percent in the north.

Upon discovering the error, the relative sablefish biomass was recalculated north and south of 36° N. lat. according to the status quo methodology, as described in the 2011 sablefish assessment, resulting in 26.2 percent in the south and 73.8 percent in the north.

The Council was urged unanimously by the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel and the public to correct this error as quickly as possible. NMFS was also asked to correct the error as soon as possible.

The Council also recommended adjustments to 2017 cumulative landing limits for sablefish (based on the corrected apportionment):

- Limited Entry Fixed Gear North of 36° N. lat.: 1,100 lbs./week, not to exceed 3,300 lbs. bimonthly;
- Open Access Fixed Gear North of 36° N. lat.: 300 lbs./day or 1 landing per week up to 900 lbs., not to exceed 1,800 lbs. bimonthly;
- Limited Entry Fixed Gear South of 36° N. lat.: 2,000 lbs./week.

MID-BIENNIUM HARVEST SPECS ADJUSTMENT POLICY ALTERNATIVES ADOPTED

The Council adopted a range of alternatives and a preliminary preferred alternative to allow an increase in groundfish harvest specifications in the second year of a biennial management cycle when a new assessment shows a substantial increase in the availability of a stock.

This initiative, called the “green light” policy, was initially considered under Amendment 17, which created the biennial groundfish management cycle, but was not adopted at that time.

Discussion of the green light policy began in June 2016, with initial scoping in September.

The new policy would allow such an increase for any newly assessed stock when a significant increase in available yield would provide substantial benefits to fisheries and fishing communities. Final action is scheduled for September 2017.

TRAWL CATCH SHARE AND INTERSECTOR ALLOCATION REVIEW UPDATE

Scoping hearings on the catch share review and intersector allocations were held in fishing communities this past summer and fall. Over 150 members of the public attended, and over 65 people spoke at the nine hearings. Numerous state and Federal agency representatives attended to hear the public comment. Summaries of the hearings are available on the [five-year review webpage](#).

In November, the Council continued its work to develop a review of the groundfish trawl catch share program, approving a blueprint (outline) for the document. The Council is scheduled to approve a public review draft in June and complete the review by November 2017. The Council also authorized an additional meeting of its Community Advisory Board prior to the June 2017 Council meeting, and directed analysts working on the review to consider concerns about the catch share program brought up during public comment, community hearings, and in advisory body reports (specifically the Community Advisory Board, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, Groundfish Management Team, and Scientific and Statistical Committee reports, and the Pacific Coast Groundfish Quota Program Workshop [“Santa Rosa III”]).

With respect to intersector allocations, the Council directed staff to take into account NMFS guidelines on intersector allocation review and begin reviewing those allocations, reporting back in April 2017. Any revisions would be developed through the Council’s Groundfish Allocation Committee, but the Community Advisory Board (which is reviewing the catch share program) may address within-trawl allocation and comment on trawl/nontrawl allocations as they relate to performance of the catch share program. Currently, the Council does not intend to reconsider within-trawl whiting, sablefish, or trawl/nontrawl allocations.

TRAWL GEAR EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT RECOMMENDED

In November, the Council recommended that NMFS approve an exempted fishing permit (EFP) for modification of trawl gear regulations. Specifically, the EFP allows participants to explore the use of certain trawl gear configurations to target rockfish species and collect information about the bycatch of species listed under the Endangered Species Act that are caught while using that gear.

The Council recommended Chinook salmon caught under the EFP be limited to 4,000 fish, with



Conversations before the Eureka catch share review hearing. Photo: Jim Seger.

EFP: Exempted fishing permit.
NMFS: National Marine Fisheries Service.



Humpback whale lunge-feeding on anchovies in Monterey Bay. Photo by John Krzesinski, Flickr creative commons.

a sublimit of 17 percent of the total Chinook limit for the Eureka management area. The Council recommended that the EFP include a closure of the Klamath River Salmon Conservation Zone, but not for the Columbia River Salmon Conservation Zone. Special bycatch minimization measures will apply to vessels that encounter high bycatch trips, defined as 25 or more Chinook in any area or more than one adult Chinook (20” or more) in the California portion of the Klamath Management Zone. These rules may be modified as the EFP progresses.

