

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
SACRAMENTO RIVER FALL CHINOOK AND KLAMATH RIVER FALL CHINOOK
CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) supports reviews the conservation objectives for Sacramento River fall Chinook (SRFC) and Klamath River fall Chinook (KRFC). The SAS recommends forming two individual Ad Hoc workgroups who will identify objectives, management, and scoping issues. Each group should consist of the proper government and tribal salmon management agencies, scientists, Salmon Technical Team (STT) and SAS members, and stakeholders. The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) was briefed on the SRFC/KRFC conservation objectives (Agenda Item E.5) and on the Klamath River dam removal project (Agenda Item E.9) in April 2023.

The Klamath River Workgroup (KRWG) faces many more management challenges with dam removal and the uncertainty of the salmon returns to specific geographic locations. California Department of Wildlife (CDFW) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) both estimate it will possibly take 3 - 4 generations to collect enough data to get accurate information to set long term conservation goals. Therefore, the KRWG should be active before, during, and after dam removal in analyzing its findings. This workgroup will help managers address the potential need to identify interim management measures for KRFC stock. The SAS understands that NMFS has flexibility within the current fishery management plan to adjust current management goals on an annual basis.

The Sacramento River Workgroup (SRWG) would start with an update of past and current work done on conservation objectives. The SAS supports the need to start the SRWG with an overview of all data and science supporting revised conservation objectives and proper management measures for SRFC. This would bypass the idea of a workshop and task the SRWG to conduct the work instead. The CDFW spurred Council discussion on the renewed concern for the SRFC stock; the Council generally concurred that continuing progress on the SRFC conservation objective review appeared equally important. The SAS expects to be involved within the workgroup process considering the importance of the SRFC stock to inland and ocean fisheries.

The SAS recommends that the Council form the two workgroups outlined above, consisting of the appropriate salmon management agencies. The SAS does have concerns of raising the objective prematurely without other salmon management issues being addressed. The SAS has concerns on dam removal, sediment, hatchery production outputs, adult returns, and water management which all play a vital role in the conservation objective. The SAS feels these workgroups are critical to finding the correct conservation objectives.