



## Pacific Fishery Management Council *NEWS RELEASE*

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### PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL ADOPTS 2026 WEST COAST OCEAN SALMON SEASONS

Portland, Oregon—The Pacific Fishery Management Council has adopted recommendations for ocean salmon fishing along the Pacific west coast in 2026. The seasons provide coastwide recreational and commercial opportunities while also achieving conservation goals for salmon stocks.

The recommendations will be forwarded to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for approval by May 16, 2026.

Forecasts for West Coast Chinook and coho stocks in 2026 are looking largely encouraging coastwide, with forecasts mostly stable or slightly higher than last year. Federal requirements to conserve Washington coastal coho, Lower Columbia River natural coho, Lower Columbia River natural tule Chinook, Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast natural coho, Klamath River fall Chinook, and California Coastal Chinook are the main constraints for this year's ocean salmon fisheries.

"Providing meaningful fishing opportunities, achieving conservation and management goals, and ensuring the long-term health of salmon populations and fishing communities are all key priorities for the Council," said Council Chair Pete Hassemer. "For 2026, the Council set fishing seasons designed to offer valuable opportunities for all users while carefully managing the resource for the future."

## **Washington and Northern Oregon (north of Cape Falcon, Oregon)**

Fisheries North of Cape Falcon (in northern Oregon) are limited mainly by the need to constrain catch of Washington coastal coho, Lower Columbia River natural coho, and Lower Columbia River natural tule Chinook. In encouraging news, Queets River spring/summer Chinook, which was declared overfished in 2023, continues to meet the criteria of “not overfished-rebuilding” (same as in 2025), and no stocks are currently classified as overfished.

### *Tribal ocean fisheries north of Cape Falcon, Oregon*

The Council addresses the federally recognized fishing rights of coastal tribes as part of its annual process to adopt ocean salmon recommendations for tribal ocean fisheries north of Cape Falcon. The Council adopted the quotas as proposed by the tribes. The tribal ocean fishery structure has a spring season focused on Chinook and a summer fishery focused on both Chinook and coho. The quotas are 45,000 Chinook (compared to 45,000 last year), and 42,500 coho (compared to 37,500 last year).

### *Commercial ocean season*

The non-tribal ocean commercial fishery north of Cape Falcon includes seasons in the spring (May-June) for Chinook and in the summer (July-September) for Chinook and coho. The Chinook quota is 56,000 (compared to 61,250 last year) and the coho quota is 19,600 marked coho (compared to 8,280 last year).

### *Sport ocean season*

The ocean sport fishery north of Cape Falcon opens in mid-June and continues through September, unless salmon quotas are met earlier. The Chinook quota is 54,000 (compared to 53,750 last year) and the coho quota is 102,900 marked coho, (compared to 99,720 last year).

## **Oregon (south of Cape Falcon, Oregon) and California**

Ocean salmon fisheries south of Cape Falcon are limited mainly by the low abundance forecasts for Klamath River fall Chinook and management objectives for California Coastal Chinook. However, increased forecasts for both Sacramento and Klamath River fall Chinook compared to recent years has allowed for broader fishing opportunities relative to prior seasons, including the first troll fishery openings off the coast of California since 2022.

Coho salmon forecasts for 2026 are generally similar to or somewhat lower compared

with 2025. Forecasts are increased for Oregon Production Index hatchery stocks and lower Columbia River natural stocks. However, the forecast for the Oregon Coast natural stock is lower than last year.

#### *Commercial ocean season*

Oregon ocean commercial salmon fisheries will be open from Cape Falcon to the Oregon/California border for the latter half of April. From Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain, the fishery will remain open until the end of June for all salmon except coho. The latter half of July will be open from Cape Falcon to the Heceta Bank management line. In the southernmost area of the state, the fishery will be open from Humbug Mountain to the Oregon/California border from mid-May to mid-June for all salmon except coho.

In the fall, the fishery will be open from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain September through the end of October, with a coho fishery opener during the month of September and lasting until the end of the month or the 7,000 coho quota is taken.

California ocean commercial salmon fisheries will remain closed from the Oregon/California border to Point Arena (California Klamath Management Zone and Fort Bragg areas).

