

QUEETS RIVER NATURAL COHO

SALMON REBUILDING PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, MAGNUSON-STEVENSON FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT ANALYSIS, REGULATORY IMPACT REVIEW, AND INITIAL REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS

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PLEASE NOTE:

THIS IS AN INTEGRATED DOCUMENT DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL'S PACIFIC SALMON FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AND PROVIDE THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS REQUIRED UNDER THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-----------|---|
| ABC | acceptable biological catch |
| ACL | annual catch limit |
| BY | brood year |
| CoTC | Coho Technical Committee (of the PSC) |
| Council | Pacific Fishery Management Council |
| CWT | coded-wire tag |
| EA | Environmental Assessment |
| EEZ | exclusive economic zone (from 3-200 miles from shore) |
| EIS | Environmental Impact Statement |
| ER | exploitation rate |
| ESA | Endangered Species Act |
| ESU | evolutionarily significant unit |
| F_{ABC} | exploitation rate associated with ABC |
| F_{ACL} | exploitation rate associated with ACL ($= F_{ABC}$) |
| FMP | fishery management plan |
| F_{MSY} | maximum sustainable yield exploitation rate |
| F_{OFL} | exploitation rate associated with the overfishing limit ($= F_{MSY}$, MFMT) |
| FONSI | Finding of No Significant Impacts |
| FRAM | Fishery Regulatory Assessment Model |
| ISBM | individual stock-based management |
| MFMT | maximum fishing mortality threshold |
| MSA | Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act |
| MSM | mixed stock model |
| MSST | minimum stock size threshold |
| MSY | maximum sustainable yield |
| NA | not available |
| NEPA | National Environmental Policy Act |
| NMFS | National Marine Fisheries Service |
| NPGO | North Pacific Gyre Oscillation |
| NSIG | National Standard 1 Guidelines |
| OFL | overfishing limit |
| OY | Optimum Yield |
| PDO | Pacific Decadal Oscillation |
| PFMC | Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) |
| PSC | Pacific Salmon Commission |
| PST | Pacific Salmon Treaty |
| QIN | Quinault Indian Nation |
| S_{ABC} | spawning escapement associated with ABC |
| S_{ACL} | spawning escapement associated with ACL ($= S_{ABC}$) |
| S_{MSY} | MSY spawning escapement |
| S_{OFL} | spawning escapement associated with the overfishing limit ($= S_{MSY}$) |
| STT | Salmon Technical Team (formerly the Salmon Plan Development Team) |
| WDFW | Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife |

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Queets River natural coho salmon (Queets coho) met the criteria for overfished status in 2018 as defined in Section 3.1 of the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP). In response, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) directed the Salmon Technical Team (STT), in coordination with relevant state and tribal co-managers, to develop a rebuilding plan for Council consideration within one year. This report represents the Queets coho rebuilding plan and includes requirements described in section 3.1.4.1 of the FMP, including: (1) an evaluation of the roles of fishing, marine and freshwater survival in the overfished determination, (2) any modifications to the criteria for determining when the stock has rebuilt, (3) recommendations for actions the Council could take to rebuild the stock, and (4) specification of the rebuilding period.

Section 3 describes the evaluation of potential factors that led to the overfished status. A review of data provided by the Tribal and State co-managers revealed abnormally low marine survival coupled with low smolt outmigration for the brood that returned in 2015 contributed to a spawning escapement that was the lowest on record in the past 20 years. This low escapement value had a large impact on the 3 year geometric mean spawning escapement, which forms the basis in the FMP for determining an overfished salmon stock. Marine conditions improved somewhat for the brood returning in 2016, and precautionary management measures were taken for all North of Falcon fisheries. However, despite good spawning escapement in 2014 and 2016, the historic low escapement in 2015 reduced the 3 year geometric mean spawning escapement too severely to avoid an overfished determination based on the 3 year geometric mean spawning escapement (2014-2016).

Section 4 provides recommendations for action in this rebuilding plan, including (1) the rebuilt criterion, (2) fishery management strategies to be employed during the rebuilding period, (3) co-manager recommendations for habitat restoration and precautionary approaches to both preseason planning and inseason management, and (4) an analysis of rebuilding times. Estimates of rebuilding time ranged from one year under the T_{MIN} scenario (no fishing) to two years under each of the two fishery management strategy alternatives. An analysis of the socioeconomic impacts of management strategy alternatives is presented in Section 5. Section 6 presents an analysis of the environmental impacts of the alternative rebuilding strategies, as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

This rebuilding plan was adopted as draft for public review at the June 2019 Council meeting in San Diego, California. At the September 2019 meeting in Boise, Idaho the Council adopted the rebuilding plan as final, with the following decisions: (1) maintain the default criterion for achieving rebuilt status as defined in the FMP, (2) identification of Alternative I (status quo) as the preferred management strategy alternative.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In 2018, Queets River natural coho salmon (Queets coho) met the criteria for overfished status as defined in section 3.1 of the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP; PFMC 2016). In response, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) directed the Salmon Technical Team (STT) to propose a rebuilding plan for Council consideration within one year. The FMP, and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), requires that a

rebuilding plan must be developed and implemented within two years of the formal notification from National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to the Council of the overfished status. Excerpts from the FMP relevant to status determinations and rebuilding plans are provided in Appendix A.

The Council's criteria for overfished is met if the geometric mean of escapement, computed over the most recent three years, falls below the Minimum Stock Size Threshold (MSST) which is defined for applicable stocks in Table 3-1 of the FMP. For Queets coho, the number of adult spawners expected to produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY) is defined as 5,800 natural-area adult spawners, also known as S_{MSY} . The MSST for Queets coho is defined as 4,350 natural-area adult spawners, with $MSST = 0.75 \times S_{MSY}$. The geometric mean of Queets coho natural-area adult spawners over years 2014-2016 was 4,291, and thus in 2018 the stock met the criteria for overfished status. Figure 2.0.a displays the time series of Queets River coho natural-area adult escapement and the running three year geometric mean of escapement relative to S_{MSY} and the MSST. The FMP identifies the default criterion for achieving rebuilt status as attainment of a 3-year geometric mean of spawning escapement exceeding S_{MSY} .

Overfished status is defined by recent spawner escapement for salmon stocks, which is not necessarily the result of overfishing. Overfishing occurs when in any one year the exploitation rate (ER) on a stock exceeds the maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT), which for Queets coho is defined as the MSY fishing mortality rate (F_{MSY}) of 0.65. It is possible that this situation could represent normal variation, as has been seen in the past for several salmon stocks. However, the occurrence of reduced stock size or spawner escapements, depending on the magnitude of the short-fall, could signal the beginning of a critical downward trend. Imposing fisheries on top of already low abundances could further jeopardize the capacity of the stock to produce MSY over the long term if appropriate actions are not taken to ensure that conservation objectives are achieved.

In this rebuilding plan, we begin by providing an overview of the Queets coho stock, the physical setting of the Queets river watershed, and fisheries management. We then review the potential factors that may have contributed to the overfished status. Recommendations regarding alternative rebuilding actions are proposed, as are recommendations for actions outside of the management of salmon fisheries. We end with a socioeconomic and environmental analysis of the impact of the recommended rebuilding alternatives.

The long-term average (1976-2017) natural escapement of Queets coho just over 6,100 spawners. Over the most recent 10 years (2008-2017), average natural spawner escapement has averaged about 6,400 fish, which includes the very low return year of 2015. (Table 2.0.a, Figure 2.0.a).

Table 2.0.a. Queets coho spawning escapement.

| Year ^{a/} | Spawning Escapement ^{b/} | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------|
| | Hatchery | Supplemental | Natural | Total |
| 2000 | 3,834 | 682 | 8,097 | 12,613 |
| 2001 | 6,491 | 1,080 | 23,890 | 31,461 |
| 2002 | 2,240 | 1,065 | 13,968 | 17,273 |
| 2003 | 7,002 | 1,081 | 9,846 | 17,929 |
| 2004 | 3,985 | 1,225 | 7,484 | 12,694 |
| 2005 | 7,843 | 432 | 6,539 | 14,814 |
| 2006 | 2,946 | - | 5,612 | 8,558 |
| 2007 | 1,954 | - | 4,600 | 6,554 |
| 2008 | 3,461 | - | 4,629 | 8,090 |
| 2009 | 14,151 | - | 9,204 | 23,355 |
| 2010 | 10,326 | - | 11,261 | 21,587 |
| 2011 | 12,887 | - | 8,588 | 21,475 |
| 2012 | 1,090 | - | 4,285 | 5,375 |
| 2013 | 9,680 | - | 5,684 | 15,364 |
| 2014 | 12,271 | - | 7,558 | 19,829 |
| 2015 | 3,315 | - | 2,028 | 5,343 |
| 2016 | 6,985 | - | 5,156 | 12,141 |
| 2017 | 9,947 | - | 5,232 | 15,179 |
| GOAL | | | 5,800-14,500 | |

a/ In 2004, 2005 and 2006 escapement estimates are from non-standard methods due to poor survey conditions during the coho spawning season.

b/ Natural escapement estimates include fish taken for hatchery brood stock.

Source: PFMC 2018 Review of Ocean Fisheries, Table B-31

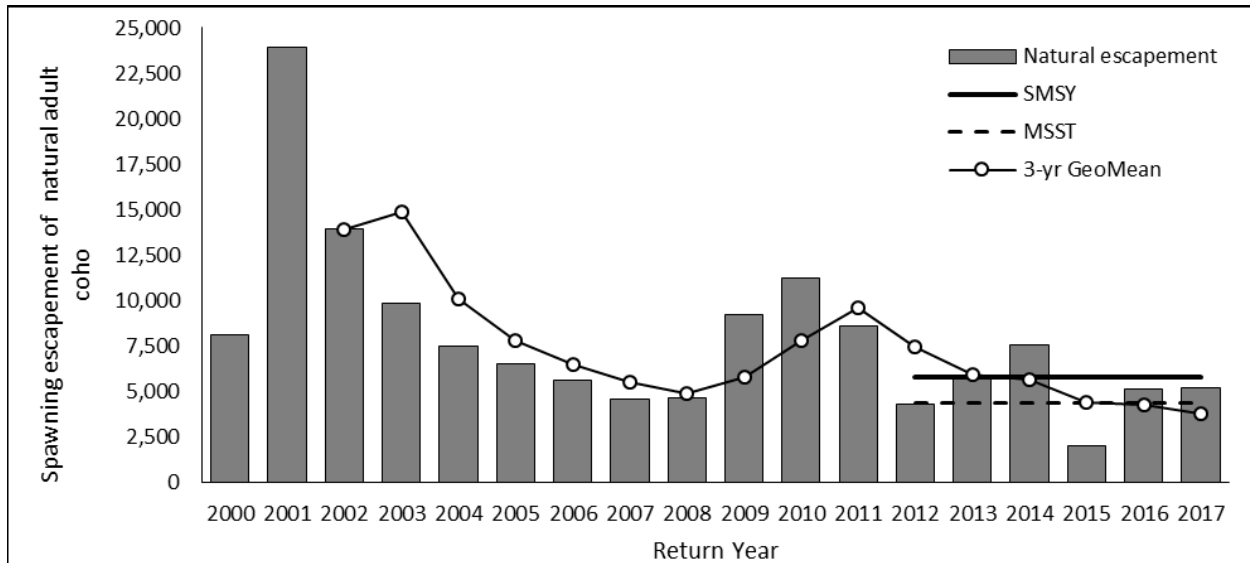


Figure 2.0.a. Spawning escapement of adult natural Queets coho

2.1 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

The following is a review of NMFS' MSA National Standard 1 (NS1) guidelines regarding rebuilding plans (50 CFR 600.310(j)), and how these guidelines interface with the salmon FMP (e.g., required elements T_{target} , T_{MIN} , and T_{MAX}).

