



## Pacific Fishery Management Council

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

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 13, 2024

TO: Salmon Advisory Subpanel, Salmon Technical Team, and Interested Persons

FROM: Robin Ehlke, Staff Officer

SUBJECT: March 2024 Council Meeting

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet in person from [March 5 through March 11](#), 2024 at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, Fresno Convention Center, 2233 Ventura Street Fresno, CA 93721. The Salmon Technical Team (STT) and the Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) will also meet in person. The STT will meet in the Salon D1 room at 8 a.m. daily from March 5 through March 11. The SAS will meet in person in the Salon A1 room at 8 a.m. daily from March 5 through March 10. All meetings are open to the public and at least one opportunity for public comment has been scheduled for each meeting day.

The Council will consider several important salmon agenda items and related matters of interest at this meeting. The briefing book materials identified at the end of this memorandum provide detailed information for these items on the Council's March 2024 agenda. The following agenda items summarized below may be of particular interest to the STT and SAS. Please note that the Council will continue to encourage participants to obtain briefing book materials via our website. Printed materials may not be available at the meeting.

The Council will discuss salmon agenda items each day of the March meeting. Other topics of interest on the Council agenda include Pacific Halibut, Marine Planning, and Ecosystem items.

The Salmon agenda item (Agenda Item C) will begin on Wednesday, March 6 (Day 1) with four topics for discussion. The first is a briefing from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to the Council on salmon-related topics and a report from the Science Centers on current research (Agenda Item C.1). Next, the Council will be briefed by the STT on the *Review of 2023 Ocean Salmon Fisheries and Preseason Report I: Stock Abundance Analysis for 2024 Ocean Salmon Fisheries* (Agenda Item C.2). The *Review of 2022 Ocean Salmon Fisheries* is scheduled to be posted on the Council website by February 14. The *Preseason Report I* is being compiled by the STT the week of February 21 and should be posted to the Council website by March 2.

The main salmon issue before the Council will be developing alternatives for modeling 2024 ocean fisheries. On Thursday, March 7, the SAS will present the Council with recommendations for three alternatives (Agenda Item C.5). SAS representatives should review the *Guidance for Alternative Development and Assessment* (Agenda Item C.5, Attachment 1) and clearly identify their fishery

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priorities and engage in negotiations as necessary to resolve conflicts among fishery sectors and areas to arrive at cohesive and coordinated options. This Agenda Item is on the Council floor the morning of Thursday, March 7, so best practice would be to finalize the SAS report no later than mid-day Wednesday, March 6 so that it can be processed and posted by the Secretariat prior to close of business.

After the SAS provides the preliminary 2024 management alternatives, the STT will then collate and analyze the alternatives as directed by the Council. The STT results will first be presented under Agenda Item C.6 on Friday, March 8. Working throughout the week the SAS, STT, and Council will refine the alternatives (Agenda Items C.7 and C.8), which are scheduled to be adopted for public review on Monday, March 11 (Agenda Item C.9). The Council will adopt the hearing officers for the three public salmon hearings scheduled for late March under Agenda Item C.10.

The Pacific halibut agenda items (Agenda Item G) are covered on Saturday, March 9. The Council will hear reports on the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) annual meeting (Agenda Item G.1). Under Agenda Item G.2, the Council will consider incidental halibut retention limits in salmon troll and fixed gear sablefish fisheries. The SAS should be prepared to offer recommendations regarding alternatives for halibut retention in salmon troll fisheries that begin May 16, 2024, and for the 2025 season occurring prior to May 16. In addition, the SAS should be prepared to offer recommendations for any inseason adjustments to the halibut retention regulations occurring prior to May 16, 2024. The Council will adopt for public review the incidental halibut retention alternatives in the commercial salmon fisheries and include them in the 2024 management alternatives package (Agenda Item C.9).

The Council is scheduled to receive a report from the Marine Planning Committee (MPC) on Friday, March 8. The Council is scheduled to receive updates on recent developments regarding offshore wind energy planning and on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Aquaculture Opportunity Areas in California. The MPC developed a report (E.3.a, MPC Report 1), and the MPC and Habitat Committee collaborated on a Quick Response letter on a planned Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the five California leases. That comment period closes February 20, 2024. Advisory Bodies should consider the contents of the MPC Report and if any clarifications or additional information would benefit Council decision making, ABs may consider developing supplemental reports.

Ecosystem topics (Agenda Item H) are covered on Saturday, March 9. There are three items on the Council's agenda.

- Agenda Item H.1: California Current Annual Ecosystem Status Report. The California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Team has produced the 2023-2024 California Current Ecosystem Status Report and appendices. Due to late arriving data and other interruptions the Report will be provided supplementally. **There will be an online presentation on this year's report on February 27.** See the Council website for [details](#). The annual report highlights trends in physical, biological, and socioeconomic components of the ecosystem. Since the ESR is informational, advisory bodies need not comment on it, although in previous years advisory bodies have made recommendations for improvements to the indicators or the addition of new ones to the report.
- Agenda Item H.2: Fishery Ecosystem Plan Initiative 4 – Progress Review. The purpose of the initiative is to develop onramps for integrating ecosystem and climate information into Council fishery management plan decision making. Since September 2023 the Ecosystem

Workgroup (EWG) met with the Groundfish Management and Coastal Pelagic Species management teams and advisory subpanels to solicit further input on integrating climate and ecosystem information into those processes. Also, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Ecosystem and Groundfish Subcommittees reviewed the risk assessment methodology and application presented by the EWG. At the March 2024 meeting, advisory bodies should access work completed to date and make further recommendations on integrating ecosystem and climate information into Council FMP management processes.

- H.3 Climate and Communities Initiative Review and Prioritize Tasks. The Council completed the Climate and Communities Initiative (CCI) in September 2021, which focused on a scenario planning process to elicit ideas on how to mitigate climate change effects to Council fisheries. Potential follow-up activities emerging from the Initiative were identified. The Ad Hoc Ecosystem Workgroup has submitted a report summarizing its revisitation of materials produced during the scenario planning process to produce a more comprehensive list of potential tasks. Under this agenda item the Council has an opportunity to consider whether to prioritize any tasks for future work. Advisory bodies may wish to submit their recommendations on which tasks to prioritize.

Please take the necessary time needed to review and familiarize yourself with briefing materials thoroughly before the meeting. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your commitment to the Council's salmon management process.

RDE:rdd

Enclosures:

1. Agenda Item A – Council Agenda
2. Agenda Item C – Salmon Management
3. Agenda Item D – Habitat Issues
4. Agenda Item E – Cross Fishery Management Plan Items
5. Agenda Item G – Pacific Halibut Management
6. Agenda Item H – Ecosystem Management
7. Agenda Item J – Council Administrative Matters
8. Informational Reports
9. Proposed SAS Agenda
10. Proposed STT Agenda
11. Proposed SSC Agenda
12. Proposed Habitat Committee Agenda
13. General Information and Council Roster

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