

**Decision Summary Document
Pacific Fishery Management Council**

June 9-14, 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](#).

Coastal Pelagic Species Management

Final Pacific Mackerel Stock Assessment and Management Measures

The Council adopted Pacific mackerel harvest specifications and management measures for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 fishing seasons, which run July 1-June 30 each season. These include the specifications in the table below, and the following management measures: if the directed fishery reaches the annual catch target (ACT), it will close and shift to an incidental-only fishery for the remainder of the fishing year, with a 45 percent incidental landing allowance when Pacific mackerel are landed with other coastal pelagic species (CPS); in non-CPS fisheries, up to 3 mt of Pacific mackerel per landing may be landed, to be counted against the annual catch limit (ACL).

	2017-18	2018-19
Biomass	143,403 mt	131,724 mt
OFL	30,115 mt	27,662 mt
ABC _{0.45}	27,510 mt	25,269 mt
ACL (=ABC)	27,510 mt	25,269 mt
HG	26,293 mt	23,840 mt
ACT	25,293 mt	22,840 mt
Incidental	1,000 mt	1,000 mt

Final Approval of Aerial Survey Methodology

The Council approved the CDFW aerial survey methodology for use in future CPS stock assessments, consistent with recommendations contained in the [Methodology Review Panel report](#).

Habitat

Current Habitat Issues

The Council directed staff to finalize and send the [draft letter on Klamath dam operations](#), and to conduct a webinar or conference call between the June and September Council meetings to discuss Oroville dam operations, with invitations to representatives of California Department of Water Resources, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Groundfish Management

Trawl Catch Shares Review Draft Report and Intersector Allocation Report

The Council directed staff to finalize the intersector allocation review document, after incorporating the changes [recommended by the Groundfish Management Team \(GMT\)](#), and to finalize the update of the description of the catch share program contained in Appendix E, after incorporating the changes recommended by the GMT excluding the proposed changes to the review schedule. The Council directed staff to release for public review the draft catch share review document, after incorporating recommendations from the [Scientific and Statistical Committee \(SSC\)](#) and the [Community Advisory Board's \(CAB\) recommendations](#) 1.d (other constraining species), 2 (comparison indicators of profit), and 5 (ports list). The authors were also directed to consider whether to revise or add clarifying language to the executive summary conveying that many of the program's economic benefit objectives have not yet been achieved.

The Council identified possible follow-on actions for the catch share review, but also noted that expedited completion of essential fish habitat (EFH)/Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) revisions, the trawl gear regulatory package, and EFPs for gear and for year-round coastwide use of midwater gear to target non-whiting species, already under consideration by the Council, was a high priority. Follow-on actions identified included: 1) elimination of the sablefish management line at 36° N. for the trawl sector; 2) long-term solutions to address at-sea whiting bycatch needs; 3) changing accumulation limits; and 4) alternative management tools/management approaches for constraining species. At its July 27-28 meeting in Portland, Oregon, the CAB will work on developing preliminary alternatives on these issues for Council consideration in September 2017.

The Council requested the following specific analyses be provided to the CAB for consideration: the impacts of accumulation limits; the implications of continued increase in the ratio of quota pounds (QP) leasing to quota share (QS) owner use of QS/QP; and gear switching, including the possibility of establishing an amount of sablefish QS/QP that could only be used with trawl gear.

The Council also took action to consider limiting the accumulation of control over access and harvest within the catcher-processor (CP) sector. The Council recommended that NMFS announce that any acquisition of CP permits and/or use of CP sector whiting allocation after June 13, 2017 might not be included in any grandfather clause adopted by the Council when establishing ownership and/or use limits for CP permits. Further, the Council identified the

following action alternatives for initial analysis: 1) no individual or entity may own or control more than four CP permits; and 2) no individual or entity owning a CP permit(s) may process more than 45 percent of the total CP sector whiting allocation.

As additional follow-on actions for subsequent consideration, the Council directed the CAB to explore and develop alternatives for permanent resolution of the AMP, and asked that NMFS explore options for reducing observer and catch monitor costs and report back to the Council.

Scoping of Trawl Catch Shares Discard Survival Credits for Sablefish and Lingcod

The Council supported moving forward with the development of alternatives for lingcod and sablefish discard survival credits in the trawl catch share program. The Council recommended adding the agenda item to the list of potential management measures in the 2019-2020 groundfish specifications process versus keeping it as a separate agenda item. The Council asked the GMT and Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) to assist in the development of alternatives for consideration. If the management measures are analyzed in the specifications process, then the Council requests that the GMT coordinate with the SSC to review the analysis. The Council would also like to include an analysis of how revision or removal of the lingcod size limits may affect all groundfish fishing sectors.

