

Decision Summary Document

Pacific Fishery Management Council

June 20-25, 2019

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 transcripts](#) or the [Council newsletter](#).

Habitat

Current Habitat Issues

The Council directed staff to finalize and send a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on the Jordan Cove Liquefied Natural Gas facility ([Agenda Item C.1, Supplemental Attachment 2](#)). The Council also directed the Habitat Committee to prepare two letters for the September briefing book: a letter to the Bureau of Reclamation on the Central Valley Project Biological Assessment, and one to the U.S. Forest Service on forest management standards for riparian zone management related to the Jordan Cove project.

Enforcement

Annual U.S. Coast Guard Fishery Enforcement Report

The Council received a [presentation](#) on the [annual U.S. Coast Guard report](#) and requested for September, additional detail on fatal incidents in West Coast recreational fisheries, with particular attention to whether regulatory restrictions contributed to any of the fatalities.

Coastal Pelagic Species Management

Stock Assessment Prioritization Process

The Council adopted a biennial stock assessment prioritization process for use in 2020 to inform stock assessment priorities beginning in 2022. This process will include sufficient flexibility to allow for revisions in the intervening year based on new information. The new process is also intended to guide stock assessment priorities, survey design, and the long-term integrity and value of abundance indices. The Council also recommends a benchmark assessment for Pacific sardine in 2020 and a model-based assessment of the central subpopulation of northern anchovy in 2021.

Pacific Mackerel Assessment, Harvest Specifications, and Management Measures – Final Action

The Council adopted the 2019 Pacific mackerel stock assessment, reference points, and management measures for the 2019-2020 and the 2020-2021 Pacific mackerel fishing seasons. These include the harvest specifications below and the following management measures: the directed fishery will close if it reaches the annual catch target and shift to an incidental-only fishery for the remainder of the fishing year with a 45 percent incidental landing allowance when Pacific mackerel are landed with other coastal pelagic species (CPS) and no more than 3 mt of Pacific mackerel per landing in non-CPS fisheries.

Table 1. 2019-2020 Pacific Mackerel Harvest Specifications

Biomass	71,099
OFL	14,931
ABC _{0.45} (Tier 2)	13,169
ACL (=ABC)	13,169
HG	11,109
ACT	10,109
Incidental	1,000

Table 2. 2020-2021 Pacific Mackerel Harvest Specifications

Biomass	56,058
OFL	11,772
ABC _{0.45} (Tier 2)	10,289
ACL (=ABC)	10,289
HG	7,950
ACT	6,950
Incidental	1,000

Review of Management Categories

The Council asked the CPS Management Team to produce a revised CPS Fishery Management Plan that removes the Active and Monitored management categories, and, instead, provides individual descriptions of the management of each CPS stock. The Council is tentatively scheduled to consider a draft Fishery Management Plan revision at the June 2020 meeting.

Salmon Management

Rebuilding Plans

The Council adopted rebuilding plans for Sacramento River fall Chinook and Klamath River fall Chinook choosing Alternative I (status quo) as the final preferred alternative for both plans for recommendation to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. The Council also adopted three coho salmon rebuilding plans (Strait of Jaun de Fuca, Queets River, and Snohomish River) as drafts for public review with plans to finalize them at the September Council meeting.

Pacific Halibut Management

Commercial Directed Fishery Transition Process and Workshop Planning

The Council committed to working closely with the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and stakeholders on transitioning the management of the non-Indian commercial directed halibut fishery from the IPHC to the Council and outlined intentions for the management and structure of the fishery in the near future. The Council plans to:

1. Request that IPHC continue to issue licenses for the 2A halibut fisheries, including the directed commercial halibut fishery for 2020 and 2021, at a minimum, to provide sufficient time for the development and promulgation of new permitting regulations,
2. Request the IPHC enter into a data sharing arrangement for the IPHC 2A halibut licensing system and the commercial directed halibut fishery logbook data.
3. Signal to commercial directed halibut fishery participants the Council's intent to not consider any major changes to the fishery management structure for the next few years.
4. Utilize the Council's September/November Catch Sharing Plan process rather than a separate workshop to solicit stakeholder input and consider annual directed commercial halibut fishery regulations within the existing season structure for 2020 regulations.

Groundfish Management

Workload and New Management Measure Update

The Council reviewed the groundfish [workload list](#) and recommended four new items: [increasing cowcod](#) annual vessel limits for vessels in the California Groundfish Collective, salmon troll vessel VMS [ping rate](#), creation of regulations regarding [conversion rates for dressed landings including petrale sole](#), and [revisiting the shortbelly](#) annual catch limit and accountability measures for

2020. These new items will be considered with existing items on the workload list for potential future prioritization.

Trawl Logbook Requirements

The Council reaffirmed a commitment to State and Federal data collection programs as described in Fishery Management Plan Amendment 4, and approved the implementation of a Federal logbook program for the shorebased IFQ trawl fishery as soon as possible to minimize data loss from California fisheries. The logbooks are anticipated to be part of a new Federal data collection program intended to ensure continued coverage and to streamline potential future data collection programs.

