



REPORT FROM THE PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETING April 6 - 11, 2017 Sacramento, California



SALMON MANAGEMENT

E.5. Final Action on 2017 Ocean Salmon Management Measures

The Council adopted ocean salmon season recommendations that provide recreational and commercial opportunities for most of the Pacific coast. However, due to low forecasts, several areas are closed this year, and the open areas are significantly constrained. The adopted salmon fisheries off the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington achieve conservation goals for the numerous individual salmon stocks on the West Coast.

The recommendations will be forwarded to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for approval by May 1, 2017.

California and Oregon South of Cape Falcon, Oregon

Fisheries south of Cape Falcon (in northern Oregon) are limited by the need to protect Klamath River fall Chinook, and south of Point Arena (in northern California), they are also affected by the need to protect Sacramento River winter Chinook. Returns of spawning Klamath River fall Chinook are projected to be the lowest on record in 2017 due to drought, disease, poor ocean conditions, and other issues. At the same time, the Council must protect Sacramento River winter Chinook, which are listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Because both of these fish intermix with other stocks in the ocean, fisheries targeting more abundant stocks must be constrained.

Recreational Fisheries

Recreational fisheries off the central Oregon coast will allow Chinook retention from March 15 through October 31. Coho fisheries consist of a mark-selective quota fishery of 18,000 in mid-summer (compared to 26,000 last year) and a non-mark-selective quota fishery of 6,000 in September (compared to 7,500 last year), both open from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain.

The Brookings/Crescent City/Eureka areas are closed for the entire season to conserve Klamath River fall Chinook, which are most abundant in these areas. Fisheries further south all opened on April 1. In the Fort Bragg area, the season will close during June, July, and half of August, then reopen through November 12. In the San Francisco area, the season will close during the first half of May and reopen through October 31. Salmon fishing will remain open through July 15 in the Monterey Bay area and through May 31 for areas south of Monterey Bay.

Commercial Fisheries

Commercial fisheries from Cape Falcon to the Florence South Jetty, Oregon open on April 15 and will run through July 31 with intermittent closures to reduce impacts on Klamath fall Chinook. This area will also be open in September and October. Fisheries from the Florence South Jetty to Horse Mountain, California will be closed for the entire season to reduce impacts on Klamath River fall Chinook.

Between Horse Mountain and Point Arena (in the Fort Bragg area), there will be a 3,000 Chinook quota ocean fishery during the month of September, after 2017 Klamath River fall Chinook spawners have entered the Klamath River.

In the area from Point Arena to Pigeon Point (San Francisco), the season will be open for most of August and all of September. From Pigeon Point to the Mexico border (Monterey), the Chinook season will be open in May and June. There will also be a season from Point Reyes to Point San Pedro (subset of the San Francisco area), open October 2 to 6 and October 9 to 13.

GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT

F.1. NMFS Report

In addition to a list of groundfish and halibut actions that have published, NMFS provided a list of rulemakings and other major activities that are currently in progress.

Published

1. New Electronic Fish ticket reporting requirements for sablefish landings, joint registration, and exemption to ownership limitations on sablefish permits; effective December 23, 2016. Electronic Fish ticket requirements; effective January 1, 2017 - 11/23/16 (81 FR 84419).
2. Notice of receipt of EFP application; comments due by January 24. 2017 - 12/30/16 (81 FR 96437)
3. Final 2017-2018 Groundfish Harvest Specifications and Management Measures; effective February 7, 2017 - 2/7/17 (82 FR 9634).
4. Proposal to approve changes to the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan for Area 2A for 2017 fisheries; Public comments must be received by March 15, 2017 - 2/23/17 (82 FR 11419).
5. Pacific Halibut Fisheries, Catch Sharing Plan. Action: Final Rule - 3/7/17 (82 FR 12730).
6. Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions: Fisheries off West Coast States: Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery: 2016 Tribal Fishery Allocations for Pacific Whiting: Reapportionment between Tribal and Non-tribal Sectors. ACTION: Reapportionment of tribal pacific whiting allocation - 3/8/17 (82FR 12922).