NMFS has developed guidelines for complying with the NS1 provisions of section 301 of the MSA (50 CFR 600.310). Under these guidelines, rebuilding plans must include the following elements; including these elements in rebuilding plan alternatives allows the Council to make an informed decision on adopting rebuilding plans.

T_{target} : the target time for rebuilding the fishery in as short a time as possible, taking into account the status and biology of the overfished stock, the needs of the fishing communities, recommendations by international organizations in which the United States participates, and the interaction of the overfished stock of fish within the marine ecosystem.

T_{MIN} : the amount of time the stock is expected to take to rebuild to MSY biomass level in the absence of any fishing mortality ("expected" means to have at least a 50 percent probability of attaining MSY, where such probabilities can be calculated). Note that, for salmon, we use spawning escapement for biomass, so the MSY biomass level is termed S_{MSY} in salmon rebuilding plans.

T_{MAX} : the maximum time for rebuilding a stock to B_{MSY} (S_{MSY} for salmon). If T_{MIN} is less than 10 years, T_{MAX} is 10 years.

To be approved, a rebuilding plan must identify T_{target} and state how the plan will accomplish rebuilding to S_{MSY} within that time (e.g., the identified harvest strategy).

To estimate T_{MIN} , an impact rate of zero is assumed, meaning all fisheries affecting the stock would cease until the stock was rebuilt. Because the Council does not have jurisdiction over tribal, in-river, and other fisheries that may impact the stock, a 'no-fishing' alternative is not a viable option for the Council to consider. Also, a 'no-fishing' alternative does not meet the purpose and need (see section 2.2.2, below) because it would restrict tribal fisheries in a manner that is inconsistent with their treaty right.

However, because T_{MIN} does serve as a bookend in the analysis of rebuilding probabilities over a ten year period when assuming an exploitation rate of zero, this ' T_{MIN} scenario' fulfills the requirement of National Standard 1 in calculating the minimum time (T_{MIN}) estimated to achieve rebuilt status. It is for this purpose only that the ' T_{MIN} scenario' is included in this document (See Sections 4 and 5).

2.2 National Environmental Policy Act

In addition to addressing the requirements of the FMP and MSA, this rebuilding plan document integrates the environmental assessment required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This EA was prepared using the 1978 CEQ NEPA Regulations. NEPA reviews initiated prior to the effective date of the revised CEQ regulations may be conducted using the 1978 version of the regulations. The effective date of the 2020 CEQ NEPA Regulations was September 14,

2020. This review began on September 21, 2018 and the agency has decided to proceed under the 1978 regulations.

2.2.1 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is for the Council to adopt and NMFS to approve a rebuilding plan for the Queets coho salmon stock, which has been determined by NMFS to be overfished under the MSA. The rebuilding plan must be consistent with the MSA and the provisions of the FMP; therefore, the plan shall include a control rule and a specified rebuilding period. The specified rebuilding period shall be as short as possible, taking into consideration the needs of the commercial, recreational and tribal fishing interests and coastal communities.

2.2.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to develop and implement a harvest control rule that will be applied to setting annual ocean salmon fishery management measures that impact Queets coho. This harvest control rule will be designed to attain a three-year geometric mean spawning escapement that meets the SMSY specified for that stock in the FMP in the least amount of time possible while taking into account the biology of the stock, international agreements, and the needs of fishing communities, but not to exceed 10 years. The need for the proposed action is to rebuild Queets coho, which the National Marine Fisheries Service determined, in 2018, to be overfished under the MSA.

2.3 Stock overview

Queets River coho is recognized as one of thirteen key management units (MU) of naturally spawning coho stocks under the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST). The PST provides a southern coho management plan that specifies how U.S. and Canadian fisheries impact coho salmon originating in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon. It also establishes monitoring objectives and funding mechanisms that have been critical to the intensive monitoring of juvenile and adult life stages for Queets coho.

Domestically, the Queets coho run is managed as a unit under the determinations of the *U.S. District Court in U.S. v. Washington*, 384 F. Supp. 312 (W.D. Wash. 1974), and *Hoh Indian Tribe v. Baldrige*, 522 F. Supp. 683 (W.D. Wash. 1981).

2.3.1 Stock composition

There are currently two components to the run: (1) natural and (2) hatchery. A wild stock supplementation program initiated with the 1984 brood was discontinued with the final release occurring in 2004.

Natural Production

Natural coho production in the Queets River system has been extensively studied since the 1970s. Research indicates that the dynamics of coho populations in the Queets River are quite complex; the dependence of the species upon different habitat types during different life history stages makes the stock susceptible to a variety of factors that affect environmental conditions at certain times of the year.

The capacity of various tributaries of the Queets River to support coho populations varies depending upon their positions within the watershed and geomorphologies that result in different types of habitat. Naturally-produced coho are dependent on a variety of habitat types within the Queets River Basin: (1) lower mainstem, (2) low gradient tributaries, (3) off-channel ponds, (4) upper mainstem, and (5) high gradient tributaries (Lestelle et. al. 1993). Utilization of these habitat types varies, depending upon life history stage. Low and high gradient tributaries and the upper mainstem are the primary spawning areas, although some spawning also occurs in the lower mainstem and the outlet channels of off-channel rearing habitats. The lower mainstem and lower gradient tributaries are the primary areas used for summer rearing with other habitat types occupied to a lesser degree. Lower gradient tributaries and off-channel ponds are most heavily utilized during the overwintering period, while juvenile coho rarely occupy upper mainstem and high gradient tributaries during this life history stage (STT 2001).

Supplemental Production

The abundance of Queets natural coho relative to the established escapement goal range has frequently limited ocean and terminal fisheries. Cyclical climatic and oceanographic conditions have led to periods of low smolt to adult survival. Degraded habitats in the Clearwater basin and Queets tributaries and dynamic environments within the Queets basin cause substantial variability in freshwater production. To address chronic production limits in the Queets system, a supplementation program was developed beginning with the 1984 brood. The program was designed to stabilize and improve the stock status of natural coho. The program used natural-origin broodstock, reared progeny in a hatchery environment to a pre-smolt stage, acclimated juveniles in natural, off-channel habitats in the vicinity of broodstock capture and allowed volitional migration. All production was adipose clipped and coded-wire tagged to ensure none of the adult returns were utilized for broodstock. Returning fish were allowed to spawn naturally in order to supplement fry recruitment. Results of the program indicated that the supplementation protocols used could produce smolts with nearly the same survival rate to adults as that of wild smolts and increase adult abundance without short-term adverse impacts to intrinsic productivity or overall smolt production. Reinitiating the program with the same operational protocols and associated monitoring programs could contribute to future improvement and stabilization of stock status while habitats are being repaired through ongoing restoration efforts.

Hatchery Production

The Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) operates a fish culture facility at river mile 4 on the Salmon River, a major tributary entering the Queets river at river mile 10.1. Coho released at this facility are early-timed stock derived from Quinault National Fish Hatchery located on the lower Quinault River. Broodstock are now collected from adult returns to the Salmon River facility. The early run timing of this segregated stock allows an intensive terminal area fishery to occur before the peak entry timing of wild coho. Straying is minimized within the Salmon River sub-basin through the operation of an adult collection trap located downstream of the hatchery water intake diversion. Virtually no straying is observed outside of the Salmon River sub-basin. Hatchery origin coho spawn through early November with peak activity occurring in early October and the highest spawning densities occurring within the main stem of Salmon River. The spawn timing and spatial extent of this stock places the stock at a competitive disadvantage compared to natural stock.

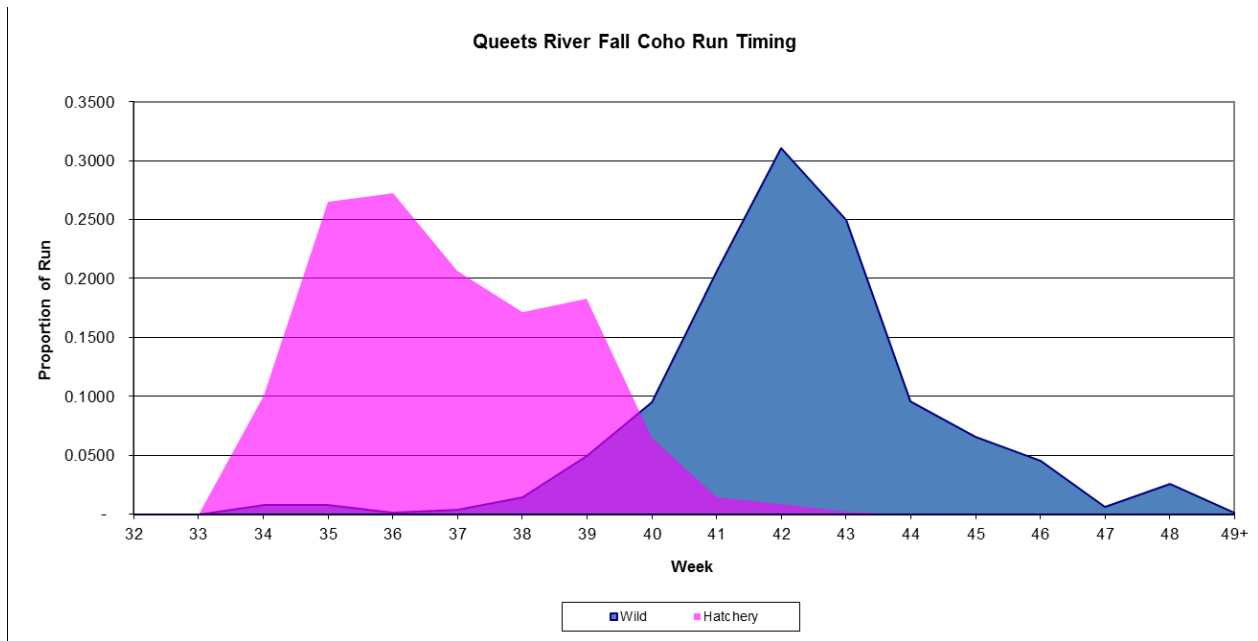


Figure 2.3.1.a. Queets coho run timing of hatchery and wild fish.

2.3.2 Location and geography

The Queets River MU encompasses the Queets River Basin. The Queets River Basin includes several major tributaries: the Clearwater River, Salmon River, Matheny Creek, Sams River, and Tshletshty Creek. Of these, the Clearwater River is the largest tributary and supports a watershed of nearly 400 square km (Figure 2.2.a).