The Council recommended that vessels be allowed to fish concurrently under both this EFP and the electronic monitoring EFP. Applicants were asked to prepare an informational report for the April 2017 Council meeting briefing book, and a full report for the June 2017 meeting. The permit will not be automatically renewed, but rather resubmitted to the Council in September 2017 if an extension is warranted.

Coastal Pelagic Species

COUNCIL ADOPTS ALTERNATIVES FOR SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

In November, the Council considered the range of alternatives for allowing small-scale directed fishing to continue when a directed coastal pelagic species fishery is closed. This issue arose during the 2015-16 and 2016-17 Pacific sardine fishing seasons, when all directed sardine fishing was precluded, except for limited amounts of tribal harvest and live bait fishing. Small producers in the bait and human consumption markets were also closed down.

The Council selected a preliminary preferred alternative that includes a trip limit maximum of 1.0 metric tons, and a one-trip limit per vessel per day. Beach seining operations will be included in the analysis of alternatives, with selection of a final preferred alternative set for April 2017. An informational update on the fishery will be provided in September 2017.

NORTHERN ANCHOVY STOCK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

In November, the Council considered a NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center relative abundance index for the central subpopulation of northern anchovy. The assessment, which was reviewed by the Scientific and Statistical Committee’s Coastal Pelagic Species Subcommittee in October, used egg and larval production in the Southern California Bight to produce the index. The Council requested that the Scientific and Statistical Committee, the Southwest Fisheries Science Center, and coastal pelagic species advisory bodies examine the current overfishing limit and identify alternative approaches to developing a revised overfishing limit for the central subpopulation of northern anchovy. The Scientific and Statistical Committee will provide an update on this process in April 2017.

Salmon and Halibut

COUNCIL WELCOMES NEW SALMON STAFF OFFICER

The Council is pleased to announce that Ms. Robin Ehlke will be serving as Staff Officer for salmon at the Pacific Council. Robin will staff the Salmon Technical Team, the Salmon Advisory Subpanel, and the Model Evaluation workgroup. She is a Washington State native born and raised in Vancouver, Washington. She attended Clark Community College and Portland State University to earn her Bachelors degree. Before joining the Council, she worked

EFP: Exempted fishing permit
NMFS: National Marine Fisheries Service



Robin Ehlke, new staff officer for salmon.

at Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for 16 years. While there, most of her work focused on Columbia River salmon fisheries, but also included sturgeon, smelt and Chum salmon research; stream surveys; commercial sampling; and creel checks.

PRE-SEASON SALMON SCHEDULE SET

The preseason salmon management schedule was set in November. Hearings will be held on March 27, 2017 in Westport, Washington and Coos Bay, Oregon, and on March 28 in Fort Bragg, California. The March 2017 Council meeting will be held in Vancouver, Washington, and the April meeting will be held in Sacramento. The April meeting will serve as a public comment opportunity for the preliminary management measures.

COUNCIL ADOPTS CHANGES TO HALIBUT CATCH SHARING PLAN

In November, the Council adopted final changes to the 2017 Catch Sharing Plan for Pacific halibut and annual fishing regulations for the Washington and Oregon recreational fisheries. For Washington recreational fisheries, statewide season dates for the South Coast, North Coast, and Puget Sound subareas will be Thursday, May 4; Saturday, May 6; and Thursday, May 11. If sufficient quota remains, the seasons will continue as follows: Sunday, May 21 and/or Thursday, May 25 and Thursday, June 1 and/or Sunday, June 4. Other changes for the Washington recreational fisheries include allowing lingcod retention on halibut days during the month of May in the Columbia River subarea north of the Washington-Oregon border, and specifying that in the South Coast subarea, the nearshore fishery will open on the Saturday after the quota for the primary season has been achieved. Additionally, catch and effort information will be available inseason for the Puget Sound area, providing for inseason quota management.

For the Oregon recreational fisheries in all subareas, inseason adjustments (e.g., area restrictions) will be allowed based on bycatch of other limiting species, such as yelloweye rockfish. Additionally, changes to the groundfish retention rules were modified for the Central Coast subarea fisheries. On all-depth halibut days, groundfish may not be retained except for sablefish, Pacific cod, and other flatfish species, unless the recreational groundfish fishery is also open to all depth, then all groundfish allowed under current groundfish regulations may be retained. Additionally, retention of other flatfish species (flounder, sole, sanddab, and California halibut) is allowed seaward of the seasonal groundfish depth restriction when participating in the nearshore halibut fishery.