Endangered Species Workgroup Report

The Council received [the biennial report of the Endangered Species Workgroup](#) and adopted the recommendations therein including a reaffirmation of Council support for a fixed-gear logbook. The Council also discussed adding industry representatives to the Workgroup and intends to work with the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel on potential future appointments.

Endangered Species Act Seabirds Mitigation Measures –Final Action

In 2017, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published its Biological Opinion (BiOp) addressing observed take of endangered short-tailed albatross in commercial groundfish longline fisheries and developed recommendations to extend seabird mitigation measures to vessels 26-55 feet length overall (LOA). At this meeting, the Council selected its final preferred alternative:

Require non-tribal vessels 26 feet and greater LOA using bottom longline gear as defined under 50 CFR 660.11 in the limited entry fixed gear and open access fixed gear sectors, and longline vessels under the Shorebased IFQ Program to either use streamer lines according to the Alaska streamer line requirements or deploy gear between one hour after local sunset and one hour before local sunrise when declared into a Federal fishery and fishing in Federal waters. In addition:

- When fishing south of 36° N. latitude, vessels would be exempted from the requirement to deploy streamer lines or night set.
- For vessels 26-55 feet LOA, deploying streamer lines would be discretionary when a small craft wind advisory or higher is declared, in the area where the vessel is fishing.

In addition, the Council encourages continued collaborative research to develop and test enforceable floated mainline gear configurations that can sink within the streamer line zone to reduce seabird interactions.

Biennial Harvest Specifications and Management Measures Process for 2021-2022 Fisheries

The Council adopted a [proposed process and schedule for deciding the 2021-22 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures](#). The Council intends to implement a

streamlined decision-making process limited to new harvest specifications and accompanying management measures necessary to attain but not exceed new annual catch limits. Such a streamlined process would allow timely implementation of new specifications and management measures on January 1, 2021 and free up resources to forward other new Council initiatives on a parallel track. The Council is scheduled to continue the process with the adoption of new stock assessments and harvest specifications at the September meeting in Boise, Idaho.

Final Action on Inseason Adjustments

The Council considered routine inseason actions for groundfish fisheries as well as adjustments to incidental landings of Pacific halibut in the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis. The Council adopted the recommendations of the [Groundfish Management Team](#) as follows:

- Recommend increasing incidental Pacific halibut landing allowance to 250 lbs dressed weight halibut per 1,000 lbs dressed weight sablefish, plus 2 Pacific halibut in the primary sablefish fishery north of Point Chehalis.
- Recommend increasing the limited entry bocaccio trip limit for the area between 40° 10' N. lat. - 34° 27' N. lat. to 1,500 lbs per 2 months.
- Recommend revised trip limits for big skate in the shorebased IFQ program as shown:

Jan/Feb	March/Apr	May/June	July/Aug	Sept/Oct	Nov/Dec
5,000 lbs	25,000 lbs	30,000 lbs	70,000 lbs	20,000 lbs	20,000 lbs

- Open Access sablefish recommendations:
 - Open Access North 300 lb/day, or one landing per week up to 1,400 lb, not to exceed 2,800 lb per 2 months.
 - Open Access South 300 lb per day, or one landing per week up to 1,600 lb, not to exceed 4,800 lb per 2 months.

In addition, the Council discussed the unexpectedly high bycatch of shortbelly rockfish in 2019 and heard from the California Groundfish Collective regarding the potential for annual vessel limits for cowcod to curtail this year’s season. The Council did not recommend inseason actions for 2019 to address these two matters, but is anticipated to consider fishery adjustments for 2020 this fall and for the 2021-2022 biennial management process.

Highly Migratory Species Management

Recommend International Management Activities

The Council reiterated its support of US stakeholder participation in the North Pacific albacore and Pacific bluefin management strategy evaluation processes. Furthermore, these processes should provide equitable opportunity for U.S. stakeholder participation by holding workshops in the U.S. (as well as the Asia-Pacific region) and facilitating U.S. stakeholder participation in meetings outside the U.S.

With regard to the upcoming 94th Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) meeting (July 22-26), the Council took note of:

- The U.S. proposal to strengthen the existing sea turtle bycatch resolution (C-07-03), recognizing that this would implement mitigation requirements on foreign fleets comparable to measures currently required by U.S. pelagic longline vessels (e.g., circle hooks, finfish bait).
- A proposal presented in [Agenda Item I.2.a, Supplemental HMSAS Report 2](#) to address fishing effort by longline vessels fishing for North Pacific albacore in the EPO. While not taking a position on whether the U.S. should submit such a proposal, the Council endorses the goal of this proposal to prevent any substantial increase in fishing effort directed at North Pacific albacore.

The Council supports the appropriate international entity (whether the International Scientific Committee or IATTC) conducting a new assessment of the EPO swordfish stock to better understand current stock status.

The Council agreed to fund travel costs for two Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management Team (HMSMT) members and four HMS Advisory Subpanel members to attend the Pacific bluefin Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission-(IATTC) Northern Committee Joint Working Group and Northern Committee meetings the week of September 2, 2019 in Portland, Oregon. This will allow advisory bodies to better understand the Regional Fishery Management Organization process and communicate those lessons to the Council.

