

Navigating the Council Process

A Guide to the Pacific Fishery Management Council
Second Edition

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Do you have suggestions or comments on how to make this guide more useful? Please contact Jennifer Gilden at jennifer.gilden@noaa.gov or 503-820-2280.

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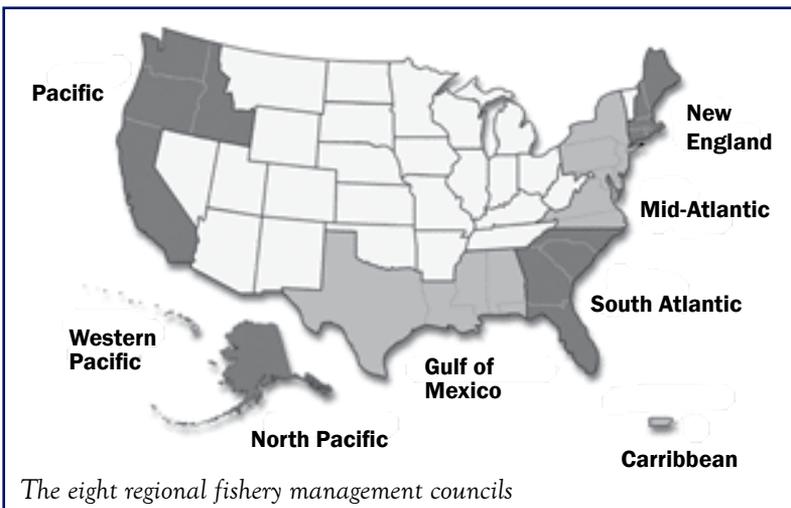
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Who is This Guide For?

This guide is designed for a wide variety of people. It's for those who want to have their voice heard in the fisheries management arena; for those who need to know how fisheries management works; for fishermen and women who want to have more control over the decisions that affect their livelihood; for people concerned about environmental issues; and for students, managers, fishing family members, and recreational anglers.

The guide is designed for those who know little about fisheries management and those who are somewhat familiar with the process. It can be used to guide you through a formal Council meeting—or to get involved in management issues even if you do not have time to attend Council meetings. It explains who to contact with your comments and questions, and outlines which fisheries the Council manages. The Reference Desk chapter provides contact information, mailing list information, and useful phone numbers.



What is the Pacific Fishery Management Council?

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (also known as the Council, Pacific Council, or PFMC) recommends fishery management measures to the Secretary of Commerce through the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The Pacific Council manages fisheries for salmon, groundfish, coastal pelagic species (sardines, anchovies, and mackerel), and highly migratory species (tunas, sharks, and swordfish) in the Exclusive Economic Zone three to 200 miles off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California. The Council also works with the International Pacific Halibut Commission to manage Pacific halibut fisheries.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council is made up of 14 voting representatives from Oregon, Washington, California, and Idaho. Some represent state or tribal fish and wildlife agencies, and some are private citizens who are knowledgeable about recreational or commercial fishing or marine conservation. Except for the tribal representative, these citizens are chosen by the governors of the four states within the Council region, in conjunction with the Secretary of Commerce.

The Pacific Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils in the United States. The other councils are the North Pacific, Western Pacific, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. While these councils all operate in similar ways, there are many differences among them.

The entire fisheries management process is overseen by Congress, which controls funding for the councils, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Coast Guard. States are also involved through their membership on the councils, their legislatures, and sometimes through research and enforcement. Interstate fishery management commissions help coordinate state efforts. For example, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission coordinates efforts between Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, and Idaho and regional fishery management councils.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) is the principal law governing marine fisheries in the United States. It was originally adopted to extend control of U.S. waters to 200 nautical miles in the ocean; to phase out foreign fishing activities within this zone; to prevent overfishing, especially by foreign fleets; to allow overfished stocks to recover; and to conserve and manage fishery resources. The MSA is named after the late Senator Warren Magnuson of Washington and current Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska.

Congress passed the original MSA in 1976. It has since been amended several times, most recently in 2006. Among other things, the MSA explains the role of regional fishery management councils and describes their functions and operating procedures. The MSA includes national standards for management and outlines the contents of fishery management plans. In addition, it gives the Secretary of Commerce power to review, approve, and implement fishery management plans and other recommendations developed by the councils.

In 1996, Congress passed the Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA), which revised the MSA and reauthorized it through 1999. This revision brought new requirements to prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished fisheries. The SFA required that each fishery management plan (FMP) specify objective and measurable criteria for determining when a stock is overfished or when overfishing is occurring, and to establish measures for rebuilding the stock. The SFA also added definitions for “overfishing” and “overfished.”

The SFA added three new National Standards to address fishing vessel safety, fishing communities, and bycatch. Several existing standards were revised. The MSA now contains ten National Standards for fishery conservation and management, with which all FMPs must comply.

In late 2006, Congress revised and reauthorized the MSA again. This revision (called “Fishery Conservation and Management Amendments of 2006”) did not add any National Standards, but made a number of changes related to establishment of annual

catch limits, function of the Scientific and Statistical Committee, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process, rebuilding provisions, limited access privilege programs, and other areas. The MSA is now reauthorized through 2010.

