



COUNCIL DECISIONS - NOVEMBER 2008 MEETING

Salmon Management

Salmon Methodology Review

The Council approved proposed changes to the Sacramento Index and Sacramento Harvest Model for use in 2009 salmon management. The changes were primarily the inclusion of freshwater harvest estimates into the index and model. The Central Valley Index, which is the predecessor to the Sacramento Index, will also be retained for comparative purposes in 2009.

The Council also approved use of the Chinook Fishery Regulation Assessment Model (FRAM) for use in modeling 2009 fisheries, including the possibility of low intensity mark selective Chinook fisheries. The Council based their approval on a sensitivity analysis conducted by the Model Evaluation Workgroup (MEW) and recommendation of the Scientific and Statistical Committee and Salmon Technical Team. The Council also directed the MEW to continue with more comprehensive sensitivity analyses of Chinook and Coho FRAM, and to investigate appropriate threshold levels for mark selective fisheries relative to Model performance.

Pacific Halibut Management

Proposed Changes to Catch Sharing Plan and 2009 Annual Regulations

The Council adopted the following changes to the Area 2A Pacific halibut catch sharing plan (CSP) affecting Oregon and Washington sport fisheries.

Columbia River Subarea – Spring Fishery Openings Thursday-Saturday

Change the structuring of the spring fishery from 7 days per week to every Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The purpose of the change is to extend the duration of the spring season. Open days on Thursday, Friday and Saturday were suggested by the public as salmon seasons are often closed on Fridays and Saturdays.

Central Coast Subarea – Allow the retention of Pacific cod

Allow the retention of Pacific cod with a halibut on the vessel during all-depth openings. Current language specifies that all groundfish, except sablefish, cannot be retained with a halibut on the vessel during all-depth openings. Although Pacific cod are rarely encountered south of Cape Falcon, allowing retention in the Oregon central coast fishery helps to simplify regulations as the groundfish species allowed in the all-depth halibut fishery north and south of Cape Falcon would be the same. Pacific cod and sablefish are currently allowed in the Columbia River subarea when a halibut is on the vessel.

Washington North Coast Subarea

- a) Remove the provision to divide the subarea quota between May and June; and
- b) Change the re-opening date in June from the first Tuesday after June 16 to the first Thursday in June.

Washington South Coast Subarea

- a) Specify that the nearshore set-aside would be 10 percent of the subquota, or 2,000 pounds, whichever is less;
- b) Open the first Sunday in May and continue to be open on Sundays and Tuesdays in May, except open on Sunday only beginning the third week in May until the quota for the offshore season is reached;
- c) Specify that the season will be open in the nearshore areas on Thursday through Saturday during the primary season (in addition to the offshore days) and Thursday through Sunday after the primary season; and
- d) Specify that, in addition to the South Coast Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (YRCA), recreational fishing for groundfish and halibut is prohibited in the Westport Offshore YRCA.

Pacific Halibut Catch Apportionment Methodology

The Council heard a report in a meeting between the Halibut Managers Workgroup (HMW) and the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) staff on apportionment issues affecting Area 2A. Three factors were identified as potentially biasing the IPHC proposed apportionment in Area 2A: changing bait used in the setline survey, calculating the amount of halibut habitat, and timing of the survey relative to fishery removals. The IPHC staff agreed to conduct a sensitivity analysis of the potential bias on survey catch per unit of effort for the interim IPHC meeting on November 19-20. The Council recommended additional coordination and discussion among the HMW and the Council representative to the IPHC subsequent to the interim IPHC meeting and prior to the annual IPHC meeting in January, 2009.

Highly Migratory Species Management

Council Recommendations to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

The Council makes the following recommendations to the U.S. delegation to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). The Council generally supports the recommendations made by the Northern Committee (NC).

More specifically:

1. Expressing concern for the status of north Pacific bluefin tuna while noting that U.S. purse seine catch in the eastern Pacific represents a small proportion of total fishing mortality. The U. S. should support efforts to craft a conservation and management measure (CMM) similar to that proposed by Japan (NC Report Attachment H), without prejudicing the future viability of the U.S. fleet.

2. Endorsing a U.S. proposal for an interim management objective and measures for North Pacific albacore, described in NC Report Attachment J.
3. Requesting NC members to report at the 2009 meeting (NC5) their interpretation and implementation of fishing effort controls for North Pacific albacore as required by CMM-2005-03.
4. Requesting that north Pacific striped marlin is added to the list of species subject to the NC process while at the same time supporting consideration of a CMM at the upcoming WCPFC plenary.

