

**Decision Summary Document
Pacific Fishery Management Council**

March 7-11, 2013

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](#), which are typically available at some point well after the Council meeting has concluded.

SALMON MANAGEMENT

Review of 2012 Fisheries and Summary of 2013 Stock Abundance Forecasts

The Council adopted the salmon stock abundance forecasts, acceptable biological catch, and annual catch limits for 2013 salmon fisheries as shown in Preseason Report I, as recommended by the Salmon Technical Team and the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Additionally, the Council adopted abundance forecasts for Grays Harbor Chinook of 20,636 natural Chinook and 3,632 hatchery Chinook.

Adoption of 2013 Management Alternatives for Public Review

Three alternatives for 2013 ocean salmon fisheries were adopted for public review. Detailed information on these ocean salmon fisheries will be available on the Council website in the near future. The Council will make a final decision for all ocean salmon fisheries for the May 1, 2013 through April 30, 2014 season at its April 5-11, 2013 meeting in Portland, Oregon.

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, 2013 and the scheduled April 16, 2013 opening of the Fort Bragg, California commercial fishery until May 1, 2013.

Salmon Hearing Officers

The Council appointed the following officers to the three salmon hearings on 2013 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 25 Monday 7 p.m.	Chateau Westport Beach Room 710 W Hancock Westport, WA 98595	Rich Lincoln	Bob Turner	TBD	Chuck Tracy	Doug Milward	Rhonda 360-268-9101
March 25 Monday 7 p.m.	Red Lion Hotel South Umpqua Room 1313 N Bayshore Dr Coos Bay, OR 97420	Jeff Feldner	Peggy Mundy	TBD	Mike Burner	Craig Foster	Christine Merz or Kristin McDonald 541-269-4099
March 26 Tuesday 7 p.m.	Red Lion Hotel Eureka Humboldt Bay Room 1929 4th St Eureka, CA 95501	David Crabbe	Heidi Taylor	TBD	Mike Burner	Melodie Palmer- Zwahlen	Tami Myer 707-441-4712

HABITAT

Current Habitat Issues

Given the high number of returning Klamath fall-run Chinook salmon and the potential for a low-water year in the Klamath, and the success of supplemental flows provided for the large run that returned in 2012, the Council tasked the Habitat Committee with drafting a letter similar to the letter sent by the Council in 2012, asking the Secretary of the Interior to ensure that water flows are adequate to prevent a potential fish kill in the Klamath River this year.

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP) for 2013

The Council recommended that National Marine Fisheries Service approve and issue the EFP proposed by the Northwest Aerial Sardine Survey. Any of the 3,000 metric ton set-aside that is not utilized will be re-allocated to the third period directed fishery.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Agenda Approval

The Council approved the March Council Meeting Agenda as proposed, with the provision that all decisions made at this meeting, with the exception of C.6, Adoption of 2013 Management Alternatives for Public Review, and C.7, Salmon Hearings Officers, be considered "Preliminary Selections", to be formalized under a specific agenda item at the April, 2013 Council meeting. The delayed formalization process is a result of an inadvertent delay in the meeting notice filed in the Federal Register prior to the March, 2013 Council meeting.

Research Planning

The Council approved the final five-year Research and Data Needs Document including revisions suggested by the Scientific and Statistical Committee, Groundfish Management Team, and the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel. The Council also recommended a review of Council Operating Procedure 12 regarding the development of future Research and Data Needs Documents with an emphasis on the procedure by which the prioritization of needs are determined.

Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

The Council made the following advisory body appointments:

1. Sgt. Dan Chadwick to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife position on the Enforcement Consultants, replacing Deputy Chief Mike Cenci.
2. Mr. Scott Grunder to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game position on the Habitat Committee, replacing Mr. Eric Leitzinger.
3. Mr. Steve Copps to the Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat Review Committee.
4. Mr. Calvin Frank to the Washington Coast tribal fisher vacancy on the Salmon Advisory Subpanel.

5. The Council appointed Ms. Ms. Michele Culver to be its nominee for one of the Fishery Manager positions on the International Pacific Halibut Commission Management Strategy Advisory Body.

The Council also directed Council staff to solicit candidates for the vacant California seat on the Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel and declined to appoint further members to the ad hoc Groundfish Amendment 24 Workgroup, or convene it in the immediate future.

Future Council Meeting Agenda Workload Planning

The next meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled for April 2013 in Portland, Oregon. A proposed agenda can be found on www.pcouncil.org, with a draft detailed agenda to be available later in March 2013.

PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGEMENT

Pacific Halibut Management South of Humbug Mountain

The Council reviewed the report of the South of Humbug Pacific Halibut Policy Committee (<http://tinyurl.com/asyf2zt>) and tasked the Halibut Workgroup with analyzing a series of recreational management measures designed to reduce the catch of Pacific halibut in the area south of Humbug Mountain. The results of the analysis will inform Council consideration of 2014 Pacific halibut management measures, which will be discussed at the September and November 2013 Council meetings.

