



## DECISIONS AT THE MARCH 2006 MEETING

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### ***Salmon Management***

#### **Inseason Action on March and April 2006 Fisheries**

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) recommended National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) take inseason action to suspend the scheduled March 15 through April 30 openings for commercial fisheries in the Fort Bragg area and the Oregon coast from Cape Falcon to the Oregon/California border, and the April 1 through April 30 California recreational fishery from Point Arena to Point Sur.

#### **Adoption of 2006 Management Options for Public Review**

Detailed information on this agenda item will be available on our website, <http://www.pcouncil.org/salmon/salcurr.html#2006>, early in the week of March 13, 2006. The Council will make recommendations for all fisheries for the May 1, 2006 through April 30, 2007 season at its April 2-7, 2006 meeting in Sacramento, California.

#### **Salmon Hearings Officers**

The Council appointed the following officers to the three salmon hearings on 2006 salmon season options. All hearings will begin at 7:00 p.m.

##### **March 27**

*The Chateau Westport, Westport, WA* – Bob Alverson, Mark Cedergreen, Phil Anderson, and Jim Harp representing the Council, and Peter Dygert representing NMFS;

*Coos Bay Red Lion Hotel, Coos Bay, OR* – Frank Warrens and Curt Melcher representing the Council, and Frank Lockhart representing NMFS;

##### **March 28**

*Flamingo Hotel, Santa Rosa, CA* – Roger Thomas representing the Council, and Eric Chavez representing NMFS.

#### **Fishery Management Plan Amendment Scoping for *de minimis* Fisheries Associated with Klamath River Fall Chinook Impacts**

The Council identified two issues for consideration of a Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP) amendment:

1. Modifying the criteria and Council action for a Conservation Alert; and
2. Modifying the Klamath River fall chinook conservation objective. The intent of the FMP amendment would be to address implementation of *de minimis* fisheries associated with temporarily depressed stock status and to examine the use of "escapement floor" terminology.

The Council also identified three possible alternatives to be analyzed:

1. Use of a sliding scale for a spawner reduction rate as suggested by the Klamath Fishery Management Council;

2. Prescribing an exploitation rate level ( $\leq 5\%$  or  $10\%$  were cited) below which fisheries could be prosecuted without significant impact on stocks of concern; and
3. Use of an exploitation matrix that takes into account such things as the abundance of the stock in question, the abundance of co-mingled healthy stocks and technical uncertainty.

A workgroup scheduled be formed from interested state and federal agencies, tribes, Council advisors and staff, and others. The workgroup will conduct analyses for Council consideration and may develop other alternatives.

The Council will review the preliminary analyses and adopt a final range of reasonable alternatives for detailed analysis, including a preferred alternative if possible, at its June 2006 meeting in Foster City, California. At its September 2006 meeting, the Council would review an analysis of the alternatives and adopt a preferred alternative for public review. Final action is tentatively planned for the November 2006 Council meeting in San Diego, California.

## ***Pacific Halibut Management***

### **Incidental Catch Regulations for the Salmon Troll and Fixed Gear Sablefish Fisheries**

The Council adopted public review options for the 2006 incidental halibut catch in both the salmon troll fishery and the fixed gear sablefish fishery. These options are:

#### **Salmon Troll Fishery**

- 1a Restrict to one halibut per three chinook landed, allow one additional halibut to be landed without meeting the 1:3 ratio, and limit each landing to 35 halibut.
- 1b Restrict to one halibut per two chinook landed, allow one additional halibut to be landed without meeting the 1:2 ratio, and limit each landing to 40 halibut.
- 1c Restrict to one halibut per three chinook landed, allow one additional halibut to be landed without meeting the 1:3 ratio, and limit each landing to 24 halibut.
- 1 Designate the “C-shaped” yelloweye rockfish conservation area in the North Coast subarea (Washington Marine Area 3) as an area to be voluntarily avoided for salmon troll fishing to protect yelloweye rockfish.

NOTE: Option 2 may be combined with either Option 1a, 1b or 1c.

#### **Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery**

- 1 Restrict landing to two halibut plus an additional 100 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish.
- 2 Restrict landings to 120 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish, and allow two additional halibut in excess of the 100 pounds per 1,000 pounds ratio per landing.
- 3 Restrict landings to 80 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish, and allow two additional halibut in excess of the 100 pounds per 1,000 pounds ratio per landing.