In Progress (Table 1)

	Rule	Timing (Tentative)	Sectors Affected
1	Midwater Recreational Fishery off Oregon	Proposed rule - April 2017 Final rule - May/June 2017	Oregon Recreational
2	Sablefish Rule Includes: Registering a LE trawl and fixed gear permit to a vessel at same time (joint registration), sablefish- endorsed LE fixed gear ownership issues, electronic fish tickets	Effective November 2016 except requirements for use of electronic fish tickets, which became effective on January 1, 2017	Limited Entry (LE) Trawl (e.g IFQ)), LE fixed gear, Open Access (OA)
3	Trawl Gear Modifications	Contingent on Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) and Endangered Species Act (ESA) Consultation Rulemaking Schedule	IFQ, Mothership (MS), Catcher-Processor (C/P)

		To be Determined	
4	Electronic Monitoring	Final rule – April 2017	IFQ
5	Widow reallocation	Final rule – April 2017	IFQ
6	Pacific Halibut Rulemaking for 2017	Proposed Rule – March 2017 Comment period closed March 15. Final Rule – April 2017	Non-Treaty directed commercial, incidental catch in salmon troll fishery & sablefish fishery, Treaty commercial & ceremonial/subsistence, WA, OR, & CA recreational
7	Pacific Whiting Rulemaking for 2017	Proposed Rule – March 2017 Final Rule – Late April 2017	IFQ, MS, C/P, Tribal
8	Vessel Movement Monitoring	Proposed rule – April 2017 Final rule – July 2017	LE and OA
9	Amendment 21 At-Sea Sector Set-Asides for darkblotched rockfish and Pacific Ocean perch	Proposed rule – summer 2017 Final rule – Fall 2017	MS, CP
10	2017-2018 Biennial Harvest Specifications and Management Measures and Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment 27	Final rule – Published and effective February 7, 2017	All Sectors

Major Activities (Table 2)

	Activity	Timing (Tentative)	Sectors Affected
1	Trawl Gear EFP	February 2017 Modifications in March 2017	IFQ
2	Electronic Monitoring Non-whiting Midwater & Bottom Trawl EFP	Update for Council in April 2017	IFQ
3	Trawl Cost Recovery	Update for Council in April 2017	IFQ, MS, C/P
4	Salmon ESA Section 7 Consultation for Groundfish FMP	Final Council recommendations in April 2017 Biological Opinion Completed by XX	IFQ, MS, C/P, Tribal, OA
5	Seabird ESA Section 7 Consultation for Groundfish FMP	Biological Assessment to USF&WS in December 2016 Biological Opinion from USF&WS April 2017	IFQ, MS, C/P, Tribal, OA, Recreational
6	ESA Section 7 Consultation on Pacific Halibut Fisheries and Catch Sharing Plan	Completed by NMFS in March 2017	Non-Treaty directed commercial, incidental catch in salmon troll fishery & sablefish fishery, Treaty commercial & ceremonial/subsistence, WA, OR, & CA recreational
7	Seabird ESA Section 7 Consultation for Pacific Halibut Fisheries and Catch Sharing Plan	Biological Assessment to USF&WS in Spring 2017 Biological Opinion from USF&WS Autumn 2017	
8	Inseason Actions	Council decisions in March 2017 Potential for April, June, September, and November Council Meetings	To be determined
9	Magnuson-Act Scientific Research	Winter and Spring	Unlikely any

	Permitting		
10	EFH/RCA Process	Report to Council in June/September 2017	
11	5 Year Catch Share Program Review	Report to Council in June 2017	
12	2019-2020 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures	June, September, November 2017 Council meetings	
13	Cost Recovery Litigation	Settled in January 2017	IFQ, MS, C/P
14	Challenge to Divestiture (Pacific Choice)	Ongoing	IFQ, MS, CP

F.2. Final Action on Electronic Monitoring (EM) of Non-Whiting Midwater & Bottom Trawl Fisheries Regulations and Update on Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP)

NMFS provided a report to support the Council’s consideration of alternatives for an EM program for groundfish vessels using bottom trawl, and non-whiting midwater trawl gear. This report summarizes the performance of the EM EFP program in 2016.