From Point Arena to Pigeon Point (San Francisco area), there will be four multi-day openers in May and three in August. From Pigeon Point to the U.S./Mexico Border (Monterey area), there will be a series of multi-day openers from May through August. All openings are dependent on the remaining availability of the statewide harvest limit of 83,000 Chinook salmon. Additional fishing opportunities will be available in September from 38° 02' N. latitude to Pigeon Point with a separate harvest limit of 20,000 Chinook.

In California, all proposed fishing seasons include vessel-based landing and possession limits during open periods, along with established harvest limits. Additional requirements specify where fish may be landed and require fishermen to provide biological samples to state biologists upon request. A 24-hour quick-reporting requirement would also be in place to help monitor catch levels as the season progresses.

#### *Sport ocean season*

For the ocean salmon sport fishery from Cape Falcon to the Oregon/California border, the fishery opened for all salmon except coho in mid-March. A mark-selective coho fishery runs from early June through late August or until a 47,600 marked coho quota is

reached. Once the coho quota is reached, the all salmon except coho fishery continues until the end of August.

From Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain, an all salmon fishery with a non-mark-selective coho quota of 27,500 is open in September, or until the quota is reached. The fishery will continue for all salmon except coho until the end of October.

Off the coast of California, the sport fishery will open in a series of area-specific windows throughout the season. From the Oregon/California border to latitude 40°10' N. (California Klamath Management Zone) and from latitude 40°10' N. to Point Arena (Fort Bragg area), the fishery will be open from mid-June through mid-July and again during the month of August. Between Point Arena and Pigeon Point (San Francisco area), the season will run from late June through late July as well as the month of August. Farther south, from Pigeon Point to the U.S./Mexico border (Monterey area) the fishery will be open from mid-April through the end of August. All areas will operate under area-specific Chinook harvest guidelines and will close once those limits are reached.

In the fall, additional fishing opportunities are planned for September and October between 38°02' N. latitude and Pigeon Point, as well as in September in the Monterey area, or until the statewide fall harvest guideline of 20,000 Chinook salmon is achieved.

### **Management Objectives for Southern Resident Killer Whales**

The Council worked collaboratively with NMFS to understand the effects of Council-area fisheries on Southern Resident killer whales, which are listed as endangered. Based in part on information provided by the Council's ad-hoc Southern Resident Killer Whale Workgroup, the Council amended the Pacific Salmon Fishery Management Plan to address the needs of the whales while providing salmon harvest opportunities. As part of the amendment, the Council adopted a Chinook abundance threshold for the north of Falcon area, below which additional action (management measures) would be required when considering ocean salmon seasons. The threshold value is 623,000 Chinook. The Chinook abundance is projected to be well above this threshold in 2026.

### **Management Process**

“Collaboration among the Council, its advisors, stakeholders, and the public played a central role in shaping this year’s West Coast ocean salmon fisheries, with strong input from fishing communities helping guide the outcome,” said Merrick Burden, Executive Director of the Council. “Encouraging forecasts, especially for Klamath and Sacramento

River fall Chinook, have enabled more expanded fishing opportunities off of California this year, including the first commercial opening since 2022. At the same time, the final seasons remain focused on responsibly managing the resource and ensuring abundant salmon populations for the future.”

The Council developed three management alternatives in early March for public review and further analysis. The review process included input from Tribal, Federal, and state fishery scientists and fishing industry members; public testimony; and three public hearings hosted by the Council. At its April meeting (April 7-12), the Council consulted scientists, heard public comments, revised preliminary alternatives, and chose a final alternative.

The decision must be approved by NMFS. Coastal states will adopt fishery regulations for state-managed waters through their respective state commissions.

## **Council Role**

The Pacific Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 for the purpose of managing fisheries 3-200 miles offshore of the U.S. coastline. The Pacific Council recommends management measures for fisheries off the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington.

## **On the Web**

- [Pacific Fishery Management Council](http://www.pcouncil.org) (www.pcouncil.org)
- 2026 seasons adopted by the Council are on the '[Annual season management process](#)' page on the Council's website.
- Final analyses of the biological and socioeconomic impacts will be posted on the Council web page on or about April 23 ([look for 2025 Preseason Report III on this page](#))
- Fact sheet: [Salmon](#)
- Fact sheet: [Geography of Salmon](#)
- Fact sheet: [Common Terms Used in Salmon Management](#)

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