

**Decision Summary Document
Pacific Fishery Management Council**

April 1-6, 2012

HABITAT

Current Habitat Issues

The Council approved sending [Agenda Item C.1.a, Attachment 1](#), a letter on levee vegetation policies, to the Army Corps of Engineers. The Council also approved sending a letter to the Secretary of the Interior recommending planning for stored water set-asides for increased Klamath River water flows during the fall salmon migration period based on [Agenda Item C.1.a, Revised Supplemental Attachment 2](#), with some edits by the Council.

PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGEMENT

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

The Council adopted the following landing restrictions for incidentally caught Pacific halibut in the salmon troll fishery:

Beginning May 1, license holders may land no more than one Pacific halibut per each four Chinook, except one Pacific halibut may be landed without meeting the ratio requirement, and no more than 20 halibut may be landed per trip. Pacific halibut retained must be no less than 32 inches in total length (with head on).

The Council adopted the following landing restrictions for incidentally caught Pacific halibut in the fixed gear sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis, Washington:

Beginning May 1, restrict incidental halibut landings to 50 pounds (dressed weight) of halibut for every 1,000 pounds (dressed weight) of sablefish landed and up to 2 additional halibut in excess of the 50-pounds-per-1,000-pound ratio per landing.

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) for 2012 Northwest Aerial Sardine Survey

The Council recommended that the National Marine Fisheries Service approve and issue the EFP proposed by the Northwest Aerial Sardine Survey. Any of the 3000 mt set-aside that is not utilized will be re-allocated to the third period directed fishery. The Council also asked the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Management Team to explore ways to streamline the CPS EFP process, and report back at the June Council meeting.

SALMON MANAGEMENT

Methodology Review Process and Preliminary Topic Selection for 2012

The Council adopted the following topics for potential review in the annual salmon methodology review process (parties responsible for analysis in bold and brackets):

- 1) Implementation and assessment of proposed bias-corrections methods for mark-selective fisheries into the Coho Fishery Regulation Assessment Model (FRAM). **[Methodology Evaluation Workgroup (MEW)]**
- 2) Review of modifications to Chinook FRAM size limit algorithms implemented to allow evaluation of changes to size-limits. **[MEW]**
- 3) Review of alternative forecast methodologies for the Sacramento Fall Chinook index. **[Salmon Technical Team (STT)]**
- 4) A multi-year review and evaluation of preseason forecasts and postseason estimates for mark-selective coho fisheries both north and south of Cape Falcon. **[STT]**
- 5) Preliminary assessment of the feasibility of abundance-based management for California Coastal Chinook. **[NMFS Southwest Region]**
- 6) A user's manual for the Visual Studio version of FRAM. **[MEW]**
- 7) Investigate Chinook FRAM's sensitivity to age composition forecasts. **[MEW]**
- 8) Evaluate the feasibility of incorporating bias-correction methods for mark-selective fisheries into Chinook FRAM. **[MEW]**
- 9) Develop recommendations on management methodologies for Sacramento River Winter Chinook that better achieve Council's objective, particularly at low abundance. **[STT]**

Southern Oregon-Northern California Coastal Coho Recovery Plan

The Council will forward recommendations on the public review draft Southern Oregon Northern California Coast coho Recovery Plan to National Marine Fisheries Service that were developed by the Council's Habitat Committee, Salmon Advisory Subpanel, and Staff by the May 4 comment deadline. In particular, without endorsing the draft plan, the Council requested additional information on how a harvest related consultation standard that incorporates "viable salmonid population" parameters would differ from the current consultation standard based on an ocean exploitation rate limit, and validation of "intrinsic potential" population estimates used in recovery thresholds. The full recovery plan can be accessed at the NMFS Southwest Region website:

http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/recovery/soncc_draft/SONCC_Coho_DRAFT_Recovery_Plan_January_2012.htm

Final Action on 2012 Management Measures

The Council adopted 2012 ocean salmon fishery management measures as explained in detail on the Council Web site:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/2012/04/20323/council-adopts-generous-salmon-seasons-coastwide/>

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT

Implementation of the 2012 Pacific Whiting Fishery under the U.S.-Canada Pacific Whiting Agreement

The Council received a briefing on the 2012 whiting treaty process for setting the U.S. and Canada total allowable catch (TAC) for Pacific whiting. The process went smoothly and the U.S. TAC was recommended to be 186,037 mt. The Council was also briefed on the tribes request for a 2012 allocation of 17.5 percent of the U.S. TAC for the Makah Tribe and 16,000 mt for the Quileute Tribe. NMFS will decide the 2012 U.S. TAC and whiting allocation to the tribes by about May 1 when the final rule is expected to be published in the Federal Register.

Trawl Rationalization Trailing Actions

The Council selected the preliminary preferred alternatives listed in [Agenda Item I.4.a, Attachment 1](#) as its final preferred alternative for all of the items on the Council's list for the second Program Improvements and Enhancement Rule (PIE 2), except for the Pacific whiting season dates. With respect to widow rockfish quota share (QS) reallocation in response to this stock achieving fully rebuilt status, the Council (1) decided that at its June meeting it will consider whether trading of widow QS should be suspended while it considers a reallocation of those QS, and (2) adopted a consideration schedule that includes adopting a suite of alternatives at its November 2012 meeting for consideration; selecting a preliminary preferred alternative in the March or April 2013 Council meeting, and taking final action at the June 2013 Council meeting.