No additional changes were proposed for the Southern Oregon or California sub-area recreational fisheries, or any commercial fisheries. A similar approach to establish the California recreational season structure and inseason management processes used in 2016 will be used in 2017.

Highly Migratory Species

COUNCIL MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

In November, the Council made a variety of recommendations on the management of Pacific bluefin tuna.

NMFS has declared Pacific bluefin overfished and subject to overfishing. Most bluefin are



Johnson's Bait and Tackle Shop, Yuba City, California. Photo: Harry Morse, CDFW.

caught in waters around Japan by Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese fishing fleets. Bluefin spawn in those waters, and at least a part of the population migrates across the Pacific when they are about two years old. Purse seiners off Baja California, Mexico target these fish, which are put in floating pens off Baja to be raised for the Japanese market. At four or five years old the fish off of North America return to the spawning grounds around Japan. As far as fisheries are concerned, the U.S. is a bit player, accounting for only two percent of total catch in the 10 years from 2006 to 2015.

Given bluefin's wide-ranging habits, international cooperation is essential to effective fishery management. In this context, the Council reiterated past comments about the stock rebuilding plan proposed by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, which sets a 2024 rebuilding target and a secondary target (as yet unspecified) to be reached in 2030. Separate catch limits are set by country for fish less than 30 kg and those greater than or equal to 30 kg.



Bluefin Tuna at the Tsukiji Market. Photo: Matt Saunders, Flickr creative commons.

A change to the conservation measure would allow countries to apply their catch limit for smaller fish to catches of larger fish. This change was included because in 2016 the Korean purse seine fleet caught a significant amount of large fish, and under the conservation measure Korea does not have a catch allowance for these fish. Korea will be able to use a portion of its small fish catch limit to cover catches of large fish. Korea has also agreed to a voluntary "payback" scheme whereby it will reduce its small fish catch limit over the next five years to make up for the 2016 overage. The Council noted that the provision allowing the transfer from the small fish catch limit to large fish catch should be carefully evaluated to ensure it doesn't compromise stock rebuilding.

For the Eastern Pacific, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission adopted a companion measure establishing for the U.S. a 600 mt biennial commercial catch limit for 2017 and 2018; catch is not to exceed 425 mt in either year. The Council recommended that implementing regulations for this measure continue the current 25 mt trip limit until catch is within 50 mt of the annual limit, at which time a 2 mt trip limit is imposed.

In 2014, NMFS received a petition for rulemaking from the Center for Biological Diversity calling for landings of Pacific bluefin to be prohibited or substantially limited. In its response, published in June, NMFS concluded that such a unilateral landing prohibition would do little to either end overfishing or rebuild the stock. The Council noted that the economic impacts of a prohibition would be disproportionate to any stock conservation benefits; in that respect, banning catch entirely would not be in the best interest of the nation.

The Center for Biological Diversity also asked that management reference points be established for Pacific bluefin tuna as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act. NMFS agreed, noting that this task was appropriate for the Council to undertake.

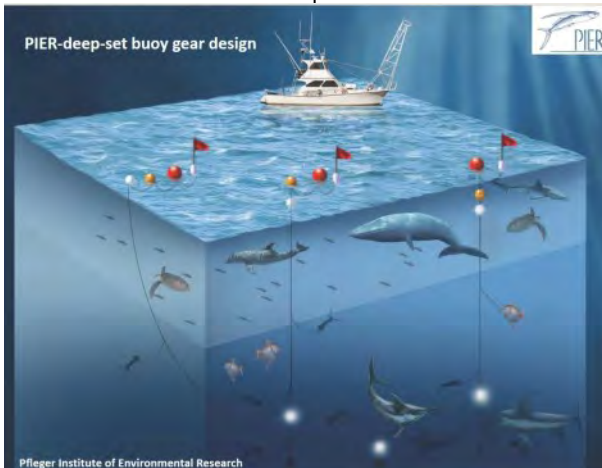
As a followup, the Highly Migratory Species Management Team was directed to identify management reference points for Pacific bluefin. These reference points are useful for monitoring stock status and recovery. Typically, the Council would also use them to establish an annual catch limit and management measures to make sure the catch limit isn't exceeded. But for wide-ranging stocks like Pacific bluefin, where the U.S. has to work with other countries to implement effective management measures, the Magnuson-Stevens Act grants an exception. Councils still must establish reference points for monitoring stock status, but not catch limits.