The Queets River flows through a relatively low gradient, heavily forested alluvial valley. The Queets River originates at the foot of the Humes Glacier on Mount Olympus, located on the Olympic Peninsula of western Washington, and generally flows southwest before entering the Pacific Ocean near the village of Queets within the Quinault Indian Reservation. This western Washington river system is 82.7 km long and drains a watershed of 1,152 square km.

The bedrock geology of the Queets River basin consists of Tertiary sandstone with minor inclusions of basaltic rock; overlain by accumulations of Pleistocene alpine glacial till and outwash, lacustrine deposits, and Holocene alluvium deposited by landslides and fluvial transport (Tabor and Cady 1978).

The Queets River watershed includes a wide range of land-use stakeholders, and historically was almost entirely forested with a large majority of the Queets mainstem running predominantly within the protected old growth forest of the Olympic National Park. The Clearwater River watershed flows through lands managed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and private timber companies. The Salmon River is contained almost entirely within the boundaries of the Quinault Indian Reservation. In addition, Sams River and Matheny Creek run mostly through land managed by the United States Forest Service (USFS). Lands on and off the Quinault Indian Reservation are subject to various logging practices, both contemporary and historical (STT 2001).



Figure 2.3.2.a. Location of the Queets River Basin.

2.4 Management Overview

Queets River coho are one of four coastal (or outside) coho MU’s included in the coho chapter of the PST. Under the PST, outside coho MU’s are managed under an abundance-based management regime. Each year, the MU’s are classified as “low” abundance, “moderate” abundance, or “abundant” based on the forecast ocean abundance of age-3 fish. Washington coastal coho stocks are managed for an escapement goal (or range), and the maximum allowable exploitation rate is the maximum exploitation rate that would meet the escapement goal given the current year’s abundance (CoTC, 2013). This rate determines the abundance category of Washington outside coho MU’s under the coho chapter of the PST (Table 2.3.a), which in turn places limits on the

allowable total exploitation rate in intercepting Canadian fisheries. For example, if two or more of the WA coastal coho MUs are in the low abundance category, the maximum allowable exploitation rate in Canadian fisheries on those MUs is 10%; if one of the Washington coastal coho MUs in the low category, the maximum allowable ER on it in Canadian fisheries is 12%.

Table 2.3.a. Pacific Salmon Treaty-defined total exploitation rate ceilings by PSC status categories.

| Queets River natural coho | | |
|---------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Status (PSC/Council) | Ocean Age-3 Abundance Reference Point | Total Exploitation Rate |
| Low | < 7,250 | Up to 20% |
| Moderate | 7,250 - 9,667 | 21% – 40% |
| Abundant | > 9,667 | 41% – 65% |

2.4.1 Conservation objectives

The Council’s conservation objectives for stocks managed for natural production were based on MSY spawner escapements established pursuant to the U.S. District Court order in *Hoh v Baldrige*. The conservation objectives for the Queets, Hoh, and Quillayute Rivers were developed as ranges intended to bracket estimates of MSY escapement. The range reflects inherent uncertainty by using the high estimate of recruits-per-spawner and the low estimate of carrying capacity for the lower bound, and the low estimate of recruits-per-spawner and the high estimate of smolt carrying capacity for the upper end of the range. The ranges were further adjusted upward by 26-184 percent for risk aversion and habitat considerations. For Queets River Natural coho, the escapement goal range is 5,800 – 14,500 natural adult spawners. However, annual natural spawning escapement targets may vary from the FMP conservation objectives if agreed to by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the treaty tribes under the provisions of *Hoh v Baldrige* and subsequent U.S. District Court orders. After an annual agreement is reached, ocean fishery escapement objectives are established for each river, or region of origin. The agreement includes provisions for treaty allocation requirements and non-ocean fisheries. Agreements on annual spawning targets for Washington coastal coho other than those in the FMP are not made every year (Draft CoTC report 2012, unpublished data).

2.4.2 Management strategy

The Queets River coho stock is managed as a unit under the determinations of the U.S. District Court in *U.S. v. Washington*, and *Hoh Indian Tribe v. Baldrige*. Each year the abundance of the Queets River coho MU is forecast and the abundance category is determined. The fishery impacts of different management alternatives are modeled during the preseason planning process using the Fishery Regulation Assessment Model (FRAM), which contains a specific model stock for Queets coho called Queets River Fall Natural with separate marked and unmarked components. Management measures adopted by the Council are consistent with the conservation objectives of the FMP or annual natural spawning escapement targets agreed to by WDFW and the treaty tribes (see section above).

3.0 REVIEW OF POTENTIAL FACTORS LEADING TO OVERFISHED STATUS

A number of factors may contribute to a stock falling below the MSST and becoming classified as overfished. Fishing mortality may be higher than was expected when management measures were adopted, or the abundance may be less than forecast. Abundance may be less than forecast because low freshwater survival resulted in fewer smolts than expected, or because low marine survival resulted in fewer adult returns than expected. Freshwater and/or marine survival may be low enough, that even if anticipated, there will simply be too few adults produced to prevent the stock from falling below the MSST, even in the absence of fishing. The FMP specifies that the roles of freshwater survival, marine survival, and fishing should be considered in any rebuilding plan.

3.1 Freshwater survival

3.1.1 Review of freshwater conditions

Adult and juvenile coho salmon of the 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 brood years were present in the Queets River Basin from the fall of 2011 through the spring of 2016. Brood years 2011-2013 are of particular interest since those are the brood years that produced the three years of adult returns (2014-2016) that led to the overfished status.

River flows (USGS gage 12040500; Queets River Near Clearwater, WA) during this period followed normal patterns with a majority of the annual discharge occurring in October through March, and the lowest flows occurring in August through September of each year. However, some extremes during this period may have affected overall survival and limited smolt production, especially from the 2013 and 2014 brood year. Water temperatures in the Queets River during the summer rearing months in 2014 and 2015 also reached levels that may have reduced overall survival (Quinault Division of Natural Resources, unpublished data). Prolonged periods of low flows and high water temperatures likely limited suitable cold water refugia, altered feeding behavior and increased juvenile coho susceptibility to disease and stress-induced mortality.

Parent spawners, eggs, alevin and emergent fry of the 2011 brood year experienced moderate flows in the fall and winter of 2011/2012 (Figure 3.1.1.a). Flows remained moderate, above 50-percentile levels, through the summer months and reached low flow conditions near the 5-percentile levels for only a brief period in late September and early October 2012. Fry and pre-smolt juveniles experienced moderate flows through the fall and winter of 2012/2013. Flow conditions for freshwater residence of 2011 brood year juveniles were generally moderate and presumably favorable except for the brief low flow period in late summer of 2012. Water temperatures during the summer were moderate with only 17 days exceeding 16 degrees Celsius and zero days exceeding 20 degrees (Figure 3.1.1.f). An estimated productivity of 32.7 smolts/spawner for the freshwater stage is in the upper range for similar escapement levels and suggests relatively good freshwater survival for the 2011 brood year (Figure 3.1.1.b).

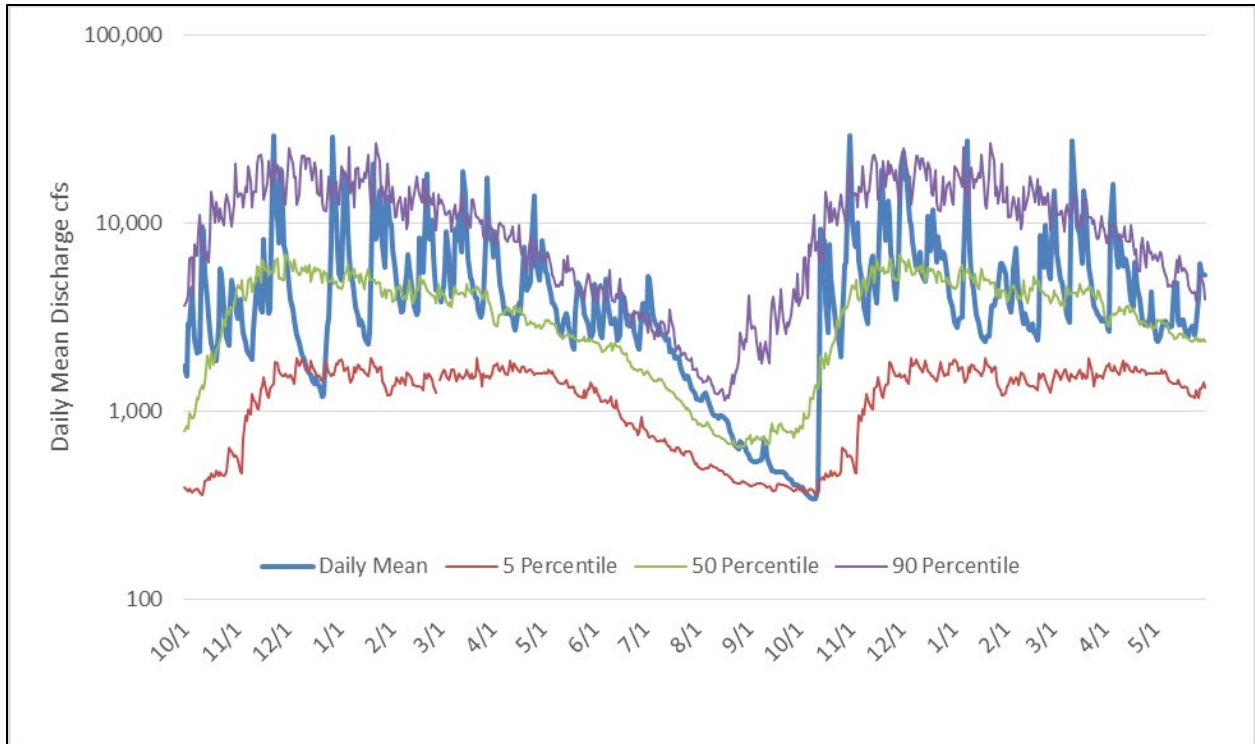


Figure 3.1.1.a: Daily mean discharge measurements for the Queets River for October 2011 through May 2013. Values for the 5, 50 and 90 percentile flow levels derived from approximately 63 years of record are also shown. For example, the 5-percentile flow is the level at which 5 percent of flows are equal to or less than the estimated value.

