SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT ON SACRAMENTO RIVER FALL CHINOOK FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT - WORKGROUP REPORT, INITIAL SCOPING

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) received an overview of the Staff Report on the Sacramento River Fall Chinook (SRFC) Fishery Management Plan Amendment Development (Agenda Item G.4, Attachment 1) and Tentative Timeline for a Sacramento River Fall Chinook Fishery Management Plan Amendment (Agenda Item G.4, Attachment 2) from Staff Officer Angela Forristall, followed by an overview of portions of the Sacramento River Fall Chinook Workgroup Progress Report (Agenda Item G.4.a, SRWG Report 1) from Will Satterthwaite (SSC, Sacramento Fall Chinook Workgroup [SRWG] Chair). The SSC primarily discussed the proposed plan for peer review of the scientific elements of the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment process, with the understanding that the initial review would focus on S_{MSY}.

The SSC supports an additional peer review step for the re-estimation of S_{MSY} and offers some recommendations for how that review might be undertaken. Given the fairly exhaustive exploration by the SRWG of data sets and possible models that conform to the formula directed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council ($S_{MSY} = F_{MSY} * S_{MP}$), the SSC recommends the Basic peer review option outlined in Attachment 1. If the advisory feedback from that review is for additional analyses, an additional peer review might be scheduled in late summer or early fall of 2026, possibly spread out to allow for interactive review with iterations. The SSC notes that while some aspects of the Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panels may be helpful as a model for this peer review, such as having a general Terms of Reference document on which the SSC provides feedback and the need to provide clear rationale for analytical requests, other aspects are not transferable. For example, the SRWG makeup is quite different from that of most Stock Assessment Teams and the number of members who can help respond to technical requests is limited. Additionally, the computer models underlying the analyses are not in established software like Stock Synthesis, so changes must be programmed, debugged, and tested by the analysts for many types of requests. Therefore, an interactive peer review with "request and response" style iterations will likely require a longer time period than a typical STAR panel meeting. The SSC recommends that analytical requests should be pre-specified, including a rationale and guidance on the methods for evaluation of the current versus new analysis.

The SSC recommends that a peer review include SSC Salmon Subcommittee members and one or more independent reviewers, preferably with substantial knowledge of the SRFC and Sacramento River system. If the review cannot take place in California, where the main experts on SRFC and the Sacramento River system reside, as well as much of the interested public, the SSC recommends

a robust hybrid option to maximize participation of those with knowledge of and interest in the system.

The SSC notes that the current S_{MSY} value is based on flawed assumptions, compounded by an apparent math error (Agenda Item D.2.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1, November 2022, especially page 4) so timely action is necessary to be in compliance with National Standard 2.

PFMC
11/15/25