

**Decision Summary Document
Pacific Fishery Management Council**

November 15-20, 2017

Council Meeting Decision Summary Documents are highlights of significant decisions made at Council meetings. Results of agenda items that do not reach a level of highlight significance are typically not described in the Decision Summary Document. For a more detailed account of Council meeting discussions, see the [Council meeting record and voting logs](#) or the [Council newsletter](#).

Coastal Pelagic Species Management

2018 Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs) Notice of Intent

The Council adopted two EFP proposals for public review. The Southern California [Aerial Survey](#) and the Northwest [Nearshore Surveillance](#) EFPs are independent, but are designed to complement ongoing National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and California Department of Fish and Wildlife surveys. The proponents will modify the proposals, based on recommendations from the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team, with final Council action scheduled tentatively for April 2018.

Salmon Management

Methodology Review - Final Approval

The Council adopted a technical revision to the Marine Survival Index of the Oregon Coastal Natural coho harvest matrix, which reduced the number of life-cycle monitoring sites used to forecast marine survival from six to five due to Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife budget reductions.

Sacramento River Winter Chinook (SRWC) Control Rule, Final Recommendations

The Council recommended National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) consider use of a new harvest control rule for Sacramento River winter Chinook as an Endangered Species Act consultation standard. The control rule restricts harvest rates south of Point Arena, California, and allowable rates decrease as forecast abundance decreases. The recommended control rule uses forecast abundance rather than past-year average to make it more responsive to current circumstances, and the allowable impact rate does not go to zero until abundance falls to zero. It is anticipated that the new consultation standard will be in place for 2018 ocean salmon fisheries. The Council recommended the new control rule be reviewed five years after implementation.

2018 Preseason Management Schedule

The Council adopted the tentative [2018 salmon management schedule](#) including the tentative dates and sites for the public meetings. One exception was the California meeting site would likely not be in Fort Bragg, and would be moved to a more southern location, preferably along Highway 101 and potentially in the city of Salinas, California.

Pacific Halibut Management

Final Annual Regulation and 2A Catch Sharing Plan Changes for 2018

The Council adopted final changes to the 2018 Catch Sharing Plan and annual fishing regulations, consistent with the [recommendations provided by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) as follows:

1. Retain the current statewide season structure (i.e. manage the North Coast, South Coast and Puget Sound subareas under a common season) with status quo management where each subarea has its own quota and is managed to remain within that individual quota.
 - Each subarea will be open on the season dates listed below unless the individual quota for that subarea has been reached. Season dates for these three subareas include:
 - Open four days in May (Friday May 11, Sunday May 13, Friday May 25, Sunday May 27).
 - Open seven days in June (Thursday June 7, Saturday June 9, Saturday June 16, Thursday June 21, Saturday June 23, Thursday June 28, Saturday June 30).
2. Revise the catch sharing calculations for incidental halibut retention in the sablefish fishery north of Pt. Chehalis so that when the Area 2A total allowable catch is less than 1.5 million pounds, the status quo formula would apply up to a maximum allocation of 50,000 lbs. When the Area 2A total allowable catch allocation is 1.5 million pounds or more, the maximum allocation would increase to 70,000 lbs.
3. The annual bag limit will be four (4) fish per angler.
4. For the Columbia River subarea - the days open for the all-depth fishery will be Thursday, Friday, and Sunday (3 days).

No changes were adopted for the Oregon Central Coast Subarea, consistent with the recommendations of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Groundfish Management

Trawl Catch Share Review – Final Report Adoption and Preliminary Range of Alternatives for Follow-On Actions

At its November 2017 meeting, the Council finalized its trawl catch share review document and moved forward a number of possible actions that were identified during the five-year review of the trawl catch share program. The processes through which these possible actions will be considered are identified in the following lists.

Catch Share Review Follow-on Included in the Biennial Specifications Process: The following will be addressed in the biennial groundfish specifications process and may be implemented with the management measures for those specifications at the start of 2019.

- Increasing amounts available for harvest, for example, by using values other than historic maximums to determine set-aside amounts.
- Daily vessel quota pound (QP) limits (though possibly only for rebuilt species, i.e. excluding cowcod, yelloweye) and Pacific halibut.
- Continuation of the adaptive management program pass-through

Catch Share Review Follow-on in a Follow-on Action Package: The following issues will be addressed as part of a catch share review follow-on package that will be considered at the March 2018 meeting. At that time, the Council will finalize a range of alternatives to be analyzed over the summer. A final decision is expected in the fall of 2018.