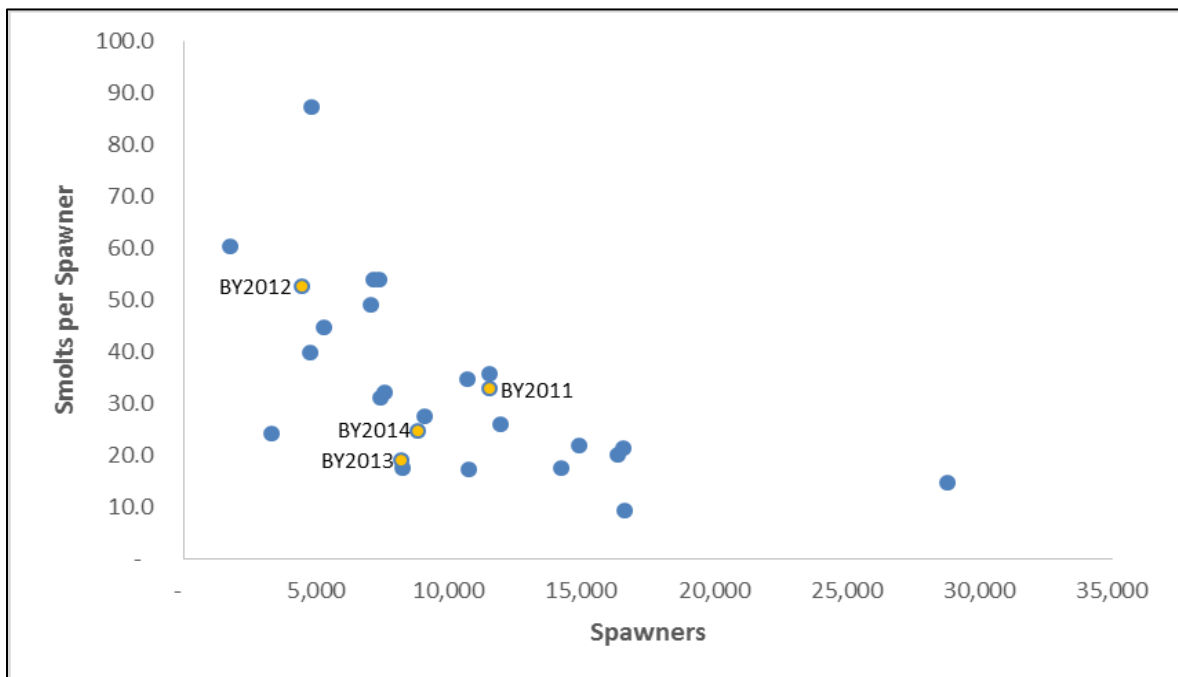


Figure 3.1.1.b Coho smolts-per-spawner as a function of natural spawning escapement of Queets River coho salmon for brood years 1989 through 2014. Note: the estimates of spawning escapement include all natural spawners including hatchery origin returning fish. The brood years 2011-2014 are highlighted in orange.

The 2012 brood year fish experienced moderate flows, infrequently exceeding 90-percentile levels, through the fall and winter of 2012/2013 (Figure 3.1.1.c). These fish experienced good flows, generally around the 50-percentile level, through the summer of 2013 and then relatively low flows during the fall and early winter of 2013/2014. Flows returned to moderate in the late winter through spring of 2014. Flow conditions for freshwater residence of the 2012 brood year juveniles were generally moderate. Water temperatures during the summer rearing months were higher than the previous year with 62 days exceeding 16 degrees Celsius, but there were still zero days that exceeded 20 degrees (Figure 3.1.1.f). Brood year 2012 experienced a relatively good productivity of 52.6 smolts/spawner, which is well within the range of productivity for similar spawning escapements (Figure 3.1.1.b).

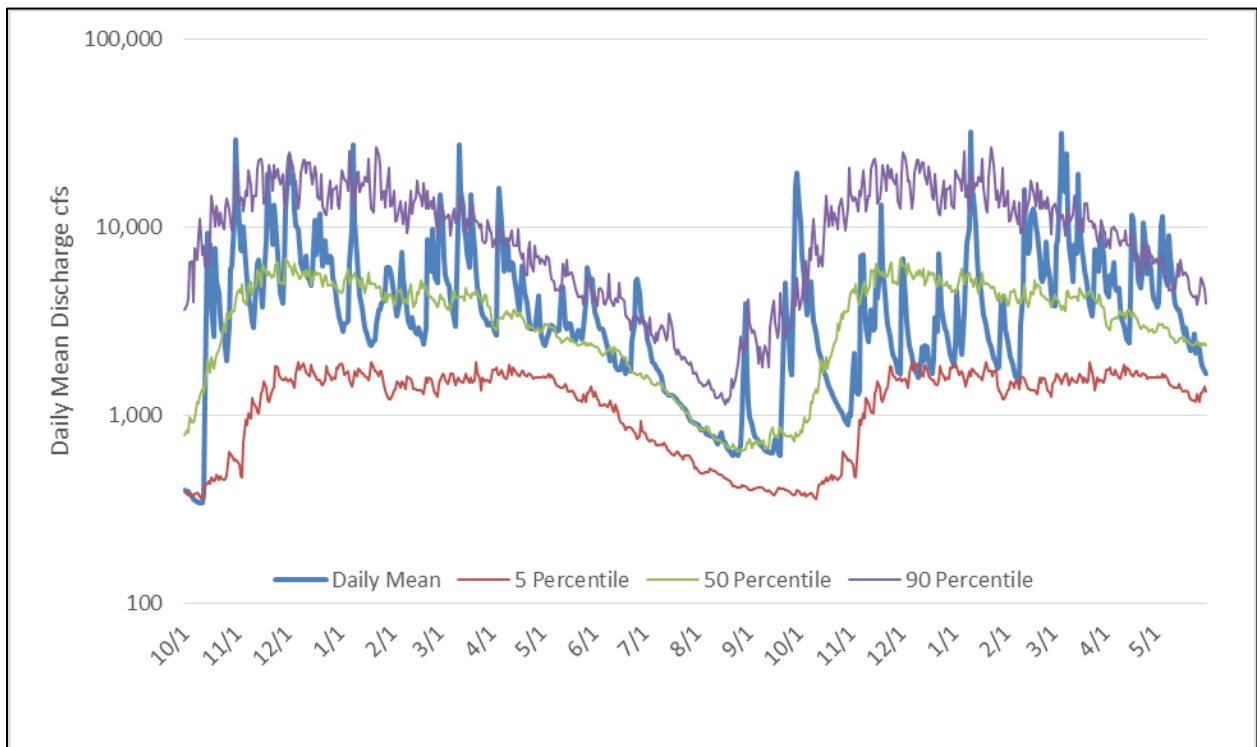


Figure 3.1.1.c: Daily mean discharge measurements for the Queets River for October 2012 through May 2014. Values for the 5, 50 and 90 percentile flow levels derived from approximately 63 years of record are also shown. For example, the 5-percentile flow is the level at which 5 percent of flows are equal to or less than the estimated value.

For brood year 2013, flows were relatively low, generally less than 50-percentile levels, during the parent-spawning phase (Figure 3.1.1.d). These low flows could limit access to stable, peripheral locations and expose redds to greater risk of loss from scour during subsequent high flow events. Flows did increase to generally greater than the 50-percentile levels during late winter and spring of 2014. Summer flows were very low in 2014, falling to near the 5-percentile level in August and September. Flows in the fall and winter of 2014/2015 were moderate to high with several flood events exceeding 90-percentile levels. Flow conditions for freshwater residence of the 2013 brood year juveniles were more challenging than those for the 2011 and 2012 brood years. The relatively low flows during spawning, extreme low flows during summer and the frequent floods during the overwintering period may have reduced survival. Water temperatures during the

summer rearing period exceeded 16 degrees Celsius for 68 days and extreme temperatures exceeding 20 degrees Celsius were observed for 20 days (figure 3.1.1.f). This is reflected in the poor productivity of 18.9 smolts/spawner, which is low productivity for spawning escapements of similar magnitude (Figure 3.1.1.b).

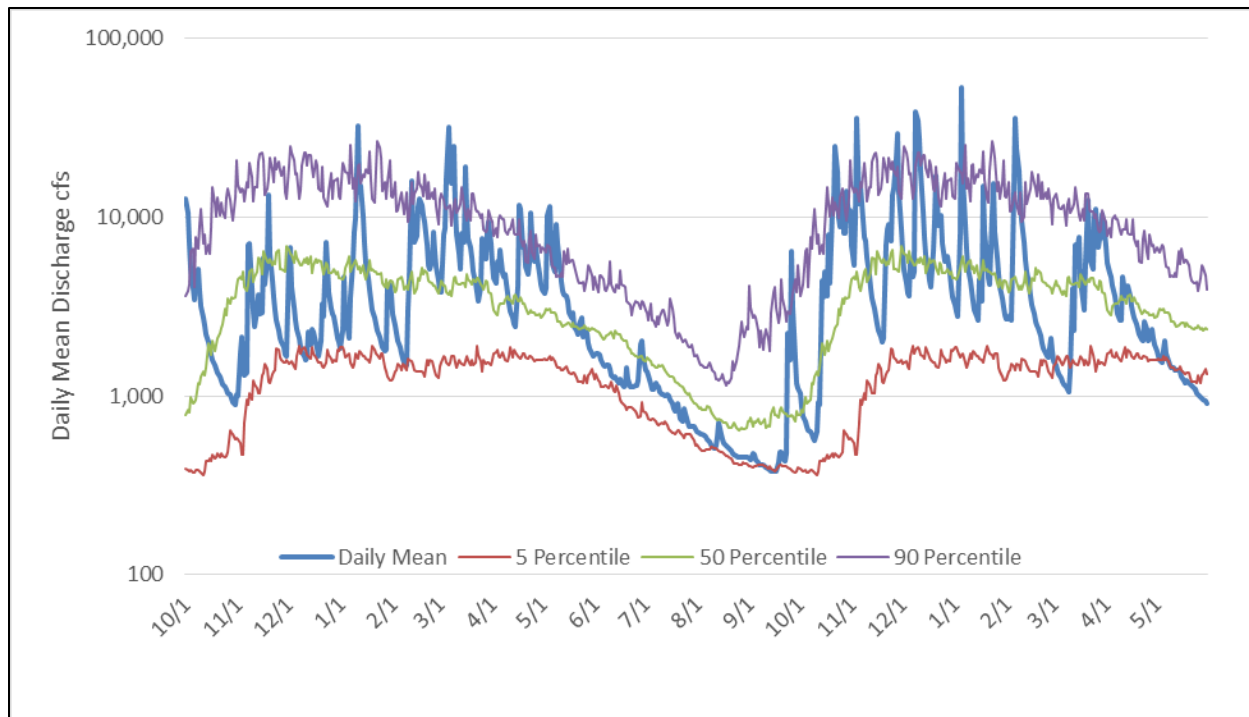


Figure 3.1.1.d: Daily mean discharge measurements for the Queets River for October 2013 through May 2015. Values for the 5, 50 and 90 percentile flow levels derived from approximately 63 years of record are also shown. For example, the 5-percentile flow is the level at which 5 percent of flows are equal to or less than the estimated value.

The 2014 brood year is outside the production years (brood years 2011-2013) that led to the current overfished condition. However, juveniles from the 2014 brood year are included in this section because the relatively poor conditions and low freshwater survival help illustrate the relationships described for the focus brood years. Flows during the brood year 2014 parent spawning period were moderate to high with some flood events greater than 90-percentile levels (Figure 3.1.1.e). Flows at these levels have potentially positive (e.g. habitat access, greater distribution) and negative (redd scour) effects for egg and alevin survival. A period of extreme low flows occurred in mid-March of 2015 that could have caused some losses due to redd dewatering. Summer flows in 2015 were extremely low, falling below 5-percentile levels from mid-May to late August. Fall 2015 and winter 2016 flows were moderate to high with several flood events greater than the 90-percentile level. Flow conditions during the freshwater residency of 2014 brood year juveniles were again more challenging than those for the 2012 brood year. Summer water temperatures in 2015 were extremely high exceeding 16 degrees Celsius for 73 days and exceeding 20 degrees for 63 days. Peak summer water temperatures occurred approximately a month earlier than normal in the first week of July. The relatively poor productivity of 24.7 smolts/spawner supports this inference (Figure 3.1.1.b).