In addition, a joint report submitted by The Nature Conservancy, California Groundfish Collective, and Environmental Defense Fund described findings from the EFP they carried out in 2015, 2016, and 2017.

The Council adopted Final Alternatives for EM in the non-whiting and bottom trawl fisheries as follows;

1. Provide option to use Electronic Monitoring in lieu of human observers;
2. Data: Logbook data is the primary data source to debit vessel accounts, and EM video is used to audit the logbook;
3. Level of Video Review: Initially 100%, NMFS, in consultation with the Council, shall have the ability to modify the review percentage based on the amount of review necessary to verify the accuracy of logbook information, and the performance of individual operators;
4. Discard Accounting: All discards will be debited from IFQ accounts;
5. Retention: Optimized retention - Vessel operators are able to discard those species that can be identified on camera;
6. Halibut: Use a NMFS approved discard mortality rate, developed in consultation with the Council (finalize by November 2017);
7. Vessel Monitoring Plan Expiration: No expiration, Vessel Monitoring Plans are effective until revised;
8. Declaration of EM Use: No limitation on switching between EM and Observers;
9. Data Transfer Process: A representative of the vessel (operator/crew) shall deliver the hard drive to the EM service provider;
10. Discard List Adjustments: NMFS, in consultation with the Council, may adjust the Discard List (Rulemaking is not required);
11. Video Review Provider: Maintain status quo [Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission performs video review] and develop protocols for transferring financial responsibility for video review from NMFS to the industry (implemented when NMFS is no longer able to cover cost of video review). If, in a future action, the Council considers a more expansive

3rd party reviewer provision, this separate rulemaking will require fully articulated program design alternatives and cost information to determine whether a change to 3rd party providers best meets the goals and objectives of the program; and,

12. Revise the Draft Regulations to include:

- a. A requirement for self-enforcing agreement groups to submit an annual report to the Council;
- b. Deep-sea sole, sanddabs, and starry flounder in the list of species that can be discarded. Deep-sea sole and sanddabs would be counted as individual fishing quota (IFQ) species, if mixed with IFQ species; and,
- c. A provision to allow state-managed species to be landed when using EM, but prohibit sale or use of those fish, and include a landing limit of 150 pounds for California halibut.

F.3. Salmon Endangered Species Act (ESA) Consultation Recommendations

April 2015: NOAA Fisheries provided the Council, its advisory bodies, and the public, with an initial briefing on the agency's intent to reinstate ESA section 7 consultation on the effects of the groundfish fisheries on listed Chinook salmon stocks. The Council asked NOAA Fisheries to provide additional information and analysis, including: a description of past section 7 consultations for the groundfish trawl fishery; a breakdown of Chinook catch by fishery sector, and past and present stock composition estimates for Chinook taken in the fishery.

June 2015: NOAA Fisheries reported back to the Council with information on salmon bycatch in the groundfish fishery, addressing the Council's requests from April 2015 in NOAA Fisheries Reports 1 and 2 (Agenda Item D.3.a.). After receiving comments from its advisory bodies and the public, the Council endorsed a NOAA Fisheries proposal to convene a July 2015 workshop to brief stakeholders on the development of the biological opinion for ESA-listed Chinook salmon stocks caught in the Pacific coast groundfish fishery, and to obtain input from stakeholders on realistic bycatch estimates in existing and future groundfish fisheries and on potential measures to reduce Chinook salmon bycatch. The Council also requested NOAA Fisheries report on the workshop's outcomes in order to use September 2015 meeting time to develop proposed incidental catch levels for various groundfish fisheries evaluated through the reinstated ESA section 7 consultation.