**National Standards of the
Magnuson-Stevens Act
(A Summary)**

Conservation and management measures shall:

- (1) Prevent overfishing while achieving optimum yield.
- (2) Be based upon the best scientific information available.
- (3) Manage individual stocks as a unit throughout their range, to the extent practicable; interrelated stocks shall be managed as a unit or in close coordination.
- (4) Not discriminate between residents of different states; any allocation of privileges must be fair and equitable.
- (5) Where practicable, promote efficiency, except that no such measure shall have economic allocation as its sole purpose.
- (6) Take into account and allow for variations among and contingencies in fisheries, fishery resources, and catches.
- (7) Minimize costs and avoid duplications, where practicable.
- (8) Take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities to provide for the sustained participation of, and minimize adverse impacts to, such communities (consistent with conservation requirements).
- (9) Minimize bycatch or mortality from bycatch.
- (10) Promote safety of human life at sea.

Other Laws Affecting Fisheries Management

U.S. fishery regulations must comply with many laws apart from the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Some of these include NEPA, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, and the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. International agreements and organizations, such as the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, and the United Nation's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, also play a role in shaping management of U.S. fisheries.

Management Area

The Pacific Fishery Management Council develops management measures for the EEZ off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California. These are federal waters. State waters cover the area from shore to three miles seaward of the coast. Because fish move between state and federal waters without regard to political boundaries, the Council's plans generally cover the entire area out to 200 miles. The Council manages fish *species*, so while regulations apply mainly in federal waters, they may also apply in state waters and on the high seas (beyond the 200-mile limit). States are required to adopt regulations that are at least as stringent as federal laws.

Who's in Charge?

Managing fisheries is a complicated task, in part because there are so many states involved, all of which have their own agencies and laws. In some cases, other countries are also involved. In the U.S., individual states are responsible for managing fisheries within three miles offshore (although they must be consistent with federal laws). Regional fishery management councils recommend management measures for fisheries in the EEZ; these measures are in turn subject to approval by NMFS. On the high seas, other countries may become involved in management. They also become involved when dealing with migratory fish stocks, like tunas, that move

EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service

between different nations' and territorial waters. Management of these fisheries usually requires international cooperation. For example, high seas driftnet fisheries in the Pacific Ocean are currently prohibited by a United Nations moratorium.

Foreign Fishing

One reason Congress adopted the original Magnuson-Stevens Act was to control foreign fishing near the U.S. coast. As a result of the Act, nearly all foreign fishing in U.S. waters has been eliminated. Domestic harvesting and processing have grown to replace this fishing effort. No foreign fishing currently takes place in the area managed by the Council. Joint ventures, which involved American fishing vessels delivering their catch to foreign processors at sea, have also been phased out. Before 1991, most joint ventures off the West Coast involved catching and processing Pacific whiting (also known as hake).

Foreign fishing in Council waters could occur again in the future if there are enough fish to satisfy both a domestic and foreign fishery. The Council would review each foreign application, and the Secretary of Commerce would issue permits for approved foreign operations. However, there have not been any recent applications by foreign fishers, and it is unlikely that foreign fishing will resume any time soon.



Soviet factory ship with tenders, circa 1970 (NOAA)

Common Organizational Acronyms

CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CRITFC	Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
DOC	Department of Commerce
IDFG	Idaho Department of Fish and Game
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NWFSC	Northwest Fisheries Science Center (part of NMFS)
ODFW	Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
PFMC	Pacific Fishery Management Council
PSMFC	Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
SWFSC	Southwest Fisheries Science Center (part of NMFS)
WDFW	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Common Management Acronyms

ABC	acceptable biological catch
CPS	coastal pelagic species
EA	environmental assessment
EFH	essential fish habitat
EFP	exempted fishing permit
EIS	environmental impact statement (DEIS = draft EIS; FEIS = final EIS; PEIS = programmatic EIS)
F	fishing mortality rate
FMP	fishery management plan
HAPC	habitat area of particular concern
HMS	highly migratory species
IQ	individual quota (ITQ = individual transferable quota)
LE	limited entry (fleet)
MSA	Magnuson-Stevens Act
MPA	marine protected area
MSY	maximum sustained yield
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
OA	open access (fishery)
OY	optimum yield
RCA	rockfish conservation area
VMS	vessel monitoring system

Components of the Council System

The Council system is composed of Council members, Council staff, advisory bodies who advise the Council, and the public, which participates in Council decisionmaking both directly and indirectly.

Council Members

The Council has 14 voting members and five non-voting members. The voting Council members include:

- The directors of state fish and wildlife departments from California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, or their designees.
- The Regional Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service or his or her designee.
- A representative of a federally-recognized West Coast Native American tribe.
- Eight private citizens who are familiar with the fishing industry, marine conservation, or both. These citizens are appointed by the Secretary of Commerce from lists submitted by the governors of the member states. They include one “obligatory member” from each state, which ensures that someone from each state is represented. The other four are “at-large” members who may come from any state.

There are also five non-voting members who assist the Council in decisionmaking. They represent:

- The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, which coordinates data and research for the Pacific states.

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which serves in an advisory role.
- The State of Alaska, because both fish and the people who fish for them migrate to and from Alaskan waters.
- The U.S. Department of State, which is concerned about management decisions that have international implications.
- The U.S. Coast Guard, which is concerned about enforcement and safety issues.

Obligatory, at-large, and tribal members serve three-year terms and may not serve more than three consecutive terms. The private citizens on the Council are paid for the time they spend in Council meetings, but not for the time they spend preparing for meetings or working with constituents.

Financial Interest of Members

Council members' financial interests are important because they could influence how members make decisions. Council members may have a financial interest in any harvesting, processing, or marketing activity as long as they disclose the extent of this interest to the public. This ensures that knowledgeable fishing industry members can serve on the Council. Council members are not allowed to vote on matters that would benefit only them or a minority of other people within the same sector or gear group. Financial disclosure forms are available for public inspection at the Council office and at Council meetings.

