SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON SACRAMENTO AND KLAMATH RIVER FALL CHINOOK CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES SCOPING

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) considered the potential processes, timeline, workload, and content needed to develop new conservation objectives for Sacramento River Fall Chinook (SRFC) and Klamath River Fall Chinook (KRFC) stocks.

Evaluating and updating conservation objectives for SRFC and KRFC should not require a lengthy process nor a long period of time to complete. A report prepared for the SSC Salmon Subcommittee in October 2022 (Agenda Item D.2, Attachment 1, Nov 2022) indicates that sufficient information to evaluate the SRFC conservation objective likely exists. An update could be accomplished fairly quickly by a small group of analysts with scientific expertise in salmon biology.

For KRFC, there are data to establish conservation objectives for the lower Klamath under current conditions, and there may be information available on the productive capacity of habitat above Iron Gate Dam that could be used to establish a conservation objective, noting that conservation objectives can include data-gathering strategies (Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP) p.19).

Council Operating Procedure (COP) 15 and the FMP indicate that changes to conservation objectives should occur periodically and take place within the salmon methodology review process (COP 15 p.1, FMP p.20). Updating conservation objectives for SRFC and KRFC stocks may have unusual challenges that would benefit from a special process, but this need not be the case in general.

The conservation objectives for both stocks are linked to reference points such that updating only the conservation objectives could lead to inconsistency. The lower bound of the conservation objective for SRFC is the S_{MSY}. The KRFC conservation objective is the S_{MSY}. Since S_{MSY} is an input into the control rule for both stocks, the conservation objective is an implicit input as well. In each case, if only the conservation objective is changed, it will no longer be linked to the control rule.

The SSC recommends that the Council differentiate between natural- and hatchery-origin spawners when setting conservation objectives for these stocks.

PFMC
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