

SOUTHERN OREGON/NORTHERN CALIFORNIA COAST COHO
AD HOC WORKGROUP REPORT

The Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast (SONCC) Coho Ad Hoc Workgroup (Workgroup) was formed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) in April 2020 with the primary task of developing harvest control alternatives for Council consideration. At the November 2020 Council meeting, the Workgroup submitted a progress report and a preliminary risk assessment report for Council consideration. Since the November 2020 Council meeting the Workgroup has met for work sessions in January and March of 2021.

Substantial progress has been made on the SONCC coho risk assessment since November, including (1) estimation of productivity and capacity for SONCC coho population units with sufficient data, (2) estimation of past ocean and freshwater exploitation rates to establish a baseline for comparison of alternatives, (3) investigation of how environmental variables and survival rate estimates could be used in SONCC coho assessment and management, (4) evaluation of potential abundance forecast methods, (5) updating the risk analysis model, and (6) using the risk assessment model to evaluate how both abundance-based and constant exploitation rate control rules effect population status and harvest. In the preliminary risk assessment report provided to the Council in November 2020 only the constant exploitation rate control rules were evaluated.

Implementation of abundance-based control rules will require abundance forecasts for SONCC coho population units or population aggregates. A variety of abundance forecast approaches have been investigated by the Workgroup and some analysis is on-going. There are substantial challenges to making abundance forecasts for SONCC coho population units owing to data gaps, the timeliness of data needed for annual forecasting, and the potential that some monitoring programs may not reliably provide the data needed on an annual basis. The Workgroup is also examining the feasibility of implementing abundance-based approaches based on wild coho seeding levels, marine survival, and hatchery jack indices. The Workgroup continues to refine the evaluation of abundance-based and constant exploitation rate control rules.

Following the April Council meeting, the Workgroup will work on development and evaluation of harvest control alternatives for Council consideration. An updated and revised risk assessment report will be submitted for the June 2021 Council meeting. The Workgroup currently has four meetings scheduled between now and the November 2021 Council meeting (May 12, July 7, August 10, and October 13) when the Council is scheduled to select the final preferred alternative.

The Workgroup appreciates the support of the Council and any direction the Council might be able to give at this time.