

PURPOSE

To provide guidance for making weather-related adjustments to salmon fisheries.

GENERAL

The Council approved this policy on September 18, 1992, after reviewing public comments on the reports and recommendations of an ad hoc committee formed to explore this issue in July 1991.

PROCEDURE

Preseason

To provide the most effective and least confusing management with regard to weather impacts on fishers and stock conservation, the Council will strive to give adequate consideration to potential weather and safety conflicts when developing preseason management recommendations. In particular, the Council will attempt to avoid establishing extremely short open periods for non-quota fisheries which may be lost to severe weather.

Inseason

The Council's policy for inseason adjustments to fishery seasons due to both beneficial and negative impacts of weather are outlined below. Inseason adjustments for weather are constrained by the complexity of determining weather effects on harvest levels and the need to assure achievement of harvest allocations and stock conservation objectives.

For quota fisheries scheduled for a season duration of one month or less, the normal inseason management process may be used to consider the need for season adjustments due to weather. Adjustments for weather may be recommended to the National Marine Fisheries Service regional office when data clearly indicate that unusually adverse weather has precluded a fishery from reaching a specific quota or other management guideline. Potential sources of data should include, but not be limited to, records from wind buoys, U.S. Coast Guard assessment of weather conditions, and evidence of extremely low effort. Seasons may not be extended if such an extension could be expected to reduce the escapement of any critical stock to levels below that expected in the preseason escapement projections.

For quota fisheries scheduled for more than one month's duration, weather adjustments generally should not be made. The complexities of calculating differential stock impacts and weather effects on fishing effort and harvest over extended periods is generally beyond the capabilities of inseason management.

For seasons that are constrained by time and area restrictions, inseason adjustments for weather are unnecessary. The models used to determine these seasons generally contain an average weather factor which, over time, should balance fishing opportunity and stock protection. (An example of a season constrained by time and area restrictions is that imposed to protect Klamath River fall chinook in the troll fishery south of Point Arena in 1991.)