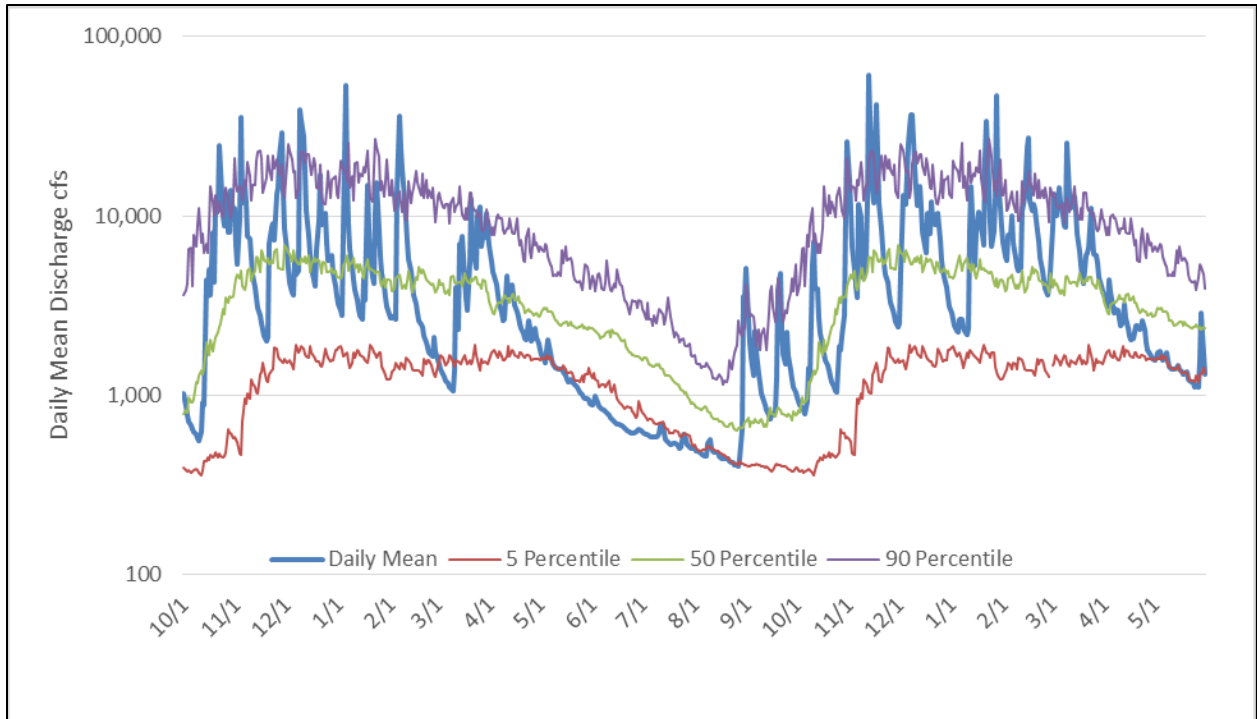


Figure 3.1.1.e: Daily mean discharge measurements for the Queets River for October 2014 through May 2016. Values for the 5, 50 and 90 percentile flow levels derived from approximately 63 years of record are also shown. For example, the 5-percentile flow is the level at which 5 percent of flows are equal to or less than the estimated value.

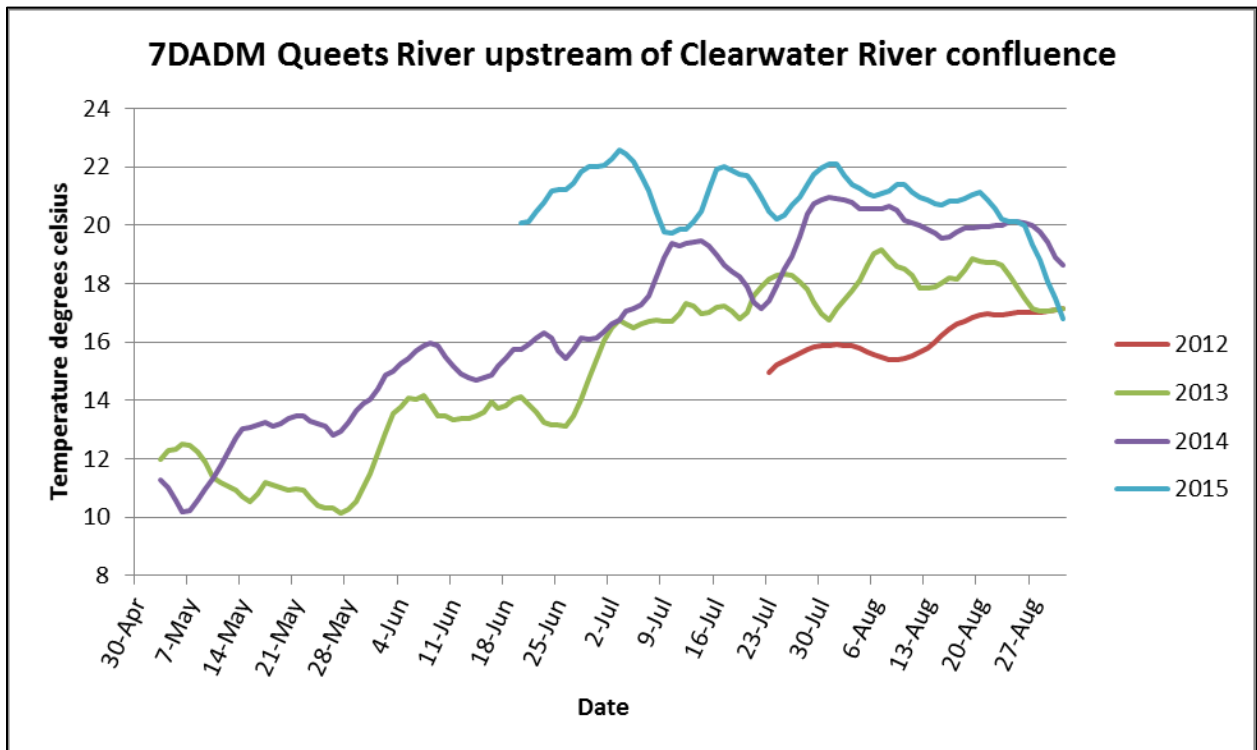


Figure 3.1.1.f: Seven day average daily maximum water temperatures (degrees celsius) measured from 4/30-8/31 for years 2012-2015.

3.1.2 Juvenile Production Estimates

Coho salmon in Washington, Oregon, and California enter the ocean as yearling smolts, and contribute to fisheries and spawning escapement as 3-year-olds the following calendar year. Year classes contributing to the spawning escapements in 2014-2016 were from brood years 2011-2013, and migrated to sea as smolts in 2013, 2014, and 2015 (Figure 3.1.2.a).

Since 1991, juvenile production has averaged 275,400 smolts per emigration year through 2016. More recently (2004-2016), smolt production averaged 297,300, ranging from 155,900 to 420,500. During the emigration years 2013-2015, which produced the returns in years 2014-2016, smolt production averaged 256,800, ranging from 155,900 (2015) to 379,100 (2013). Smolt production estimates in 2016 and 2017 were both below average.

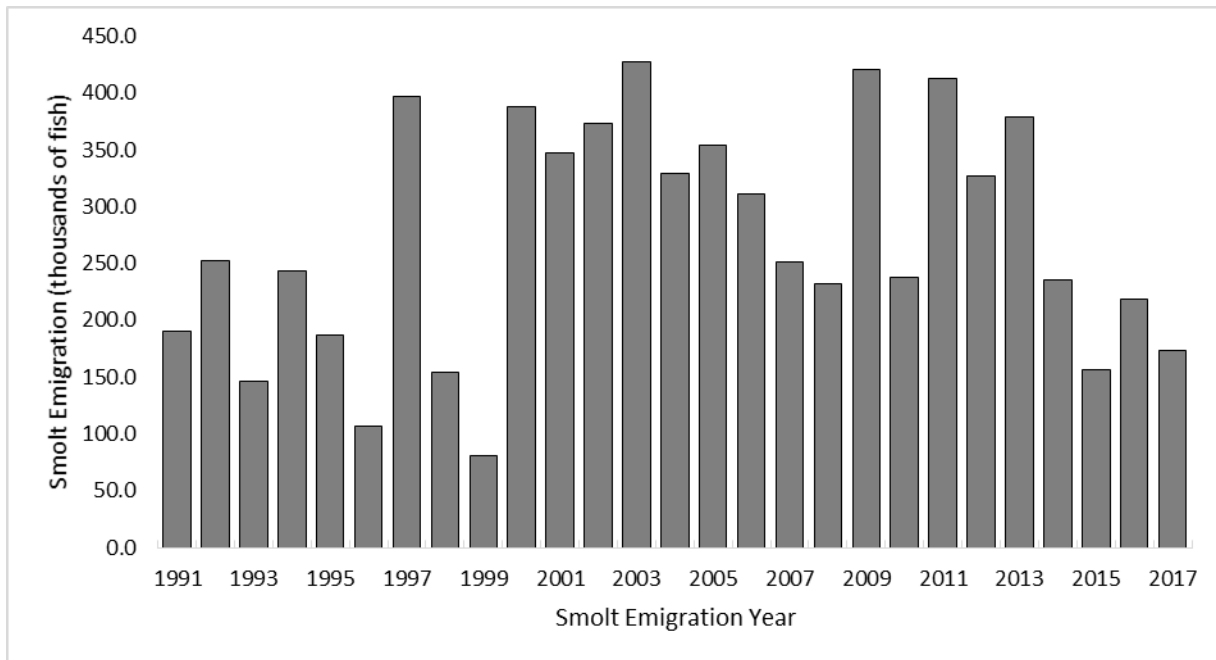


Figure 3.1.2.a. Natural smolt production of Queets River coho salmon by smolt year (data from QIN).

