



LIST OF DECISIONS AT THE MARCH 2008 PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETING

Highly Migratory Species Management

Yellowfin Tuna Overfishing

In order to address the requirements of Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Section 304(i), the Council adopted the following recommendations.

For domestic regulations to address the relative impact of U.S. fishing vessels on the stock, the Council recommends that no new conservation measures are needed.

For international actions that will end overfishing, taking into account the relative impact of vessels of other nations and vessels of the U.S.:

1. Set a total allowable catch (TAC) of 200,000 metric tons for yellowfin taken by purse seine in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) to reduce fishing mortality to a level sufficient to end overfishing on the stock.
2. Reduce capacity in the purse seine fishery, consistent with Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) resolutions C-00-10 and C-02-03 to control total fishing capacity.
3. Design and implement an IATTC program to collect information on fish aggregating devices and assess their impacts on target stocks, especially juvenile tunas.
4. Implement time-area closures consistent with measures identified by the IATTC scientific staff.

High Seas Shallow-Set Longline Amendment

The Council adopted the following alternatives for public review to establish a management framework for a shallow-set longline (SSLL) fishery outside of the west coast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which is currently prohibited. Further detail on these alternatives will be provided in the next Council newsletter or posted on the Council website.

- Alternative 1: Status quo.
- Alternative 2: A west coast limited entry program for SSLL seaward of the west coast EEZ - Qualification to receive one of these limited entry permits would be based on criteria that would involve prior landings of swordfish, a number of years of fishing experience, or ownership of a drift gillnet permit.
- Alternative 3: Establish a management framework without a limited entry permit program.

An analysis of these alternatives will be distributed for public review in mid-2008 with the intention that the Council will select a preferred alternative at their September meeting.

Exempted Fishing Permit for Longline Fishing in the West Coast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

The Council recommended that the exempted fishing permit (EFP) application submitted to the Council to allow a single vessel to fish with shallow-set longline gear inside the west coast EEZ be forwarded for public review, with the proviso that fishing occur between September and December. The EFP covers the same type of activity that was recommended by the Council in 2007 but did not occur in 2007. The only difference between the activity as recommended by the Council for 2007 and that now advanced for 2008 is that fishing would be prohibited within 50 nautical miles of the coast instead of 30 nautical miles. If the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) review and approval process cannot be completed in time for the EFP fishery to occur in 2008, then the Council recommends it occur in 2009 and 2010 without need for further Council review.

Salmon Management

Review of 2007 Fisheries and Summary of 2008 Stock Abundance Estimates

The Council reviewed new stock forecast information for the Sacramento River fall Chinook, and Oregon coastal natural (OCN) coho, and adopted 2008 forecasting methodologies for these stocks that result in pre-season abundance estimates of about 59,000 Sacramento fall Chinook and 60,000 OCN coho. The spawning escapement goal for the aggregate Sacramento fall Chinook natural and hatchery stock is 122,000 – 180,000.

The Council also tasked the Executive Director with sending a letter to NMFS Administrator Dr. Jim Balsiger requesting the West Coast Science Centers take the lead in convening a multi-agency workgroup to (1) comprehensively evaluate all potential causative factors of the collapse of the 2004 and 2005 Sacramento River fall Chinook stock, (2) explain how ocean conditions may be affecting West Coast salmon stocks on a regional level, and (3) advance ideas for improved forecasting of key West Coast salmon stocks. The intent is to have the workgroup report back to the Council at the September Council meeting in Boise, Idaho for potential use in the 2009 salmon fishery management cycle.

Identification of Stocks Not Meeting Conservation Objectives

The Council confirmed the Sacramento River fall Chinook stock has triggered a Conservation Alert according to terms of the Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP), in that abundance is forecasted to be at a level below the spawning level conservation goal even if all ocean salmon fisheries are closed. Consequently, the Council requested the California Department of Fish and Game, NMFS, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify the probable cause(s) for the stock depression. The assessment is to be completed no later than March 2009.

The Council noted Queets River and Quillayute River spring/summer Chinook have not met their conservation objective in at least the last three years, but noted the Salmon Technical Team (STT) evaluation that both stocks are exceptions to the FMP Overfishing Criteria because

Council area fisheries impacts are less than 5%. However, the Council tasked the STT with confirming Council area fishery impacts rates and the Habitat Committee with an assessment of the status of those stocks.

Adoption of 2008 Management Options for Public Review

Three options for ocean salmon fisheries were adopted for public review. Detailed information on these fisheries is available on the Council website, www.pcouncil.org. The Council will develop a preferred option for all ocean salmon fisheries for the May 1, 2008 through April 30, 2009 season at its April 7-11, 2008 meeting in Seattle, Washington.

The Council also recommended that NMFS take inseason action to close the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain commercial and recreational salmon fisheries between March 15 and at least April 30, close the Fort Bragg recreational salmon fishery between April 1 and at least April 14, and close the Fort Bragg commercial salmon fishery April 7-25.