Yellowfin Tuna Overfishing Response

On November 2, 2018, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) notified the Council that the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) stock of yellowfin tuna is subject to overfishing, and the Council must make recommendations within one year of that date to address the status of the stock pursuant to section 304(i) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act within one year. The Council had concerns about the quality or the most recent stock assessment and recognized the small impacts of West Coast fisheries to this stock and recommended no changes to domestic regulations to address the relative impact of fishing vessels of the U.S. at this time. The Council also requested that IATTC scientific staff prioritize tasks intended to improve the EPO yellowfin benchmark assessment to be completed in 2020, including examining the sensitivity of the model to the 2018 catch-per-unit-effort longline data and obtaining the necessary additional data to explore spatial and temporal factors (e.g., fleet behavior). This recommendation will be submitted to the Secretary of State and Congress.

Drift Gillnet Performance Metrics Review

In [Agenda Item J.4.a, Supplemental HMSMT Report 1](#) the HMSMT presented drift gillnet performance metrics for the 2017 calendar year and described an alternative, multi-annual method for assessing bycatch performance in the fishery. The Council directed the HMSMT to present an assessment of fishery performance using this method at the June 2020 Council meeting. (This assessment will cover the species of interest identified in Motion 11 from the

September 2018 Council Meeting.) In further developing this method, the HMSMT will include an additional assessment threshold for detecting exceptionally high bycatch rates.

Exempted Fishing Permits

The Council reviewed 18 deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) exempted fishing permit (EFP) applications submitted by the May 23 deadline and:

1. Approved 16 applications for EFP issuance by NMFS
2. Preliminarily approved the Perez/Carson EFP for night set buoy gear ([Attachment 17](#)) under 100 percent observer coverage. The Council will make a final recommendation on this EFP at its September 2019 meeting
3. Recommended that NMFS prioritize issuance of these EFPs over previously approved applications for which EFPs have not yet been issued, within the limits in the existing protected resources consultation, recommended that NMFS extend currently issued DSBG EFPs through 2020 (see [Attachment 21](#)), and recommended that NMFS consider any EFP applications previously approved by the Council but not issued by December 31, 2019, due to inaction by the applicant, as ineligible for issuance.

Deep-Set Buoy Gear Authorization

NMFS presented its preliminary analysis of the biological impacts of authorizing a DSBG fishery. The Council noted the potential socioeconomic effects stemming from the number of limited entry permits issued to fish in the Southern California Bight and asked that the analysis of the range of alternatives to be provided in September include information to facilitate an informed final Council decision on the permit issuance process. The Council is scheduled to choose a final preferred alternative at its September 2019 meeting.

Administrative Matters

Legislative Matters

The Council approved the draft language proposed for the Council Coordinating Committee working paper consensus positions. The Council also approved a letter to Senator Maria Cantwell on House Bill 2236, the Forage Fish Conservation Act, in response to the Senator's request for comment.

Allocation Review Procedures – Final Action

The Council adopted as final [Council Operating Procedure 27](#), modifying the second and third sentences of the first paragraph under "Procedure," in order to better portray the relationship between public comment and determination of the need for and Council capacity to engage in a review.

Phased-in Approaches to Changing Catch Limits - Scoping

The Council decided to further consider new approaches to phase in more conservative catch limits for groundfish stocks to mitigate short-term negative economic impacts when new analyses indicate significant reductions in catch limits. Such new approaches include a three-year phase-in of new acceptable biological catches (ABCs) as allowed in the National Standard 1 guidelines and the potential of basing interim ABCs over a limited period on overfishing probabilities (P*s) larger than the current maximum of 0.45 (see [NMFS Report 1](#)).

The Council is requesting comment on these new harvest control rules (HCRs) in September, particularly, the criteria for implementing these new HCRs, a time limit for the duration of the phase-in period (or frequency of their use) , the types of analyses needed to assess the risk of overfishing, and the preferred timing of a fishery management plan amendment process that synchronizes with the 2021-22 biennial specifications decision-making process. The Council further requested a list of candidate stocks for these alternative HCRs to be reported under the 2021-22 biennial specifications agenda item.

Fiscal Matters

Council approved a calendar year 2019 Operational Budget of \$5,203,673, the draft Project Narrative and budget for the 2020-2024 Grant (also identified as the 2020 Provisional budget), and a list of No-Cost Extension Projects., The Budget Committee is next scheduled to meet in November, unless the need for a September meeting arises.

Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures

The Council suspended the provision of Council Operating Procedure 1 that states that the Chair may not serve more than two consecutive one-year terms, and re-elected Mr. Phil Anderson as Council Chair and Mr. Marc Gorelnik as Council Vice-Chair for the 2019-2020 term.

The Council appointed Ms. Jessica Watson to the vacant Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife positions on the Highly Migratory Species Management Team and the ad hoc Ecosystem Workgroup.

Additionally, the Council appointed Mr. Bob Dooley to the Council Coordination Committee's Council Member Ongoing Development Subcommittee and asked Ms. Christa Svensson to shadow U.S. Commissioner Dorothy Lowman, the Council's representative to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, as a means of building understanding and international working relationships.

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