Final Stock Assessments and Catch Reports

The Council adopted new update stock assessments for arrowtooth flounder, blackgill rockfish, bocaccio, and darkblotched rockfish; as well as a new cowcod catch report. Arrowtooth flounder status is considered healthy with a depletion of 87 percent at the start of 2017 (relative to the management target of 25 percent) and an increasing biomass due to strong recent recruitments. Blackgill rockfish status is estimated to be close to, but just below, the management target of 40 percent with a depletion of 39 percent at the start of 2017. Bocaccio is estimated to be above their target of 40 percent with a depletion of 48 percent at the start of 2017. Darkblotched rockfish is also estimated to be just above the management target of 40 percent with a depletion of 40.03 percent at the start of 2017. Bocaccio and darkblotched rockfish have been managed under rebuilding plans and have subsequently been declared rebuilt by NMFS. The cowcod catch report indicated that recent year (2013-2016) catches have been well below the ACLs specified under the cowcod rebuilding plan, and the stock remains on track to be rebuilt by 2019.

Scoping of Multi-year Average Catch Policy

The Council received initial scoping comments from the GMT and GAP regarding a multi-year average catch policy which seeks to provide a more flexible ACL management framework. NMFS will inform the Council in September whether establishment of a new multi-year policy will require an amendment to the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan. The Council tasked the GMT and GAP with developing a draft purpose and need statement which articulates the need for such a policy, and report to the Council in September. The Council also tasked the GMT and GAP with providing examples of how a new multi-year average catch policy would work.

Electronic Ticket Reporting Timeline Requirements

The Council reviewed the current options available for first receivers to comply with the 24-hour reporting requirement for electronic fish tickets, and determined that [existing options](#) are adequate, which required no Council action or regulatory changes.

Specifications and Management Measures Process for 2019-2020 Fisheries

The Council adopted the process and schedule for 2019-2020 specifications and management measures as [proposed by NMFS and Council Staff](#) with regulations scheduled for implementation on January 1, 2019. At the September meeting, the Council is scheduled to adopt stock assessments for lingcod, Pacific ocean perch, yelloweye, yellowtail, blue/deacon rockfishes, and California scorpionfish. The Council is also scheduled to take final action on overfishing limits and sigmas, as well as a range of P* values and acceptable biological catches, if applicable. Further, the Council is scheduled to consider a preliminary range of new management measures. Final action for all matters associated with the 2019-2020 harvest specifications and management measures is scheduled for June 2018.

Coastwide Non-whiting Midwater and Gear Modification Exempted Fishing Permit Progress Reports

The Council adopted the preliminary 2018 Year-Round Midwater Rockfish exempted fishing permit (EFP) [as proposed by the proponents](#) with the following additions and recommendations: (1) work with NMFS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) to modify the declaration process in order to accommodate the use of multiple trawl gears on one trip, and to document gear type use at the individual haul level; (2) enable the EFP to test whether observers or electronic monitoring (EM) can confirm the type of gear being used, as [recommended by the Enforcement Consultants \(EC\)](#); (3) require EFP participants to provide information on specific gear configurations by haul to NMFS, as [recommended by the GMT](#); and (4) specify an area-based sub-cap of 80 chinook for the area South of 42° N., out of the 800 allowed in the entire EFP area prior to May 15. The Council also requested that the EFP holders transmit the additional haul-specific gear configuration information from the 2017 EFP to NMFS for the trips already made, consistent with the GMT recommendation.

Additionally, the Council requested NMFS to review the options for decision-making processes for the operation of the EFP south of 42° N. and report to the Council in September, including consideration of the possibility of delaying approval of the EFP south of 42° N. until the 2018 pre-season Chinook forecasts are available, and/or approving only limited elements of the EFP for the area south of 42° N.

Final Action on Updated Coordinates for the 125 Fathom Rockfish Conservation Area Line in California

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

fm line was in effect (2003-2016). The modifications for Delgada, Point Ano Nuevo, and Cordell Banks contained in the [CDFW Report](#) from the April 2017 Council meeting 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.