Klamath River Fall Chinook Stock Assessment and Management Recommendations

The Council reviewed an assessment of factors affecting the low natural area spawning escapements of Klamath River fall Chinook (KRFC) in 2004-2006, which were less than the spawning conservation objective and technically placed this stock in the category of an Overfishing Concern. The report also included 13 recommendations regarding actions to end the Overfishing Concern and reduce the chances of subsequently entering into another Overfishing Concern designation in the future. The Council concurred that fishing mortality contributed to the escapement shortfall and adopted 12 of the 13 recommendations in the report, after modifying two of the recommendations. The criteria adopted for ending the Overfishing Concern, specific to KRFC and this particular designation event, was to achieve the 35,000 adult natural spawning escapement floor in three of four consecutive years or to achieve an escapement of at least 40,700 (the maximum sustained yield level) in two consecutive years. KRFC natural spawning escapement in 2007 was approximately 59,700 adults. A full description of the 12 actions adopted by the Council will be available on the Council website (www.pcouncil.org) in the near future.

Appoint Salmon Hearings Officers

The Council appointed the following officers to the three salmon hearings on 2008 salmon season options. All hearings will begin at 7:00 p.m.

March 31

The Chateau Westport, Westport, WA –Mark Cedergreen and Phil Anderson representing the Council, and Peter Dygert representing NMFS;

Coos Bay Red Lion Hotel, Coos Bay, OR – Rod Moore and Steve Williams representing the Council, and Sarah McAvinchey representing NMFS;

April 1

Red Lion Hotel Eureka –Dan Wolford and Marija Vojkovich representing the Council, and Mark Helvey representing NMFS.

Groundfish Management

Stock Assessment Planning for 2011-2012 Management Measures

The Council adopted for public review the following stock assessments to be done next year for the 2011-12 management period.

Full Assessments	Update Assessments	Assessment Methodology Development for Consideration in the 2013-14 Cycle
Bocaccio	Canary Rockfish	Minor Slope Rockfish
Widow Rockfish	Cowcod	(includes Bank Rockfish)
Yelloweye Rockfish	Lingcod	Minor Shelf Rockfish
Petrale Sole	Pacific Ocean Perch	Minor Nearshore Rockfish
Spiny Dogfish	Darkblotched Rockfish	
Cabazon		
Bronzespotted Rockfish*		
Greenspotted Rockfish*		

*May be only a data report.

The Council also adopted for public review a draft stock assessment and review terms of reference as provided in Agenda Item F.2.c, Supplemental Attachment 1, modified by striking the new language in the 2nd paragraph on page 6 (paragraph starting with “Presuming two full stock assessments are under review ...”). They also adopted for public review a draft terms of reference for groundfish rebuilding analyses as provided in Agenda Item F.2.c, Supplemental Attachment 2.

The Council is inviting public comment on the proposed stock assessments and terms of reference preparatory to making decisions at the June Council meeting in Foster City, CA.

Pacific Whiting Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for 2008

The Council adopted a new whiting assessment (Agenda Item F.3.a, Attachment 1) for deciding 2008 Pacific whiting harvest specifications and management measures. The SSC recommended adopting the stock assessment and a mid-point acceptable biological catch (ABC) value of 656,604 mt.

They also adopted the following harvest specifications for 2008 fisheries:

- a coastwide (U.S. + Canada) ABC of 400,000 mt,
- a coastwide optimum yield (OY) of 364,842 mt,
- a U.S. OY of 269,545 mt, and
- a treaty allocation of 35,000 mt.

The Council also decided total catch limits for non-treaty whiting sectors for canary rockfish, darkblotched rockfish, and widow rockfish of 4.7 mt, 40 mt, and 275 mt, respectively. If any of these total catch limits are attained inseason, the whiting fishery will close for all non-treaty sectors even if whiting allocations have not been attained.

Fishery Management Plan Amendment 22: Open Access License Limitation

The Council modified the preliminary draft environmental assessment as follows:

1. Remove Alternative 5, which required vessel consolidation to reduce fleet size.
2. Modify Alternative 3 to have (a) an average fleet size of 680 vessels and (b) a fleet size goal of 710 vessels, the 2006 fleet size.
3. Report on numbers of vessels meeting various trip (landing) requirements and poundage landings in various landing period categories.
4. Conduct a review of the program every seven years.
5. For all alternatives, analyze impacts on Washington fishermen and Oregon vessel owners.
6. Provide for issuance of B permits for landings in the respective states.
7. Add a “no transfer” provision in Alternative 6.
8. Remove gear and vessel length endorsement from the environmental assessment.

Tracking and Monitoring for Trawl Rationalization Program

The Council directed that analysis proceed of the trawl rationalization alternatives using the tracking and monitoring program alternatives. The Council modified objectives based on the Groundfish Management Team (GMT), Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP), and Enforcement Consultants (EC) recommendations, as well as some adjustments to options on retention requirements and the use of cameras. A full description of the refined tracking and monitoring program alternatives will be posted on the Council website in the near future.

