

SALMON TECHNICAL TEAM REPORT ON PRELIMINARY REBUILDING PLANS

Five salmon stocks, two Chinook and three coho, met the Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP) criteria for overfished status in 2018. In response, the Salmon Technical Team (STT) with tribal, state, and Federal collaborators have worked to develop individual rebuilding plans for these stocks. At the April 2018 Council meeting, the STT provided a draft timeline for development of the five rebuilding plans. Progress reports were provided to the Council at both the June and September 2018 meetings. In keeping with the timeline developed in April, draft rebuilding plan reports were submitted for Council consideration at this meeting.

The STT notes that these plans are in draft form and in some cases are missing sections or portions of sections. Following this meeting, the STT and collaborators will continue work on these rebuilding plans. This work will include the development of missing sections, augmenting existing sections where necessary, identifying and correcting errors, and responding to Council direction provided at this meeting.

A short overview of the Chinook and coho rebuilding plans is provided below.

Chinook

Sacramento River fall Chinook (SRFC) and Klamath River fall Chinook (KRFC) are the two Chinook stocks that were classified as overfished in 2018.

Our preliminary analysis of causal factors indicated that poor freshwater and marine conditions were encountered by a portion of the broods that contributed to the low escapement estimates in 2015-2017. For SRFC, assessment errors were also identified as a contributing factor to the overfished status.

Three rebuilding alternatives are identified in both the SRFC and KRFC reports. The alternatives include (1) the status quo control rules, (2) buffered control rules, and (3) no fishing until rebuilt status is achieved. The no fishing alternative is not intended to be interpreted as a viable alternative, but rather is provided to determine the minimum rebuilding time (T_{MIN}). Additional recommendations, some of which pertain to water and habitat management, are also included in both plans.

Coho

The three coho stocks that were classified as overfished in 2018 include the Queets River, Strait of Juan de Fuca, and Snohomish River stocks. As with the Chinook stocks, our preliminary analysis indicated that poor marine survival, especially for the brood that returned in 2015, was a primary causal factor for the overfished status of these three stocks. Forecast error was also identified as a factor for the Snohomish.

As with the Chinook rebuilding plans, three rebuilding alternatives are identified in each report. The alternatives include use of (1) the status quo control rules, (2) reduced harvest, and (3) no fishing until rebuilt status is achieved. The no fishing alternative includes closure of fisheries outside the jurisdiction of the Council, and is not intended to be interpreted as a viable alternative, but rather is provided to determine the minimum rebuilding time (T_{MIN}).

We struggled with how to assess rebuilding times for these coho alternatives because the impacts on coho stocks (particularly for the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Snohomish stocks) are often constrained by impacts on other limiting stocks, and modeling impacts defined by the current control rules, or even buffered control rules, would represent an increase in impacts over what has occurred. For this reason we only evaluated the status quo and no fishing alternatives.

Habitat Committee

Since freshwater habitat conditions were found to be a contributing factor for three of the five overfished stocks, the STT recommends that the Council consider directing the Habitat Committee to work with federal, state, local, and tribal habitat experts to review the status of the essential fish habitat affecting SRFC, KRFC and Juan de Fuca coho, as stated in the FMP.

PFMC

11/03/18