- At-sea set-asides. Permanently change bycatch management for the at-sea fishery from catch limits to set-asides for canary rockfish, darkblotched rockfish, Pacific ocean perch and widow rockfish. Remove from the Fishery Management Plan the formulas for allocation and set-aside amounts for darkblotched rockfish, Pacific ocean perch and widow rockfish.
- Revise individual species annual vessel QP limits.
- Allow post-season QP trading and provide post-season relief from vessel QP limits
- Eliminate the September 1 expiration for QP that has not been moved to a vessel account.
- Establish catcher-processor accumulation limits for permit ownership and amount of processing, including a decision on whether to apply the limits immediately or only if the catcher-processor co-op reverts to an individual fishing quota program.
- Require the submission of catcher-processor ownership information during the permit review process.
- Require all owners of quota shares (QS) to provide information on their ownership to the Economic Data Collection Program (currently only QS owners that also own vessels or first receiver licenses are required to submit this information).

Catch Share Review Follow-on as a Stand Alone Agenda Item (possibly March 2018): The Council requested some additional information be available in March to help decide on the process for moving forward, as well as provide some guiding principles to whatever group will be working on the following issues:

- Sablefish 36° Line – Eliminate the line for the trawl sector management or modify the catch area requirements, including applicable annual vessel QP limits.
- Limit gear switching.
- Reduce sablefish annual vessel QP limit.

Increasing Trawl Carryover and Flexibility in ACL Management: At its March meeting, the Council will take up increasing the QP carryover to some amount above 10 percent as part of its consideration of flexibility in ACL management.

Catch Share Review Actions for Later Prioritization in the Omnibus Process: The following topics will be considered for possible action during the Council's groundfish omnibus prioritization process in the Fall of 2018.

- Between trawl sector QP trading.

- Trawl/nontrawl allocations.
- Carryover of at-sea set-asides.
- Aggregate nonwhiting control limits and the weightings used to calculate aggregate holding.

Final Stock Assessments and Rebuilding Analyses

The Council adopted a new stock assessment for [Pacific ocean perch](#) (POP) and a new rebuilding analysis for [yelloweye rockfish](#), as endorsed by the [Scientific and Statistical Committee](#). The POP stock assessment and the yelloweye rockfish rebuilding analysis will be used to inform management decisions for 2019 and beyond. The adopted POP stock assessment indicates the stock is at 77 percent of its initial unfished biomass and therefore has been successfully rebuilt. The official declaration of POP stock status will be announced once NMFS confirms the assessment is the best scientific information available for management decision-making.

Mid-Biennium Harvest Specifications Adjustments, Final Action

The Council considered a new policy framework that would allow an increase in harvest specifications in the second year of a biennial management cycle when a new assessment indicates a substantial increase in the available harvest of a stock. The Council decided to halt further consideration of this new policy in deference to other higher priority tasks. However, the Council requested the NMFS Northwest Fishery Science Center provide information to inform stock assessment priorities for both 2019 and 2021 when assessment priorities are identified in March 2018, as was contemplated in the Council's consideration of mid-biennium harvest adjustments.

Biennial Harvest Specifications for 2019-2020

The Council adopted final 2019 and 2020 overfishing limits (OFLs) for all groundfish stocks endorsed by the [Scientific and Statistical Committee](#) except for yelloweye rockfish. The Council also adopted the stock category designations and sigma values, which are used to determine acceptable biological catches (ABCs; sigma, the estimated biomass uncertainty, and P*, the overfishing probability, are used to determine the size of the precautionary reduction from the OFL, which defines the ABC). The Council also adopted the final ABCs and preliminary preferred ACLs recommended by the [Groundfish Management Team](#) and the [Groundfish Advisory Subpanel](#). The yelloweye rockfish OFLs are dependent on the final annual catch limits (ACLs) decided for that stock. The Council selected three alternative harvest control rules (HCRs) for managing yelloweye rockfish: the status quo HCR and harvest specifications under the spawning potential ratio (SPR) harvest rate of 76 percent and those under SPR harvest rates of 70 percent and 65 percent based on the [yelloweye rebuilding analysis](#). The Council did not indicate a preference for a yelloweye rockfish HCR and rebuilding plan at this time. The Council is scheduled to decide final 2019 and 2020 ACLs and make a final decision on the yelloweye rockfish rebuilding plan at their April meeting in Portland, Oregon.

Endangered Species Act Consultations on Salmon and Seabirds

The Council discussed the range of measures to mitigate the take of ESA-listed Chinook salmon in the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery. Potential measures that would be implemented through the 2019-2020 biennial harvest specifications and management measures were adopted under Agenda Item F.9. The Council will receive an update on the completed Biological Opinion at its March 2018 meeting.

The Council also tentatively scheduled action on a regulatory proposal to mitigate take of ESA-listed short-tailed albatross in groundfish fixed gear fisheries for its September 2018 meeting.

