

**Decision Summary Document
Pacific Fishery Management Council**

April 7-11, 2017

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 staff to communicate with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and California Department of Water Resources to express Council concerns about thermal regulation at Oroville Dam, to ask for clarity on specific issues related to those concerns, and to invite representatives of the two agencies to present to the Council and/or Habitat Committee (HC) in June. The Council directed staff to work with California Department of Fish and Wildlife staff to identify those specific concerns. The Council may send a follow-up letter in the future.

In addition, the Council directed staff to send the HC's [letter](#) to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the Permit Renewal and Expansion on the Coast Seafoods project with edits outlined in the [Supplemental California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Report](#) and further edited by the Council.

The Council also requested both an update from the HC and a draft letter commenting on the Environmental Protection Agency's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System general permit for the June Briefing Book.

Salmon Management

Sacramento River Winter Chinook Harvest Control Rule

The Council reviewed the progress of the ad hoc Sacramento River Winter Chinook Workgroup since their last report in September 2016. The Council provided feedback on the initial analysis and is tentatively scheduled to provide preliminary recommendations for control rules at the September 2017 Council meeting and final recommendations at the November 2017 Council meeting.

Methodology Review Preliminary Topic Review

The Council supported the list of items for review submitted by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Model Evaluation Workgroup (MEW) that included: 1) Complete the

documentation of the development of the new Chinook Fishery Regulation Assessment Model (FRAM) base period including algorithms, and 2) review and update the FRAM documentation and User Manual that is currently on the Council website.

The Council is scheduled to adopt the final list of topics at the September Council meeting and any final methodology changes/updates at the November Council meeting.

Final Action on 2017 Salmon Management Measures

The Council adopted management measures for 2017 ocean salmon fisheries. Detailed management measures and a press release are posted on the Council's [webpage](#).

Groundfish Management

Final Action on Electronic Monitoring of Non-whiting Midwater and Bottom Trawl Fisheries Regulations and Update on Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP)

The Council received an update on ongoing EFPs and modified several of the preferred alternatives they had adopted in September 2014 for the non-whiting midwater trawl and bottom trawl fisheries. A complete list of final alternatives is available on the Council website. The Council also directed:

- NMFS, in consultation to the Council, to develop a process that does not require rulemaking to adjust the discard species list;
- NMFS to maintain the current practice of having Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) perform video review responsibilities, but develop protocols for transferring financial responsibility for the video review from NMFS to the industry. The Council would like NMFS to examine the feasibility of using a sole provider (PSMFC) model indefinitely;
- NMFS and Council staff work with the Groundfish Electronic Monitoring Policy Advisory Committee/Technical Advisory Committee, Groundfish Management Team (GMT), and other appropriate Council advisory bodies to develop a process for reducing the level of video review to the minimum level necessary to audit logbooks, and to develop new discard mortality rates for halibut when vessels use electronic monitoring (EM); and
- Revisions to the [draft regulations](#) to include:
 1. Changes in the final preferred alternatives adopted by the Council;
 2. A requirement for self-enforcing agreement groups to submit an annual report to the Council;
 3. Deep-sea sole, sanddabs, and starry flounder in the list of species that can be discarded. Deep-sea sole and sanddabs would be counted as individual fishing quota (IFQ) species, if mixed with IFQ species; and

4. A provision to allow state-managed species to be landed when using EM, but prohibit sale or use of those fish, and include a landing limit of 150 pounds for California halibut.

Salmon Endangered Species Act (ESA) Consultation Recommendations

The Council provided guidance to NMFS on the proposed action that will be the basis for ESA section 7 consultation on the take of listed salmonids in the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery. The recommendations include:

- A description of groundfish fisheries including the likely future distribution of fishing, range of directed catch volumes, and range of Chinook salmon bycatch rates, which can be used to estimate amount and stock composition of Chinook take.
- Chinook salmon bycatch thresholds of 11,000 for the whiting fishery, 5,500 for all other groundfish fisheries, and a 3,500 reserve to be used for additional bycatch in either of the two fisheries. The sum of these three thresholds, 20,000 Chinook, equals the sum of the bycatch thresholds specified in the current biological opinion.
- Considering additional bycatch mitigation measures as part of the 2019-2020 biennial harvest specifications and management measures process.

NMFS intends to request Council recommendations on a draft incidental take statement at the September 2017 meeting, prior to completing the biological opinion.

Trawl Catch Shares and Intersector Allocation Progress Reports and Cost Recovery Report

Catch Share Program Review: Review document will be made available as early as possible to facilitate public review.

Intersector Allocation Review: The Council identified issues requiring additional information and proposed a process involving a public review draft adopted at the June Council meeting and final action taken in the fall. The Council directed that the next draft of the intersector allocation review document:

- address the recommendations in the [GMT report](#) and the [GAP report](#);
- include approaches for addressing the sablefish management line and related allocation issues;
- focus on set-asides in the non-trawl sectors for a select number of the species identified as trawl-dominant (i.e., darkblotched rockfish, Pacific ocean perch, petrale sole, and longspine thornyhead north of 40° 10' N. latitude);
- evaluate species that may be constraining the non-trawl fishery while not being fully attained in the trawl fishery (e.g., lingcod south of 40° 10' N. latitude); and,
- discontinue development of the yellowtail rockfish cap issue.

Cost Recovery: Council and NMFS staff will meet to discuss ways to address transparency concerns such as those raised by the [GAP report](#).