## **Groundfish Management**

### **Stock Assessment Planning for the 2009-2010 Fishing Season**

The Council adopted for public review the following list of groundfish stocks to be assessed next year for 2009-2010 management decisionmaking as well as a tentative listing of possible stocks to be assessed in the subsequent two fishing cycles.

#### **2009-2010 Fishing Season**

##### **Full Assessments**

Bocaccio Rockfish  
Canary Rockfish  
Chilipepper Rockfish  
Arrowtooth Flounder  
Darkblotched Rockfish  
Sablefish  
Black Rockfish (coastwide)  
Longnose Skate  
Spiny Dogfish  
Blue Rockfish

##### **Updated Assessments**

Cowcod  
Widow Rockfish  
Yelloweye Rockfish \*  
Pacific Ocean Perch  
Petrale Sole

\* May be recommended for a full assessment in April

The Council also adopted for public review a draft Stock Assessment Terms of Reference with many changes from the adopted version. The Council requests, in particular, for public comment on whether Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and Groundfish Advisory Subpanel representatives to future Stock Assessment Review panels should be full participants, not just advisors. Final actions on these two issues are scheduled for the April Council meeting.

### **Yelloweye Stock Assessment**

The Council adopted a new yelloweye rockfish stock assessment and rebuilding analysis for use in 2007-2008 management decisionmaking. The Council also tasked the GMT and Scientific and Statistical Committee to explore the major data issues in the new assessment and provide recommendations to the Council on data improvements at the November Council meeting.

### **Pacific Whiting Management for 2006**

The Council adopted a new acceptable biological catch (ABC) and a status quo optimum yield (OY) for the 2006 whiting fisheries as follows:

0. Coastwide (U.S. and Canada) ABC of 661,680 mt based on the more conservative  $q=1$  assessment model,
0. Coastwide (U.S. and Canada) OY of 364,842 mt, and
0. U.S. OY of 269,069 mt.
0. The tribal allocation will be 35,000 mt.

The Council announced the intent to adopt a darkblotched bycatch cap for non-tribal whiting sectors at the April or later Council meeting and during the inseason adjustment agenda item, adopted bycatch caps of 4.7 mt and 200 mt for canary and widow rockfish, respectively.

## Consideration of Inseason Adjustments

The Council adopted conforming federal inseason adjustments for 2006 recreational fisheries as follows:

### Washington Recreational

Prohibit retention of rockfish and lingcod seaward of the 20 fm contour (or the state line if this is closer inshore) from May 22-Sept. 30 in Marine Areas 3 and 4 on days when halibut fishing is closed.

Prohibit retention of rockfish and lingcod seaward of the 30 fm contour from March 18-June 15 in Marine Area 2.

Prohibit retention of groundfish, except sablefish and Pacific cod, south of Leadbetter Pt. when Pacific halibut are on board.

### Oregon Recreational

Reduce the marine fish bag from 10 fish per day to 6 fish per day.

Prohibit retention of groundfish, except sablefish and Pacific cod, north of Cape Falcon when Pacific halibut are on board.

Prohibit retention of groundfish, except sablefish, south of Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain during days open to the “all-depth” Pacific halibut fishery.

The Council also adopted the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife groundfish discard mortality rates for modeling impacts in Oregon recreational fisheries. Finally, the Council adopted canary and widow rockfish total mortality limits of 4.7 mt and 200 mt, respectively for non-tribal Pacific whiting fisheries.

## ***Habitat***

### **Current Habitat Issues**

After review of the Habitat Committee's proposed letter on relicensing of Iron Gate, Copco 1, Copco 2, and J. C. Boyle dams on the Klamath River, the Council scheduled further consideration for the April Council meeting, pending additional information. The Council also postponed discussion of a proposed liquefied natural gas terminal on the Columbia River until June, pending new information and additional discussion of this matter by the Habitat Committee.

## ***Coastal Pelagic Species Management***

### **Fishery Management Plan Amendment – Krill Management**

The Council took final action adopting Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan Amendment 12 to prohibit harvest of all species of krill in the U. S. Exclusive Economic Zone. Additionally, the Council adopted an essential fish habitat designation for all species of krill that extends the length of the West Coast from the shoreline to the 1,000 fm isobath and to a depth of 400 meters. No habitat areas of particular concern were identified.