FISHING UNDER US/CANADA ALBACORE TREATY MAY EXPIRE SOON

The current fishing regime under the U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty will expire at the end of the 2016 fishing season. If a new fishing regime is not agreed to by the start of the 2017 bilateral fishing season (June 15), albacore fishing by either country in the other country's exclusive economic zone would be eliminated.

In November, the Council expressed appreciation for the Department of State's efforts to consult with stakeholders on their views, as represented in the advisory body statements and public comments received at the Council meeting.

DEEP-SET BUOY GEAR: A POTENTIAL NEW OPTION FOR THE COMMERCIAL SWORDFISH FISHERY



Deep-set buoy gear schematic. Source: PIER.

Deep-set buoy gear offers a potential option for the commercial swordfish fishery off the west coast. Developed by the Pfleger Institute of Environmental Research (PIER), this gear may be a viable option for fisheries with little or no bycatch. Moving from research to real-world trials, PIER applied for and received an exempted fishing permit (EFP) in 2014, allowing commercial fishermen that joined its project to use the gear and sell the fish they caught. The Council has encouraged others to apply for EFPs to test the gear, anticipating action in 2017 to make it a legal gear and establish a commercial fishery within a couple years.

In November PIER submitted an application to test what it sees as the next iteration in this type of gear, linked deep-set buoy gear. Linked gear could allow higher catch volumes and thus would be better suited for bigger boats with higher operational costs. The Council preliminarily approved PIER's application with a request for more details on the

proposed activity. The Council will make its final recommendation in March 2017; any recommendation will then be forwarded to NMFS, who issues the EFP. The Council also took action on other EFP applications, recommending issuance of a permit to Mr. Fred Hepp, who wants to test deep-set buoy gear, and a reissuance of Mr. Steve Mintz's EFP with some changes to the observer coverage requirements. Mr. Mintz wants to use the gear in Northern California and Oregon, where the gear has yet to be tested.

The Council is interested in making it easier for fishermen to apply for an EFP to test deep-set buoy gear in order to inform the upcoming decision to authorize the fishery. To this end, the Council will accept applications at any Council meeting where highly migratory species topics are on the agenda. It also endorsed a deep-set buoy gear ["application template."](#) Finally, the Council intends to expedite review, when possible, by making a final recommendation at one meeting rather than making a preliminary and final recommendation at two meetings as is the current practice.

Monitoring EFPs through observers is a vital aspect of information gathering. However, because the EFP holder is obligated to pay the cost of observer coverage, this can be a significant disincentive to apply for an EFP. To this end, the Council adopted criteria to decide when observer coverage could be reduced from 100 percent, recognizing that deep-set buoy gear has proven to result in very low bycatch.

EFP: Exempted Fishing Permit
NMFS: National Marine Fisheries Service
PIER: Pfleger Institute of Environmental Research

COUNCIL TO CONSIDER FEDERAL PERMITS FOR CALIFORNIA DRIFT GILLNET AND DEEP-SET BUOY GEAR



Flickr creative commons:
Opus Moreschi

The Council received a briefing from NMFS and California about their ongoing work on the Council's proposal to create a Federal limited entry permit for the California large mesh drift gillnet fishery. The Council is slated to take final action on the proposal in March 2017. According to the report, Federal permits could be issued in early 2018 if all goes according to plan.

The Council plans to adopt a range of alternatives to create a Federal deep-set buoy gear fishery at its June 2017 meeting (see article, previous page). To begin soliciting ideas about how the fishery should be managed, the Council asked its Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) to provide its views. In its report, the HMSAS offered a variety of recommendations, including consideration of a separate permit for the fishery rather than issuing a single permit with endorsements for different gear types.

The HMSAS report did not make a recommendation on whether a limited entry permit should be created for the deep-set buoy gear fishery or whether anyone should be allowed to participate with a Federal highly migratory species permit. However, the report does lay out the pros and cons of different permitting options. The HMSAS emphasized that it sees a deep-set buoy gear fishery supplementing, rather than replacing, other gear types, such as drift gillnets. The Highly Migratory Species Management Team will use the information in this report to develop a range of alternatives for the Council to consider in June 2017.