July-August 2015: On July 29, 2015, NOAA Fisheries held a public workshop to engage stakeholders on the ESA consultation reinstatement for fishing under the Groundfish FMP. The workshop was well attended by groundfish fishery management entities, and generated ideas and comments from groundfish participants, including Council advisory body members, state and tribal agency staff, stakeholders, and from other members of the public. Unfortunately, the salmon fishing community did not participate. NOAA Fisheries posted a video recording of the workshop online and provided a public comment period through August 7, 2015. In September 2015 NOAA Fisheries summarized the comments in NMFS Report 1 (Agenda Item H.6.a.).

September 2015: In addition to reporting on the July 2015 public workshop and subsequent public input, NOAA Fisheries reported to the Council in September 2015 with: draft proposals for managing salmon bycatch in the groundfish fisheries (NMFS Report 2, Agenda Item H.6.a.),

an analysis of the Chinook catch per unit effort for the bottom trawl and non-whiting midwater trawl fisheries (NMFS Report 3, Agenda Item H.6.a), and on Chinook bycatch in the at-sea sectors of the Pacific whiting fishery, with a summary of the Chinook genetic stock composition estimates from that fishery's bycatch. After reviewing the NOAA Fisheries reports and comments from its advisory bodies and the public, the Council adopted a motion and provided guidance to NOAA Fisheries for analysis of a range of alternatives to determine the Chinook bycatch thresholds under different groundfish management strategies as needed to define the proposed action. The Council's motion included requests for analysis of alternative management scenarios for the whiting fishery and for the combined bottom trawl, commercial fixed gear, and recreational groundfish fisheries.

March 2016: NOAA Fisheries provided a progress check to ensure that the Council's salmon advisory bodies would have an adequate opportunity to review the draft analyses and Council progress on the action. The Council clarified and reaffirmed its comments and motion from its September 2015 meeting.

March 2017: The Council reviewed the analysis of scenarios representing the ongoing prosecution of the groundfish fishery associated Chinook salmon bycatch thresholds, and estimate Chinook bycatch (Agenda Item I.1.a, NMFS Report 1). In order to accurately represent the ongoing prosecution of the fishery, the Council eliminated the scenario that assumes whiting processing at sea will extend South of 42 N. latitude. The Council also directed additional descriptive material be included in the analysis, such as whiting co-op coordination information and non-trawl fisheries descriptions. The Council's Groundfish Management Team (GMT) will assist NMFS in developing revised Chinook salmon bycatch estimates.

April 2017: The Council provided guidance to NMFS on the proposed action that will be the basis for ESA section 7 consultation on the take of listed salmonids in the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery. The recommendations include:

- A description of groundfish fisheries including the likely future distribution of fishing; range of directed catch volumes; and range of Chinook salmon bycatch rates, which can be used to estimate amount and stock composition of Chinook take:
- Chinook salmon bycatch thresholds for analysis of: 11,000 for the whiting fishery; 5,500 for all other groundfish fisheries; and a 3,500 reserve (safety net) to be used for additional bycatch in either of the two fisheries. The sum of these three thresholds, 20,000 Chinook, equals the sum of the bycatch thresholds specified in the current biological opinion.
 - Based on the results of the reserve analysis, the Council could, through the Biennial Harvest Specs & Management Measures process: maintain the reserve; limit portions of the reserve to specific sectors; or eliminate the reserve.
- Considering additional bycatch mitigation measures as part of the 2019-2020 biennial harvest specifications and management measures process.

NMFS intends to request Council recommendations on a draft incidental take statement at the September 2017 meeting, prior to completing the biological opinion.

F.4. Trawl Catch Shares and Intersector Allocation Progress Reports and Cost Recovery Report

Catch Share Program Review

The five-year review for the catch share program is moving forward under an accelerated schedule which calls for Council approval of a draft for public review at the June 2017 Council meeting, and completion of the review at the November 2017 Council meeting. Additionally, the schedule includes: identification of priority issues for follow-on actions at the June 2017 Council meeting, preliminary development of ranges of alternatives by the Community Advisory Board (CAB) over the summer, Council guidance on that range at the September Council meeting, and finalization of ranges of alternatives for analysis when the review is completed in November.