Technically, the Council recommends regulations to the Secretary of Commerce (through NMFS). The decisions made by the Council are not final until they are approved by the Secretary of Commerce through NMFS.

Council members must balance competing interests while trying to make decisions for the public good. Council members are advised by the Council's advisory committees, Council staff, the public, the states, academia, and NMFS.

The Council Staff

Council staff support the Council by providing information for management decisions, informing the public about Council activities, helping the public participate in the process, coordinating the process and meetings, creating fishery management documents, and assisting advisory groups.

The Council staff consists of an Executive Director, Deputy Director, support staff, and Staff Officers. Staff Officers oversee each fishery management plan (groundfish, coastal pelagic species, highly migratory species, and salmon), and also focus on economics, social science, habitat, and outreach and education. As of November 2007, there were 16 members of the Council staff.

The Council is a nonprofit organization; as such, the Council staff are not federal government employees. The Executive Director carries out tasks assigned by the Council and, with the Deputy Director, directs and oversees the staff.

Advisory Bodies

The Council decisionmaking process includes several types of advisory bodies. Advisory bodies usually meet during the Council week, and sometimes between Council meetings. During the Council meeting, the advisory bodies prepare comments on relevant agenda items and provide them in written and oral form to the Council. Advisory body meetings are open to the public.

Advisory subpanels advise the Council from the perspective of the commercial and recreational fishing industry, the conservation community, and the public. The Council currently has four advisory subpanels:

- **Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP).** This subpanel includes three fixed gear (at-large) commercial fishers, one conservation representative, two processors, one at-sea processor, three sport fishers, two open access fishers, three trawlers, four charter boat operators (one each for Washington and Oregon, and two for California), and one tribal fisher.

- Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS). This subpanel includes three California commercial fishers, one Oregon commercial fisher, one Washington commercial fisher, three processors (one from each coastal state), one California charter or sport fisher, and one conservation representative.
- Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS). This subpanel includes one member each from the commercial troll, purse seine, gillnet, and charter fisheries; one recreational at-large fisher and one private recreational fisher; three commercial at-large members; two processors; one public-at large member; and one conservation representative.
- Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS). Currently, this group comprises two tribal representatives (from the Washington coast, and California); one gillnetter; three charter boat operators and three trollers (one from each coastal state); four sport fishers (one from each state, including Idaho); one processor; and one conservation representative.

The **Scientific and Statistical Committee** is composed of scientists from tribal, state, and federal agencies, academic institutions, and other sources. The SSC provides multi-disciplinary peer review for the Council. This includes reviewing stock assessments, assessment methods, and biological, economic, and social impact analyses. The SSC also reviews the qualifications of technical team and SSC members. The SSC has subcommittees that focus on salmon, groundfish, highly migratory species, coastal pelagic species, ecosystem-based management, and economics.

The **Habitat Committee** works with other teams and advisory bodies on habitat issues that affect Council managed stocks. The group helps develop ways to resolve habitat problems and avoid future habitat conflicts, and it makes recommendations for actions that will help achieve the Council's habitat objectives. The Habitat Committee includes two members from NMFS; one member each from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission; one at-large member; one conservation representative; four members from the four state fishery agencies; two tribal representatives; two fishing industry members; and one National Marine Sanctuary representative.



Mouth of the Klamath River. The Council's Habitat Committee often provides input on Klamath habitat issues. (Photo: Jim Harp)

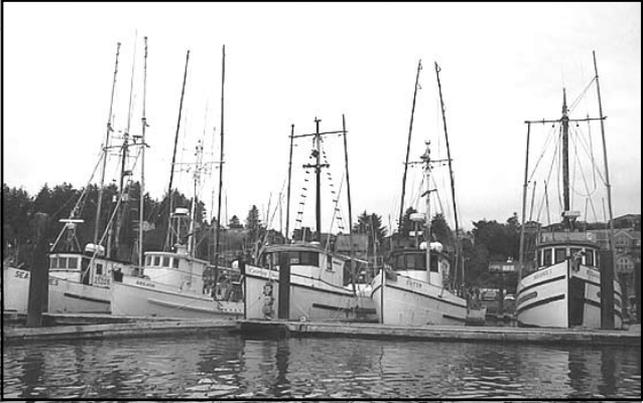
The **Enforcement Consultants** are law enforcement representatives from state police agencies, state fish and wildlife agencies, NMFS regions, and the Coast Guard. They provide advice to the Council about whether proposed management actions are enforceable and how they affect safety at sea. There are seven enforcement consultants.

The **Groundfish Allocation Committee (GAC)** is charged with developing options for allocating certain groundfish species among the commercial and recreational sectors and among gear groups within the commercial sector. The purpose of the GAC is to distribute the harvestable surplus among competing interests in a way that resolves allocation issues on a short- or long-term basis. The GAC is composed of voting members who sit on the Council (one representative each from the state management agencies, NMFS,

PSMFC, and the Council Chair). NOAA Northwest Regional Counsel provides legal advice. In addition, there are seven non-voting advisors representing the non-whiting trawl, whiting trawl, fixed gear, open access, and recreational sectors; conservation groups; and processors.

Plan, technical, and management teams (such as the **Groundfish Management Team, Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team, Highly Migratory Species Management Team, Salmon Technical Team, and Salmon Model Evaluation Workgroup**) provide objective scientific information about their respective fisheries to the Council. They contribute to the development of fishery management plans and amendments, develop relevant analyses, compile abundance forecasts (in the case of the Salmon Technical Team), contribute to Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation documents, review models, and conduct other scientific tasks in support of decisionmaking.