METHODOLOGY REVIEW TOPICS SELECTED FOR GROUND FISH AND COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES; SALMON MODEL REVIEWED

Methodology review topics were recently selected for groundfish and coastal pelagic species, and the Chinook Fishery Regulation Model (FRAM) model was reviewed. Methodology reviews help assure that fisheries management uses the best available science.

Salmon

In November, the Council reviewed progress on the development of a new forecast method for Sacramento River winter Chinook. The new method was not intended for use in 2017, but is part of a larger effort to develop a new forward-looking harvest policy to replace the existing policy, which is based on spawning escapement from the previous three years. In 2017, the ad hoc Sacramento River Winter Chinook Workgroup will consider feedback from the Salmon Technical Team and the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) as it proceeds with the development and analysis of alternative harvest policies for potential implementation in 2018.

In addition, considerable work has been done in recent years to update the base period in the Chinook FRAM for use in Council management. In 2015, this work focused on new algorithms in the model that address growth and sublegal encounters. Following the recommendation of the Salmon Technical Team and the SSC, the two algorithm changes were adopted for use in 2017 management.

In November, Ms. Angelika Hagen-Breaux and Mr. Larrie LaVoy updated the Council on the implementation of a new base period in the FRAM. Additional validation of the new model will likely take place over the winter before it is used in the 2017 season-setting process.

SSC: Scientific and
Statistical Committee
EFP: Exempted Fishing
Permit
FRAM: Chinook Fishery
Regulation Model
HMSAS: Highly Migratory
Species Advisory Subpanel
NMFS: National Marine



Acoustic tagging of Chinook salmon off Bodega Bay, CA. Photo: NOAA West Coast Region.

Groundfish

At the November meeting, the Council adopted a set of topics and a schedule for a formal groundfish methodology review.

Specifically, the Groundfish Management Team proposed reviewing the nearshore catch projection model improvements (March 2017), non-nearshore catch projection model improvements (September 2017), changes to discard mortality rates (March 2017), and the probability analysis used to evaluate the risk of exceeding catch limits (September 2017).

By March 2017 the SSC will review new catch per unit effort standardization methods, a revised steepness “prior” (h), an update of the prior on natural mortality (M), and methods used in the weighting of length and age composition in the Stock Synthesis model. By September 2017 they will recommend and adjustment to the “sigma” used in quantifying the scientific uncertainty that contributes to the buffer between the overfishing limit and the acceptable biological catch.

If these changes are endorsed, they will be available for use in 2017 to inform future harvest specifications, management measures, and stock assessments.

Coastal Pelagic Species

The Council approved a methodology review for the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and California Wetfish Producers Association aerial survey, to be scheduled in spring 2017, with the Panel's report back to the Council scheduled for June 2017. The aerial survey methodology includes two purposes: to provide a nearshore relative index of abundance for sardine and anchovy within the Southern California Bight survey area, and to develop an inshore correction factor to account for sardine and anchovy not surveyed from offshore acoustic surveys (to supplement or replace extrapolations).

Habitat News

COUNCIL COMMENTS ON COLUMBIA BIOP; OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY UPDATE

Columbia River: In November, based on a recommendation by the Habitat Committee, the Council approved a letter on the Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion. The letter urges the Bureau of Reclamation to consider a full range of alternatives in the Opinion, up to and including removal of the lower Snake River dams. The letter is available in the [habitat document library](#) on the Council web page.

Ocean Energy: The Habitat Committee heard an update by Jean Thurston from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). Ms. Thurston explained the competitive lease process for wind energy projects off Central California. Currently, Trident Winds and Statoil Wind have expressed interest in leasing an area off Morro Bay for a potential wind project. The BOEM competitive lease process may take several years.

Oroville Reservoir: The Oroville water storage facility is the second largest hydropower project in California next to Shasta Dam. Its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing agreement was signed in 2006. The Oroville relicensing agreement is relevant to EFH and productivity of fall- and spring-run Chinook salmon. The Sacramento spring Chinook run is

BOEM: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
FRAM: Chinook Fishery Regulation Model
NMFS: National Marine Fisheries Service
SSC: Scientific and Statistical Committee

listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, and low productivity of spring-run populations can constrain harvest of the fall run. The spring run originally spawned above Oroville Dam, and the remnant population is forced to spawn below the dam.

