

**Decision Summary Document**  
**Pacific Fishery Management Council**  
**March 2-7, 2012**

The Council Meeting Decision Summary Documents are highlights of decisions made at Council meetings. For a more detailed account of Council meeting discussions, see the [Council meeting minutes and voting logs](#) or the [Council newsletter](#).

**SALMON MANAGEMENT**

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**Review of 2011 Fisheries and Summary of 2012 Stock Abundance Forecasts**

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The Council reviewed 2011 catch and return information and approved 2012 stock abundance forecasts for Council managed salmon stocks for use in modeling 2012 ocean salmon fisheries presented in Preseason Report I. The Sacramento River fall Chinook (SRFC) and Klamath River fall Chinook (KRFC) stocks both experienced record high returns of two year old fish (jacks) in 2011, resulting in forecasts of very high ocean abundance in 2012; several other stocks are forecasted at strong levels of abundance, such as Oregon Coastal coho, Queets River coho, and Lower Columbia River Hatchery Chinook, while some stocks are forecasted at below average abundance, such as Columbia River coho. For SRFC, the Council adopted a new, substantially more conservative forecast on the basis of poor performance of recent forecasts; the new forecast is for an ocean abundance approximately one third of what would have been predicted using the former methodology, but at approximately 800,000 adult fish, it still results in over double the high end of the spawning conservation objective for this stock after all ocean and river fisheries currently under consideration.

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**Rebuilding Plan Consideration for Sacramento River Fall Chinook and Strait of Juan de Fuca Coho Rebuilding Plans**

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The Council adopted alternatives for a rebuilding plan for SRFC, which is now classified as overfished on the basis of the new status determination criteria in Amendment 16. The alternatives involve potential modification of the harvest control rule for SRFC and will be analyzed with the alternatives for 2012 ocean salmon regulations (see below). The Council will take final action on the SRFC rebuilding plan at its April 2012 meeting. The forecasted abundance of SRFC in 2012 is high enough that all rebuilding alternatives are expected to be achieved in 2012.

After reviewing the natural spawning escapement level for Strait of Juan de Fuca coho, the Council formally acknowledged that this stock has rebuilt to maximum sustainable yield levels, thus ending its status in the overfished category. Therefore, a rebuilding plan will not be necessary.

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## Salmon Essential Fish Habitat Amendment 17 Scoping

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The Council considered the scope of issues to be included in salmon fishery management plan (FMP) Amendment 17, and recommended developing an alternatives document for consideration at a subsequent Council meeting. The Council included a variety of non-essential fish habitat issues for further scoping, as described in March Agenda Item G.6.b., Supplemental PFMC and NMFS Report, and including the issue of an abundance-based management regime for California coastal Chinook salmon. Council staff is expected to review the additional issues, and report on the workload and schedule impacts of their inclusion in Amendment 17.

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## Adoption of 2012 Management Alternatives for Public Review

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Three alternatives for ocean salmon fisheries were adopted for public review. Detailed information on these ocean salmon fisheries is available on the Council website at, <http://www.pcouncil.org/salmon/current-season-management/#adopted>. The Council will develop a preferred alternative for all ocean salmon fisheries for the May 1, 2012 through April 30, 2013 season at its April 1-6, 2012 meeting in Seattle, Washington.

The Council also recommended that National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) take inseason action to delay the scheduled March 15 opening of the Cape Falcon to Oregon/California border commercial fishery until April 1, 2012.

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## Salmon Hearings Officers

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The Council appointed the following officers to the three salmon hearings on 2012 salmon season options. All hearings will begin at 7:00 p.m.