Ad hoc committees are created to serve special, usually short-term needs. Ad hoc committees that have existed in the recent past include the Ad Hoc Allocation Committee, Ad Hoc Groundfish Strategic Plan Implementation Oversight Committee, Ad Hoc Observer Program Implementation Committee, Ad Hoc Marine Protected Areas Committee, Ad Hoc Groundfish Habitat Technical Review Committee, and Ad Hoc Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat Environmental Impact Statement Oversight Committee.



Some of the vessels pursuing fisheries in the Pacific Council region

Council Meetings

The Council meets five times a year, usually in March, April, June, September, and October or November. Most Council meetings take five days, with individual advisory body meetings occurring during the course of the week. Advisory bodies also meet at various times between Council meetings. All meetings are open to the public, except for a short closed Council session in which the Council deals with personnel and litigation issues. Summary minutes are taken for each Council meeting and are posted on the website. Meetings are usually held in large cities where there is adequate meeting space and airport connections.

Briefing Books

Council members and Council staff receive a copy of an advance Briefing Book. The advance Briefing Book contains “situation



Council member Mark Cedergreen at the Council table

summaries” (brief summaries that provide background for each agenda item), reports and materials for each agenda item, and written public comment. Because of the size of the Briefing Book and the effort required to create it, Briefing Books are not available to the general public. However, Briefing Book materials are available on the Council website (www.pccouncil.org), usually as PDF files, two weeks prior to Council meetings. Briefing Books are also available on CD by request.

There are two Briefing Book deadlines. The first (and main) deadline is two-and-a-half weeks before the Council meeting. Public comments and reports that are supplied before this deadline are included in the advance Briefing Book. The second deadline, known as the “supplemental” deadline, is at close of business on the Tuesday before the start of the Council meeting. Public comments and reports provided by this deadline are given to Council members on the first day of the Council meeting. Comments can be emailed, mailed, or faxed to the Council.

Handouts

During Council meetings, all materials included in the Briefing Book, the supplemental material provided to Council members, and all reports, handouts, and statements generated at Council meetings are available on a table located in the hall outside the Council room, or in the back of the meeting room. A label in the upper right-hand corner of the handouts explains where they fit in the agenda.

Agendas and Agenda Items

The Council works off an agenda which is drafted at the previous Council meeting. Agendas are posted on the Council’s website, sent to a large mailing list, and provided on a table at the back of the Council chamber.

The contents of the agenda are set by the Council itself, working in concert with Council staff. To have something placed on the agenda, talk to the Executive Director, Chairman, or an individual Council member; suggest the agenda item during an advisory body meeting; or suggest the agenda item during the public comment period when the agenda is finalized. Draft agendas for the next

Council meeting are usually discussed on Friday of the Council meeting. During the weeks following the meeting, the agenda is finalized by staff.

Each agenda item has several parts. First, a Staff Officer usually gives an overview of what to expect during the agenda item, based on the situation summary provided in the Briefing Book. This may be followed by presentations or discussion of the particular topic, by advisory body comments or reports, and by public comment. Finally, the Council discusses the topic and may vote on it.

Robert's Rules of Order

The Council meeting process follows “Robert’s Rules of Order,” rules for parliamentary procedure that were first developed in 1876. A “parliamentarian” sits next to the Council Chair to ensure Robert’s Rules are followed.

Motions

During discussion, voting Council members may make a motion to take action. A Council member must second the motion before the Council votes on it. (Note: not all Council members are voting members. Representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, Coast Guard, State Department, and Alaska do not vote.) Sometimes Council members will make a “friendly amendment” to a motion. A friendly amendment is a suggestion for a minor change that does not alter the overall intent of the motion.

The Secretariat

The “Secretariat” is the office where reports are processed for Council meetings. It is usually located near the Council chamber. The purpose of the Secretariat is to receive reports from advisory bodies and Council staff to be formally entered into the administrative record, formatted, copied, and handed out to the Council during their proceedings. The Secretariat provides computers for advisory body members and staff to use in writing their reports, and copy machines to produce copies of the reports for use by the Council and advisory bodies. Photocopiers are not available to the public. However, public comment provided to the Secretariat will

be formally entered into the administrative record and handed out to the Council when appropriate. The Secretariat does not have email or fax capabilities at this time, and the telephone is for use by staff only.

Public Comment

Public comment is invited for nearly every item on the Council's agenda (the only exceptions are for "closed session," when the Council deals with personnel and litigation issues). You can sign up to give public comment any time *before* the public comment period for the agenda item begins. Go to the staffed desk at the entrance of the Council room and fill out a card with your name, the agenda item you wish to comment on, and your affiliation. Council staff will give this card to the Chair before the public comment period. When your name is called, go to the table that sits before the Council, introduce yourself, and give your testimony. Because of time constraints, public comment is limited to five minutes for individuals and ten minutes for representatives of groups. For more tips, see the information sheet titled "Sample Letter & Testimony" (available online at <http://www.pcouncil.org/facts/sample.pdf>).

Fishery Management Plans

The fisheries management process is based on fishery management plans (FMPs). An FMP is a set of management objectives and strategies for achieving them. Councils develop FMPs, amend them, and make decisions like setting harvest limits within the framework of existing FMPs. In their decision making, the Councils are required to use the best scientific information available and to meet the National Standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. They must also comply with the other federal laws. The Council currently has FMPs for salmon, groundfish, coastal pelagic species, and highly migratory species.