Groundfish Non-Salmon Endangered Species Workgroup Report

The Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup (Workgroup) reports to the Council biennially on estimated bycatch of Endangered Species Act- (ESA) listed marine mammals, sea turtles, eulachon, green sturgeon, and seabirds subject to a 2013 biological opinion on the continued operation of the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery. The Workgroup found that recent take of subject species did not warrant consideration of additional mitigation measures by the Council. The Workgroup noted that new biological opinions will be completed in 2017 for eulachon and short-tailed albatross. Based on the [Workgroup Report](#), the Council made the following recommendations:

- Conduct a risk analysis of humpback whale takes in the groundfish fixed gear fishery and work with the fleet to reduce the risk of such takes;
- GMT work with NMFS to better estimate eulachon take in the groundfish fishery;
- Complete the new seabird biological opinion and report to the Council at the June or September 2017 meeting to allow development of additional mitigation measures, as appropriate, through the 2019-2020 groundfish biennial harvest specifications and management measures process; and,
- Facilitate greater engagement by industry representatives in future Workgroup meetings.

Final Action on Inseason Adjustments

The Council recommended increasing the open access fixed gear trip limits for sablefish north of 36° N. latitude limits to 300 pounds per day, or one landing per week of up to 1,000 pounds, not to exceed 2,000 pounds per two months because effort and landings are tracking behind recent years.

Klamath Chinook salmon, a bycatch species in the groundfish trawl fisheries, will not meet escapement goals for 2017 by a historically large margin. The Council recommended the whiting fleet voluntarily move north to avoid Chinook salmon, recognizing there could be increased interactions with Pacific ocean perch (POP), especially given the historically high whiting quotas. Therefore, the Council also recommended that NMFS reallocate 3.5 mt of POP from the incidental open access off-the-top deduction to the mothership sector and 3.5 mt to the catcher-processor sector as soon as possible.

The Council also directed the GMT to develop alternatives for potentially distributing the POP, darkblotched, and canary rockfish buffers later in the year and report back at the June Council meeting in Spokane, Washington.

Updated Coordinates for the 125 Fathom (fm) Rockfish Conservation Area Line in California

The Council adopted revised coordinates for the 125 fm line at Usal and Noyo canyons in California for public review, as shown in Table 1 of the [CDFW Report](#). These modifications are intended to provide access to canyons that were previously open when the 150 fm line was in

effect (2003-2016). The Council is scheduled to take final action on the updated coordinates at the June 2017 Council meeting. The modifications for Delgada, Point Ano Nuevo, Cordell Banks contained in the [CDFW Report](#) and any other proposed modifications will be forwarded for consideration in the 2019-2020 harvest specifications and management measures process at the September 2017 Council meeting.

Sablefish Electronic Ticket Reporting Requirements

The Council directed its Enforcement Consultants and Groundfish Advisory Subpanel to meet together at the June Council meeting, discuss non-regulatory possibilities for resolving concerns about the 24-hour reporting requirement associated with electronic fish tickets, and report to the Council.

Coastal Pelagic Species Management

Central Subpopulation of Northern Anchovy (CSNA) Overfishing Limit (OFL) Process

The SSC will further review methods for developing an OFL for the central subpopulation of northern anchovy, evaluate the results of the January 2018 acoustic-trawl survey methodology review as it could apply to anchovy biomass and F_{msy} estimates, and report to the Council in April 2018.

Methodology Review Planning

The Council approved a proposed methodology review of the [SWFSC's acoustic-trawl survey](#), tentatively scheduled for January 2018, and directed that the review address recommendations included in the [SSC report](#). The Council will consider a proposed Terms of Reference for the review at its September 2017 meeting.

Small-Scale Fishery Management Final Action

The Council adopted Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan Amendment 26 allowing for small-scale directed fishing on CPS finfish stocks that are otherwise closed to directed fishing. The amendment will allow for landings up to one metric ton per day, with a limit of one trip per day. The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team will provide an update on the small-scale fishery at its April 2018 meeting.

Final Action on Sardine Assessment, Specifications, and Management Measures

The Council adopted the 2017 sardine [stock assessment report](#) and the following harvest specifications and management measures, as described in the [Supplemental CPSMT Report](#):

Biomass	86,586 mt
OFL	16,957 mt
P* buffer	0.4
ABC_{0.4}	15,479 mt
ACL	8,000 mt

They adopted the following automatic inseason actions for CPS fisheries:

- An incidental per-landing allowance of 40 percent Pacific sardine in non-treaty CPS fisheries until a total of 2,000 mt of Pacific sardine are landed.
- When the 2,000 mt is achieved, the incidental per-landing allowance would be reduced to 20 percent until a total of 5,000 mt of Pacific sardine have been landed.
- When 5,000 mt have been landed, the incidental per-landing allowance would be reduced to 10 percent for the remainder of the 2017-2018 fishing year.

The Council also adopted a 2 mt incidental per-landing allowance in non-CPS fisheries, and acknowledged a letter from the [Quinault Indian Nation](#) stating their intent to harvest up to 800 mt of sardine. Tribal landings would be accounted for within the ACL.

Pacific Halibut Management

Final Incidental Landing Restrictions for the 2017-2018 Salmon Troll Fishery

The Council adopted final incidental landing restrictions May 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017 and April 1-30, 2018 as follows: license holders may land no more than one Pacific halibut per two Chinook, except one Pacific halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 35 halibut landed per trip. Limits may be modified by inseason action.

Administrative Matters

Legislative Matters

The Council approved [the requested letter to Rep. Jaime Herrera-Beutler](#) commenting on [H.R. 200, the Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act](#) (a Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization bill) with minor edits.

Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

The Council adopted revisions to Council Operating Procedure (COP) 1 regarding the submission of supplemental written public comments at Council meetings and COP 20 regarding the deadline for submission of exempted fishing permits for Highly Migratory Species.

Additionally, the Council is currently soliciting nominations for a vacant California seat on the Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel. The deadline for submitting nominations is May 11, 2017. [See the Council web page for further information.](#)

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