

COUNCIL OPERATING PROCEDURE

Protocol for Industry Sponsored Salmon Test Fishery Proposals

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Approved by Council: 11/02/99

Revised: **03/11/05**

DEFINITION

For the purpose of this protocol, a salmon test fishery can be characterized as a conceptual proposal made by an individual or entity representing the fishing industry without the authority or capability to collect and assess the target data. A test fishery generally relies on participation by unpaid fishermen (the available fleet) to provide landings which can be sampled by a funded and authorized entity to obtain stock composition or other pertinent information from which to determine precise fishery impacts or other data beneficial to future fishery management decisions. Such test fisheries often are set to occur in a restricted area and/or time which may be outside the normal or standard season parameters with the intent of establishing fisheries which minimize impacts on stocks of concern while providing local economic and social benefits.

PURPOSE

Test fisheries have been proposed by the fishing industry during the preseason salmon management process with varying degrees of planning, justification, and management agency support. Because of the difficulty of fully developing, assessing, and budgeting for such proposals during the relatively short and intensive preseason process, the Council believes the procedures below are necessary to more adequately consider and implement test fisheries in the most effective and beneficial manner. This test fishery protocol is based on the protocol developed at the request of the Council by an eleven-member work group of California Department of Fish and Game and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff which met in Healdsburg, California on May 27, 1999. The protocol includes procedures and specifications for submitting, reviewing, reporting, and implementing the results of test fisheries. The Council urges all test fishery sponsors to coordinate their proposals with the appropriate management entities.

PROTOCOL

A. Submission

1. Proposals for test fisheries must be submitted to the Council office approximately three weeks prior to the November Council meeting preceding the season in which the test fishery would be implemented. The exact cutoff date each year may be obtained by contacting the Council office.
2. Council staff will screen proposals and distribute complete proposals to Council members and advisors with briefing materials for the November meeting. Proposals that do not meet minimum content requirements will be returned to applicants.
3. Multi-year test fisheries approved for the initial year will not require resubmission under the protocol to receive consideration for the follow-up years.

B. Review and Approval

1. November Council Meeting

- a. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Salmon Technical Team (STT), and Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) will initiate review of the proposals and may provide preliminary comments to the Council.
- b. The states, tribes, and NMFS may supply comments on the proposals through their STT members, including resources available for test fisheries.

2. March Council Meeting

- a. The STT, SSC, and SAS will provide written evaluations of the proposals to the Council.
- b. The Council will determine which test fisheries to include in the options for public review.

3. April Council Meeting - The Council will make its final decision on adoption of test fisheries and provide an explanation of why test fisheries have been accepted or rejected.

C. Proposal Contents

1. Project Summary - Include a statement of objectives, methods to be employed, and the potential impact of the project. Relate the proposal to the Council Research and Data Needs and the NMFS Strategic Plan for Fisheries Research.
2. Project Personnel - Identify the project manager (the person responsible for overall coordination of the project from beginning to end), and other staff or organizations necessary to complete the project, including specific responsibilities related to technical, analytical, and management roles. Provide evidence that the work proposed is appropriate for the experience of the investigators.
3. Objectives
 - a. Make a clear statement of the specific purposes of the study (may be stated as a hypothesis in the form of a question).
 - b. Benefits - Identify potential benefits to fisheries management and coastal communities, or specific stocks, such as improved estimates of key harvest model parameters (e.g., stock contact rates, hooking mortality rates, gear selectivity on encounter rates).

4. Research Design and Methodology

- a. Specify the major elements of the design, including sample size, number of years the test fishery will run, potential limitations of the proposed approach, and geographic scope.
- b. Data Collection - describe sampling methods, personnel, and protocols.
- c. Data Synthesis and Analysis - describe how the data will be analyzed and evaluated.
- d. Reporting - provide a timetable for delivering report(s) to the Council.
- e. Discuss compatibility with existing seasons and other test fisheries, potential difficulties with processors or dealers, additional enforcement requirements, and potential negative impacts of the study (e.g., species listed under the Endangered Species Act, allocation shifts, shortened season length, etc.).

5. Ability to Conduct Proposed Research - Identify the total costs (including collection of samples, tissue, and data analysis) associated with the test fishery and sources of funding; identify any existing commitments for participation in, or funding of the project.

D. Report Contents

1. Summary of the work completed.
2. Analysis of data.
3. Conclusions and recommendations.
4. Include raw data as well as summaries.

E. Application of Results

1. In general, at least three years of data should be accumulated before incorporating the results of test fisheries into appropriate harvest models.
2. The STT may consider interim results from test fisheries to inform decisions on harvest management if appropriate.
3. The SSC requires information relevant to methodology changes be submitted by the November meeting prior to the season of implementation.