



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
PORTLAND OFFICE
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100
PORTLAND, OREGON 97232-1274

June 18, 2018

Mr. Phil Anderson, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Chair Anderson:

This letter is to inform the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) that NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has made determinations on status changes for eight stocks of Pacific salmon, managed under the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP):

Stillaguamish coho	Klamath River fall-run Chinook
Queets coho	Sacramento River fall-run Chinook
Juan de Fuca coho	Upper Columbia River summer-run Chinook
Snohomish coho	Skagit coho

NMFS' determinations are based on the most recent salmon stock assessments conducted by the Council's Salmon Technical Team (STT)¹ and as reported in the Council's Review of 2017 Ocean Salmon Fisheries (Tables II-6 and III-7) and Preseason Report III (Pre-III) for 2018 (Table 12). These determinations are consistent with the Council's letter to NMFS regarding 2018 Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Plan Stock Status Updates, dated May 1, 2018. Information about the newly revised status of the eight salmon stocks, as well as pertinent information about each from the FMP, is identified below (also, see FMP Table 1-1). Note that all but two stocks discussed in this letter are subject to Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) provisions; therefore, no annual catch limits (ACLs) are specified for those stocks.² The Klamath River and Sacramento River fall-run Chinook salmon stocks are not subject to PST provisions.

Stock No Longer Subject To Overfishing

In 2017, one stock of salmon was determined to be *subject to overfishing*, based on assessment data in Pre-I for 2017. Based on updated assessment data in Pre-III for 2018, this stock has been determined *not subject to overfishing*:

- Stillaguamish coho

¹ The STT is composed of staff from NMFS' Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and treaty tribes.

² Stocks managed under an international agreement to which the U.S. is a party are exempted from the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act 303(a)(15) requirement for specifying ACLs; see CFR 600.310(h)(2).



Stock No Longer Approaching an Overfished Condition

In 2017, three stocks of salmon were determined to be *approaching an overfished condition*, based on assessment data in Pre-I for 2017. Based on updated assessment data in Pre-III for 2018, the following stock has been determined to be *not approaching an overfished condition*:

- Skagit coho

Stock Subject to Overfishing

Based on assessment data in Pre-III for 2018, the following salmon stock has been determined to be *subject to overfishing*:

- Upper Columbia River summer-run Chinook salmon – This stock is identified as a non-target stock in the FMP and makes a minor contribution to ocean fisheries off Washington and northern Oregon. It does contribute to Alaskan fisheries and ocean fisheries off of British Columbia, Canada. This stock has been determined to be *subject to overfishing* based on data from 2015, which is the most recent year for which an annual exploitation rate is reported for this stock. The exploitation rate for this stock in 2015 was 0.89, which exceeds its maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT) of 0.75. However, spawning escapement for this stock is consistently well above the stock's minimum stock size threshold (MSST) and it is not at risk of approaching an overfished condition.

Stocks in an Overfished Condition

Based on assessment data in the Review of 2017 Ocean Salmon Fisheries (Tables II-6 and III-7), the following five salmon stocks have been determined to be *overfished*:

- Klamath River fall-run Chinook salmon – This stock is identified as a target stock in the FMP. It contributes to U.S. ocean fisheries from Cape Falcon, Oregon to Point Sur, California, as well as tribal and recreational fisheries in the Klamath River. Based on the most recent assessment, the three-year geometric mean of escapement for 2015 through 2017 was 19,358, which is below the stock's MSST of 30,525.
- Sacramento River fall-run Chinook salmon – This stock is identified as a target stock in the FMP. It contributes to U.S. ocean fisheries from the central Oregon coast south along the California coast and is primarily impacted by fisheries south of Point Arena, California. Based on the most recent assessment, the three-year geometric mean of escapement for 2015 through 2017 was 76,714, which is below the stock's MSST of 91,500.
- Queets coho – This stock is identified as a target stock in the FMP. It contributes to U.S. ocean fisheries north of Cape Falcon and inside fisheries in the Queets River, as well as ocean fisheries off British Columbia, Canada. Based on the most recent assessment, the three-year geometric mean of escapement for 2014 through 2016 (the most recent three-year period for which escapement data are available) was 4,291, which is below the stock's MSST of 4,350.
- Snohomish coho – This stock is identified as a target stock in the FMP. It contributes to U.S. ocean fisheries north of Cape Falcon, fisheries in Puget Sound, and inside tribal fisheries, as well as ocean fisheries off British Columbia, Canada. Based on the most recent assessment, the three-year geometric mean of escapement for 2014 through 2016 (the most recent three-year period for which escapement data are available) was 29,677, which is below the stock's MSST of 31,000.

