SALMON TECHNICAL TEAM REPORT ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS FINAL ACTION REGARDING SALMON BYCATCH IN 2023 PACIFIC WHITING TRAWL FISHERIES

The Salmon Technical Team (STT) discussed the status of Chinook bycatch in the at-sea and shoreside whiting sectors and reviewed the National Marine Fisheries Service report (G.8.a, Supplemental REVISED NMFS Report 1) on their in-season assessment of evolutionarily significant unit (ESU)-specific impacts to Chinook salmon. Included in the report (Figure 9) was the Northwest Fisheries Science Center's analysis that projected the ESU-level impacts to Chinook salmon, and the Klamath/Trinity ESU made up the greatest proportion of salmon bycatch.

The STT also reviewed the Groundfish Management Team's (GMT) report (G.8.a, Supplemental GMT Report 1) which included analysis that revealed higher than average Chinook salmon bycatch in the spring whiting fishery, and simulations for the fall whiting fishery predicted that the 11,000 fish bycatch threshold may be exceeded (Table 6).

The STT is concerned with the potential bycatch of Klamath River Fall Chinook (KRFC) in the whiting fleet's fall fishing season. Under the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan section 6.5.2 Bycatch and Incidental Take of Non-Groundfish Species in Groundfish Fisheries, the STT is permitted to bring attention to a non-groundfish bycatch species facing conservation problems. While the whiting sectors are still within their bounds of Chinook bycatch at this time, we remind the Pacific Fishery Management Council of the critically low forecasted abundance of KRFC, and that the stock has remained in an overfished condition since 2018 (2023 Preseason Report II). Additionally, KRFC is facing further conservation concerns this year resulting from Klamath River dam removal including habitat disruption and decreases to hatchery production.

PFMC
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