3.2 Marine Survival

3.2.1 Review of Ocean Conditions

Ecosystem indicators associated with early marine survival of Chinook and coho salmon are displayed in Figure 3.2.1.a (Peterson et al 2018). These indicators were selected based primarily on correlations with survival of Columbia River stocks, but are generally indicative of coast-wide marine conditions. Indicators related to the early marine survival of coho are generally related to adult coho abundance in the following year; so, early marine survival rates from 2013-2015 are associated with adult returns in 2014-2016. The mean ranks of indicators were generally neutral, but declined in 2013 and 2014 and have been negative since then. One noteworthy indicator is the catches of juvenile coho in the September surveys. These were highly correlated with coho returns in the following year, but the September surveys were discontinued in 2013, and are thus omitted from the mean ranks.

| Ecosystem Indicators | Year | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
| PDO (Sum Dec-March) | 18 | 6 | 3 | 13 | 7 | 20 | 12 | 16 | 14 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 15 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 10 | 21 | 19 | 17 | 11 |
| PDO (Sum May-Sept) | 10 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 17 | 16 | 18 | 12 | 14 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 19 | 21 | 20 | 15 | 13 |
| ONI (Average Jan-June) | 20 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 14 | 16 | 15 | 17 | 9 | 12 | 3 | 11 | 18 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 19 | 21 | 13 | 5 |
| 46050 SST (°C; May-Sept) | 16 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 21 | 15 | 5 | 17 | 2 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 20 | 18 | 6 | 19 |
| Upper 20 m T (°C; Nov-Mar) | 20 | 11 | 8 | 10 | 6 | 15 | 16 | 12 | 13 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 17 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 21 | 19 | 18 | 14 |
| Upper 20 m T (°C; May-Sept) | 17 | 12 | 14 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 21 | 19 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 13 | 10 | 6 | 18 | 20 | 9 | 15 | 11 | 16 |
| Deep temperature (°C; May-Sept) | 21 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 10 | 12 | 16 | 11 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 14 | 9 | 3 | 15 | 20 | 18 | 13 | 17 | 19 |
| Deep salinity (May-Sept) | 19 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 16 | 17 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 18 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 20 | 15 | 8 | 7 | 6 |
| Copepod richness anom. (no. species; May-Sept) | 19 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 14 | 13 | 18 | 15 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 17 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 11 | 20 | 21 | 16 | 12 |
| N. copepod biomass anom. (mg C m ⁻³ ; May-Sept) | 19 | 14 | 10 | 11 | 3 | 16 | 13 | 20 | 15 | 12 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 17 | 21 | 18 | 7 |
| S. copepod biomass anom. (mg C m ⁻³ ; May-Sept) | 21 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 14 | 15 | 20 | 13 | 10 | 1 | 7 | 16 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 11 | 18 | 19 | 17 | 12 |
| Biological transition (day of year) | 18 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 14 | 13 | 19 | 12 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 16 | 6 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 21 | 21 | 17 | 15 |
| Ichthyoplankton biomass (mg C 1,000 m ⁻³ ; Jan-Mar) | 21 | 12 | 3 | 8 | 10 | 19 | 18 | 15 | 17 | 16 | 2 | 13 | 5 | 14 | 11 | 9 | 20 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 4 |
| Ichthyoplankton community index (PCO axis 1 scores; Jan-Mar) | 10 | 13 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 11 | 20 | 18 | 3 | 12 | 1 | 14 | 15 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 19 | 21 | 17 | 16 |
| Chinook salmon juvenile catches (no. km ⁻³ ; June) | 19 | 4 | 5 | 16 | 8 | 12 | 17 | 20 | 11 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 15 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 13 | 18 | 21 | 14 |
| Coho salmon juvenile catches (no. km ⁻³ ; June) | 19 | 8 | 13 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 16 | 20 | 17 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 11 | 15 | 18 | 1 | 12 | 9 | 14 | 21 | 2 |
| Mean of ranks | 17.9 | 7.2 | 6.0 | 7.3 | 6.1 | 13.0 | 15.9 | 17.1 | 11.3 | 9.2 | 2.7 | 8.6 | 12.8 | 8.1 | 6.6 | 7.7 | 12.8 | 16.7 | 17.2 | 14.5 | 11.6 |
| Rank of the mean rank | 21 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 15 | 17 | 19 | 11 | 10 | 1 | 9 | 13 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 13 | 18 | 20 | 16 | 12 |
| <i>Ecosystem Indicators not included in the mean of ranks or statistical analyses</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Physical Spring Trans. UI based (day of year) | 3 | 7 | 20 | 17 | 4 | 13 | 15 | 21 | 13 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 11 | 18 | 9 | 19 | 10 | 5 | 16 | 11 |
| Physical Spring Trans. Hydrographic (day of year) | 20 | 3 | 13 | 8 | 5 | 12 | 14 | 21 | 6 | 9 | 1 | 9 | 18 | 3 | 11 | 2 | 16 | 7 | 17 | 19 | 14 |
| Upwelling Anomaly (April-May) | 10 | 3 | 17 | 6 | 9 | 14 | 13 | 21 | 10 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 12 | 19 | 1 | 2 | 20 | 5 |
| Length of Upwelling Season UI based (days) | 6 | 2 | 19 | 12 | 1 | 14 | 10 | 21 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 16 | 18 | 16 | 15 | 20 | 11 | 8 | 13 | 7 |
| SST NH-5 (°C; May-Sept) | 9 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 21 | 16 | 10 | 18 | 2 | 19 | 11 | 7 | 14 | 13 | 15 | 12 | 17 | 8 | 20 |
| Copepod Community Index (MDS axis 1 scores) | 20 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 13 | 15 | 18 | 16 | 10 | 2 | 6 | 12 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 11 | 19 | 21 | 17 | 14 |
| Coho Juv Catches (no. fish km ⁻¹ ; Sept) | 11 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 12 | 14 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 15 | 13 | 5 | 10 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |

Figure 3.2.1.a. Summary of marine indicators from 1998-2018. The top block is basin-wide climate indices, the second block is specific physical oceanographic indicators, and the third block is biological indicators. Numbers inside each block are rank value of that indicator across all years with one being the best and 21 the worst. It is color-coded to reflect ocean conditions for salmon growth and survival; Color coding is green for values in the lower 1/3, yellow for values in the middle 1/3, and red for values in the highest 1/3. The bottom block is indicators not included in the mean ranks. Source: NWFSC.

In 2013, there were mixed ocean conditions. Climate indicators, such as the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) and El Niño, were 'neutral'; sea surface temperatures were warmer than usual, and the majority of the upwelling occurred over a short period of time (i.e., July) with the upwelling 'season' ultimately ending much earlier than usual. Biological indicators pointed to good ocean conditions, with a high abundance of large, lipid-rich zooplankton; a moderate abundance of winter fish larvae that develop into salmon prey in the spring; and catches of juvenile spring Chinook salmon during the June survey off Washington and Oregon that were the second highest in 16 years. Overall, juvenile salmon entering the ocean in 2013 encountered average to above average ocean conditions off Oregon and Washington.

In 2014 many of the ecosystem indicators pointed towards a relatively poor year for salmon survival. The summer PDO values were strongly positive (i.e., warm), coinciding with a 'warm

blob’ of water centered in the Gulf of Alaska. El Niño conditions were ‘neutral’, sea surface temperatures were warmer than usual, and the upwelling season started late and ended early. Biological indicators featured a high abundance of large, lipid-rich zooplankton, but a low abundance of winter fish larvae that develop into salmon prey in the spring, and moderate catches of juvenile spring Chinook salmon during the June survey off Washington and Oregon.

Overall, juvenile salmon entering the ocean in 2014 encountered below average ocean conditions off Oregon and Washington, likely leading to below average returns of adult coho salmon in 2015 and Chinook salmon in 2016.

In 2015, many of the ocean ecosystem indicators suggested it was a relatively poor year for juvenile salmon survival. The PDO was strongly positive (i.e., warm) throughout 2015, coinciding with anomalously warm ocean conditions in the NE Pacific called “The Blob” that began in the fall of 2013 and persisted through 2015. El Niño conditions also turned positive in April 2015 and remained strongly positive, signaling a strong El Niño at the equator. Despite the strongest upwelling observed since 1998, sea surface and deep water temperatures off Newport, Oregon remained warmer than usual (+2°C) throughout most of 2015. During the strongest upwelling period in June, shelf waters did cool and salinity increased; but returned to positive temperature anomalies quickly from July onward. The zooplankton community remained in a lipid-depleted state throughout 2015, and was dominated by small tropical and sub-tropical copepods and gelatinous zooplankton that generally indicate poor feeding conditions for small fishes upon which juvenile salmon feed. Krill biomass was also among the lowest in 20 years. On the other hand, the biomass of larval fish species that are common in salmon diets in spring was above average this year, however, there were also high concentrations of larval rockfish and Northern anchovy which are generally indicators of poor feeding conditions for salmon. There were also many new copepod species encountered that had never been seen off Newport since sampling began in 1969.

In 2017, the anomalous warm ocean conditions that had persisted since September of 2014 had begun to dissipate. While ocean ecosystem indicators in 2015 and 2016 suggested some of the poorest outmigration years for juvenile salmon survival in the 20 year time series, some of the indicators in 2017 were fair, indicating that the ecosystem might be returning to normal. The PDO was strongly positive (warm) throughout the first half of 2017, however the index declined to more neutral levels from July through November 2017. Strong La Niña conditions at the equator persisted from August through December of 2016, and then became neutral throughout most of 2017. Prior to the onset of upwelling in 2017, ocean conditions off Newport Oregon remained warm and fresh. However, after the onset of upwelling, sea surface temperatures were cooler than average and the near bottom water on the shelf was salty. In 2015 and 2016, the seasonal shift from a warm winter copepod community to a cold summer community did not occur because of the extended period of warm ocean conditions. However, in June 2017, the copepod community transitioned to a cold water community, signaling that the marine ecosystem might be transitioning back to normal.

In 2018, the anomalous warm ocean conditions that had persisted since September of 2014 had dissipated. While ocean ecosystem indicators in 2015 and 2016 remain some of the poorest outmigration years for juvenile salmon survival in the 21 year time series, some of the indicators in 2017 were fair, while the indicators in 2018 pointed towards neutral conditions, indicating that

the ecosystem might be returning to normal. However, sea surface temperatures in the Northeast Pacific are anomalously warm with a spatial pattern similar to the “Blob” in late 2013. Further, model projections point towards warm ocean conditions of approximately +1°C in the Northeast Pacific through spring 2019.

3.2.2 Early life survival rates

Marine survival estimates are available for 1991 through 2015. During those years, marine survival averaged 4.9 percent. More recently (2004-2015), smolt survival averaged 4.4 percent, ranging from 1.7 percent to 11.1 percent. During the years 2013-2015, smolt survival averaged 3.7 percent, ranging from 1.7 percent (2014) to 5.1 percent (2015).

