

## Agenda Item Summary

### BACKGROUND

*NOTE: This document was prepared and distributed prior to finalization of Federal fishery actions for 2017 seasons. The content should be considered as draft, and specific season recommendations contained may change prior to the April 21 OFWC hearing.*

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) adopted ocean salmon fishing regulations on April 11, 2017, for ocean waters from three to 200 miles off shore (federal jurisdiction). The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) will be asked to adopt identical permanent regulations for ocean waters from zero to three miles off shore (state jurisdiction).

Ocean salmon seasons adopted by the PFMC are structured to address conservation and Endangered Species Act (ESA) requirements for various Chinook and coho stocks. Forecasts for Klamath River fall Chinook are the lowest on record, and those for Sacramento fall Chinook are below average. Forecasts for other salmon stocks are lower than 2016 forecasts. The overall 2017 forecast for Columbia River fall Chinook is 582,600 fish, which is lower than the 2016 actual return of 641,100 fish. Coho returns to the Columbia and Oregon coast are forecast to be similar to recent forecasts.

Staff is also proposing commercial troll seasons in two traditional terminal areas for 2017: Elk River and Chetco River. Staff is proposing terminal sport fisheries in the Elk and Chetco areas. These terminal fisheries are successful at harvesting stocks returning to these locations with little interception of other Chinook stocks. In addition to these areas, the PFMC rules may include a repeat of the 2016 allowance of fall state waters fisheries coastwide, shoreward of a 40-fathom contour line.

### ISSUE 1

#### **OCEAN RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHERIES**

### ANALYSIS

Due to the reduced run size of Sacramento fall Chinook and critically low forecast of Klamath fall Chinook stocks, the PFMC adopted ocean Chinook fisheries off Oregon south of Cape Falcon that are highly restrictive, particularly for troll seasons. Recreational fisheries in this area harvest far fewer Chinook and are less affected, but not unaffected, by the reductions. The main constraint in planning 2017 Chinook fisheries is the depressed status of Klamath River fall Chinook.

The forecasts for Coho (Columbia and Oregon coast) are similar to 2016 forecasts, and will allow for continued recreational Coho fishery opportunity south of Cape Falcon, including mark-selective fishing in

July and potential non-mark-selective fishing in September.

Details of the season structures and quotas adopted by the PFMF for commercial, recreational, and tribal fisheries are contained in Attachment 4.

**STAFF  
RECOMMENDATION**

1. Ocean salmon fisheries (Staff Recommendation)

Adopt ocean salmon fisheries rules for state waters as proposed in Attachment 3, which are identical to federal regulations.

**ISSUE 2**

**OCEAN SPORT AND COMMERCIAL CHINOOK  
REGULATIONS FOR TERMINAL AREAS**

**ANALYSIS**

**Discussion of 2016 40-fa line approach**

In 2016, a new approach was taken for state waters commercial troll fisheries in Oregon. For fall fisheries, the PFMF rules allowed commercial troll fishing from Oct. 1-31 shoreward of a 40-fathom contour line, from Cape Falcon south to Humbug Mt. This approach confined fishing close to shore, in order to focus on Oregon local stocks, while minimizing catch of Klamath River fall Chinook, which are generally found farther off shore. This allowed more fishing area than would be achieved with more traditional “bubble” fisheries, and precluded the need to adopt a Tillamook terminal fishery in 2016. In general, catches during this fishery were relatively low, but it did have the intended effect of catching Oregon stocks and avoiding Klamath fish. This approach will be likely repeated in 2017; if not, Staff will likely propose adoption of a Tillamook bubble fishery.

**Elk River Ocean Terminal Fishery**

The 2017 forecasts for Elk River and Sixes River Chinook are expected to be about the same as recent years.

In 2016, the sport season was November 1-30 with bag limits of two Chinook per day, but no more than one wild Chinook per day and ten per season. The Department is recommending the Commission adopt the same sport season regulations for 2017. The 2016 commercial season was November 1--30 with a landing and possession limit of 20 Chinook per day and a minimum size of 26 inches. The Department is recommending the Commission also add October 15-31 to this fishing period for 2017.

Accordingly, the draft OARs in Attachment 3 reflect no changes to the season structures for this area.

**Chetco River Ocean Terminal Fishery**

The 2017 forecasts for the Chetco River and Winchuck River Chinook

are reduced from recent years. As a result, staff is proposing continuation of a shortened season for the recreational fishery and reduced quota and landing limits for the commercial fishery compared to prior years.

Proposed seasons for 2017 are:

- Recreational October 7-8 and 14-15, encompassing two weekends. One Chinook per day. Minimum size 28”.
- Commercial troll October 9-13 and 16-31, 300 fish quota, 5 fish per day landing limit for October 9-13 and 10 fish per day landing limit thereafter. Minimum size 28”.

The draft OARs in Attachment 3 reflect changes to implement these staff recommendations for this area.

1. Staff Recommendation:

**Elk**

**STAFF  
RECOMMENDATION**

Commercial troll – October 15-November 30, with a daily Chinook landing and possession limit of 20 per day and a 26 inch minimum length.

Sport – November 1-30, two Chinook per day, but no more than one wild Chinook per day and ten per season.

**Chetco**

Commercial troll - October 9-13 and 16-31, 300 fish quota, 5 fish per day landing limit for October 9-13 and 10 fish per day landing limit thereafter. Minimum size 28”.

Recreational - October 7-8 and 14-15. One Chinook per day. Minimum size 28”.

**DRAFT MOTION**

I move to adopt the 2017 regulations for ocean sport and commercial salmon fisheries, and ocean terminal sport and commercial fisheries as proposed by staff and as reflected in draft OARs shown in Attachment 3.

**EFFECTIVE  
DATE**

Upon filing with the Secretary of State.