- **Juan de Fuca coho** – This stock is identified as a target stock in the FMP. It contributes to U.S. ocean fisheries north of Cape Falcon, fisheries in Puget Sound, and tribal in-river fisheries, as well as ocean fisheries off British Columbia, Canada. Based on the most recent assessment, the three-year geometric mean of escapement for 2014 through 2016 (the most recent three-year period for which escapement data are available) was 6,842, which is below the stock's MSST of 7,000.

Overfishing

Overfishing occurs when a salmon stock's total annual exploitation rate exceeds the stock's MFMT set in the FMP (FMP Table 3-1). When overfishing occurs, section 3.1.2.1 of the FMP states that the Council shall:

1. notify the NMFS Regional Administrator of the STT's findings;
2. direct the STT to assess the mortality rates in fisheries impacting the stock of concern and report their findings;
3. immediately take action to ensure Council area fisheries are not contributing to overfishing; and
4. notify pertinent management agencies of the stock's status and the contribution of various fisheries to the total exploitation rate.

The total annual exploitation rate for Pacific salmon includes impacts from Council-area fisheries as well as other fisheries (e.g., fisheries managed in Alaska and Canada subject to the provisions of the PST and inside fisheries managed by the state and tribal co-managers). NMFS notes that the one stock that is subject to overfishing, Upper Columbia River summer-run Chinook salmon, is primarily subject to harvest in fisheries north of the U.S./Canada border and/or in Washington state waters including the Columbia River. As mentioned previously, Council-area fisheries account for a very low amount of the harvest related mortality on the stock. The total exploitation rate on this stock in 2015 was 0.89 compared with its MFMT of 0.75.

Overfished

Under the FMP, a stock will be considered *overfished* if the three-year geometric mean of annual spawning escapements falls below the stock's MSST. When the overfished status determination criteria in the FMP are triggered, section 3.1.4 of the FMP states that the Council shall:

1. notify the NMFS Regional Administrator of this situation;
2. notify pertinent management entities;
3. structure Council area fisheries to reduce the likelihood of the stock remaining overfished and to mitigate the effects on stock status; and
4. direct the STT to propose a rebuilding plan for Council consideration within one year.

As stated above, NMFS has determined that five salmon stocks are currently overfished. Pursuant to the requirements of Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act section 304(e), the Council must prepare and implement a rebuilding plan within two years of the date of this notification letter. In order to meet this deadline, Council actions should be submitted to NMFS within 15 months of this notification to ensure sufficient time for the Secretary to implement the measures, if approved.

Conclusion

If the next stock assessment shows that overfishing and overfished status of any of the stocks mentioned in this letter has since ended, then the NMFS West Coast Region will recommend to the NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries that the status of the appropriate stocks should be changed to *not subject to overfishing* and *not overfished*. However, if exceedance of MFMT for Upper Columbia River summer-run Chinook salmon continues, the Council may consider taking further action, consistent with the provisions of the FMP. NMFS understands that the Council has directed the STT to propose rebuilding plans for the following overfished salmon stocks: Klamath River fall-run Chinook salmon, Sacramento River fall-run Chinook salmon, Queets coho, Snohomish coho and Juan de Fuca coho. For any of these five stocks that continue to meet the criteria for overfished in the next stock assessment, the Council should submit rebuilding plans for approval by the Secretary of Commerce within 15 months of this letter (September 18, 2019).

Sincerely,



Barry A. Thom
Regional Administrator

cc: Pacific Fishery Management Council – C. Tracy