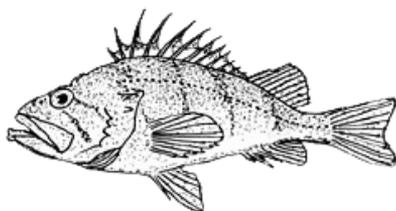
Councils do not manage harvesting of all fish species. There is not enough funding available to do so, and state or inter-state management works for many species. Councils focus their efforts on the major fisheries that require regional management. For the Pacific Fishery Management Council, those include the following categories.

Groundfish

The groundfish managed under the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP include more than 80 different species that, with a few exceptions, live on or near the bottom of the ocean. These are made up of rockfish, flatfish, roundfish, some sharks and skates, and other species.

Since there is such a wide variety of groundfish, many different gear types are used to target them. While the trawl fishery harvests most groundfish, they can also be caught with troll, longline, hook-and-line, pots, gillnets, and other gear.

The West Coast groundfish fishery is divided into four major sectors: limited entry commercial (trawl and fixed gear), open access commercial, recreational, and tribal fisheries.

**Groundfish Advisory Bodies:**

Groundfish Management Team

Groundfish Advisory Subpanel

Groundfish Allocation Committee

Other advisory bodies associated with specific issues (trawl individual quota program, vessel monitoring systems, etc.)

Contact:

John DeVore (John.DeVore@noaa.gov), 866-806-7204

Web Sites

Groundfish Background:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/gfprimer.html>

Groundfish Current Season Management:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/gfcurmngmt.html>

Essential Fish Habitat:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/facts/habitat.pdf>

Geography of Rockfish:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/facts/georock.pdf>

Groundfish fact sheet:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/facts/groundfish.pdf>

Individual Fishing Quotas:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/gfifq.html>

Questions and Answers about Rebuilding Plans:

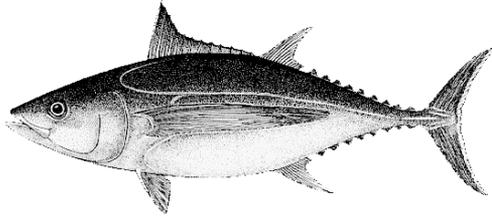
<http://www.pcouncil.org/facts/qarebuild.pdf>

Understanding Rebuilding Analyses:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/facts/undrebuild.pdf>

Vessel Monitoring Systems:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/facts/vms.pdf>



Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Advisory Bodies:

HMS Management Team

HMS Advisory Subpanel

Contact:

Kit Dahl (Kit.Dahl@noaa.gov), 866-806-7204

Web pages:

HMS Background:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/hms/hmsback.html>

HMS Frequently Asked Questions:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/hms/hmsinfo.html>

HMS fact sheet:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/facts/hms.pdf>

Currently, all sectors of the groundfish fishery are limited by the need to rebuild groundfish species that have been designated by NMFS as overfished (bocaccio, cowcod, Pacific Ocean perch, canary rockfish, darkblotched rockfish, yelloweye rockfish, and widow rockfish). The Council has developed rebuilding plans for these species. Because of the slow reproduction rate and small stock size of some species, the overall groundfish harvest has been significantly reduced.

Groundfish are managed through a number of measures including harvest guidelines, quotas, trip and landing limits, area restrictions, depth restrictions, size limits, seasonal closures, and gear restrictions (such as minimum mesh size for nets and small trawl footrope requirements for fishing on the continental shelf).

The Council's Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan, *Transition to*

Sustainability, calls for sharp reductions in fleet capacity across all sectors. This was accomplished in part by a vessel buyout that took place in 2003-2004. The Council's objective is to reduce the size of the fishing fleet to a level that is economically sustainable.

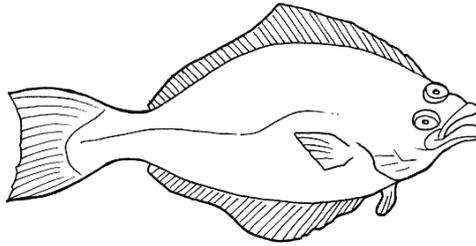
The Council is currently considering alternatives that would establish a Trawl Individual Quota program based on individual fishing quotas (IFQs). In June 2005, the Council culminated a year-and-a-half initial public scoping process with the unanimous adoption of seven alternatives for analysis in an environmental impact statement (EIS). For more information, see the Council website at <http://www.pcouncil.org/groundfish/gfifq.html#current>.

Highly Migratory Species

Highly migratory species (HMS) are fish that move great distances in the ocean to feed or reproduce. In their migrations, they may pass through the waters of several nations and the high seas. Their presence depends on ocean temperatures, availability of food, and other factors. Highly migratory species are sometimes called "pelagic," which means they do not live near the sea floor, or "oceanic," which means they live in the open sea. They are harvested by U.S. commercial and recreational fishers and by foreign fishing fleets. Only a small fraction of the total harvest of most stocks is taken within U.S. waters.

Many different gear types are used to catch these species, including troll, drift gillnets, harpoon, pelagic longline, coastal purse seine, large purse seine, and hook-and-line. (Some of these gears are illegal in certain states). Recreational fishermen generally use hook-and-line gear.

The Council recently developed an FMP for West Coast HMS fisheries. The FMP covers north Pacific albacore, yellowfin, bigeye, skipjack, and northern bluefin tunas; common thresher, pelagic thresher, bigeye thresher, shortfin mako, and blue sharks; striped marlin and Pacific swordfish; and dorado (also known as dolphin-fish or mahi-mahi). Because these species migrate across international boundaries, they are mainly managed through regional organizations such as the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, which includes countries catching HMS in the Eastern Pacific.



