

SALMON TECHNICAL TEAM REPORT ON A REPORTING ERROR FOR TWO CHINOOK STOCKS

The Salmon Technical Team (SST) wishes to inform the Council of some errors in reporting management reference points for two Chinook stocks in the annual Review¹ and preseason documents².

These reporting errors consist of:

Southern Oregon Coastal Chinook

1. Maximum Fishing Mortality Threshold (MFMT)³: Incorrectly reported as 78 percent; correct value is 54 percent.

Grays Harbor fall Chinook

1. MFMT: Incorrectly reported as 78 percent; correct value is 63 percent.
2. Minimum Stock Size Threshold (MSST): Incorrectly reported as 5,694; correct value is 6,663.

Background

As part of the 2014 Salmon Methodology Review process, the STT and the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed updated spawner-recruit analyses and associated management reference points for the Southern Oregon (OR) Coastal and Grays Harbor fall Chinook stocks. The STT and SSC determined that the updated analyses represented the best scientific information available and the Council adopted the proposed management reference points including the conservation objective, spawners corresponding with maximum sustainable yield (S_{MSY}), MSST, and MFMT.

Reference Point	Southern OR Coastal Chinook	Grays Harbor fall Chinook
Conservation Objective	41,000*	13,326
S_{MSY}	34,992	13,326
MSST	20,500*	6,663
MFMT/ F_{MSY}	54 percent	63 percent

*Measured at Huntley Park

These updated reference points were transmitted to the National Marine Fishery Service and a final rule was published in April 2015. Because these changes did not require an amendment to the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan ([FMP](#)), the FMP was not immediately updated.

¹ Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Document for the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan

² Preseason Report I – Stock Abundance Analysis and Environmental Assessment Part 1 for Ocean Salmon Fishery Regulations, and Preseason Report III – Council Adopted Management Measures and Environmental Assessment Part 3 for Ocean Salmon Fishery Regulations.

³ MFMT is equivalent to the fishing mortality rate that corresponds with maximum sustainable yield (F_{MSY})

Status of current STT documents and FMP

These updated reference points have been inconsistently updated in the relevant text and tables of the Review document and the preseason reports. An initial review of the most current version of these reports indicates some of these reference points are still outdated in key tables. Specifically, in Table II-6 of the Review document, Table V-4 and A-1 of Preseason Report I, and Table 12 in Preseason Report 3, the following corrections need to be made:

- MFMT for Southern OR coastal Chinook needs to be corrected to 54 percent from 78 percent.
- MSST for Grays Harbor fall Chinook needs to be corrected to 6,663 from 5,694.
- MFMT for Grays Harbor fall Chinook needs to be corrected to 63 percent from 78 percent.

Amendment 20 to the FMP, published in April 2021 updated Table 3-1 to reflect these new values except the MFMT for Southern OR coastal Chinook was accidentally overlooked and not included in that amendment process. This value should be updated at the earliest opportunity to reflect the correct MFMT value for Southern OR coastal Chinook of 54 percent.

Implications

- Southern OR MFMT reported incorrectly as 78 percent; correct value is 54 percent:
 - No implications as there are currently no preseason or postseason exploitation rate (ER) estimates available for this stock to compare against the MFMT
- Grays Harbor MSST reported incorrectly as 5,694; correct value of 6,663:
 - No implications as the 3-year geometric mean of spawning escapement for this stock has consistently been above both values since the update
- Grays Harbor MFMT reported incorrectly as 78 percent; correct value is 63 percent
 - Unfortunately, there are implications to this error. This stock should have been flagged a ‘subject to overfishing’ in past years but was not.

As noted, there are implications for incorrectly reporting the Grays Harbor fall Chinook MFMT value as 78 percent. In the nine years since the new reference points were adopted in 2015, the most current fishery mortality rate available has always been below the outdated MFMT of 78 percent. However, in four of those years (2016, 2021, 2022, 2024) the MFMT was greater than the correct value of 63 percent. This means that there were four instances where this stock should have been identified by the STT as having met the criteria for being subject to overfishing but was not.

Steps Forward

The STT regrets these oversights and intends to conduct a thorough review of the Review and all preseason reports during the 2025 planning cycle to ensure that all reference points reflect the correct values.

PFMC
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