The development of the catch share review is currently on schedule. Analysts working on the catch share review have completed the first draft, which is currently undergoing internal review. The Scientific and Statistical Committee groundfish and economic subcommittees are scheduled to meet May 24-25 to review the draft document, and the CAB will meet May 30-31 to review the document and develop recommendations for follow-on actions to be presented to the Council in June.

Intersector Allocation (ISA) Review

At its November 2016 meeting, the Council directed staff to begin developing a review of intersector allocations and report back on progress at the April 2017 Council meeting. At the end of the review process, the Council would decide whether to prioritize consideration of changes to intersector allocations. At its November 2016 meeting, the Council also determined that any revisions to the allocations would follow the review and be developed through the Council's Groundfish Allocation Committee, although the catch share review CAB may address within-trawl allocation and comment on trawl/non-trawl allocations as they relate to performance of the catch share program. Further, the Council specified that at that time, it was not its intent to focus on reconsideration of within-trawl whiting, sablefish, or trawl/non-trawl allocations.

Factors to Consider in the ISA Review

- Ecological Factors
 - Amendment 24 analysis indicated there were no adverse ecosystem/ecological impacts associated with non-whiting groundfish species across a wide range of removal assumptions (Atlantis modelling results);
 - Habitat impacts are discussed in the Am 28 EFH process; and,
 - Stock status in 2016 SAFE.
- Economic and Social Factors
 - Partially addressed in past spex analyses; and,
 - Augmented in this review.
- Performance Indicators
 - Partially addressed in past spex analyses; and,
 - Augmented in this review.

Trawl/Nontrawl Allocations

Evidence of Stranded Yield

Primary target stocks, such as petrale sole in the trawl fishery and sablefish in both trawl and non-trawl fisheries, have had high attainment rates since the trawl catch share program was implemented. Shortspine thornyhead north of 34° 27' N. lat. have also experienced relatively high attainment rates. Of the formally allocated overfished stocks, darkblotched and POP have had relatively high attainment rates indicating the potential for these stocks to be choke species that can inhibit access to target stocks. Both of these stocks are known to constrain some trawl fishing activities.

Many of the stocks formally allocated under Amendment 21 are trawl-dominant (defined as ≥90 percent of the average available historical harvest to non-tribal groundfish fisheries was caught by limited entry trawl sectors). A minimum allocation of 5 percent of the fishery harvest guideline (fishery HG) of the trawl-dominant species was allocated to non-trawl sectors under Amendment 21.

- The 5% (minimum) non-trawl allocation of trawl-dominant stocks tends to strand yield:
- Consider set-aside management of such stocks for the non-trawl sectors:
 - arrowtooth flounder, darkblotched rockfish, Dover sole, English sole, longspine thornyhead north, petrale sole, POP, and splitnose rockfish south;
 - this management strategy is more adaptive (set-asides decided every 2 yrs).

Amendment 6 Considerations

Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment 6, which established the commercial non-treaty limited entry system, also established allocation procedures for any species to be newly allocated between commercial open access (including directed and incidental open access) and limited entry based on catch history for the license limitation allocation period (July 11, 1984 through August 1, 1988). The species that were affected by Am 6 are lingcod, chilipepper rockfish, yellowtail rockfish, the species in the rockfish complexes, and shortspine thornyhead north of the Conception area. Amendment 21 superseded any Am 6 allocations for affected species (i.e., lingcod, the species in the Slope Rockfish complexes north and south, and shortspine thornyhead north). The FMP also suspends such allocations for overfished species. In current practice, the Am 6 limited entry and open access allocations are rarely met, due to constraints imposed by management measures designed to rebuild overfished species.