Final Action on Inseason Adjustments

The Council recommended NMFS implement increases to the lingcod limited entry and open access fixed gear limits as soon as possible as follows:

Area	Sector	July-Oct	Nov	Dec
North 40°10' N. Lat.	LE	1,400 lbs. bimonthly	700 lbs.	400 lbs.
	OA	700 lbs. monthly	700 lbs.	200 lbs.
South 40°10' N. Lat.	LE	1,200 lbs. bimonthly	600 lbs.	300 lbs.
	OA	600 lbs. monthly	200 lbs.	150 lbs.

The Council also recommended the shoreward boundary of the non-trawl RCA between 40° 10' N. lat. and 34° 27' N. lat. be modified from 30 fathoms to 40 fathoms.

The Council also discussed the challenges the at-sea sectors have experienced managing their rockfish bycatch allocations as the sectors voluntarily move north to avoid Chinook salmon. The at-sea sectors noted the possibility of voluntary agreements to transfer canary and widow rockfish allocations between the mothership and catcher-processor sectors. The Council encouraged NMFS to implement such allocation changes if the agreements are forwarded to the agency. The Council also recommended NMFS allocate the Pacific ocean perch (25 mt) and darkblotched rockfish (50 mt) buffers equally to the mothership and CP sectors.

Finally, the Council directed the GMT to develop alternatives for potentially distributing the canary rockfish buffers and report back at the September Council meeting in Boise, Idaho.

Pacific Halibut Management

Scoping of Catch Sharing Plan Changes (CSP) and International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) Data Request Report

The Council began scoping the potential for greater allocation changes for future CSPs than could be accomplished in the standard two-meeting process (i.e., September and November). The Council reviewed the agency and advisory subpanel reports, as well as public comment, and

recommended the following options be further developed for Council consideration and NMFS assessment of the required analysis in September:

- Options for the Washington recreational sector, as shown in the [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife \(WDFW\)](#) Report (starting at the bottom of page 4), intended to provide flexibility to share allocations among the Washington recreational sub-areas; a statewide season in May, along with reducing the possession limit in the field to one fish and an annual bag limit of two halibut per angler.
- Options for a combined commercial and recreational allocation for California as described in the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife \(CDFW\)](#) report. The allocation would be 7.51 or 7.15 percent of the non-tribal quota by reducing the non-tribal commercial share by 3.51 or 3.15 percent. The California commercial share would provide for incidental retention in the groundfish and salmon troll fisheries and the non-tribal commercial share would then be for north of 42° N. latitude only. CDFW may also consider an option that limits the California commercial share to incidental retention in the groundfish fisheries only while maintaining the incidental salmon troll allocation.
- Increase the California recreational subarea allocation from 4 to 6 percent by equally reducing the Washington and Oregon recreational subarea allocations as outlined in the [Groundfish Advisory Subpanel Report](#). When considering this option, WDFW may consider reducing the incidental halibut allocation to the primary sablefish north of Pt. Chehalis to provide Washington's proposed 1 percent contribution.
- Options for moving away from 10 hour derby openings, such as managing the non-tribal directed commercial fishery for halibut to provide a 20 day, 30 day, or shorter season managed with per vessel trip limits by vessel length.

The Council is scheduled to adopt for public review proposed changes to the 2018 CSP at their September 2017 meeting with final action scheduled for the November 2017 Council meeting.

Highly Migratory Species Management

Amendment 4 to the Fishery Management Plan for West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS FMP)

The Council adopted for public review [proposed changes](#) to the HMS FMP with additional changes recommended by the [Highly Migratory Species Management Team \(HMSMT\)](#) and a modified version of the changes proposed by the [Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel \(HMSAS\)](#).

A revised version of the proposed amendment language incorporating the additional changes proposed in the advisory body reports will be circulated as part of the advanced briefing book for the Council's September 2017 meeting.

Authorization of Deep-Set Buoy Gear and Federal Permitting

The Council reviewed the range of alternatives described developed by [the HMSMT](#); considered advice from the HMSMT, HMSAS, EC, and the public; and provided guidance to refine the

alternatives for potential adoption at the September meeting. The Council endorsed the range of alternatives proposed by the [HMSMT](#) with the following refinements:

1. Limit further analysis of the area for authorizing the fishery to Federal waters off California and Oregon
2. Include voluntary trade-in alternatives that would allow drift gillnet (DGN) permittees to surrender a permit in exchange for one or more deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) permits.
3. Refine gear retrieval requirements so as to discourage the use of gear at night while providing reasonable accommodation for gear retrieval that extends after dusk.
4. Develop an option to restrict the fishery to depths greater than 150 fathoms.
5. Develop guidelines for engaging in other commercial fishing activities on the same trip where DSBG is deployed. Use of other gear would have to be compliant with active tending requirements for DSBG.
6. Develop a permitting alternative to include a DSBG endorsement on the current Federal HMS permit.
7. Develop an alternative that would restrict DSBG fishing in the Southern California Bight to weekdays only.

