

Agenda Item Summary

BACKGROUND

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) will adopt 2008 ocean salmon fishing regulations on April 11, 2008 for ocean waters from three to 200 miles off shore (federal jurisdiction). The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) is asked to adopt similar regulations for ocean waters from zero to three miles off shore (state jurisdiction).

Specialized restrictive regulations in state waters during recent years have been linked to conservation requirements for Oregon coastal and lower Columbia River wild coho and wild spring Chinook and ocean fishing regimes adopted by PFMC. Due to these requirements coupled with the declines in Oregon coastal fall Chinook observed over the last two years and anticipated poor returns in 2008, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is looking at restrictions in fall Chinook terminal sport and commercial fisheries as well as river sport fisheries in 2008 that will be addressed at the June Commission meeting. Meetings to solicit public input on fall Chinook ocean terminal and river fishery options will be held April 29, 2008 in Coos Bay, April 30, 2008 in Newport, and May 1, 2008 in Tillamook.

Modifications to the open fishing areas and daily salmon bag limit may be proposed for the 2008 Columbia River and Buoy 10 recreational fisheries. These modifications will help reduce the need for in-season management and provide the maximum angling opportunity within restrictive conservation requirements. Similar to 2007, staff may propose extending the angling closure in Big Creek to help address a potential shortfall in Big Creek Hatchery fall Chinook escapement.

ISSUE 1

OCEAN SPORT AND COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHERIES

ANALYSIS

On March 14, 2008, three options for regulating ocean salmon fisheries in federal waters in 2008 were approved by the PFMC and released for public review. In Oregon, ODFW staff presented the options to the Commission on March 21, 2008, and to the public at meetings hosted by PFMC staff on March 31, 2008 in Coos Bay. During the week of April 6-11, 2008, subsequent to consideration of public hearing results and advice from its scientific and technical committees, the PFMC will adopt the final 2008 regulations for ocean salmon fisheries in federal waters off the coasts of Washington, Oregon and California. Because of poor salmon forecasts in 2008 for numerous stocks that contribute to ocean salmon fisheries off Oregon,

specifically concerns with low numbers of Sacramento fall Chinook and a low forecast for Klamath three year old fall Chinook, on March 12, 2008, the National Marine Fisheries Service in consultation with the PFMC and State of Oregon took an in-season management action and closed the March 15-April 30 ocean commercial and sport Chinook salmon seasons off Oregon. Subsequent to the April PFMC meeting, staff will prepare sample rules regarding ocean salmon fisheries for Commission consideration.

OPTIONS

The Commission has historically adopted federal regulations for state waters without change. Commission policy requires that changes from PFMC actions first be presented to the PFMC with a copy to the Secretary of Commerce and adopted only after the Commission has received, or waited a reasonable time, for a response from PFMC.

**STAFF
RECOMMENDATION**

At the April 18, 2008 meeting, staff anticipates it will recommend the Commission adopt ocean salmon seasons as set by PFMC.

ISSUE 2

**SPORT AND COMMERCIAL SALMON REGULATIONS FOR
NEARSHORE OCEAN WATERS**

ANALYSIS (overview)

ODFW is required by OAR 635-500-0135 to adopt regulations for ocean mixed-stock and terminal area fisheries that meet three specific criteria: 1) provide access by fisheries to harvestable surpluses of Chinook salmon that may exist, 2) maintain traditional in-river fisheries and 3) meet spawning escapement goals in wild coastal Chinook populations. These fisheries also cannot impact other regional depressed salmon stocks under PFMC or Oregon management plans.

Terminal ocean commercial and sport fisheries have traditionally occurred in the Garibaldi ocean area (targeting Tillamook Bay fall Chinook), the Port Orford ocean area (targeting Elk River fall Chinook) and the Brookings ocean area (targeting Chetco River fall Chinook). In 2006, as part of the Governor's declaration of state of emergency over salmon season closures, the Commission adopted additional terminal ocean commercial fisheries targeting fall Chinook from the Tillamook Bay and the Nehalem, Nestucca, Yaquina, Alsea, Siuslaw, Umpqua, Coos and Rogue rivers. These fisheries were continued in 2007 except for the Rogue terminal fishery.

As discussed above, because of recent low escapements and anticipated poor returns for fall Chinook this year, ODFW is looking at restrictions in fall Chinook terminal ocean commercial and sport fisheries as well as river sport fisheries in 2008 to insure that escapement goals are met for each basin. Options for ocean terminal

and river Chinook fisheries will be addressed at the June Commission meeting.

ISSUE 3

AMENDMENT TO ANGLING REGULATIONS FOR THE BUOY 10, LOWER COLUMBIA RIVER AND BIG CREEK RECREATIONAL FISHERIES TO MODIFY THE OPEN FISHING AREA

ANALYSIS

Adoption of these regulations will help reduce the possibility of in-season emergency action, improve escapement of hatchery fall Chinook to facilities and serve to provide fishery opportunity and flexibility for in-river fisheries.

OPTIONS

Regulations for the Buoy 10 and Columbia River recreational fisheries are subject to negotiations through the North of Cape Falcon process which will conclude in conjunction with the PFMC April meeting. Therefore, the staff recommendation will be developed subsequent to those negotiations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

N/A

DRAFT MOTION

I move to adopt 2008 ocean sport and commercial salmon seasons as proposed by staff in Attachment 5.

I move to adopt 2008 sport and commercial salmon regulations for nearshore ocean waters as proposed by staff in Attachment 5.

I move to adopt the Chinook bag limit, season structure and closed areas for the Buoy 10, lower Columbia River and Big Creek recreational fisheries as proposed by staff in Attachment .

EFFECTIVE DATE

May 1, 2008