As part of the five-year review, the question of whether the Am 6 allocations of species in the Nearshore and Shelf Rockfish complexes (the remaining stocks affected by Am 6) should continue. Nearshore rockfish allocations are managed by state policies and nearshore FMPs in California and Oregon. Access to shelf rockfish is severely affected by species' rebuilding plans, and Am 6 allocations of shelf rockfish are unlikely to be an issue for the foreseeable future

Allocation of Sablefish North of 36°N Lat.

Sablefish north of 36° N. lat. were formally allocated many years before Am 21 was implemented. However, as with all formal intersector allocations, the Council intended a full review at this juncture.

One issue with the sablefish north allocation is the management line at 36° N. lat. The allocation was decided in an era when the sablefish assessment only assessed the portion of the stock north of 36° N. lat. since the surveys then only extended that far south. However, as

is made clear in the last full sablefish assessment (Stewart, et al. 2011), the 36° N lat. line “*does not likely correspond to any meaningful biological boundary*” and Pt. Conception at 34° 27' N lat. is a more reasonable biogeographic break for west coast sablefish. For many years, there has been a post-stratification of the assessed biomass using trawl survey data to apportion stock biomass north and south of 36° N. lat. to determine the current allocations.

Should the Sablefish Management Line Change?

- The 36°N lat. line is not a meaningful biological boundary for sablefish; Pt. Conception at 34°27' N lat. is a more reasonable biogeographic break:
 - Existing sector allocations in the north can be recalculated using relative biomass estimates by area from the trawl survey;
 - Moving the line would require a reallocation in the south since the vast majority of historical trawl catch in the south occurred north of Pt. Conception;
 - Consider equitability effects for LEFG permits with and without sablefish endorsements (~74% of vessels fishing in that area do not have the endorsement); and,
 - ~30 trawl IFQ vessels have fished in the area between Pt. Conception and 36°N lat. using fixed gears since 2011.
- Gear switching has caused gear conflicts between the traditional LE and OA fixed gear fleets and the trawl IFQ fleet in the Morro Bay area:
- If moving the management line is too onerous a step, consider a coastwide management strategy for sablefish:
 - OFLs and ABCs are coastwide; ACLs are stratified North & South of 36°N lat.;
 - Many trawl IFQ vessels with southern sablefish quota move south to target sablefish;
 - Coastwide trawl IFQ management would likely shift much of the current trawl effort north of Morro Bay;
 - A northern HG could be calculated every 2 yrs. using the relative biomass from trawl surveys to maintain the existing sector allocations; recombine trawl quota to manage that sector coastwide.

After receiving reports from its advisory bodies and the public, the Council identified issues requiring additional information and proposed a process for carrying out the ISA review. A Draft ISA Review Document will be available for public review at the June Council meeting and final action is scheduled for the fall 2017. The Council directed that the next draft of the ISA review document:

- Address the recommendations in the GMT report (Agenda Item F.4.b.) and the GAP report (Agenda Item F.4.b.);
- Include approaches for addressing the 36°N lat. sablefish management line and related allocation issues;
- Focus on set-asides in the non-trawl sectors for a select number of the species identified as trawl-dominant (i.e., darkblotched rockfish, Pacific ocean perch, petrale sole, and longspine thornyhead north of 40° 10' N. latitude);

- Evaluate species that may be constraining the non-trawl fishery while not being fully attained in the trawl fishery (e.g., lingcod south of 40° 10' N. latitude); and,
- Discontinue development of the yellowtail rockfish cap issue.

Cost Recovery: Council and NMFS staff will meet to discuss ways to address transparency concerns such as those raised by the GAP report (Agenda Item F.4.b.).

F.5. Groundfish Non-Salmon Endangered Species Workgroup Report

On December 7, 2012, NMFS published a Biological Opinion (Opinion) prepared pursuant to section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on the continuing operation of the Pacific coast groundfish fishery. The Opinion analyzed the effects of the fishery on green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*), eulachon (*Thaleichthys pacificus*), humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*), and leatherback sea turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*). The Opinion concluded that the action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence and is not likely to destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat of green sturgeon, eulachon, and leatherback sea turtles, and is not likely to jeopardize humpback whales. (Note that the eastern distinct population segment [DPS] of Steller sea lions was subsequently de-listed.)