Proposed Deep-Set Buoy Gear Exempted Fishing Permits

The Council:

- Adopted the [HMSAS](#) recommendations for issuing EFPs based on the 19 applications reviewed at this meeting.
- Endorsed the [HMSMT](#) recommendations for observer coverage levels.
- Requested NMFS to report on development of a logbook for DSBG EFPs.
- Noted that most applicants proposed fishing in the Southern California Bight and expressed concern about potential gear conflicts depending on the level of fishing effort when recommended EFPs are issued. For that reason, in the future, applications that propose fishing outside the Southern California Bight may be prioritized in the approval process.

Recommendations for International Management Activities

The Council made recommendations in response to the August 17, 2016, notification from NMFS that the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean stock of striped marlin is overfished and subject to overfishing. The Council determined that there is no need for additional domestic regulations pursuant to its HMS FMP, because vessels managed under the FMP do not catch fish from this stock. The Council noted that the objectives in Conservation and Management Measure 2010-01, adopted by the Western and Central Fisheries Commission, are being met.

The Council supported the draft U.S. proposal to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) for a second rebuilding target for Pacific bluefin tuna (20%SSB_{current, F=0}) to be achieved by 2030 with at least 60 percent probability. This target is a reasonable approximation of

maximum sustainable yield, and therefore consistent with the harvest specifications framework in the FMP and with past Council recommendations.

The Council also recommends the U.S. delegation to the July 24-28 IATTC meeting advocate for the U.S. proposal on observer safety.

Enforcement Issues

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) Strategic Review

The Council reviewed a draft of the OLE West Coast Division Enforcement Priorities (2018 – 2022) and expressed its appreciation for the cooperative manner in which the priorities were developed and the cooperative relationship between OLE, state enforcement, and the United States Coast Guard. Appreciation was also expressed for the Joint Enforcement Agreement and the important role that it plays in West Coast enforcement. The Council agreed with the OLE lists of priorities for the [West Coast](#).

Administrative Matters

Fiscal Matters

The Council was unable to adopt a final 2017 Operational Budget as planned, but intends to do so at the September 2017 meeting.

Stock Assessment Improvement Plan Comments

The Council and its advisors received a briefing on a draft update of the NMFS Stock Assessment Improvement Plan (SAIP). The Council directed staff to send a letter to NMFS summarizing the recommendations provided by the [Scientific and Statistical Committee](#), [Groundfish Management Team](#), [Groundfish Advisory Subpanel](#), and the [Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel](#). Comments from all the Regional Fishery Management Councils will be considered in the final draft of the updated SAIP, which is anticipated in September.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) White Paper on Best Scientific Information Available (BSIA)

The Council and its advisors received a briefing on a draft NMFS policy on determining the Best Scientific Information Available (BSIA) for decision-making by Regional Fishery Management Councils. The Council emphasized the Pacific Council's robust scientific peer review and oversight by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee in its BSIA determination process. The Council also underscored the need for quick determinations by NMFS at the regional level, given the need to avoid delays in using BSIA, and noted the current strong association of the Pacific Council and the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers. The Council directed staff to send a letter to NMFS summarizing these comments. A draft policy paper from NMFS on how to make BSIA determinations is anticipated later this year.

Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures (COPs)

The Council elected Mr. Phil Anderson as the Council Chair and Mr. David Crabbe as the Council Vice-Chair for the August 11, 2017 through August 10, 2018 term.

The Council reviewed and approved the following appointments:

- Ms. Corey Ridings was appointed to the vacant California seat on the Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel.
- Dr. Andrew (Ole) Shelton was appointed to the vacant NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center seat on the Scientific and Statistical Committee.

The Council adopted changes to COP 4 regarding SSC membership, replacing the designated Alaska Fisheries Science Center seat with an at-large seat. Additionally, the Council directed staff to solicit nominations for this new at-large seat with an emphasis on seeking expertise in stock assessment science. A formal request for nominations will be posted to the Council webpage in the near future, with an anticipated submission deadline of August 15, 2017.

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