Preliminary Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) Approval for 2019-2020

The Council recommended the following groundfish EFP for public review, including all the modifications contained in the [Groundfish Management Team \(GMT\) report](#), as follows

- [San Francisco Community Fishing Association and Dan Platt Application](#) - Commercial jig fishing targeting yellowtail rockfish in the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) off California.
- [Scott Cook and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Application](#): Commercial midwater hook-and-line rockfish fishing in the RCA off Oregon. The Council recommended caps be reduced to 0.12 mt for yelloweye rockfish and 3 mt for canary.
- [Monterey Bay Fishermen Exempted Fishing Application](#) – The Council recommended caps be increased for yelloweye rockfish cap to 0.06 mt.
- [Tom Mattusch Application](#) and [Addendum](#): Recreational long leader gear targeting chilipepper and yellowtail rockfish in the RCA. The Council also recommended vessels under this EFP be identified with a research banner.

The Council is scheduled to take final action on EFPs for 2019-2020 in June 2018.

Biennial Management Measures for 2019-2020

The Council provided guidance on the methods and values necessary to initiate the analysis of management measures for 2019-2020. The Council recommended stock complex alternatives that affect the following stocks: Oregon blue/deacon, Oregon black rockfish, and the Nearshore Rockfish North of 40° 10' N. latitude complex; and Oregon kelp greenling, Oregon cabezon, and the Other Fish complex. Additionally, the Council forwarded an alternative for analysis that would remove Washington cabezon and Washington kelp greenling from the Other Fish complex and manage them in a separate Washington cabezon/kelp greenling complex.

The Council also included the following new measures for analysis as described in [GMT Report 4](#): salmon mitigation measures for midwater trawl gears and rules for all sectors for accessing the salmon reserve (item 24), sablefish and lingcod discard mortality rates applied to Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program QP (item 29), removal of the daily vessel limits in the Shorebased IFQ program (item 30), removal of the automatic action provision that closes the at-sea Pacific whiting sectors if a darkblotched or Pacific ocean perch set-aside and the associated buffer is attained (item 34).

The results of the 2019-2020 harvest specifications and management measure analysis will be provided to the Council during an informational presentation at the March 2018 meeting. In April 2018, the Council is scheduled to adopt a preliminary preferred suite of management measures. After a public review period, the Council will take final action at the June 2018 Council meeting with implementation scheduled for January 1, 2019.

Off-Year Science and Stock Assessment Methodology Review – Final Topic Selection

The Council adopted the off-year science and stock assessment methodology review recommendations of the [Scientific and Statistical Committee](#). Off-Year Science Workshops that will be conducted next year include a review of data-limited methods for use in groundfish stock assessments and a follow-up workshop on historical catch reconstruction with a focus on historical catch reconstructions of skate species. Methodology reviews planned for next year include a review of catch estimation methods in sparsely sampled mixed stock fisheries and a review of proposed remotely operated vehicle (ROV) surveys of nearshore stocks in California and Oregon. The focus of the methodology review of the nearshore ROV surveys will be how collected data can be used to inform stock assessments. The Council recommended participation by representatives of the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel and the Groundfish Management Team in these workshops and methodology reviews where appropriate.

Electronic Monitoring – Final Pacific Halibut Discard Mortality Rates, Discard Species Lists, and Third-Party Review

The Council adopted Pacific halibut discard mortality rates (DMR) for the bottom trawl and non-whiting midwater trawl fisheries that use electronic monitoring (EM).

For the bottom trawl fishery, a DMR model based on time on deck was conditionally approved by the [SSC](#). The modeled mortality rate (or revised rates) will be applied after the SSC receives confirmation that the Groundfish Management Team has fulfilled the conditions identified by the SSC. All vessels will be required to use best handling practices for the modeled rate to be applied, otherwise a default rate of 90 percent would be applied.

For the non-whiting midwater trawl fishery, the following will be applied:

- When a vessel declares optimized retention, a default rate of 90 percent will be applied to all halibut that are discarded.
- When a vessel declares maximized retention, the halibut must be landed and a DMR of 100 percent will be applied.

In addition, the Council adopted the following final preferred alternatives for electronic monitoring:

- For the Discard Species List Adjustment process, the Council selected [Option 2](#) whereby a species may be added or removed under an inseason action during one Council meeting. Vessel monitoring plans would be updated to reflect the change.

- The Council selected the [Third Party Video Review Model](#), in which Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and other eligible entities would compete as a video review provider for the industry.

The Council also asked the Executive Director to explore opportunities to create a designated funding mechanism for electronic monitoring to help offset the cost of EM, similar to that used by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council as authorized in Section 314 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA).

