

Decision Summary Document
Pacific Fishery Management Council

March 4-9, 2020

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 transcripts](#) or the [Council newsletter](#).

Habitat

Current Habitat Issues

The Council directed the Habitat Committee to work with the Salmon Technical Team in April to begin coordinating Habitat Committee input on Sacramento and Klamath River salmon essential fish habitat recommendations, and to submit a draft letter on the Columbia River Hydropower Operations Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the April briefing book.

Salmon Management

Willapa Bay Coho Forecast Methodology Review – Final Action

The Council adopted the [Willapa Bay Coho Forecast methodology](#) approach provided by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for use in forecasting the abundance of Willapa Bay coho for 2020 and beyond. The Council accepted the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) determination that the methodology utilizes the best scientific information available for this stock.

Southern Resident Killer Whale Endangered Species Act Consultation

The Council approved the [Risk Assessment](#) provided by the Ad-hoc Southern Resident Killer Whale Workgroup as a final draft, and directed the Workgroup to proceed with development of draft management measure recommendations.

Review of 2019 Fisheries and Summary of 2020 Stock Forecasts

The Council adopted the stock abundances, overfishing limits, acceptable biological catches, and annual catch limits as presented in the 2020 Preseason Report I, as the best scientific information available for use in 2020 salmon management, as recommended by the SSC.

Adopt 2020 Management Alternatives for Public Review

The Council adopted [three Alternative sets of management measures for the 2020 ocean commercial and recreational salmon fisheries, and six alternatives for tribal ocean salmon fisheries](#). Public hearings on the Alternatives have been scheduled in [Westport](#), Washington and

[Coos Bay](#), Oregon for Monday, March 23 and [Eureka](#), California for Tuesday, March 24. The Council is scheduled to adopt final 2020 ocean salmon regulations at its April 3-10 meeting in Vancouver, Washington.

Pacific Halibut Management

Incidental Catch Recommendations: Options for Salmon Troll and Final Recommendations for Fixed Gear Sablefish Fisheries

The Council adopted three options for incidental halibut retention in the 2020 and early 2021 Salmon troll fishery. Each option included a landing and possession limit on one halibut for every two Chinook, plus one additional halibut in excess of the possession/landing ratio. The possession/landing limit per trip ranged from 25 to 35 halibut among the three options.

Final Recommendations for Fixed Gear Sablefish Fisheries: the Council recommended the 2020 incidental halibut catch restrictions in the fixed gear fishery north of Point Chehalis from April 1 through October 31 be set at 200 pounds of dressed weight halibut for every 1,000 pounds dressed weight of sablefish, plus 2 additional halibut in excess of the ratio.

Transition of Area 2A Fishery Management

The Council approved the purpose and need statement and the scope of action to transfer the management of the Area 2A Pacific halibut non-Tribal directed commercial fishery from the International Pacific Halibut Commission to National Marine Fisheries Service and the Council. The Council also approved a range of alternatives described in the [Project Team report](#) with only minor adjustments. The Council is scheduled to review and potentially adopt preliminary preferred alternatives in September 2020.

Ecosystem Management

California Current Ecosystem and Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) Report and Science Review Topics

The Council directed its SSC to review the methodology for four ecosystem indicators used in the Annual Report:

1. California sea lion pup count and growth rate as an indicator of forage conditions
2. The habitat compression index
3. Port-specific revenue indices
4. The natural origin central valley fall Chinook stock indicator

The SSC review will occur at the September Council meeting.

The Council also encouraged the IEA team to continue development of socioeconomic and recreational fishery indicators.

Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) Five-Year Review – Final Action

The Council took final action to adopt revised FEP chapters 1 & 2 based on the [public review draft](#) with revisions recommended by its advisory bodies and the public. It directed the Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) to continue reviewing and revising FEP Chapter 3 and provide a final draft for adoption at the September 2020 Council meeting. The Council will solicit public comment on proposed revisions to Chapters 4 & 5 and tasked the EWG with proposing revisions to those chapters at a future meeting. To accomplish this work, EWG membership will be increased.

Climate and Communities Initiative Workshop Report

The Council directed its Climate and Communities Core Team (CCCT) to plan the next phase of the Climate and Communities Initiative scenario planning exercise. The CCCT is scheduled to meet by webinar on March 20 and will submit reports to the Council on its plan of work and any further elaboration of the [four scenarios](#) presented to the Council at this meeting.

Groundfish Management

Initial Stock Assessment Plan and Terms of Reference

The Council adopted a tentative list of stocks for assessment in 2021 and 2023 for public review. Candidate stocks for full assessment in 2021 include bank rockfish, brown rockfish, copper rockfish, Dover sole (to be determined whether this will be a full or data-moderate assessment), lingcod, petrale sole (to be determined whether this will be a full or update assessment), squarespot rockfish, vermilion and sunset rockfishes (to be assessed as a complex), and yellowtail rockfish. Pending a final decision in June, the Council also selected darkblotched rockfish and spiny dogfish as back-up candidates for full assessment in 2021 if the other candidate stocks are determined to be a lesser priority for a full assessment. The Council selected sablefish as a candidate stock for an update assessment in 2021. Black rockfish and quillback rockfish are candidate stocks for full assessment in 2023.