## ***Marine Protected Areas***

### **Fishery Regulation in Marine Protected Areas (MPA) within the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS) through Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) and State Management Authority**

The Council scheduled further development of alternatives for implementing fishing regulations under the MSA to create the proposed no-take and limited take areas within the CINMS to meet sanctuary goals and objectives. Specifically, the Council will pursue further consideration of existing MSA provisions for extending state fishery regulations into federal waters, and directed Council staff to work with NMFS Southwest Region and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) General Counsel to provide further detail on the functional necessities of this mechanism. Additionally, Council staff was directed to research the existing administrative record on this matter for relevant content for an update at the April Council meeting.

Finally, the Council directed staff to summarize Council comments on a NOAA flow chart to improve coordination regarding promulgation of fishing regulations in National Marine Sanctuaries for public review and further consideration at the April Council meeting.

## ***Highly Migratory Species Management***

### **Bigeye Tuna Overfishing Response**

The Council asked for additional information to be included in analysis of management options for Pacific bigeye tuna. The Council will select their preferred recommendation on a bigeye tuna overfishing response at the April 2006 Council meeting. These recommendations will be forwarded through NMFS for consideration by the U.S. delegation to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), as part of the U.S. position at the June 2006 IATTC meeting.

### **Drift Gillnet Management**

The Council adopted a recommendation to NMFS to authorize an exempted fishing permit (EFP) that would allow drift gillnet fishing in the current August 15-November 15 closed area. The EFP fishery would be governed by several requirements for all vessels, including, to carry an observer; to limit total fishing effort in the EFP fishery to 300 sets; to immediately cease the EFP fishery if, and when, two leatherback sea turtles were encountered by the fishing gear; and to immediately cease the EFP fishery if one mortality or serious injury occurred to any of the following marine mammals: short-finned pilot whale, sperm whale, fin whale, gray whale, humpback whale, or minke whale.

### **Exempted Fishing Permit Applications for Highly Migratory Species**

The Council approved the EFP proposal for a drift gillnet fishery as part of the preferred alternative selected as described under the drift gillnet management agenda item.

The Council considered a second EFP proposed to allow one vessel to use longline gear in the West Coast EEZ, which is prohibited under the highly migratory species (HMS) fishery management plan.

The Council preliminarily approved the EFP application and directed the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) to prepare an environmental assessment for Council final consideration at a later meeting. If finally approved, the EFP would occur in 2007.

## ***Administrative Matters***

### **Legislative Matters**

The Council directed staff to send two letters to convey solicited Council input on two important legislative items. First, regarding reauthorization of the MSA, the Council recommends removing MSA language requiring term limits for the Council tribal representative seat and reiterating previous Council positions on issues that have not been incorporated into the most recent version of S. 2012, including fishery management authority in national marine sanctuaries and rebuilding requirements for depleted stocks.

Second, regarding potential amendment of the American Fisheries Act (AFA), the Council requested development of provisions to protect West Coast fisheries from potential influx of AFA-qualified vessels that do not have a West Coast landing history prior to a Council adopted control date of June 29, 2000.

Lastly, the Council requested the Legislative Committee discuss S.2012 language regarding implementation of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention as well as legislation regarding qualified withdrawals from the Capital Construction Fund. The next Legislative Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for mid-May.

### **Appointments to Advisory Bodies, Standing Committees, and Other Forums**

The Council approved the following appointments to its advisory bodies:

#### **Highly Migratory Species Management Team - Indefinite Term**

Mr. Stephen Wertz – California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) Representative to replace Mr. Stephen Crooke.

#### **Groundfish Management Team - Indefinite Term**

Mr. John Wallace - NMFS Northwest Science Center Representative, to replace Dr. Jim Hastie

The Council announced a proposed modification to Council Operating Procedure 3, which would change one NMFS Southwest Science Center seat to a NMFS Southwest Region seat. The position could be filled at the April Council meeting pending approval of the proposed modification at that meeting.

### **Draft April 2006 Council Meeting Agenda**

The Council adopted the draft agenda for the April 2006 Council meeting to be held April 2-7, 2006 in Sacramento, California. The draft agenda will be available on the Council website <http://www.pcouncil.org/> during the month of March 2006.