Consideration of Inseason Adjustments

Limited Entry Non-Whiting Trawl Fishery:

Adjustments to Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area boundaries North of 40°10’:

- From Cape Alava to Leadbetter Point: Adjust period 5 boundaries from 75 – 150 fathoms to 60 – 150 fathoms.
- From Leadbetter Point to the OR/WA Border: Adjust period 3 boundaries from 60 – 150 fathoms to 60 – 200 fathoms.
- From OR/WA Border to Cape Falcon: Adjust period 3 and 4 boundaries from 75 – 200 fathoms to 75 – 150 fathoms.
- From Humbug mountain to 40°10’’: Adjust period 3, 4, and 5 boundaries from 75 – 200 fathoms to 60 – 200 fathoms.

Adjustments to Trawl Cumulative Limits:

- Adjust sablefish limits to 19,000 lbs per two months in periods 3, 4, and 5 for vessels using large footrope trawl gear in the north and large and small footrope trawl gear in the south.
- Adjust shortspine limits to 25,000 lbs per two months in periods 3, 4, 5, and 6 for vessels using large footrope trawl gear north of 40°10" and large and small footrope trawl gear south of 40°10".
- Adjust slope rockfish limits to 15,000 lbs per two months in periods 3, 4, and 5 for vessels using large and small footrope trawl gear between 40°10" and 38° N latitude.
- Adjust Dover sole limits for vessels using selective flatfish trawl gear north of 40°10" to 40,000 lbs per two months in periods 3, 4, and 5.
- Adjust Other Flatfish limits for vessels using selective flatfish trawl gear north of 40°10" to 50,000 lbs per two months in periods 3, 4, 5, and 6.
- Adjust petrale limits for vessels using selective flatfish trawl gear north of 40°10" to 18,000 lbs per two months in periods 3, 4, and 5.

Open Access Sablefish Daily-Trip-Limit Fishery North of the Conception Area:

- Reduce the bimonthly limit from 2,400 lbs to 2,200 lbs per two months.

California Recreational Groundfish Fishery

- Establish a 20 fathom depth restriction in the North and North Central management areas.
- Five Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Areas will be established in the North and North-Central Management Areas through state regulation.

Pacific Halibut Management

Report on the International Pacific Halibut Commission Meeting

The Council agreed to form an informal Pacific Halibut Workgroup to coordinate Area 2A input and participate in the planned International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) workshop on catch area apportionment. Committee members are to include representatives of federal, state, and tribal fish management agencies, and stakeholder advisors. It is anticipated the Pacific Halibut Workgroup will first meet in late June, in Portland, Oregon.

Incidental Catch Regulations in the Salmon Troll and Fixed Gear Sablefish Fisheries

The Council adopted public review options for the 2008 incidental halibut catch in both the salmon troll fishery and the fixed gear sablefish fishery, in addition to status quo. These options are:

Salmon Troll Fishery

- Option 1a Status quo - no more than one halibut per three Chinook landed, with one additional halibut landed without meeting the 1:3 ratio, and no more than 35 halibut per trip.

- Option 1b No more than one halibut per two Chinook landed, with one additional halibut landed without meeting the 1:2 ratio, and no more than 35 halibut per trip.

- Option 2 Designate the “C-shaped” yelloweye rockfish conservation area in the North Coast subarea (Washington Marine Areas 3 and 4) 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 or 1b.

Fixed Gear Sablefish Fishery North of Point Chehalis

- Option 1 Restrict landings to 80 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish, and allow two additional halibut per landing in excess of the 80 pounds per 1,000 pounds ratio.

- Option 2 Status quo - restrict landings to 100 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish, and allow two additional halibut per landing in excess of the 100 pounds per 1,000 pounds ratio.

- Option 3 Restrict landings to 150 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish, and allow two additional halibut per landing in excess of the 150 pounds per 1,000 pounds ratio.

Administrative Matters

Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization Implementation

The Council reviewed a proposed rule for expedited, uniform, and regionally-based exempted fishing permits. The Council’s existing procedures for approving EFPs are consistent with the proposed changes to the regulations and the Council offered no formal comments at this time.

The Council anticipates NMFS guidance on establishing annual catch limits and accountability measures designed to prevent overfishing and a proposed rule for a new environmental review process for fishery management actions will be published in the near future. The Council will schedule its review of these materials accordingly.

Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

The Council appointed the following persons to its advisory bodies:

Mr. Edward J. Dick to the NMFS Southwest Fishery Science Center (SWFSC) position on the GMT, replacing Dr. John Field.

Dr. Theresa Tsou to the WDFW position on the SSC, replacing Mr. Tom Jagielo.

Mr. Buzz Brizendine to the southern charter boat operator position on the HMSAS, replacing Mr. Robert Fletcher.

Mr. Larry Hanson to the CDFG position on the HC, replacing Mr. Steve Turek. Also, Ms. Vicki Frey will be Mr. Larry Hanson's designated alternate.

The Council approved final revisions to COP 15, Salmon Estimation Methodology Updates and Review, as provided in Agenda Item B.3.a, Attachment 1, with edits in the first paragraph as provided in Agenda Item B.3.a, Supplemental Attachment 2.

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