| Date Day/Time                 | Location   | Council          | NMFS            | USCG                  | Staff          | Salmon Team       | Meeting Facility Contact  |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|---|
| March 26<br>Monday<br>7 p.m.  | Chateau Westport<br>Beach Room<br>710 West Hancock<br>Westport, WA 98595             | Phil<br>Anderson | Peter<br>Dygart | CWO Jerry<br>Farmer   | Mike<br>Burner | Doug<br>Milward   | Richard<br>(360) 268-9101<br>Phone<br>(360) 268-1646 Fax          |
| March 26<br>Monday<br>7 p.m.  | Red Lion Hotel<br>South Umpqua Room<br>1313 North Bayshore Dr<br>Coos Bay, OR 97420  | Jeff<br>Feldner  | Peggy<br>Mundy  | LCDR Clint<br>Prindle | Chuck<br>Tracy | Craig<br>Foster   | Kristin McDonald<br>(541) 269-4099<br>Phone<br>(541) 269-4060 Fax |
| March 27<br>Tuesday<br>7 p.m. | Red Lion Hotel Eureka<br>Humboldt Bay Room<br>1929 Fourth Street<br>Eureka, CA 95501 | David<br>Crabbe  | Heidi<br>Taylor | CWO Curtis<br>Barthel | Chuck<br>Tracy | Jennifer<br>Simon | Tami Myer<br>(707) 445-0844<br>Phone<br>(707) 441-4725 Fax        |

a/ The Council will also receive public comment at the Seattle, Washington meeting during the week of April 1-6, 2012.

## **PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGEMENT**

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

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The Council adopted the following public review options for the 2012 incidental halibut catch in the salmon troll fishery beginning May 1:

Option 1      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 2      No more than one halibut per four Chinook landed, with one additional halibut landed without meeting the 1:4 ratio, and no more than 20 halibut per trip.

Option 3      No more than one halibut per five Chinook landed, with one additional halibut landed without meeting the 1:5 ratio, and no more than 15 halibut per trip.

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

The Council adopted the following public review options for the 2012 incidental halibut catch in the Limited entry directed sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis beginning May 1:

Option 1      Restrict landings to 100 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per trip.

Option 2      Restrict landings to 50 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut per 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish, and allow two additional halibut per landing in excess of the 50 pounds per 1,000 pounds ratio.

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### **Update on Review of Pacific Halibut Management under the National Environmental Policy Act and Status of Preliminary Alternatives for Incidental Catch Retention of Pacific Halibut in the Limited Entry Fixed Gear Sablefish Fisheries**

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The Council decided to suspend consideration of Pacific halibut bycatch retention in fixed gear sablefish fisheries south of Point Chehalis, Washington, pending identification of a lead entity for the analytical process.

## **GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT**

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### **Planning and Necessary Actions for the 2012-2013 Pacific Whiting Fishing Seasons, Including Potential Impacts from the Pacific Dawn Litigation**

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The Council decided to set aside 2,000 metric ton of Pacific whiting yield from directed 2012 whiting fisheries to accommodate projected whiting catch in research activities and incidental bycatch in pink shrimp trawl and other fisheries in 2012. For the first time, the Pacific whiting harvest specifications will be decided in a separate international process according to the newly implemented U.S.-Canada Pacific Whiting Treaty; decisions are slated for March 14-15, 2012.

The Council adopted a process for deciding a remedy to meet the court order in the Pacific Dawn litigation. The Council scheduled a three meeting process, with selection of new base period alternatives to occur at the April 2012 Council meeting, reception of detailed analysis of alternatives and selection of a preliminary preferred alternative at the June 2012 Council meeting, and final action at the September 2012 Council meeting. NMFS also indicated their intent to prepare an advance notice of rule making to suspend trading of quota shares, previously scheduled to begin in 2013.

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**Briefing on and Limited Actions for Emerging Issues in the 2013-2014 Biennial Management Cycle**

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The Council adopted preferred harvest specifications, in metric tons (mt) for lingcod and the Other Fish complex as follows:

| Stock or Stock Complex | 2013 OFL | 2014 OFL | 2013 ABC | 2014 ABC | PPA ACLs |       |
|------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------|
|                        |          |          |          |          | 2013     | 2014  |
| Lingcod N. of 40°10'   | 3,334    | 3,162    | 3,036    | 2,878    | 3,036    | 2,878 |
| Lingcod S. of 40°10'   | 1,334    | 1,276    | 1,111    | 1,063    | 1,111    | 1,063 |
| Other Fish             | 6,832    | 6,802    | 4,717    | 4,697    | 4,717    | 4,697 |

Further action on deciding 2013 and 2014 harvest specifications and management measures will occur at the April and June Council meetings.