The Council's Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup (Workgroup) was established in conformance with the Opinion and last reported to the Council in June 2015. The Workgroup meets biennially, reviews updated estimates of the incidental take of the above ESA-listed species, and makes recommendations to the Council on mitigation measures should take in groundfish fisheries be a concern. The Workgroup met February 15-16, 2017 to take up these tasks. Meetings of the Workgroup are timed so that recommendations that involve adoption or adjustment of management measures can be considered as part of the biennial harvest specifications process, slated to begin at the June Council meeting for the 2019-2020 period. The Workgroup found that recent take of subject species did not warrant consideration of additional mitigation measures by the Council. The Workgroup noted that new biological opinions will be completed in 2017 for eulachon and short-tailed albatross. Based on the Workgroup Report, the Council made the following recommendations:

- Conduct a risk analysis of humpback whale takes in the groundfish fixed gear fishery and work with the fleet to reduce the risk of such takes;
- GMT work with NMFS to better estimate eulachon take in the groundfish fishery;
- Complete the new seabird biological opinion and report to the Council at the June or September 2017 meeting to allow development of additional mitigation measures, as appropriate, through the 2019-2020 groundfish biennial harvest specifications and management measures process; and,
- Facilitate greater engagement by industry representatives in future Workgroup meetings.

F.6. Final Action on Inseason Adjustments

The Council considered the most recent information regarding ongoing fisheries and recommended a bimonthly trip limit increase for open access fixed gear sablefish North of 36°N Lat.

- 300 pounds daily, or one landing per week of up to 1,000 pounds, not to exceed 2,000 pounds per two months.

Klamath Chinook salmon, a bycatch species in the groundfish trawl fisheries, will not meet escapement goals for 2017 by a historically large margin. The Council recommended the whiting fleet voluntarily move north to avoid Chinook salmon, recognizing there could be increased interactions with Pacific ocean perch (POP), especially given the historically high whiting quotas. Therefore, the Council also recommended that NMFS reallocate 3.5 mt of POP from the incidental open access off-the-top deduction to the mothership sector and 3.5 mt to the catcher-processor sector as soon as possible.

The Council also directed the GMT to develop alternatives for potentially distributing the POP, darkblotched, and canary rockfish buffers later in the year and report back at the June Council meeting in Spokane, Washington.

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT

G.4. Small-Scale Fishery Management Final Action

At its November 2016 meeting, the Council considered a suite of alternatives to allow small-scale directed fishing to continue when directed Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) finfish fisheries are closed. The issue became apparent during the 2015-16 and 2016-17 Pacific sardine fishing seasons, when all directed sardine fishing was precluded, except for limited amounts of tribal harvest, live bait, and recreational fishing. Small-Scale harvesters in the bait and human consumption markets, who usually take no more than several hundred pounds per day or harvest by hand using nets at the beach, were also closed down. The Council selected a preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) at its November 2016 meeting.


The Council adopted CPS Fishery Management Plan Amendment 26 allowing for small-scale directed fishing on CPS finfish stocks that are otherwise closed to directed fishing. The amendment will allow for landings up to one metric ton per day, with a limit of one trip per day. The CPS Management Team will provide an update on the small-scale fishery at its April 2018 meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

C.4. Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning

The next meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled for June 8 - 14, 2017 at the Doubletree Hilton, 322 N. Spokane Falls Court, Spokane, WA. The Preliminary Proposed Agenda represents the agenda expectations for the June 2017 Council meeting.

There are two Briefing Book deadlines for every Council meeting. The first (and main) deadline is two and a half weeks before the Council meeting (Thursday, May 11). 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 four days prior to the start of the Council meeting (Wednesday, May 31). 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. The June 2017 Briefing Book is scheduled to be posted on or around May, 19.

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*The Power of Being First With
Innovation*