

NMFS REPORT ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS  
WITH POTENTIAL IMPACTS FOR SALMON MANAGEMENT

**Stock Status Determinations**

NMFS West Coast Region recently informed the Council (see letter to Executive Director Merrick Burden in briefing book under this agenda item) regarding the salmon stock status determination under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) for the Hood Canal coho salmon stock.

In 2021, NMFS determined that one stock of salmon was *approaching an overfished condition*, based on assessment data in Pre-III for 2021. Under the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP), a stock will be considered *approaching an overfished condition* if the three-year geometric mean of the stock's two most recent postseason estimates of spawning escapement and the current preseason forecast of spawning escapement, is below its MSST. The determination in 2021 was based on the three-year geometric mean of reported spawning escapement for 2018 and 2019 and the anticipated spawning escapement under 2021 management measures. The updated assessment in Pre-III for 2022, which included an estimate of 2021 escapement, resulted in an increase in the three-year geometric mean spawning escapement (2019-2021) to a level that is greater than both the MSST and  $S_{MSY}$  for this stock. Therefore, the Hood Canal natural coho salmon stock has been determined to be *not overfished*.

Of the original five stocks declared overfished in 2018, NMFS determined in 2020 that Sacramento River fall Chinook were rebuilt and in 2021 that Snohomish coho was not overfished—rebuilding. The Snohomish coho stock as well as the Queets River coho, Klamath River Chinook and Strait of Juan de Fuca coho salmon stocks continue to be managed under their respective rebuilding plans until the stocks are rebuilt.

**Amendment 23 to the Salmon FMP**

The Council transmitted its recommendation for Amendment 23 to NMFS on August 10, 2022 concluding a multi-meeting process spanning 21 months with input from stakeholders, states, and affected Tribes, and informed by substantive scientific analysis. Amendment 23 establishes two new harvest control rules that limit the impacts of the Pacific Council-area ocean salmon fisheries on Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast coho while accounting for anticipated impacts in freshwater fisheries. During its annual salmon preseason planning process, the Council will evaluate ocean fisheries using the Coho Fishery Regulation Assessment Model so that, when combined with estimated freshwater impacts, the preseason projected total ER does not exceed the adopted harvest control rules.

NMFS published a notice of availability in the Federal Register August 18, 2022 (87 FR 50824, [NOA for Amendment 23](#)) with a 60-day public comment period on the amendment and a 45-day

public comment period on the draft environmental assessment (EA). NMFS received few comments during the public comment period on either the proposed Amendment 23 or the EA, which closed October 17, 2022 and October 3, 2022, respectively. NMFS's will make its decision on Amendment 23 by November 17, 2022, consistent with the provisions of the MSA.

### **Status of CC-Chinook consultation**

On March 29, 2022, NMFS re-initiated consultation on the effects of ocean salmon fisheries as managed under the FMP on the California Coastal Chinook Salmon Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) when the 2021 ocean salmon fisheries exceeded their take limit for the ESU. The ESU was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1999. The consultation is on schedule for completion prior to the 2023 ocean salmon fishing season. NMFS West Coast Region is working closely with NMFS' Southwest Fisheries Science Center and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to explore implications for the 2023 salmon fishing season.

### **CV Spring Chinook implications for 2023 ocean salmon fisheries**

The Central Valley Spring Chinook (CVSC) ESU was listed as threatened under the ESA in 1999. Given the limited data available on CVSC, the Council relies on the management framework developed for Sacramento River Winter Chinook (SRWC), along with other regulatory measures in the FMP, to limit impacts to CVSC salmon in a manner sufficient to avoid jeopardy to CVSC. In March 2022, NMFS' Southwest Fisheries Science Center presented information to the Council indicating the potential for very low abundance for brood year (BY) 2020 CVSC ([Agenda Item D.1.a Supplemental NMFS Report 1](#)). Consequently, fisheries in 2023 are likely to encounter a very weak CVSC cohort. The SWFSC report indicated that, based on ocean spatial distribution patterns and migration timing, ocean fishery impacts on CVSC likely covary with planned ocean fishery impacts on SRFC and SRWC.

Because of actions taken to offset poor anticipated freshwater survival for SRFC and SRWC (e.g., increased hatchery production, trucking of hatchery releases), 2023 forecasts for these stocks could be higher than they would be otherwise and will likely not reflect the impacts of poor freshwater environmental conditions on natural-origin productivity that CVSC experienced. The Science Center report described additional technical work that could be helpful to the Council for its 2023 management deliberations on these stocks and for CVSC in particular. At this meeting, the Habitat Committee will report out on its work to refine ecosystem indicators specific to CVSC. This work together with other available information is intended to inform the status of the BY 2020 CVSC cohort and what it could mean for CVSC returns in 2023.