The Council also received a report on a 2012 pilot program being conducted by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to test the potential for electronic monitoring to replace human observers in three components of the rationalized fishery where 100% observers are required. The Council will further consider a study design at the June 2012 Council meeting.

Reconsideration of Initial Individual Fishery Quotas in the Mothership and Shoreside Pacific Whiting Trawl Fisheries

The Council selected for analysis a suite of five alternatives for the allocation base period for the shoreside whiting quota shares allocation to catcher vessel limited entry permits and shoreside whiting processors (buyers) and for the mothership sector catch history allocations to catcher vessel permits. For the first four alternatives, the first year of the allocation period would be 1994 for permits and 1998 for processors. The final years of the periods would vary by alternative as follows: Alternative (1) 2003 for permits and 2004 for processors; Alternative (2) 2003 for permits and processors; Alternative (3) 2007 for permits and processors; Alternative (4); 2010 for permits and processors. Alternative 5 would use an allocation base period of 2000-2010 for vessels and processors. Additionally, the Council provided guidance on the effects and impacts of these base periods that it would like included in the analysis to be provided at the June 2012 Council meeting.

Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat Review

The Council adopted the proposed revised schedule for completion of the groundfish essential fish habitat (EFH) review (contained in part A of [Agenda Item I.6.b, EFHRC Report](#)), except to shift final Council action from April, 2013 to June, 2013, with release of all proposals EFH Review Committee analysis of proposals by the April, 2013 Council meeting. The Council also adopted the draft request for proposals for public review, after including the three criteria proposed on page 2 of agenda item I.6.c, Supplemental Tribal Report. Regarding the conflict of interest/recusal issue, the Council adopted the option whereby the EFHRC will rely on existing processes used by Council advisory bodies, which does not mandate recusal and provides for reports that include and reflect disagreements on issues that lack consensus.

Consideration of Inseason Adjustments

The Council considered recent information on ongoing fisheries and recommends reductions to the sablefish daily trip limit fishery north of 36° N. latitude starting May 1, 2012 for the rest of the year. The limits would change from 1,300 pounds per week, not to exceed 5,000 pounds per two months, to 1,000 pounds per week, not to exceed 4,000 pounds per two months.

Adoption of 2013-2014 Biennial Harvest Specifications and Management Measures

The Council adopted preferred harvest specifications for 2013-2014 as outlined in [Agenda Item 1.3.a, Attachment 2](#), except lingcod. The 2013-2014 lingcod harvest specifications will be specified north and south of 40°10 N. latitude with the annual catch limits set equal to the acceptable biological catches of 3,036 mt and 2,878 mt, respectively. The Council adopted preliminary preferred management measures, including allocations for all fisheries, which will be detailed in the Council's spring newsletter.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Legislative Matters

The Council approved the recommendations of the Legislative Committee (Committee) to: 1) direct the Council Executive Director to forward the Council staff report titled "A General Review of Potential Effects of H.R. 1837 the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley Water Reliability Act, on Central Valley Salmon Productivity and Salmon Fisheries In Ocean and Inland Waters" to U.S. Congresswoman Napolitano as amended in response to Committee comments, and 2) directed Council staff to track H.R.1837 and S.2184 for future Committee consideration.

Further, Council staff was tasked to provide more information on the basis of the economic reports by Southwick Associates referenced in the letter from the Golden Gate Salmon Association and a Legislative Committee meeting was tentatively scheduled for the June Council Meeting.

Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Conservation of Migratory Birds

The Council approved sending a letter of support for the completion and implementation of the Draft MOU for the Conservation of Migratory Bird Populations between NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Included with the letter will be the comments of the Habitat Committee and Salmon Advisory Subpanel. Both these Council advisory bodies were supportive of the agreement. However,

they also had some concerns that the agreement needed to clearly include recognition of situations in which some unnatural aggregations of bird populations may pose a conservation threat for listed fish species, such as the case for salmon at the mouth of the Columbia River.

Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

The Council appointed Mr. Nick Jurlin to fill the vacant California commercial seat on the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel.

Regarding membership of the ad hoc Groundfish Amendment 24 Workgroup which was established at the March Council meeting, Chairman Wolford appointed the following members:

Council Staff:	Dr. Kit Dahl
SSC:	Dr. Martin Dorn
Washington GMT:	Mr. Corey Niles
Oregon GMT:	Ms. Lynn Mattes
California GMT:	Ms. Joanna Greibel
GAP:	Mr. Rod Moore (acting for the GAP)
NOAA GC:	Ms. Mariam McCall
NMFS NWR:	Mr. Kevin Duffy
NWFSC:	Dr. Jim Hastie
NEPA Coordinator:	Ms. Sarah Biegel

The Council established the objectives and composition for an ad hoc South of Humbug Pacific Halibut Workgroup (SHPHW). This workgroup has been formed in response to recent unusually high harvests of Pacific halibut off Southern Oregon and Northern California to help develop an understanding of the biological, abundance assessment, and allocation issues involved in the management of this area. The workgroup is to be comprised of representatives from each state, the International Pacific Halibut Commission, NMFS Northwest Region, and Council staff. The specific members will be appointed by the Council chairman at a later date. In June, the Council will consider formation of an ad hoc Area 2A policy committee to discuss policy related items for the Area 2A Pacific halibut management that could be implemented in 2014.

Future Council Meeting Agenda Workload Planning

The next meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled for June 21-26, 2012 and the agenda will be available on www.pcouncil.org in late May. In reviewing the proposed June agenda, the Council confirmed that a separate agenda item would be scheduled for considering future direction on forage fish management issues.

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