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**Scoping for Amendment 24: Improvements to the Groundfish Management Process**

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The Council commenced scoping for an amendment to the Groundfish FMP (Amendment 24) to address problems that have become apparent about the current biennial process for developing harvest specifications and management measures. The Council decided to form an ad hoc workgroup tasked with drafting a purpose and objectives statement, and initiating analysis of potential alternatives towards the goal of developing a preliminary range of detailed alternatives for Council consideration at the November 2012 Council meeting. Appointments to the workgroup are expected to be made at the April 2012 Council meeting. At the November meeting, the Council will decide on a target schedule for completing the amendment for timely implementation.

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**Stock Assessment Planning for Management Specifications in the 2015-2016 Fisheries**

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The Council adopted a preliminary list, for public review, of stocks to be assessed in 2013 for use in managing 2015-16 groundfish fisheries. Darkblotched rockfish, bocaccio, petrale sole, shortspine thornyhead, longspine thornyhead, cowcod, aurora rockfish, and Pacific sanddabs were adopted for full assessment. Pacific ocean perch and sablefish were adopted for update assessment. Canary and yelloweye rockfish were adopted for data reports.

Three terms of reference that will dictate the stock assessment and review process will be considered for preliminary adoption at the June Council meeting. Final adoption of a list of stocks for assessment, the three terms of reference, and a schedule of stock assessment review panel meetings will be decided at the September Council meeting.

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### **Consideration of Inseason Adjustments**

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The Council considered the performance of the individual fishing quota (IFQ) fishery in 2011 and progress to date in 2012, and adopted changes in the shoreward boundary of the trawl Rockfish Conservation Area from 75 to 100 fathoms for the area 40'10 to 48'10 N. latitude, in Periods 3 and 5.

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### **Harvest Set-Aside Flexibility**

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The Council adopted as a range of alternatives for managing the distribution of unused harvest set-asides, for analysis in the 2013-2014 management cycle environmental impact statement, as per the following:

Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 from Agenda Item F.7.a, Attachment 1 and a hybrid alternative that uses the catch projection methodology from Alternative 3 and the prescribed allocations under Alternative 2.

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### **Trawl Rationalization Trailing Actions and Allocation Amendments and Actions**

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At its March meeting, the Council adopted preliminary preferred alternatives for most of the Council list of items for the second trawl rationalization program improvement and enhancements (PIE) rule, including the whiting season (PIE 2, Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachment 1); provided guidance on the NMFS list for PIE 2 (Agenda Item F.8.b, NMFS Report 2); authorized the convening of a one-day public workshop of the Enforcement Consultants and interested members of the Groundfish Management Team and Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, to address the gear changes rule (Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachment 4), to occur just prior to the June, 2012 Council meeting; and put updating the midwater chafing gear regulations on a priority track with the goal of implementation on time for the 2013 whiting season. The Council also indicated its intent to consider reallocation of the widow quota shares (QS), now that widow rockfish has been rebuilt, and in April will address the need to extend the moratorium on widow rockfish QS trading in order to facilitate the reallocation. Finally, the Council discussed delays on trailing actions that would result from workload related to the need to consider the reallocation of whiting quota shares for the IFQ fishery and catch history allocations for the mothership catcher vessel permits, in response to the remand on these issues from the Pacific Dawn case. In order to ensure timely progress on these reallocation issues, it was decided that at its April meeting the Council would consider only those issues which could be implemented with minimal adjustments to regulatory language and minimal accompanying analysis.

## **COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT**

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### **Exempted Fishing Permits for 2012**

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The Council voted to adopt the Northwest Aerial Sardine Survey proposal for public review, with final recommendations scheduled for the April 2012 Council meeting.

## **HABITAT**

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### **Current Habitat Issues**

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The Council directed the Habitat Committee to draft a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers on their levee vegetation management policies. The Council also tasked the Habitat Committee with preparing a draft letter for Council consideration supporting use of Trinity reservoir stored water to enhance migration and spawning flows in the Trinity and lower Klamath Rivers for the forecasted high abundance of fall Chinook salmon expected to return in 2012.

