



The LINE. A Publication of the Pacific Fishery Management Council

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The Line is a summary of West Coast fisheries news, for fishermen, published five times per year. This issue reports on the decisions made at the September 2012 Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting. The Council (www.pcouncil.org) recommends commercial & recreational fishery management measures for Federal waters off the coasts of Washington, Oregon & California. The Council has five public meetings a year. All Council recommendations are subject to approval by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). To sign up for our full newsletter and other notices, go to <http://tinyurl.com/3s5edce>.

ROCKFISH, FLATFISH, WHITING AND OTHER GROUND FISH.

Inseason Changes to Regulations: The Council recommended increases to open access fixed gear sablefish trip limits south of 36° N. latitude from “300 pounds per day, or one landing per week of up to 1,350 lb, not to exceed 2,700 pounds per two months” to “350 pounds per day, or one landing per week of up to 1,750 pounds, not to exceed 3,500 pounds per two months” starting November 1 through the end of the year; and recommended prohibiting recreational fishing in the California Southern Management Area (south of 34°27' N. latitude) seaward of 50 fathoms to reduce cowcod mortality through the end of the year. The Council also recommended that NMFS issue sablefish carryover later this year, based on projections.

Whiting Reallocation: After looking at new information and hearing much public comment, the Council recommended no changes to whiting quota reallocation, except with respect to transferability and divestiture. The quota share transfer and divestiture periods for the shore-side individual fishing quota sector will begin on January 1, 2014 with the deadline to divest extended to December 31, 2015, and mothership catcher vessel severability will begin on September 1, 2014, with the deadline to divest extended to August 31, 2016. **Catch shares:** At its September meeting, the Council decided that cost recovery (fees to the trawl fleet to offset the costs of administering the catch share program) should apply to all species of groundfish, not just quota share species, consistent with the buyback program. • In November, the Council will discuss whether midwater trawl chafing gear restrictions are still appropriate for the whiting fleet. The Council will also work on a solution for surplus quota pound carryover for whiting and other species. It may also take final action on lender issues (more specific) and the permanent Pacific Whiting season date, and will discuss widow rockfish reallocation and the use of electronic monitoring to replace or supplant human observers. **Stock Assessments:** Altogether, 21 groundfish stocks will receive some form of assessment next year; see [URL](#) for more information.

Seabird Protections: The Council is working with other agencies to put in place Federal seabird protection regulations for vessels longer than 55 feet. The regulations are to protect albatross and other seabirds, and must be implemented in two years. The Council will discuss this in April 2013.

SALMON.

The Council is considering some changes to the models used to assess salmon. One change will look at the impacts of mark-selective ocean recreational fisheries on Washington coho stocks. • A major review of California salmon hatcheries was just released, and the authors found 14 areas that needed improvement or change (see <http://tinyurl.com/97kd686>). In addition, the Lower Columbia Endangered Species Act Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Plan was released; see <http://tinyurl.com/9jumzfk>. • The Council considered salmon essential fish habitat (EFH) and recommended a suite of alternatives for further analy-

sis and public review; see <http://tinyurl.com/97kd686>, section E4. An EFH designation provides another layer of protection to important habitat for salmon.

HALIBUT.

The Council's South of Humbug Pacific Halibut Policy Committee will meet later this fall to discuss ways to assess Pacific halibut in California waters, estimate and monitor recreational Pacific halibut catch in California waters, and ensure compliance with catch allocation south of Humbug Mountain. • The Council adopted for public review the following changes in the Area 2A Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan: 1) Revise the early season structure of the Columbia River Subarea Recreational Fishery to keep the early season open until 80 percent of the subarea allocation is reached; 2) remove the provision that would close the early season on the third Sunday in July; and 3) revise the days of the week so the early season is open from Thursday through Saturday, instead of Friday - Sunday. In the Oregon Central Coast Subarea Recreational Fishery, the Council is considering eliminating the summer all-depth fishery by transferring the entire quota to the spring all-depth and nearshore fisheries, and reducing the number of open days per week for the nearshore fishery from seven to three. For the Salmon Troll Fishery, the Council is considering allowing retention of incidentally-caught Pacific halibut in the salmon troll fishery beginning April 1.

OTHER NEWS.

The Council is asking for nominations for its advisory bodies for the 2013-2015 term. For more information, see <http://tinyurl.com/92se2lp>. • The Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary (NMS) is proposing to adjust the boundaries of the Monterey Bay NMS to include an area that was excluded when the Sanctuary was designated in 1992, known as the 'donut hole.' The area was excluded then due to anticipated sewer discharge, commercial shipping lanes, and an offshore dredge disposal site. Much has changed in the last two decades, and the Sanctuary wants to review uses and natural resources in the area to see if more protections are needed. The Council asked for more clarity about how including the area in the Monterey Bay NMS would protect it. • A bill in Congress, H.R. 6362 (the Revitalizing the Economy of Fisheries (REFI) in the Pacific Act of 2012) aims to ease financial burdens to groundfish fishermen by refinancing the existing loan funding the limited entry trawl fishery buyback under the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Fishing Capacity Reduction Program. At the request of Congressman Thompson, the Council reviewed the bill and passed on their favorable comments.

NEXT MEETING.

The Council's next meeting is scheduled for November 3-7 in Costa Mesa, California. The agenda will be available on our website, www.pcouncil.org, in October. • Comments can be sent to pfmc.comments@noaa.gov. Questions? Call us at 1-800-866-7204.