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

The Council adopted for public review the range of Pacific halibut landing limits in the salmon troll fishery for 2013 and 2014 contained in the Salmon Advisory Subpanel statement (<http://tinyurl.com/bbecvrt>). In 2014, retention would be allowed starting April 1.

For the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, the Council adopted for public review the range of Pacific halibut landing limits for 2013 and 2014 contained in the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel statement (<http://tinyurl.com/alkrms7>). If the 2014 Pacific halibut total allowable catch is high enough to provide for an allocation for this fishery, retention would be allowed starting April 1.

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT

Status Determination Criteria for Data-Moderate Stocks

The Council selected a process that allows status determination using results of approved data-moderate stock assessments and/or subsequent full assessments for these stocks. The Council also adopted a more rigorous assessment schedule for data-moderate stocks that requires either a full or update assessment within a five-year time frame.

Consideration of Inseason Adjustments, Including Carryover

The Council recommended that the NMFS issue the maximum eligible surplus carryover (up to 10%) for all non-whiting species in the shorebased individual fishing quota (IFQ) fishery. The Council also adopted the recommendation to move the shoreward trawl rockfish conservation area boundary from 75 to 100 fm between 40°10' and 48°10' N. latitude for Period 2.

Amendment 24: Improvements to the Groundfish Management Process

The Council confirmed their intent to streamline the biennial harvest specifications and management measures process including: preparing a long-term analytical framework to comply with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements without the need to prepare an EIS for each subsequent biennial cycle; focusing on management measures necessary to achieve conservation purposes during normal biennial cycles; developing a separate process for other management measures; refining how rebuilding plans are modified; amending the groundfish FMP to implement the default harvest control rule concept; and frontloading decision-making during each biennial process. The Council also adopted a preliminary range of alternatives for amending the groundfish FMP to implement the default harvest control rule concept and scheduled several implementation matters for further development at the June, 2013 Council meeting, including revisions to Council COP 9.

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Swordfish Management Report on Potential Changes to the Turtle Conservation Area and Take Limits

The Council requested NMFS to:

- Evaluate the application of recent research on leatherback sea turtle habitat utilization to support an adaptive management strategy for changes in the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area (PLCA) configuration that would minimize sea turtle - fishery interactions
- Continue research on alternative swordfish gears, including deep-set longline and buoy gear

The Council directed the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) to:

- Evaluate a potential modification of the PLCA that would allow limited drift gillnet (DGN) fishing in a triangular area south of Pt. Sur between 12 and 100 miles from shore. Vessels would require 100% observer coverage and vessel monitoring system (VMS). The analysis would include an estimate of future fishing effort in this area under the specified conditions.
- Based on NMFS research on sea turtle habitat utilization, identify management tools consistent with the adaptive management strategy referred to above. This evaluation would include consideration of whether the current 20% observer coverage rate is sufficient and the feasibility of a VMS requirement for the DGN fishery.
- In cooperation with NMFS, continue analysis of the the use of sea turtle “hard caps” (interaction limits that when reached, close the fishery) for managing the DGN fishery.

The Council asked NMFS and the HMSMT to report to the Council in early 2014 on progress on these assignments.

Recommendations for International Management Activities

WCPFC NC Precautionary Management Framework for North Pacific Albacore Tuna

The Council directed the HMSMT to identify potential measures that should be implemented pursuant to the precautionary management framework for North Pacific albacore currently under development at the international level. This should include identification of appropriate biological reference point(s) and both effort-based and catch-based control rules, at the international level of applicability as opposed to domestic fishery specificity. This information is to be ready for the June Council meeting so the Council can develop recommendations to the US delegation to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee meeting in September 2013. The HMSMT is to also provide comments on potential complementary initiatives that may be adopted by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) for the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO).

Pacific Bluefin Tuna Stock Status

- 1 The Council recommended that NMFS monitor the catch of US commercial fisheries that catch bluefin in order to ensure that the 500 mt commercial catch limit for the US in the EPO is not exceeded
- 2 The Council advised US delegations to the IATTC and WCPFC to advocate for reduce harvest rates down to 2002-04 levels for all nations.
- 3 The Council recommends that provisions for “artisanal” and Korean fisheries in the current WCPFC Pacific bluefin tuna conservation measure be replaced with stronger data reporting requirements and limits on effort and catch.

US-Canada Albacore Treaty

Noting the applicability of points in the Council’s November 20, 2012 letter, the Council informally recommended the State Department and the US delegation proceed with ongoing negotiations focusing on the possibility of a reciprocal fishing regime for 2013 only, and consider options for an orderly phase-out of reciprocal fishing arrangements.

ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

Current Enforcement Issues

The Council reviewed regional enforcement priorities for the NMFS Office of Law Enforcement Northwest and Southwest Divisions and found no points of disagreement.

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