



Pacific Fishery Management Council *NEWS RELEASE*

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PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL RELEASES ALTERNATIVES FOR 2023 WEST COAST OCEAN SALMON FISHERIES

Seattle, Washington—The Pacific Fishery Management Council has adopted three alternatives for 2023 ocean salmon fisheries off Washington, Oregon, and California for public review. The Council will make a final decision on salmon seasons at its meeting on April 1-7. Detailed information about season starting dates, areas open, and catch limits for the three alternatives are available on the Council’s website at www.pcouncil.org.

Forecasts for West Coast Chinook and coho stocks in 2023 are a mixed bag, with some low and high points when compared to last year. Federal requirements to conserve Fraser River (Canada) coho, lower Columbia River natural tule¹ fall Chinook, Klamath River fall Chinook and Sacramento River fall Chinook will be the main constraints for this year’s ocean salmon fisheries.

“Meeting our conservation and management objectives continues to be the highest priority for the Council,” said Council Chair Marc Gorelnik. “Balancing those objectives while providing meaningful commercial and recreational seasons remains a challenge in 2023.”

¹ Tule Chinook generally spawn lower in the Columbia River than salmon that continue to migrate up the mainstem.

“The 2023 salmon season discussions have been dominated by the severely low forecasts for both the Klamath and Sacramento River fall Chinook stocks”, said Executive Director Merrick Burden, “the Council will need to deliberate on the best path forward in setting 2023 seasons with considerations for economic implications to the coastal communities and the low abundances of key salmon stocks and the need to ensure future generations of healthy salmon returns.”

Washington and Northern Oregon (north of Cape Falcon)

Fisheries north of Cape Falcon (in northern Oregon) are limited mainly by the need to constrain catch of lower Columbia River natural tule Chinook. Additionally, two natural coho stocks meet the criteria for either overfished (Queets River) or not overfished/ rebuilding (Strait of Juan de Fuca), which is also a concern when structuring 2023 fisheries.

Tribal ocean fisheries north of Cape Falcon

Tribal negotiations are underway, but at this time the Chinook and coho quotas for tribal ocean fishery alternatives range from 30,000 to 50,000 for Chinook salmon, and from 42,000 to 62,000 coho (which are the same as 2022). Under the range of alternatives, seasons open May 1 and continue through September 15.

Sport season alternatives

For the ocean sport fishery north of Cape Falcon the alternatives with Chinook recreational quotas range from 32,500 to 42,500, compared to 27,000 in 2022. For coho, recreational quotas range from 142,800 to 168,000 marked coho, compared to 168,000 in 2022. Starting dates range from mid- to late-June with the season continuing through most or all of September. Chinook and coho retention is allowed generally throughout the proposed seasons.

Commercial season alternatives

For the non-Indian ocean commercial fishery North of Cape Falcon, the alternatives reflect traditional seasons between May and September. Chinook quotas for all areas and times range from 32,500 to 42,500, compared to 27,000 in 2022. Coho quotas range from 27,200 to 32,000 marked coho, compared to 32,000 in 2022.

Oregon (south of Cape Falcon) and California

Fisheries south of Cape Falcon are limited mainly by the low abundance forecast for both Klamath River and Sacramento River fall Chinook. This year's management alternatives are significantly reduced or closed to fishing opportunity to keep fishing impacts minimal given the critically low abundance forecasts for key California Chinook stocks of concern.

Sport season alternatives

While the Sacramento River and Klamath River fall Chinook abundances are forecasted to be very low, Oregon's coho populations have a similar forecast to 2022.

Oregon ocean recreational alternatives from Cape Falcon to the OR/CA border include mark-selective coho fishing seasons starting June 17 and running through all of August, with one alternative from Humbug Mountain to the OR/CA border as closed. Quotas range from 90,000 to 110,000 marked coho (compared to 95,000 to 120,000 in 2022). In addition, non-mark-selective coho fisheries are proposed in all alternatives for the area between Cape Falcon and Humbug Mountain for the month of September, with quotas ranging from 15,000 to 25,000 coho (compared to 17,000 to 20,000 in 2022). Two alternatives provide Chinook salmon retention from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain from September 1 to October 31. In the area from Humbug Mountain to the Oregon/California border a mark-selective coho fishery is proposed in two of the three alternatives.

California ocean recreational fisheries in all areas from the Oregon/California border to the U.S./Mexico border are proposed to be closed in all three alternatives given the low abundance forecasts for both Klamath and Sacramento River fall Chinook.

Commercial season alternatives

Oregon ocean commercial alternatives from Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain are open either beginning in September 1 or October 1 through October 31 and one alternative is closed entirely. A limited coho season is also being considered in September.

All commercial alternatives in both the Oregon and California Klamath Management Zones are proposed to be closed for the 2023 season.

California ocean commercial fisheries in all areas from the Oregon/California border to the U.S./Mexico border are proposed to be closed in all three alternatives given the low

abundance forecasts for both Klamath and Sacramento River fall Chinook.

Management Objectives for Southern Resident Killer Whales

The Council worked collaboratively with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to understand the effects of Council-area fisheries on Southern Resident killer whales, which are listed as endangered. Based in part on information provided by the Council's ad-hoc Southern Resident Killer Whale Workgroup, the Council amended the Pacific Salmon Fishery Management Plan to address the needs of the whales while providing salmon harvest opportunities. Based on updated modeling information, in November 2022 the Council adopted a revised abundance threshold value of 623,000 for the North of Falcon area. Salmon abundance in 2023 is projected to be well above this threshold.

Management Process

The Council has scheduled one public hearing for each coastal state to hear comments on the alternatives. The hearings will occur **in person** and are scheduled for Monday, March 20 (Washington and Oregon) and Tuesday March 21 (California). The public will also be able to comment on the alternatives during the April Council meeting. Materials and instructions for joining online Council meetings and hearings will be posted to the [Council website](#).

The Council will consult with scientists, hear public comment, revise preliminary decisions, and choose a final alternative at its meeting April 1-7.

The Council will forward its final season recommendations to NMFS for its approval and implementation no later than May 16.

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 U.S. 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) (www.pcouncil.org)
- [Draft Alternatives for 2023 salmon management](#)
- Final Alternatives and analyses of the biological and socioeconomic impacts will be posted on the Council web page on or about March 20 ([look for 2023 Preseason Report II on this page](#))
- Fact sheet: [Salmon](#)
- Fact sheet: [Geography of Salmon](#)
- Fact sheet: [Common Terms Used in Salmon Management](#)