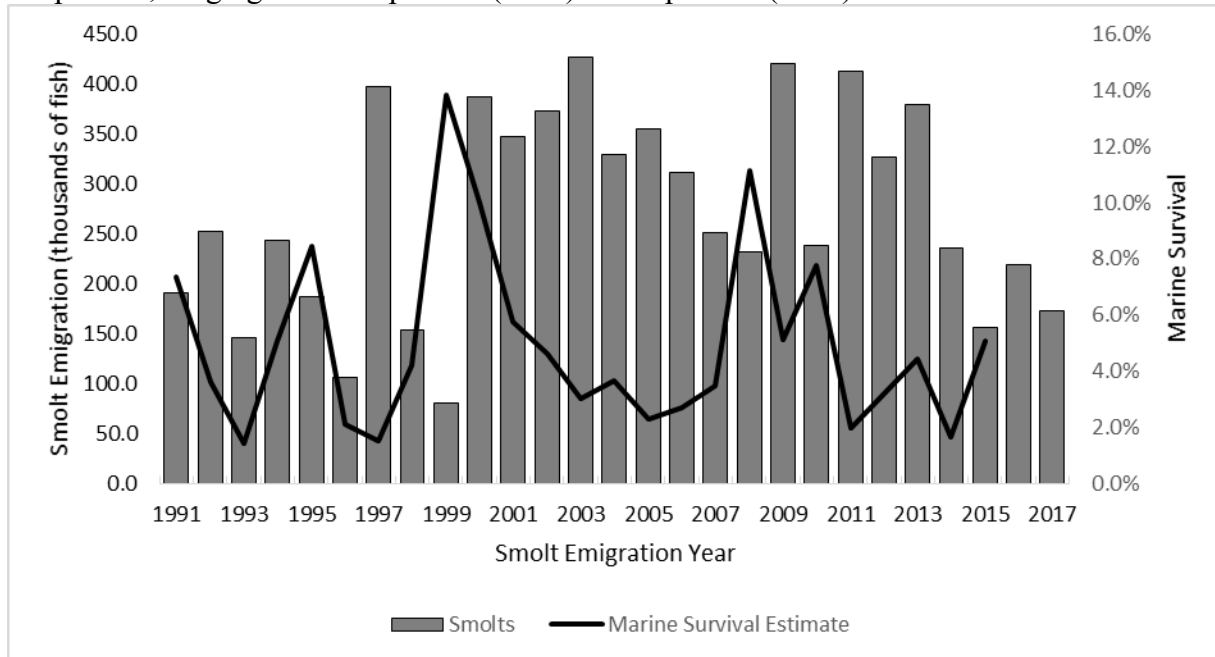


Figure 3.2.a. Marine survival of Queets River natural coho by smolt year.

3.3 Harvest Impacts

3.3.1 Ocean Fisheries

Fisheries Descriptions

Queets coho migrate to the north and are more vulnerable to Canadian fisheries than they are to Council managed fisheries in U.S. waters. Beginning in 1997, Canada curtailed fisheries targeting coho salmon out of concern for depressed Canadian coho stocks. While there has been a general declining trend in ocean fishery impacts on natural Queets coho since the 1982 return year, primarily due to restrictive management actions taken in U.S. fisheries, the coho conservation measures implemented by Canada are readily apparent as a dramatic decrease in ocean exploitation rates beginning in 1997. Impacts in Canadian fisheries have remained low as Canada has implemented a policy of maintaining impacts on critically depressed upper Fraser River coho as near to zero as possible. Queets River natural coho are also caught in low levels in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Puget Sound, and as pre-terminal “dip-ins” into other coastal river system fisheries. The term “dip-ins” refers to fish that temporarily enter non-natal rivers or streams, but could be expected to return to their natal systems if not harvested in other coastal terminal regions.

Commercial Ocean Seasons

Council area commercial troll fisheries south of Cape Falcon typically do not allow retention of coho. North of Cape Falcon, non-Indian and Treaty Indian troll regulations typically allow coho retention from July through September. In 2014 and 2015, coho retention in the non-Indian commercial troll fishery was limited to adipose-marked coho through August; non-selective coho fisheries occurred in September. In 2016, the non-Indian commercial troll fishery was limited to 30 total fishing days in July and August; September was closed to all troll fishing. Coho retention was not allowed in the fishery in 2016. In 2017 and 2018, the troll fishery was assigned minimal coho quotas, and no non-selective coho fisheries occurred.

The Treaty Indian troll fishery was open from July through mid-September in 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018 for all salmon species, and was limited to July and August in 2016, with no coho retention.

Recreational Ocean Seasons

North of Cape Falcon, the all-species recreational salmon fisheries were open from mid-June through late September in 2014 and 2015. In both years, coho retention was limited to adipose-marked coho through August, and unmarked coho retention was allowed in September. In 2016, the recreational fishery was limited to July 1 through August 27. Coho retention was not allowed north of Leadbetter Point in 2016. In 2017 and 2018, recreational salmon fisheries were assigned minimal coho quotas, and seasons were shortened relative to most recent years, ending on Labor Day. No non-selective coho fisheries occurred in 2016, 2017, or 2018.

South of Cape Falcon, coho retention was allowed from late June through early August in 2014, 2015, and 2016 with retention limited to adipose-marked coho. In 2017, mark-selective coho retention was allowed in late June and July, and in 2018, mark-selective coho retention was allowed late June through early September. Unmarked coho retention was allowed all years in September.

Ocean Harvest

Table 3.3.1.a shows coho quotas and catch by fishery during the period 2014 through 2018. During the three (critical) years that resulted in the overfished status, ocean harvest of coho fell well within the allowable quotas or guidelines. In the area north of Cape Falcon, coho harvest was severely restricted, if not prohibited, in 2016 due to the low forecasted returns. In 2017 and 2018, coho harvest remained restricted relative to recent years prior to 2016. In the area North of Cape Falcon, Council-area fisheries harvested 78 percent of the 282,500 coho quota in 2014, 42 percent of the 216,770 fish quota in 2015, 85 percent of the very low quota of 18,900 in 2016, 96 percent of the 60,100 coho quota in 2017, and 91 percent of the 60,100 coho quota in 2018.

Table 3.3.1.a. Coho harvest quotas for Council area commercial and recreational fisheries compared with actual harvest by management area and fishery.

| Fishery Governed by Quota or Guideline | 2014 | | | 2015 | | | 2016 | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | Quota | Catch | Catch/ Quota | Quota | Catch | Catch/ Quota | Quota | Catch | Catch/ Quota |
| NORTH OF CAPE FALCON | | | | | | | | | |
| TREATY INDIAN COMMERCIAL TROLL | 62,500 | 55,897 | 89% | 42,500 | 3,983 | 9% | - | - | - |
| NON-INDIAN COMMERCIAL TROLL | 35,200 | 23,141 | 66% | 19,200 | 5,059 | 26% | - | - | - |
| RECREATIONAL | 184,800 | 140,450 | 76% | 155,070 | 82,986 | 54% | 18,900 | 16,059 | 85% |
| TOTAL NORTH OF CAPE FALCON | 282,500 | 219,488 | 78% | 216,770 | 92,028 | 42% | 18,900 | 16,059 | 85% |
| SOUTH OF CAPE FALCON | | | | | | | | | |
| RECREATIONAL | | | | | | | | | |
| Coho mark-selective | 80,000 | 48,530 | 61% | 55,000 | 14,896 | 27% | 26,000 | 1,547 | 6% |
| Coho non-mark-selective | 35,000 | 34,267 | 98% | 20,700 | 4,445 | 21% | 7,500 | 4,170 | 56% |
| TOTAL SOUTH OF CAPE FALCON | 115,000 | 82,797 | 72% | 75,700 | 19,341 | 26% | 33,500 | 5,717 | 17% |
| GRAND TOTAL COUNCIL AREA | 397,500 | 302,285 | 76% | 292,470 | 111,369 | 38% | 52,400 | 21,776 | 42% |
| 2017 | | | | | | | | | |
| Fishery Governed by Quota or Guideline | 2017 | | | 2018 | | | 2018 | | |
| | Quota | Catch | Catch/ Quota | Quota | Catch | Catch/ Quota | Quota | Catch | Catch/ Quota |
| NORTH OF CAPE FALCON | | | | | | | | | |
| TREATY INDIAN COMMERCIAL TROLL | 12,500 | 13,084 | 105% | 12,500 | 11,301 | 90% | | | |
| NON-INDIAN COMMERCIAL TROLL | 2,500 | 1,838 | 74% | 4,600 | 1,384 | 30% | | | |
| RECREATIONAL | 45,100 | 42,658 | 95% | 43,000 | 41,838 | 97% | | | |
| TOTAL NORTH OF CAPE FALCON | 60,100 | 57,580 | 96% | 60,100 | 54,523 | 91% | | | |
| SOUTH OF CAPE FALCON | | | | | | | | | |
| RECREATIONAL | | | | | | | | | |
| Coho mark-selective | 18,000 | 6,177 | 34% | 35,000 | 11,601 | 33% | | | |
| Coho non-mark-selective | 7,900 | 8,451 | 107% | 7,600 | 6,898 | 91% | | | |
| TOTAL SOUTH OF CAPE FALCON | 25,900 | 14,628 | 56% | 42,600 | 18,499 | 43% | | | |
| GRAND TOTAL COUNCIL AREA | 86,000 | 72,208 | 84% | 102,700 | 73,022 | 71% | | | |

Source: PFMC Review of Ocean Fisheries, Table I-6, Feb 2015, Feb 2016, Feb 2017, Feb 2018, Feb 2019

3.3.2 In-river fisheries

Tribal fisheries

Terminal area fishing regimes were established by QIN and WDFW in 2014-2016 using estimates of ocean escapement from the FRAM and estimated harvest rates to target agreed levels of spawning escapements for Queets Coho. In-river fall season fisheries regulated by QIN target comingled stocks of hatchery coho, natural coho and chinook while limiting impacts on the weakest stock. Annual fishery management plans include adjustments to the timing and duration of fishing seasons and gear restrictions in order to meet annual management objectives. Effort in the commercial gillnet fishery is typically front-loaded to optimize harvest of early returning

hatchery coho and effort is reduced through the season when natural stocks are expected to be depressed.

In-river fisheries in 2014 were directed at both hatchery and natural coho and chinook. The expected treaty harvest rate on natural coho was 25.3 percent. Fisheries were prosecuted as planned with a post season harvest rate of 19.4 percent.

In-river fisheries in 2015 were directed at early-timed hatchery coho and natural and hatchery chinook. The expected treaty harvest rate on natural coho was 14.5 percent. Quinault enacted emergency regulations to close all tribally-regulated fisheries in late October based on in-season run size updates indicating natural coho returns were well below the minimum spawning escapement objective listed in the FMP. The actual post season harvest rate in tribal inriver fisheries was 7.9 percent.

In-river fisheries in 2016 were again directed at early-timed hatchery coho and chinook. The expected in-river tribal harvest rate on natural coho was further reduced to 7.9 percent. The post season harvest rate was 8.8 percent.

River recreational fisheries

The recreational fishery regulations in the Queets River Basin from 2004 through 2014 were fairly standard. The Clearwater River was open September through November with retention of two adult salmon allowed per angler per day. The Salmon River was open September through November with a three-fish limit to allow for extra hatchery coho retention. The open portion of the Queets River is in Olympic National Park and is managed by Park regulations, but these typically follow State rules similar to the Clearwater River.

In 2015, the Clearwater River was open September through November, but only one adult salmon could be retained per angler per day and required the release of all unmarked adult coho. The Salmon River was also open September through November allowing retention of three adult salmon per angler per day, but required the release of all unmarked adult coho. In 2016, only the Salmon River was open. The season was only open during the month of September and allowed retention of only two adult salmon per angler per day and required the release of unmarked adult coho.

