



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Brad Pettinger, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 18, 2023
TO: Habitat Committee and Interested Persons
FROM: Mr. Kerry Griffin, Habitat Staff Officer
SUBJECT: September 2023 Council Meeting Materials

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet in person with live streaming from September 8-14, 2023 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Spokane City Center, 322 N. Spokane Falls Court, Spokane, WA 99201. The Habitat Committee (HC) will convene in person, in the Salon III Room. Other ancillary meetings will be conducted via a combination of online and in-person formats as noted in the Schedule of Ancillary Meetings in the Detailed Agenda (A.3). Instructions for joining online meetings will be posted to the September Council meeting [webpage](#). The Council will consider several important habitat-related topics as well as other agenda items, including the following.

Current Habitat Issues (E.1)

The HC will consider habitat-related issues that may be of interest to the Council and will develop a supplemental HC Report for Council consideration. The supplemental HC report is designed to alert the Council of activities or issues they should be aware of, such as upcoming development projects that may affect fisheries habitat, or updates on issues previously considered by the Council. The HC may recommend a particular action such as writing a letter or other communication on relevant issues.

Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (H.1)

The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (Chumash NMS) draft designation documents and regulations are expected to be released in late summer or fall of 2023. If the draft documents are publicly available in time, the Council and its Advisory Bodies may develop comments. Consistent with the National Marine Sanctuary Act (16 CFR 32 § 1431), the Council was given the opportunity in 2022 to prepare draft fishing regulations that the Council “may deem necessary to implement the proposed designation.” The Council considered this opportunity at its November 2022 meeting and determined that additional fishing regulations were not warranted at that time, but should additional information arise that may justify such regulations in the future, that the Council would reconsider this position (See December 2022 [correspondence](#)). At this

time, the NMS Program has not indicated that fishing activity is proposed to be managed as part of the Chumash NMS. However, the Council and ABs should consider whether any ancillary regulations (e.g., vessel speed limits or bottom contact rules) could potentially affect fishing activities.

Marine Planning Update (H.3)

The Council's Ad Hoc Marine Planning Committee (MPC) met online July 27, 2023, to hear updates on offshore wind energy activities on the West Coast. MPC Report 1 includes updates from the states, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the West Coast Ocean Alliance, and a Tribal update. This report is largely informational and includes upcoming events and other information. The five offshore wind lease holders are developing Fishery Communication Plans (FCPs), which are due by September 29. However, it is not clear whether those FCPs will be available for review and comment prior to the September Council meeting. Attachment 1 is a letter from two Oregon U.S. Senators and two U.S. Congress Members to Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Director Elizabeth Klein, expressing concern about the adequacy of public engagement, and asking for public meetings with coastal communities.

Greater Farallones and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries Coral Restoration and Research Plan - Scoping (H.2)

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is proposing that the Council consider closing select areas of the Greater Farallones and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries to protect coral restoration and research sites. Council and ONMS staff are hosting a [webinar](#) on August 24th from 2-4 pm to give an overview of the item for interested Council participants. At the September Council meeting, the Council and its advisory bodies should consider the ONMS scoping document (H.2.a ONMS Report 1) and other agenda item materials, provide guidance on the proposed coral research and restoration areas, and consider which fisheries these closures should apply.

Ecosystem Management Initiative 4: Ecosystem and Climate Information - Progress Report (F.1)

The Ad Hoc Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) presented a work plan for this initiative in March 2023 ([Agenda Item H.2.a, EWG Report 1](#)). The purpose of the initiative is to develop onramps for integrating ecosystem and climate information into Council fishery management plan decision making, with a focus on harvest specifications processes. The EWG provided a short update on its work in June 2023 ([Agenda Item F.1.a, Supplemental EWG Report 1](#)). Agenda Item F.1.a, EWG Report 1, in the September advance briefing book, reports on work completed to date. The report describes: 1) A process for choosing species to receive climate information, 2) FMP-specific ecosystem and climate information onramps for harvest setting, and 3) Species-specific ecosystem information products. To demonstrate the species selection methodology (bullet 1) the EWG provides a proposed process, draft set of criteria, and example application to seven previously identified species. It requests the Council circulate the proposed process and criteria for public review in support of Council adoption in March 2024. To demonstrate potential ecosystem information products (bullet 3) the report includes a risk assessment matrix and its application to petrale sole and sablefish. The Council should decide whether to use these evaluations as part of finalizing harvest specifications for these two species at the November Council meeting. In its

report the EWG also provides additional recommendations on topics for workshops The Nature Conservancy has offered to cosponsor with the Council.

Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Amendment - Preliminary I.5)

The Council is scheduled to consider preliminary modifications to HMS EFH and adopt proposed modifications for public review. The HMS Management Team (HMSMT), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, and Council staff developed a document summarizing proposed modifications for HMS EFH (I.5 Attachment 1). Attachment 2 is an updated HMS FMP Appendix F, which includes life history summaries and EFH descriptions. The EFH information is split between the HMS FMP itself and Appendix F, although much of the required components (fishing and non-fishing effects, conservation measures, and research and information needs) are in the FMP itself. The HC should consider the proposed modifications and whether any changes are warranted.

KFG:rdd

Enclosures include:

1. Agenda Item A– Council Meeting Agenda and Executive Director’s Report
2. Agenda Item B.1 – Comments on Non-Agenda Items
3. Agenda Item E – Habitat Issues
4. Agenda Item F – Ecosystem
5. Agenda Item H – Administrative Matters
6. Agenda Item I.5 – Highly Migratory Species
7. Informational Reports
8. General Information and Council Roster

PFMC
08/14/23