



Pacific Fishery Management Council *NEWS RELEASE*

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PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL CHOOSES OPTIONS FOR 2017 SALMON SEASON

Vancouver, Washington – The Pacific Fishery Management Council today adopted three public review alternatives for the 2017 salmon seasons off the West Coast of the United States. The Council will select a final alternative at their next meeting in Sacramento, California on April 6-11. Detailed information about season starting dates, areas open, and catch limits for all three alternatives are available on the Council’s website at www.pcouncil.org or <http://tinyurl.com/salmon2017>.

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 winter-run Chinook, which are listed under the Endangered Species Act. Because both of these fish intermix with other stocks in the ocean, fisheries targeting more abundant stocks must be constrained.

“The salmon runs this year will present a challenge for ocean fishermen and managers throughout the West Coast,” said Executive Director Chuck Tracy. “In the north, several coho runs will keep ocean quotas lower than normal. In the south, the low forecast for Klamath River fall Chinook is unprecedented, and the most restrictive alternative the

Council will consider allows no ocean fishing between Cape Falcon, Oregon and the U.S./Mexico border after April 30 this year.”

“This year will be an exceptionally difficult year for ocean salmon fisheries, especially in Oregon and California. However, there are alternatives that may provide at least limited opportunity for both commercial and recreational ocean salmon fishing along much of the coast,” said Council Chair Herb Pollard.

Northern Oregon and Washington (north of Cape Falcon)

Sport season alternatives

Ocean sport fishery options north of Cape Falcon in Oregon and off the Washington coast are focused on Chinook salmon this year. One alternative includes a mark-selective Chinook fishery in June, while all alternatives include Chinook fishing opportunity in June or July-September, which are not mark-selective. Chinook recreational quotas range from 40,000 to 54,500. For coho, two alternatives allow modest coastwide opportunity. One allows opportunity for 58,800 hatchery coho in late June through September; the other allows opportunity for 50,400 hatchery coho in late June through September. A third alternative permits limited coho fishing only in the Columbia River area between Cape Falcon and Leadbetter Point, with a coho quota of 18,900 hatchery coho that starts in July and runs into September.

Commercial season options

Non-Indian ocean commercial fishery alternatives north of Cape Falcon include traditional Chinook seasons between May and September. Chinook quotas for all areas and times range from 40,000 to 50,000, compared to 35,000 in 2016. Two commercial fishery alternatives allow retention of coho, with quotas of 5,600 and 9,600 marked coho (compared to only one alternative in 2016 with a quota of 7,200 marked coho). A third alternative prohibits coho retention in the commercial fishery.

Tribal ocean fisheries north of Cape Falcon

Chinook and coho quotas for tribal ocean fishery alternatives range from 30,000 to 50,000 for Chinook salmon, and from 12,500 to 40,000 for coho. Seasons open May 1 and run through September 15.

California and southern Oregon (south of Cape Falcon)

Sport season options

From the north, recreational season alternatives south of Cape Falcon are heavily

constrained this year to protect Klamath River fall Chinook. Alternatives for Oregon Chinook fishing in the Tillamook, Newport, and Coos Bay areas all open March 15 and run either continuously through October 31 or are closed May through August.

Oregon ocean recreational alternatives include mark-selective coho fishing seasons starting in June or July, and running through July or into early August in the area between Cape Falcon and the Oregon/California border. Quotas range from 20,000 to 30,000 marked coho. In addition, a non-mark-selective fishery is proposed for the area between Cape Falcon and Humbug Mt. in September, with a quota of 10,000 coho.

Due to the poor status of Klamath River fall Chinook, none of the alternatives provide for Chinook-directed fisheries in the Klamath Management Zone, which extends from Humbug Mt., Oregon to Horse Mt., California. One alternative does include a mark-selective coho fishery in the Oregon portion of the Klamath Management Zone and extending north to Cape Falcon.

California ocean sport fishing alternatives for areas south of Horse Mountain provide seasons that are fairly conservative in comparison to recent years to protect Klamath River fall Chinook and Sacramento River winter Chinook. These protective measures include shortened seasons and mid-season closures.

Commercial season options

As with recreational seasons, commercial season alternatives south of Cape Falcon are heavily constrained this year to protect Klamath River fall Chinook. Chinook salmon seasons under Alternative 1 include an opening in the Tillamook and Newport areas from mid-April through October, with several closed periods.

In Alternative 2, the Tillamook, Newport and Coos Bay area seasons would be open most days beginning in mid-April through early June and two days in August. Under Alternative 3, commercial salmon fishing would be closed in these areas.

As in the sport fishery, commercial salmon fishing is not allowed in the Klamath Management Zone in any of the alternatives to protect Klamath River fall Chinook.

Commercial season alternatives south of the Klamath Management Zone are also heavily constrained this year to protect Klamath River fall Chinook and Sacramento River winter Chinook. In the Fort Bragg management area (Horse Mt. to Pt. Arena), two of the alternatives are completely closed, and the third only provides for a September fishery. There is more opportunity south of Pt. Arena, but seasons are still constrained

compared to recent years. Two of the alternatives include August-October fisheries in the San Francisco management area (Pt. Arena to Pigeon Pt.) and May-June fisheries in the Monterey management area (Pigeon Pt. to the U.S./Mexico border), but the third alternative has these areas closed for the whole season.

Management Process

Public hearings to receive input on the alternatives are scheduled for March 27 in Westport, Washington and Coos Bay, Oregon; and for March 28 in Fort Bragg, California. The Council will consult with scientists, hear public comment, revise preliminary decisions and choose a final alternative at its meeting April 6-11 in Sacramento, California.

The Council will forward its final season recommendations to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for its approval and implementation by May 1.

All Council meetings are open to the public.

Council Role

The Pacific Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils established by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 for the purpose of managing fisheries 3-200 miles offshore of the United States of America coastline. The Pacific Council recommends management measures for fisheries off the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington.

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On the Web

- Pacific Fishery Management Council: <http://www.pcouncil.org>
- Draft Alternatives for 2017 salmon management: <http://tinyurl.com/salmon2017>
- Final Alternatives and analyses of the biological and socioeconomic impacts will be posted on the Council web page in the near future.
- Description of 2017 salmon management process: <http://www.pcouncil.org/salmon/current-season-management/>
- Fact sheet: Salmon: <http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Salmon-Oct-2015.pdf>

- Fact sheet: Common Terms Used in Salmon Management:
<http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Common-salmon-terms-Oct-2015.pdf>