Halibut Advisory Bodies:

None

Contact:

Chuck Tracy (Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov), 866-806-7204

Web pages:

Halibut background information:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/halibut/halback.html>

Halibut fact sheet:

<http://www.pcouncil.org/facts/halibut.pdf>

The Department of State, along with NMFS, takes a lead role in negotiations at the international level. The Council provides a way for domestic constituents to channel management recommendations to the international level. The Council is also involved in deciding how measures agreed to at the international level will be applied to U.S. fisheries.

Pacific Halibut

Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) are large flatfish found on the continental shelf from California to the Bering Sea. Halibut have flat, diamond-shaped bodies, can weigh up to 500-700 pounds, and can grow to nine feet long. The Council recommends Pacific halibut harvest regulations to the International Pacific Halibut Commission. It also sets limits on how many halibut can be caught in other fisheries managed by the Council, like the salmon troll and sablefish fisheries.

Halibut have been fished for hundreds of years by native Americans on the West Coast of the U.S. The U.S. commercial fishery started in 1888, when halibut were first landed in Tacoma, Washington. Today, the U.S. West Coast non-Indian commercial directed halibut fishery uses a derby fishery system of ten-hour seasons and fishing period limits. Total catch is set up by the International Pacific Halibut Commission, but the Council allocates portions of the halibut catch to the commercial (non-Indian) fishery (including incidental salmon troll and directed halibut longlining); the incidental longline sablefish fishery; the sport fishery; and the treaty Indian commercial, ceremonial and subsistence fisheries.

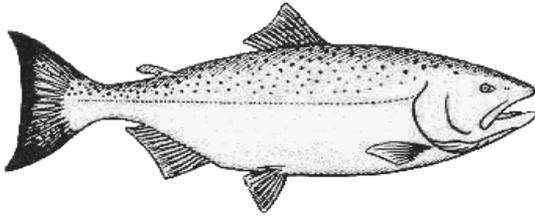
Halibut are one of the most valuable fish species in the northern Pacific. Longlining is the main commercial gear used to target halibut. In 2003, about 89 million pounds of halibut were removed from the population through directed and incidental catch.

Halibut is also a very popular target for sportfishers. Oregon, Washington, and California have catch limits for recreational halibut fishing, as with commercial and tribal halibut fishing. The demand for halibut sport fishing is so high that closed seasons, minimum size limits, bag limits, and possession limits are all used to control the recreational fishery and extend the season as long as possible.

Pacific halibut fishing is an important part of several tribal cultures, and many tribal members participate in commercial, ceremonial and subsistence fisheries. In 1995, the U.S. prohibited directed non-treaty commercial fishing north of Pt. Chehalis, Washington in order to allow the tribes to harvest their allocation of halibut.

Salmon

The Council manages ocean sport, commercial, and tribal salmon fisheries, while individual states manage recreational salmon fisheries in rivers and streams. Chinook and coho salmon are the main salmon species managed by the Council. In odd-numbered years, the Council may manage special fisheries near the Canadian border for pink salmon. Sockeye, chum, and steelhead are rarely caught in the Council's ocean fisheries.



Salmon Advisory Bodies:

Salmon Technical Team
Salmon Advisory Subpanel
Model Evaluation Workgroup

Contact:

Chuck Tracy (Chuck.Tracy@noaa.gov), 866-806-7204

Web pages:

Salmon background information
<http://www.pcouncil.org/salmon/salback.html>

Current salmon seasons
<http://www.pcouncil.org/salmon/salcurr.html>

Salmon fact sheet
<http://www.pcouncil.org/facts/salmon.pdf>

Salmon are affected by a wide variety of factors, including ocean and climatic conditions, dams, habitat loss, urbanization, agricultural and logging practices, water diversion, hatchery management, and predators (including humans). Salmon are an important source of spiritual and physical sustenance for Northwest tribal members, and they are symbolically important to many other residents of the Northwest.

Because salmon migrate so far when in the ocean, managing the ocean salmon fisheries is an extremely complex task. Several differ-

ent regions and groups are involved in the salmon fishery:

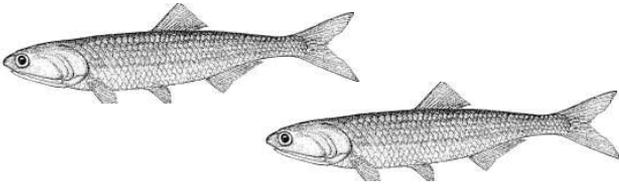
- Recreational: Ocean; inland marine (Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca, coastal bays); freshwater (including Columbia River and Buoy 10)
- Commercial: Treaty Indian and non-Indian ocean troll; Puget Sound troll, seine, and gillnet; Washington coastal bays gillnet; lower Columbia non-Indian gillnet; mid-Columbia treaty Indian gillnet
- Tribal Ceremonial and Subsistence: Gillnet, dip net, and hook-and-line conducted in Puget Sound, Washington coastal bays, the Columbia River and other Washington rivers, and the Klamath River

The Council's Salmon FMP describes the goals and methods for salmon management. Management tools such as season length, quotas, bag limits, and gear restrictions vary depending on how many salmon are present. There are two central parts of the FMP: an annual goal for the number of spawners of the major salmon stocks ("spawner escapement goals") and allocation of the harvest among different groups of fishers (commercial, recreational, tribal, various ports, ocean, and inland). There are specific conservation goals and incidental take allowances for salmon stocks listed under the Endangered Species Act; the Council must comply with these conservation provisions.