## **HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT**

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### **Update on and Recommendations for International Management Activities**

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The Council took the following actions with respect to international highly migratory species (HMS) management:

- The Council recommends continuation of the U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty but with suspension of the fishing regime allowing reciprocal access to each country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) at least through 2012. This will allow time to gather more information on the socioeconomic impacts of Canadian vessels fishing in the U.S. EEZ.
- The Council directed the HMS Management Team and Advisory Subpanel to meet with the Scientific and Statistical Committee HMS Subcommittee and others to further develop information to allow the Council to provide input on the development of a management framework for North Pacific Albacore at the international level and report back to the Council in June.
- The Council reaffirmed their previous recommendations to the U.S. delegation to the Eighth Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fishery Commission (WCPFC), which has been rescheduled from December 2011 to March 26-30, 2011. The Council also adopted some very general recommendations to the U.S. delegation to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, because their annual meeting conflicts with the June Council meeting.

### **Swordfish Management Data Report and Future Management Recommendations**

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The Council directed its HMS advisory bodies to determine if any changes can be made to the closure dates for, or the southern boundary of, the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area (PLCA) in order to

enhance fishing opportunity in the California drift gillnet fishery. In addition, they requested NMFS to determine the next steps for establishing hard take caps for Endangered Species Act-listed sea turtles in the drift gillnet fishery to mitigate bycatch impacts.

The Council requested that NMFS report to the Council at the March 2013 meeting on the progress of research on other gear types targeting swordfish, with a view toward considering regulatory changes to expand or modify the list of authorized HMS gear types for potential use in 2014, depending on the outcome of that research.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

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### **Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures**

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In considering advisory body and committee appointments, the Council appointed: 1) Dr. Daniel Huppert to an at-large position on the Scientific and Statistical Committee, 2) Ms. Cyreis Schmitt to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife position on the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team, 3) Dr. Larry Gilbertson to the Tribal position on the Ecosystem Plan Development Team, and 4) Ms Sarah McTee to the conservation position on the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel.

The Council terminated the following inactive ad hoc committees:

- Groundfish Regulatory Deeming Workgroup
- Groundfish Trawl Individual Quota Committee
- Salmon Amendment Committee
- Trawl Rationalization Tracking and Monitoring Committee
- Tule Chinook Workgroup (work completed in 2011)
- Vessel Monitoring Committee

The Council Chairman confirmed the selection of advisory body officers completed as of the March Council meeting as provided below.

|                                       | Chairman          | Vice Chairman         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Groundfish Advisory Subpanel:         | Mr. Tom Ancona    | Mr. John Holloway     |
| Groundfish Management Team:           | Mr. Corey Niles   | Mr. Daniel Erickson   |
| Habitat Committee                     | Mr. Joel Kawahara | Ms. Fran Recht        |
| Highly Migratory Advisory Subpanel:   | Mr. Doug Fricke   | Mr. Wayne Heikkila    |
| Highly Migratory Mgmt Team:           | Mr. Kirt Hughes   | Dr. Steve Stohs       |
| Salmon Advisory Subpanel:             | Mr. Butch Smith   | Mr. Duncan MacClean   |
| Salmon Technical Team:                | Dr. Robert Kope   | Dr. Michael O'Farrell |
| Scientific and Statistical Committee: | Dr. Owen Hamel    | Ms. Meisha Key        |

Other officers will be elected when the advisory bodies meet.

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## **Future Council Meeting Agenda Workload Planning**

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The graphic of the proposed April 2012 Council meeting agenda can be found online at [http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Prelim\\_Quick\\_Ref\\_Agenda.pdf](http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Prelim_Quick_Ref_Agenda.pdf). The detailed proposed agenda will be posted on our website about March 15. The Council would like to draw public attention to intended discussion (1) about the objectives and composition of the South of Humbug Pacific Halibut Management Workgroup, during the agenda item dealing with Appointments (Administrative item 4 on Friday, April 6) , and (2) forage fish protection analytical assignments to either the Ecosystem Plan Development Team or the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team, during the agenda item dealing with future meeting planning (Administrative Item 5 on Friday, April 6).

PFMC

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