Due to limited spawning habitat below the dam and overlapping spawn timing, fall and spring-run stocks are interbreeding. Additionally, fall-run spawners can superimpose redds over those of spring-run spawners, so a weir is planned under the relicensing agreement to separate the two runs. The weir location is under debate, and may depend on locations of possible temperature effects; storage facilities associated with Oroville dam control downstream releases, and may result in temperature impacts on the lower spawning reaches of the Feather River.

The NMFS biological opinion addressing the relicensing agreement may be released this month; the Habitat Committee will report to the Council in March.

APPOINTMENTS & ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Josh Churchman was appointed to the trawl catch share review ad hoc Community Advisory Board as an at-large member. The Council adopted revisions to Council Operating Procedure 9 regarding the annual management cycle and activities related to Pacific halibut management, which specify a meeting be held to assist the management entities in coordinating their input to the International Pacific Halibut Commission annual meeting and to prepare the Council representative for the annual meeting.

Upcoming Meetings and Deadlines

AREA 2A PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGERS WEBINAR

Dates: December 14

Purpose: To prepare recommendations for the January 23-27, 2017 International Pacific Halibut Commission's annual meeting in Victoria, B.C., and to address other assignments relating to Pacific halibut management.

Contact: Kelly Ames (kelly.ames@noaa.gov)

For More Info: <http://tinyurl.com/z6sgw4v>

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETING

Dates: January 9-13

Purpose: To prepare for 2019-2020 harvest specifications and management measures.

Contact: Kelly Ames (kelly.ames@noaa.gov)

For More Info: <http://tinyurl.com/j4pvtcf>

AD HOC ECOSYSTEM WORKGROUP WEBINAR

Dates: January 10

Purpose: To discuss preparation of the Annual State of the California Current Ecosystem Report and future ecosystem initiatives under the Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plan.

Contact: Kit Dahl (Kit.Dahl@noaa.gov)

For More Info: <http://tinyurl.com/gwpz4cs>

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM WORK SESSION

- Dates: January 17-19
- Location: NOAA Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, California
- Purpose: To review draft analysis and language for small-scale fisheries, in preparation for Council final action in April 2017; to explore potential changes to CPS management categories; to consider periodic review of monitored stock harvest specifications and management measures; to discuss ecosystem information and concerns, as they relate to CPS management; and workload planning for 2017 and 2018.
- Contact: Kerry Griffin (Kerry.Griffin@noaa.gov)
- For More Info: <http://tinyurl.com/hgkbbza>

MARCH COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD IN VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON

The next meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled for March 7-13 in Vancouver, Washington. Public comment materials received by the supplemental briefing book deadline of 5:00 p.m. on **February 7** will be provided to Council members on the first day of the March meeting.

March Council Meeting Agenda

GROUND FISH

- ◆ B_{MSY} Stock Productivity & Historical Catch Reconstruction workshops report
- ◆ Endangered Species Act salmon bycatch consultation analysis
- ◆ Inseason management including shorebased IFQ carryover

SALMON & HALIBUT

- ◆ Review of 2016 fisheries & summary of 2017 stock abundance forecasts
- ◆ Salmon management alternatives for 2017
- ◆ Annual International Pacific Halibut Commission meeting report and data request update
- ◆ Incidental halibut catch limits: Options for salmon troll & final for fixed gear sablefish fisheries

OTHER

- ◆ U.S. Coast Guard Annual Report
- ◆ National Standard 1 Guidelines carryover guidance
- ◆ Legislative matters

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES

- ◆ Fishery management plan Amendment 4: Preliminary action on status determination criteria
- ◆ Exempted fishing permits: review/approval
- ◆ Update on deep-set buoy gear exempted fishing permit results
- ◆ International management activities
- ◆ Authorizing Federal drift gillnet permit: final preferred alternative

ECOSYSTEM

- ◆ California Current Ecosystem and Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Report
- ◆ Habitat issues
- ◆ Sablefish ecosystem indicators
- ◆ Review of Fishery Ecosystem Plan initiatives