



Pacific Fishery Management Council *NEWS RELEASE*

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PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL ADOPTS 2023 WEST COAST OCEAN SALMON SEASONS

Foster City, California—The Pacific Fishery Management Council has adopted recommendations for ocean salmon fishing along the Pacific west coast in 2023. The seasons provide recreational and commercial opportunities in northern areas of the coast but include significant closures in southern portions of the coast to achieve conservation goals for the numerous salmon stocks.

The recommendations will be forwarded to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for approval by May 16, 2023.

Forecasts for West Coast Chinook and coho stocks in 2023 are a mixed bag, with some low and high points when compared to last year. Federal requirements to conserve Fraser River (Canada) coho, lower Columbia River natural tulle¹ fall Chinook, Klamath River fall Chinook and Sacramento River fall Chinook will be the main constraints for this year's ocean salmon fisheries.

"The forecasts for Chinook returning to California rivers this year are near record lows," said Council Chair Marc Gorelnik. "The poor conditions in the freshwater environment that contributed to these low forecasted returns are unfortunately not something that the Council can, or has authority to, control."

¹ Tule Chinook generally spawn lower in the Columbia River than salmon that continue to migrate up the mainstem.

Washington and Northern Oregon (north of Cape Falcon)

Fisheries north of Cape Falcon (in northern Oregon) are limited mainly by the need to constrain catch of lower Columbia River natural tule Chinook. Additionally, two natural coho stocks meet the criteria for either overfished (Queets River) or not overfished/rebuilding (Strait of Juan de Fuca), which is also a concern when structuring 2023 fisheries.

North of Cape Falcon, the overall non-tribal total allowable catch is 78,000 Chinook coastwide (compared to 58,000 last year) and 190,000 marked hatchery coho (compared to 75,000 last year).

Tribal ocean fisheries north of Cape Falcon

The Council addresses the “federally recognized fishing rights” of coastal tribes as part of its annual process to adopt ocean salmon recommendations for tribal ocean fisheries north of Cape Falcon. The Council adopted the seasons as proposed by the tribes. The tribal ocean fishery structure is similar to past years with a spring season focused on Chinook and a summer fishery focused on both Chinook and coho. The quotas are 45,000 Chinook salmon (compared to 40,000 last year), and 57,000 coho (compared to 52,000 last year).

Commercial ocean season

The non-tribal ocean commercial fishery north of Cape Falcon includes the traditional seasons in the spring (May-June) for Chinook and in the summer (July-September) for Chinook and coho. The Chinook quota is 39,000 (compared to 27,000 last year) and the coho quota is 30,400 marked coho (compared to 32,000 last year).

Sport ocean season

The ocean sport fishery north of Cape Falcon opens in mid-June to late-June and continues through September, unless salmon quotas are met earlier. The Chinook quota is 39,000 (compared to 27,000 last year) and the coho quota is 159,600 marked coho, (compared to 168,000 last year).

Oregon (south of Cape Falcon) and California

Fisheries south of Cape Falcon are limited mainly by the low abundance forecasts for Klamath River and Sacramento River fall Chinook. This year's season is significantly reduced or closed to fishing to keep fishing impacts minimal given the critically low abundance forecasts for these key California Chinook stocks of concern.

Sport ocean season

While the Sacramento River and Klamath River fall Chinook abundances are forecasted to be very low, Oregon's coho populations are forecasted to be similar to last year.

Oregon ocean recreational fisheries from Cape Falcon to the OR/CA border include a mark-selective coho fishing season starting June 17 and continuing through August. The quota is 110,000 marked coho (compared to 100,000 last year). In addition, a non-mark-selective coho fishery is scheduled in the area between Cape Falcon and Humbug Mountain for the month of September with a 25,000 non marked coho quota (compared to 17,000 last year). October will be open for all salmon except coho and open shoreward of the 40-fathom regulatory line.

California ocean recreational fisheries in all areas from the Oregon/California border to the U.S./Mexico border are closed given the low abundance forecasts for both Klamath and Sacramento River fall Chinook.

Commercial ocean season

Oregon ocean commercial fisheries from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain will open September 1 and continue through October. A limited coho season will also occur in September with a 10,000 non marked coho quota. Beginning October 1, the fishery is open shoreward of the 40-fathom regulatory line.

All commercial fisheries in both the Oregon and California Klamath Management Zones are closed for the 2023 season.

California ocean salmon commercial fisheries in all areas from the Oregon/California border to the U.S./Mexico border are closed given the low abundance forecasts for both Klamath and Sacramento River fall Chinook.

Southern Resident Killer Whales

The Council worked collaboratively with NMFS to understand the effects of Council-area fisheries on Southern Resident killer whales, which are listed as endangered. Based in part on information provided by the Council's ad-hoc Southern Resident Killer Whale Workgroup, the Council amended the Pacific Salmon Fishery Management Plan to address the needs of the whales while providing salmon harvest opportunities. As part of the amendment, the Council adopted a Chinook abundance threshold for the North of Falcon area, below which additional action (management measures) would be required when considering ocean salmon seasons. The threshold value is 623,000 Chinook. The Chinook abundance is projected to be well above this threshold in 2023.

Management Process

"This has been another challenging year for the Council, its advisors, fishery stakeholders, and the public, to say the least," said Council Executive Director Merrick Burden. "The economic impact of closing a good portion of the west coast ocean salmon fishery will negatively impact the people that participate in the fishery, and the small businesses in coastal communities that rely on the salmon fishery."

The Council developed three management alternatives in early March for public review and further analysis. The review process included input from tribal, Federal, and state fishery scientists and fishing industry members; public testimony; and three public hearings hosted in person by the Council. At its April meeting (April 1-7), the Council consulted with scientists, heard public comments, revised preliminary alternatives as necessary, and chose a final alternative.

The decision must be approved by NMFS. Coastal states will adopt fishery regulations for state-managed waters that are compatible with the Council's actions.

Council Role

The Pacific Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 for the purpose of managing fisheries 3-200 miles offshore of the U.S. coastline. The Pacific Council recommends management measures for fisheries off the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington.

On the Web

- [Pacific Fishery Management Council](http://www.pcouncil.org) (www.pcouncil.org)
- 2023 seasons adopted by the Council are on the '[Annual season management process](#)' page
- Final analyses of the biological and socioeconomic impacts will be posted on the Council web page on or about April 18 ([look for 2023 Preseason Report III on this page](#))
- Fact sheet: [Salmon](#)
- Fact sheet: [Geography of Salmon](#)
- Fact sheet: [Common Terms Used in Salmon Management](#)

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