Coastal Pelagic Species

Coastal pelagic species (CPS) include northern anchovy, market squid, Pacific bonito, Pacific saury, Pacific herring, Pacific sardine, Pacific (chub or blue) mackerel, and jack (Spanish) mackerel. "Pelagic" means these fish live in the water column as opposed to living near the sea floor. They can generally be found anywhere from the surface to 1,000 meters (547 fathoms) deep. Five of these species (Pacific sardine, Pacific mackerel, market squid, northern anchovy, and jack mackerel) are managed under the Council's CPS Fishery Management Plan.

Coastal pelagic species are harvested directly and are also caught



Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Advisory Bodies:

CPS Management Team

CPS Advisory Subpanel

Ad Hoc CPS Tribal Allocation Committee

Contact:

Mike Burner (Mike.Burner@noaa.gov), 866-806-7204

Web pages:

CPS background information

<http://www.pcouncil.org/cps/cpsback.html>

CPS fact sheet

<http://www.pcouncil.org/facts/cps.pdf>

in other fisheries. Generally, they are targeted with “round-haul” gear including purse seines, drum seines, lampara nets, and dip nets. These species are also taken incidentally with midwater trawls, pelagic trawls, gillnets, trammel nets, trolls, pots, hook-and-line, and jigs.

Market squid, which make up the largest portion of the CPS fishery, are fished at night with the use of powerful lights that attract the squid to the surface. They are either pumped directly from the sea into the hold of the boat or caught with an encircling net.

Coastal pelagic species are found in the Exclusive Economic Zones of Canada, Mexico, and the U.S., as well as in international waters outside the U.S. EEZ. Within the U.S. EEZ, sardines are caught by U.S. commercial fisheries, by party and charter boats, and by anglers. Beyond the U.S. EEZ, sardines are caught in Mexican and

Canadian fisheries.

The CPS FMP was recently amended to include krill species and to prohibit their harvest. This proactive Council recommendation was intended to protect krill's vital role in the marine ecosystem.

Why Get Involved in Management?

Different people have different reasons for getting involved in the fisheries management process. Many groups are concerned about fisheries, including commercial fishermen, fishing families, recreational fishers, environmentalists, tribal members, consumers, scientists, the tourism industry, and local communities. Whatever their background or motivations, these groups share the common desire to ensure the health of fish populations and the marine ecosystems they depend on.

If you are a member of the commercial fishing community or if your business serves recreational fishers, the best reason to get involved is because this is the process that controls your livelihood. You may not have control over the weather, ocean conditions, or market prices, but if you get involved in the Council process you can have some input into the decisions that affect your business.

Getting involved means commitment and hard work. It may mean reading documents, talking to people you don't know, going to meetings, speaking in public, writing letters or emails, joining or forming an association, or joining an advisory subpanel.

Ten Ways to Get Involved

Many members of the fishing community and the public do not have the time or resources to attend Council meetings. Luckily, there are ways to get involved in management without having to leave the comfort of your home or boat. Many of the suggestions below come from the publication *Fish or Cut Bait*, a guide to fisheries management written by anthropologists Bonnie McCay and Carolyn Creed (1999).

Learn

The first step to getting involved in the Council process is to learn about it. Learn how the Council system operates; learn about the context of the problem you are interested in. Learn how Council members see things, and why. Learn what terms and acronyms like “CPUE” and “optimum yield” mean. That way you will be more comfortable providing input, and your input will be more valuable. Some ways to learn:

- Get on a mailing list. The Council maintains extensive mailing lists of organizations and individuals who wish to receive meeting notices, agendas, and newsletters. If you would like to be on one or more lists, email Carrie.Montgomery@noaa.gov or call the Council. (Mailing list topics are listed on page 38).
- Visit the Council office (address on page 38).
- Read the Council newsletter to learn about recent issues and decisions (newsletters are archived on the Council website, www.pcouncil.org).



Testifying at a Council meeting

- Read other resources about how fisheries management works. Resources are listed on the Council website (<http://www.pccouncil.org/guide/Guide-part5.html#Guides>).
- Attend a Council, team, or advisory group meeting. Upcoming meetings are listed on the Council website.

Join a Group

There are groups organized around environmental issues, fishing gear types, fisheries, communities, and other interests. There are also groups that cut across interests and gear types. Join a group that represents your interests. If you can't find a group, create one. Joining a group will give you a greater voice, more motivation, and a larger pool of knowledge to draw from.

Make Informed Comments

Your comments will be most effective if they show that you know about the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the “National Standards” used to evaluate fishery management plans. Try to frame your comments and objections in these terms. Whether writing or testifying, make sure your comments are relevant to whatever the Council is discussing at the moment. Know what stage of the process the Council is in. For example, are there important deadlines approaching? What political pressures are influencing this decision?

Get to Know Someone

Getting to know someone is one of the best ways to make sure your voice is heard. Get to know your Council representative, other Council members, advisory body members, and staff. If possible, get to know your fish and wildlife department's local port biologists and discuss issues with them.

Talk Informally

One of the best ways to interact with the Council is simply to call up a Council member or staff. This provides a more personal way to discuss issues that concern or interest you. When calling, explain who you are, what your question or problem is, and ask for help in understanding what's going on. Ask for a list of the committees and key Council members responsible for your fishery, and

ask whom you should call to get more background or advice. You can also talk at meetings and hearings, in the halls during meetings, or at the Council offices. Be sure to attend informal events associated with Council meetings. You may also want to talk with state agency staff and your federal and state representatives.