The Council adopted a [draft terms of reference for the groundfish and coastal pelagic species stock assessment review process in 2021 and 2022](#), and recommended no changes to terms of reference for groundfish rebuilding analysis and methodology reviews as recommended by the SSC.

The Council is scheduled to take final action on 2021 stock assessment priorities, the three terms of reference mentioned above, and to further refine the list of candidate stocks for assessment in 2023 at their June meeting in San Diego, California. The Council anticipates the report from the methodology review of proposed length-based assessment methods to inform their June decision on stock assessment priorities.

Update on Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs) for 2021-2022

The Council reviewed the EFPs submitted in November 2019, as revised by the applicants since that time. The [Coastal Conservation Association California/Okuma Fishing Tackle EFP Proposal](#) was withdrawn, for which 7 mt of cowcod had been set aside in November. The [Monterey Bay](#)

[Regional Exempted Fishing Permit Targeting Chilipepper Rockfish](#) increased its southern Cowcod request from 0.015 to 0.5 mt. Other EFPs were also modified as reflected in the briefing book attachments. In June, when the Council finalizes its groundfish specifications and EFP recommendations, it will consider the revised EFPs (including possible increases in southern cowcod requests for other EFPs), along with public comment. The electronic monitoring EFP proposal expected at this meeting was not submitted to the Council, but opportunity was left open for such an EFP proposal at a future meeting.

Update on 2021-2022 Harvest Specifications and Management

The Council received an [overview](#) on the analysis of 2021 and 2022 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures from the Groundfish Management Team (GMT). The Council provided guidance to the analysts to assume: 1) a research set-aside of 2.92 mt for yelloweye rockfish, 2) the status quo yelloweye harvest guideline and annual catch target catch sharing framework, 3) retention of the Alternative 2 harvest specifications for shortbelly rockfish and petrale sole, 4) new limited entry and open access fixed gear trip limits recommended by the GMT, 5) consideration for a shared harvest guideline of canary rockfish for the nearshore and non-nearshore sectors of the fishery, and 6) a new 3-year average [set-aside alternative](#) for the at-sea whiting fisheries recommended by the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel. The Council is scheduled to adopt final harvest specifications at their April meeting in Vancouver, Washington and final management measures at their June meeting in San Diego, California.

Inseason Adjustments Including Shorebased Carryover – Final Action

The Council heard updates on the [2020 Trawl Gear EFP](#), [2019 Groundfish harvest in California](#), and [summary information on the Pacific coast groundfish fishery performance](#) in 2019 and performance to date for 2020. These reports were largely informational and recommended no adjustments at this time. The Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota carryover portion of this agenda item was delayed and will be rescheduled to a future meeting.

Highly Migratory Species Management

Review of Essential Fish Habitat – Scoping

The Council adopted the [action plan](#) for review of highly migratory species essential fish habitat provisions, recognizing that the timeline in the action plan may require adjustment.

International Management Activities

The Council discussed with David Hogan, Department of State representative, [issues raised by the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel](#) pertaining to negotiations on the next fishing regime under the U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty.

Drift Gillnet Fishery Hard Caps Update

The Council requested that National Marine Fisheries Service report back in September on comments received on the [final rule implementing hard caps](#), the details of the economic analysis

that was the basis of it withdrawing the proposed rule, and a range of viable measures the Council could consider in a future rulemaking process.

Administrative Matters

Marine Planning Update

The Council discussed effective ways to engage in upcoming offshore development that may affect fishing activities or fishing-dependent communities. The Executive Director will discuss the issue with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and provide recommendations to the Council.

Membership Appointments; Statement of Organization, Practices, and Procedures; and Council Operating Procedures

The Council made the following Advisory Body appointments:

- Mr. Andrew Babich was appointed to the vacant Washington Commercial position on the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel formerly held by Mr. Daniel Crome,
- Ms. Deborah Wilson-Vandenberg was appointed to the vacant California position on the Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel formerly held by Dr. Pete Adams,
- Mr. Harrison Ibach was appointed to the vacant Open Access North of Cape Mendocino position on the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel formerly held by Mr. Jeff Miles,
- Ms. Whitney Roberts was appointed to the vacant Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife position on the Groundfish Management Team, and
- Dr. Will White was appointed to the vacant At-Large position on the Scientific and Statistical Committee.

Additionally, Chairman Anderson appointed Ms. Maggie Sommer as both the Council's alternate representative to the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) as well as the Council's representative on the IPHC Management Strategy Advisory Body.

The Council reviewed its remaining Advisory Body vacancies and intends to begin accepting nominations for a Washington position on the Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel and the Northern Charter Boat Operator position on the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel shortly after the March meeting. Please consult the Council's website for further information and instructions for submitting nominations.

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