Final Changes to Routine Management Measures for 2009-2010 Seasons

The Council recommended the following efforts to support management of the thresher shark resource:

1. Continued outreach with fishermen on best practices for increased survivorship of released sharks.
2. Continued research on potential gear modifications to improve survivorship of released sharks (gear switch from j-hook to circle hook).
3. An updated thresher shark stock assessment utilizing data from both the United States and Mexico fisheries.
4. Identification of the spatial/temporal extent of thresher shark pupping grounds and nursery areas.
5. Improved collection of recreational data, including catch-and-effort estimates from vessels departing from private access marinas.
6. Better estimates of the number and condition of sharks released.
7. Improved monitoring and data collection for the commercial shark hook-and-line fishery and for non-highly migratory species (HMS) fisheries such as bottom set net and small mesh drift gillnet.
8. Obtain available Marine Recreational Information Program funding for enhanced west coast HMS data collection.
9. Support California Recreational Fisheries Survey efforts to improve data collection from the private boat fishery, specifically for trips originating from private access locations.

Coastal Pelagic Species Management

Pacific Sardine Stock Assessment and Management Measures

The Council adopted a harvest guideline (HG) of 66,932 mt for the 2009 Pacific sardine fishery. This HG is based on a biomass estimate of 662,886 mt and the harvest control rule in the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan. The Council recommends that 1,200 mt of the HG be set-aside prior to allocation for dedicated Pacific sardine research activities in period 2. The Council recommends an adjusted allocation of 59,232 mt as the HG for the directed fishery

to be allocated seasonally per the Amendment 11 framework. To allow for incidental landings of Pacific sardines in other CPS fisheries and to help to ensure the fishery does not exceed the total HG, the Council adopted a set aside of 6,500 mt allocated across seasonal periods as follows:

HG = 66,932 mt				
Research set aside = 1,200 mt				
Adjusted HG = 65,732 mt				
	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	
	Jan 1- Jun 30	Jul 1- Sep 14	Sep 15 – Dec 31	Total
Seasonal Allocation (mt)	23,006	26,293	16,433	65,732
Incidental Set Aside (mt)	1,000	1,000	4,500	6,500
Adjusted Allocation (mt)	22,006	25,293	11,933	59,232

The Seasonal Incidental Set-Asides are intended to allow CPS fisheries targeting species other than Pacific sardine to continue if a seasonal allocation to the directed fishery is reached or exceeded in any period. Under these circumstances, the Council anticipates that NMFS would close the directed sardine fishery and the fishery would revert to an incidental fishery with an incidental landing allowance of no more than 20 percent Pacific sardine by weight. The larger Seasonal Incidental Set-Aside in Period 3 is intended to protect the winter market squid fishery and to minimize the chance of exceeding the total HG.

Under this proposal, the Council recommends NMFS take the following inseason automatic actions:

- Any unused seasonal allocation to the directed fishery from Period 1 or Period 2 rolls into the next period’s directed fishery.
- Any overage of a seasonal allocation to the directed fishery from Period 1 or Period 2 is deducted from the next Period’s directed fishery.
- Any unused Seasonal Incidental Set-Aside from Period 1 or Period 2 rolls into the next period’s directed fishery.
- If both the seasonal allocation to the directed fishery and the Seasonal Incidental Set-Aside are reached or exceeded in any period, the retention of Pacific sardine will be prohibited and the overage will be deducted from the next period’s directed fishery.
- Any of the research set-aside that is not used in Period 2 rolls into the third seasonal period’s directed fishery HG.

Stock Assessment Review Panel Terms of Reference for 2009

The Council directed staff to work with the Scientific and Statistical Committee and the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team to incorporate their comments into an updated draft terms-of-reference document for the 2009 stock assessment review (STAR) panel process for public review, which will be posted to the Council website. The Council is scheduled to adopt final

terms of reference at its March 2009 meeting. The Council also tasked staff with scheduling two STAR Panels for 2009; one in May 2009 focused on a full Pacific mackerel assessment and Pacific sardine assessment methodology, and a second in September 2009 that focuses on the review of a full Pacific sardine assessment.

Groundfish Management

Consideration of Inseason Adjustments

2008 Adjustments

1. Large footrope trawl gear north of 40°10' N latitude: increase the limit from 45,000 lb/2 months to 60,000 lb/2 months;
2. All trawl gears south of 40°10' N latitude: increase the limit from 65,000 lb/2 months to 75,000 lb/2 months.
3. Maintain status quo limits for the sablefish fisheries in the Conception Area.