Attend a Meeting

All regular Council meetings and subcommittee or advisory meetings are open to the public. Subcommittee meetings are generally more informal than full Council meetings and may be a better opportunity to express your opinions and ideas. Council meetings are generally held in Portland, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, or Seattle/Tacoma because these larger cities have airports and plenty of hotel and meeting space. Because Council meetings are not convenient for many who live in small or remote coastal areas, state agencies and other entities sometimes hold public hearings, meetings, and workshops in local areas to inform the public and obtain input on proposed fishing regulations. Local residents may contact the head of their state fish and game department to request that a meeting be held in their community. Summaries of the comments made at Council-sponsored hearings are provided to Council members.

Testify

Members of the commercial and recreational fishery, the environmental community, and the public are encouraged to testify at Council meetings and hearings. This involves speaking in a formal public forum. At Council meetings, the Council members and staff generally sit in a “U” formation and everyone else sits in chairs at one end of the room. You will have to walk up to a microphone to make your comments. Because of time constraints, public comment is limited to five minutes for individuals and ten minutes for representatives of groups. If comments are supplied to the Council two weeks before the meeting date, they are included in the Briefing Book distributed to each Council member at least a week before the Council meeting.

It is best to be well prepared and as calm as possible when providing testimony. Read up on Council decisions related to your topic of interest, and make sure your comments are organized and rel-

evant. Sign-up cards are provided at the entrance of the meeting room for people who wish to address the Council.

Write

The Council reads and considers all letters and emails that arrive before the Briefing Book deadline, two weeks before a Council meeting. Generally, letters are addressed to the Council Chair or the Executive Director. However, depending on the situation and the stage of the decision-making process, you may write letters or emails to a specific Council member, the Regional Administrator of NMFS, or others.

Make sure your letter is legible, either by typing or writing very clearly. When writing, be sure to identify the FMP, amendment, proposed rule, or other measure you are commenting on. Then state your position or opinion. Explain who you are and why the reader should pay attention to what you are saying. (For example, talk about your fishing experience or the group that you represent.) Use short, clear sentences to state your position and explain why you feel the way you do. Whenever you can, be specific about how a proposed rule would affect you. Try to show how your personal interests relate to public or national interests. Letters must arrive prior to two weeks in advance of a Council meeting in order to be included in the Council members' Briefing Books.

You can also write letters to trade magazines like *National Fisherman* or *Pacific Fishing*, which many managers read. Since the National Marine Fisheries Service reviews all Council decisions, it is also effective to write or call the Northwest or Southwest Region of NMFS.

Serve

Interested citizens may serve on an advisory subpanel. Requests for nominations are posted on the Council website and sent to a large mailing list. If you are interested in serving, talk to the Executive Director and the key staff person for the fishery.

Get Involved in Research Efforts

Often, calls go out for vessel owners to charter their vessels for

research efforts. While this is not a direct way to get involved in the Council process, it does help create connections with scientists and managers, and it allows vessel owners and scientists to learn more about each others' methods. It can also provide some extra income. These efforts are publicized on the Fishresearchwest.org website.

Will It Really Make a Difference?

Your influence on Council decisions is related to the amount of energy you put into being involved. Involvement can range from writing a letter to serving on an advisory subpanel or team. No matter what level of involvement you choose, your views will have more weight and influence if you learn about the context of the decisions being made, the timeline for the decisionmaking process, and the best ways to communicate with Council members and advisory subpanel members. As a member of a fisheries association said, "If you want to get involved in fisheries management, you should be willing to go to meetings and become an active participant, be willing to listen to others' views, and communicate clearly your own ideas."

Reference Desk

Mailing Lists

To sign up to be on a mailing list, call 866-806-7204 or email Carrie.Montgomery@noaa.gov. We prefer to distribute meeting notices and other information via email in order to save on paper and mailing costs, so please let us know if this is an option for you. The Council maintains the following mailing lists:

- Council newsletter
- Council meeting notices
- Coastal pelagic species
- Groundfish
- Habitat
- Highly migratory species
- Marine protected areas
- Salmon

Contact Information

Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384
Telephone: 503-820-2280
Toll-free number: 866-806-7204
Fax: 503-820-2299

Email your comments: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Council Staff

All staff may be reached at 503-820-2280, toll-free at 866-806-7204, or at their email addresses.

For a current staff roster, see the website at www.pccouncil.org/staff/constaff.html.

Telephone Numbers for Regulatory Information

- Federal ocean salmon hotline 800-662-9825 or 206-526-6667. Recorded message summarizes inseason changes to date.
- Washington fishing hotline: 360-902-2500
- Oregon fishing hotline: 503-947-6000 (press 2)
- California ocean salmon hotline: 707-576-3429

For websites, see <http://www.pccouncil.org/statefedregs.html>.

Useful Websites

Guide to the Council Process:

<http://www.pccouncil.org/guide/Guide-intropage.html>

Fact sheets on fishery management topics:

<http://www.pccouncil.org/pfmcfacts.html>

Council meeting minutes:

<http://www.pccouncil.org/minutes/cminutes.html>

Council-related National Environmental Policy Act information:

<http://www.pccouncil.org/nepa/nepatrack.html>

Council rosters:

<http://www.pccouncil.org/operations/rosters.html>

Newsletter archives:

<http://www.pccouncil.org/newsletters/archivenews.html>

Current events:

<http://www.pccouncil.org/events/csevents.html>

Archives of Council meeting decisions:

<http://www.pccouncil.org/decisions/archivedecisions.html>

Current Council briefing book:

<http://www.pccouncil.org/bb/bb.html>