Cost Recovery Update

The Council received a report from NMFS on some of the challenges of increasing the transparency of reports on its cost recovery program and asked that constituents meet with NMFS to discuss ways some of their concerns might be addressed in the next of the NMFS annual cost recovery reports.

Final Action on Inseason Adjustments for 2017 and 2018

The Council considered the most recent data on fishery performance and recommended NMFS implement the following adjustments for 2018 fisheries, intended to increase attainment of the annual catch limits:

Big skate trip limits, in pounds, for the Shorebased Individual Fishing Quota Program as follows

Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	May-Jun	Jul-Aug	Sept-Oct	Nov-Dec
Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6
5,000	30,000	35,000	40,000	15,000	5,000

In addition, the Council recommended that NMFS clarify that the limited entry (LE) and open access (OA) trip limits for big skate are unlimited.

Sablefish north of 36 N. latitude trip limits for the LE and OA fixed gear fisheries as follows

Sector	Trip Limit for Periods 1-6
LE	1,100 lbs per week, not to exceed 3,300 lbs/2 mo
OA	300 lbs/day, or 1 landing per week up to 1,000 lbs, not to exceed 2,000 lbs/2 mo

Trip limits for lingcod north of 40° 10' N. latitude as follows

Sector	JAN-FEB	MAR-APR	MAY-JUN	JUL-AUG	SEP-OCT	NOV-DEC		
LE	600 lb/2 months		1,400 lb/2 months			700 lb/mo	400 lb/mo	
OA	300 lb/month		700 lb/ month				300 lb/mo	

The Council also recommended that NMFS establish a 1,500 mt deduction from the 2018 Pacific whiting set total allowable catch to account for Pacific whiting mortality in research and pink shrimp fisheries. Finally, the Council recommended NMFS modify the 2018 EFP terms and conditions of the San Francisco Community Fishing Association & Dan Platt to allow for canary rockfish to be sold, given that the stock is rebuilt.

Highly Migratory Species Management

Recommendations for International Management Activities

The Council endorsed NMFS-proposed trip limits for Pacific bluefin tuna commercial landings in 2018. A 1 mt trip limit would apply to all fisheries except for the large mesh drift gillnet fishery, which would be subject to a 2 mt trip limit. These limits would prevent rapid attainment of the low 2018 catch limit of approximately 120 mt while minimizing regulatory discards due to unavoidable incidental catch on a single trip.

Proposed Deep-Set Buoy Gear Exempted Fishing Permits

The Council reviewed two revised applications ([Mintz](#), [Foster](#)) and recommended NMFS issue EFPs to the applicants. It also recommended NMFS issue an EFP based on one new application ([Carson](#)) but asked the applicant to submit additional information to NMFS related to his past experience using deep-set buoy gear.

Finally, the Council asked three applicants ([Brockman](#), [Ekstrom](#), [Greyslock](#)) resubmit revised applications that include additional information on how they would address data gaps.

Administrative Matters

Legislative Matters

The Council approved sending the requested letter on HR 3916 (the FISH Act) to Representatives Calvert and Panetta ([Supplemental Attachment 15](#)) with edits suggested by the Council, and approved the letter to Representative Huffman commenting on HR 23, the Gaining Responsibility on Water Act ([Supplemental Attachment 16](#)), without changes. The Council directed staff to begin drafting a response letter or letters on MSA reauthorization before the March Council meeting, using the Council's "quick response letter" procedure in the event that the Council receives a Congressional request for comment, and providing requested comments on MSA reauthorization to the current Administration.

Fiscal Matters

The Council approved a Provisional CY 201 Budget of \$4,980,814, which includes hosting a [meeting of the Scientific Coordination Subcommittee](#) of the Council Coordination Committee in January 2018. The Council also tasked the Executive Director with pursuing additional funding for special projects not covered by base-level funding. The Council is scheduled to adopt a final CY 2018 operational budget at its June 2018 meeting.

Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

The Council reviewed and approved the following appointments:

- Ms. Sarah Nayani was appointed to the trawl at-large seat on the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel formerly held by Mr. Brent Paine.
- Mr. Trung Nguyen was appointed to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife seat on the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team formerly held by Ms. Chelsea Protasio.
- Dr. Derek Dapp was appointed to fill the current Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife vacancy on the Highly Migratory Species Management Team.
- In consultation with the Council, Chairman Anderson appointed Mr. Jeff Lackey to the Community Advisory Board seat formerly held by Mr. Brad Pettinger.
- Additionally, Chairman Anderson appointed Ms. Caren Braby as the Council's representation on the West Coast Regional Planning Body. Ms. Michele Culver formerly held this role and will continue as a Council designee.

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