2009 Adjustments

1. Increase the 2009 period 1 limited entry trawl cumulative landing limits of sablefish from 14,000 lbs/2 months to 18,000 lbs/2 months north of 40°10' N latitude using large footrope trawls and from 14,000 lbs/2 months to 20,000 lbs/2 months between 40°10' N latitude and 38° N latitude south for all trawl gears;
2. Increase the 2009 period 1 coast wide shortspine thornyhead limits from 12,000 lbs/2 months to 17,000 lbs/2 months for all strategies except the northern selective flatfish trawl strategy;
3. Increase the 2009 period 1 limited entry trawl cumulative landing limit of Dover sole in the south and in the north using large footrope trawls from 80,000 lbs/2 months to 110,000 lbs/2 months;
4. Reduce the 2009 period 1 limited entry trawl cumulative landing limit north of 40°10' N latitude of petrale sole using large and small footrope trawls from 40,000 lbs/2 months to 25,000 lbs/2 months.
5. Extend the seaward boundary of the non-trawl RCA between Cape Blanco and Cascade Head to 125 fm in period 1 next year;
6. Extend the shoreward boundary of the non-trawl RCA between 40°10' N latitude and Cape Blanco to 20 fm in period 1 next year.

Fishery Management Plan Amendment 20 – Trawl Rationalization

The Council adopted a trawl rationalization program under the groundfish fishery management plan with the following actions.

Whiting Catcher-Processors

A new endorsement for whiting catcher-processor permits will be required. This endorsement will limit the number of vessels in this fishery. The limit on the number of vessels will replace the Amendment 15 vessel endorsements and support continuation of the co-op system that participants in that sector have developed and implemented on their own. If the current voluntary co-op system fails at some time in the future, the sector will automatically revert to an

individual fishing quota (IFQ) program with IFQ divided equally among all holders of catcher-processor permits.

Mothership Sector

Qualifying catcher vessel permits will be given an endorsement and assigned a percent of the whiting sector catch. If the vessels choose to join together in a co-op, that co-op will receive an allocation based on the catch shares of its members. Any vessel that chooses not to participate in a co-op will participate in a non-co-op fishery. The shares associated with the permit for such a vessel will be put into a non-co-op fishery pool. All vessels that choose to participate in the non-co-op fishery will fish against the same pool (no amount of fish will be reserved for any particular vessel, i.e. they will race for the non-co-op pool). There will be limited entry permits for motherships. Ties between the catcher-vessels and motherships will be limited to a single year. By September 1 of each year vessels will indicate to National Marine Fisheries Service their intent to fish in a co-op and the mothership to which they will deliver in the following year. Their obligation to that mothership will last only for the following year and the catcher vessel may deliver to another mothership of its choosing in a subsequent year.

Shoreside Sector

The shoreside whiting and nonwhiting sectors will be managed together as a single sector under an IFQ program. Twenty percent of the whiting IFQ will be allocated to processors and 10% of the nonwhiting groundfish IFQ will be allocated for use in an adaptive management program. The remaining IFQ will be allocated to holders of groundfish limited entry permits. At future meetings, the Council will develop specific accumulation limits, details of the adaptive management program, and provisions that may restrict IFQ trading to those who participate in the fishery.

Administrative Matters

Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

The Council made the following advisory body appointments:

Ms. Melodie Palmer-Zwahlen to fill the California Department of Fish and Game position on the Salmon Technical Team (replacing Mr. Allen Grover)

Dr. Thomas Helser to fill the NMFS NWR position on the Salmon Technical Team (replacing Mr. Dell Simmons)

Ms. Laura Pagano, Natural Resources Defense Council, to fill the vacant non-voting conservation position on the Groundfish Allocation Committee (GAC)

Dr. Louis Botsford, Professor, Department of Fish and Wildlife, University of California, Davis to fill the vacant at-large position on the Scientific and Statistical Committee

The Council directed staff to solicit nominees for the processor positions on the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) and GAC to fill the vacancies that will be left by the resignation of Ms. Heather Mann (effective following the November Council meeting). The Council Chair will make interim appointments to ensure a processor representative attends the January GAC meeting and March GAP meeting.

The Council also adopted a clarifying amendment to Council Operating Procedure (COP) 2, Advisory Subpanels, which specifies the Council Chair may make an interim appointment to advisory subpanels to avoid lack of representation of any advisory sector while the formal replacement procedure is proceeding. This is consistent with the guidance in the COP for ad hoc committees and the GAC.

Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning

The proposed draft agenda for the March 2009 Council meeting in Seattle, Washington will be posted on the Council website <http://www.pccouncil.org/events/csevents.html> in February 2009.

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