Unmarked hatchery-origin coho contribute to the total recreational hatchery catch in the Queets River Basin. However, because these fish have adipose fins, they are tabulated with natural-origin fish in the catch record card (CRC) database. To account for these unmarked hatchery-origin coho some assumptions are made. First, all coho caught in September are considered to be hatchery origin. The hatchery program is a segregated early-timed program with distinct runtime compared to the natural stock. Second, survival rates for all hatchery fish releases are considered to be the same, marked or unmarked. Third, unmarked coho in the CRC database contains a portion of unmarked hatchery-origin coho from catch record cards. To account for these unmarked hatchery-origin coho, the number of marked coho in the CRC data is expanded by the mark rate from the hatchery releases of the appropriate year (i.e., two years prior to the year in which the coho were caught). These unmarked hatchery-origin fish are then deducted from the unmarked portion of the CRC data and added to the hatchery-origin catch. Data used in these analyses are from the WDFW

CRC database and the Regional Mark Processing Center's Regional Mark Information System (RMIS; <https://www.rmpec.org/>).

In-river harvest

Table 3.3.2.a. Terminal harvest of Queets River natural coho (Data from QIN with co-manager agreed to sport harvest).

| Year | Commercial Net | Ceremonial & Subsistence | In-river Sport | Escapement | Terminal run |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 2004 | 1,461 | 185 | 401 | 7,484 | 9,531 |
| 2005 | 2,539 | 201 | 480 | 6,539 | 9,759 |
| 2006 | 729 | 36 | 36 | 5,612 | 6,413 |
| 2007 | 1,219 | 101 | 89 | 4,600 | 6,009 |
| 2008 | 1,243 | 126 | 284 | 4,629 | 6,282 |
| 2009 | 6,460 | 510 | 383 | 9,204 | 16,557 |
| 2010 | 5,773 | 472 | 649 | 11,261 | 18,155 |
| 2011 | 3,620 | 347 | 922 | 8,588 | 13,477 |
| 2012 | 2,716 | 192 | 473 | 4,285 | 7,666 |
| 2013 | 1,313 | 188 | 834 | 5,684 | 8,019 |
| 2014 | 1,788 | 259 | 910 | 7,174 | 10,131 |
| 2015 | 126 | 46 | - | 2,028 | 2,200 |
| 2016 | 310 | 187 | - | 5,156 | 5,653 |

3.3.3 Total Exploitation Rates

Postseason harvest and exploitation rate data for Queets natural coho were compiled from post season model runs of the Fishery Regulation Assessment Model (FRAM) that are generated annually by the Coho Technical Committee (CoTC) of the Pacific Salmon Commission. Over the 14 year period from 2004 through 2017, the total exploitation rate on Queets natural coho averaged 38.5 percent and ranged from a high of 53.2 percent in 2012 to a low of 14.7 percent in 2016 (Figure 3.3.3.a, Table 3.3.3.a). Over this time period, approximately 8 percent of the total exploitation occurred in Alaskan and Canadian fisheries while 20 percent occurred in Council fisheries on average. Of the remaining 72 percent, on average 12 percent occurred in other pre-terminal fisheries (primarily “dip-ins” to the Quinault and Hoh Rivers), 10 percent in freshwater sport fisheries, and 50 percent in freshwater net fisheries (Figure 3.3.3.a, Table 3.3.3.a). Prior to 1997, Canadian fishery impacts on Queets natural coho were much higher than current levels, averaging between 20 percent and 30 percent. Beginning in 1997, Canada significantly reduced coho directed fisheries in an effort to limit impacts on depressed Canadian coho stocks (STT, 2010).

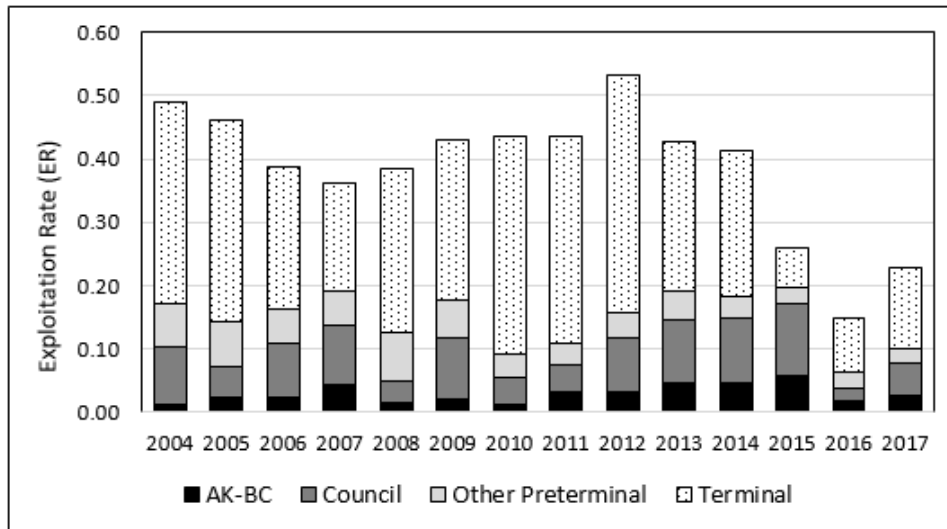


Figure 3.3.3.a. Total exploitation rates on Queets wild coho by major fishery group, estimated by postseason coho FRAM.

Table 3.3.3.a. Ocean abundance, escapement and exploitation rates for Queets wild coho from postseason FRAM.

| Strata | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 ^{a/} |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Ocean Age 3 Abundance | 13,445 | 12,149 | 8,695 | 6,828 | 7,335 | 18,733 | 19,933 |
| Escapement | 6,860 | 6,534 | 5,334 | 4,349 | 4,513 | 10,665 | 11,234 |
| Alaska-Canada | 1.3% | 2.4% | 2.2% | 4.4% | 1.6% | 2.1% | 1.1% |
| NOF - Treaty Troll | 3.8% | 2.3% | 5.3% | 4.2% | 1.9% | 4.5% | 1.2% |
| NOF - Nontreaty Troll | 1.7% | 1.1% | 1.6% | 1.5% | 0.5% | 1.7% | 1.6% |
| NOF - Sport | 2.4% | 1.3% | 1.2% | 2.4% | 0.6% | 2.5% | 1.1% |
| SOF all | 1.0% | 0.3% | 0.6% | 1.2% | 0.1% | 1.0% | 0.4% |
| Preterminal Other | 6.8% | 6.9% | 5.2% | 5.4% | 7.9% | 5.9% | 3.7% |
| Terminal Sport | 9.3% | 6.1% | 0.4% | 2.2% | 6.7% | 3.4% | 3.3% |
| Terminal Net | 22.6% | 25.9% | 22.1% | 15.1% | 19.1% | 22.0% | 31.3% |
| Total ER | 49.0% | 46.2% | 38.7% | 36.3% | 38.5% | 43.1% | 43.6% |
| Strata | 2011 ^{a/} | 2012 ^{a/} | 2013 ^{a/} | 2014 ^{a/} | 2015 ^{a/} | 2016 ^{a/} | 2017 ^{a/} |
| Ocean Age 3 Abundance | 15,063 | 9,117 | 9,862 | 12,801 | 2,729 | 6,526 | 6,797 |
| Escapement | 8,512 | 4,264 | 5,646 | 7,521 | 2,020 | 5,566 | 5,248 |
| Alaska-Canada | 3.2% | 3.2% | 4.5% | 4.5% | 5.8% | 1.7% | 2.6% |
| NOF - Treaty Troll | 1.3% | 3.5% | 4.0% | 5.3% | 1.2% | 0.1% | 1.9% |
| NOF - Nontreaty Troll | 1.0% | 1.6% | 2.9% | 1.2% | 2.7% | 0.8% | 0.6% |
| NOF - Sport | 1.5% | 2.7% | 2.7% | 2.6% | 6.4% | 0.8% | 1.9% |
| SOF all | 0.4% | 0.9% | 0.6% | 1.2% | 1.0% | 0.5% | 0.8% |
| Preterminal Other | 3.4% | 4.1% | 4.6% | 3.5% | 2.6% | 2.6% | 2.3% |
| Terminal Sport | 6.1% | 5.7% | 8.4% | 7.1% | 0.0% | 0.1% | 0.0% |
| Terminal Net | 26.6% | 31.7% | 15.1% | 15.8% | 6.3% | 8.2% | 12.8% |
| Total ER | 43.5% | 53.2% | 42.7% | 41.2% | 26.0% | 14.7% | 22.8% |

a/ 2010-2017 results are preliminary

3.4 Assessment and management

3.4.1 Abundance forecast errors

In examining the forecast error over time for Queets River natural coho, there appears to have been a shift in performance that occurred between 2002 and 2003. During the 13 year time period between 1990 and 2002, the tendency was towards under forecasting, as preseason forecasts were less than the observed returns in nine of these years. There were two years where large over forecasts occurred, but the overall mean percent error was negative 14 percent. During the 15 year time period between 2003 and 2017, however, the tendency was towards over forecasting, as the preseason forecast was greater than the observed returns in 10 of these years, with a mean percent error of 59 percent (Figure 3.4.1.a, Figure 3.4.1.b, Table 3.4.1.a).

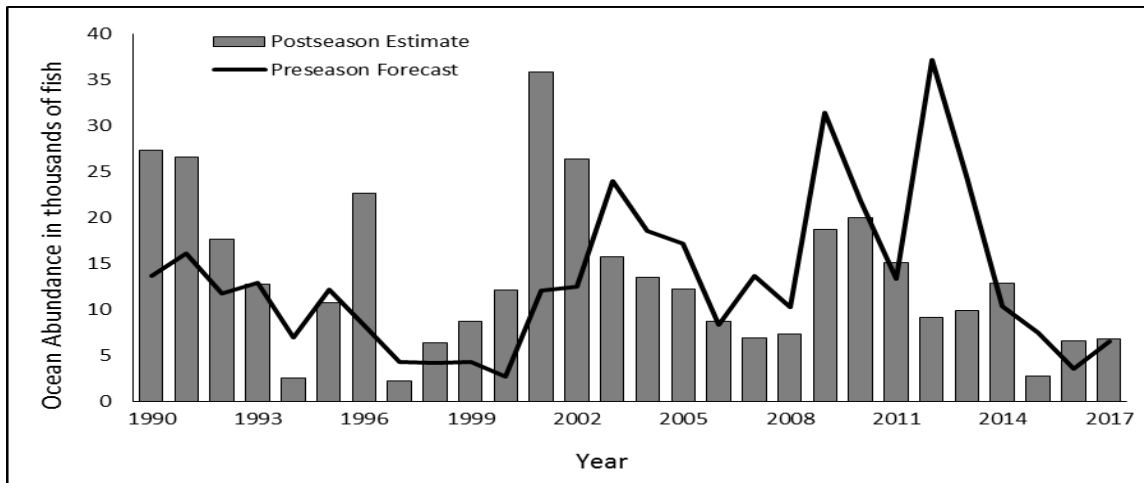


Figure 3.4.1.a. Queets River natural coho preseason forecasts and postseason FRAM estimates of ocean age 3 abundance. Preseason forecasts are generated by salmon co-managers and postseason FRAM estimates are generated by the PSC CoTC.

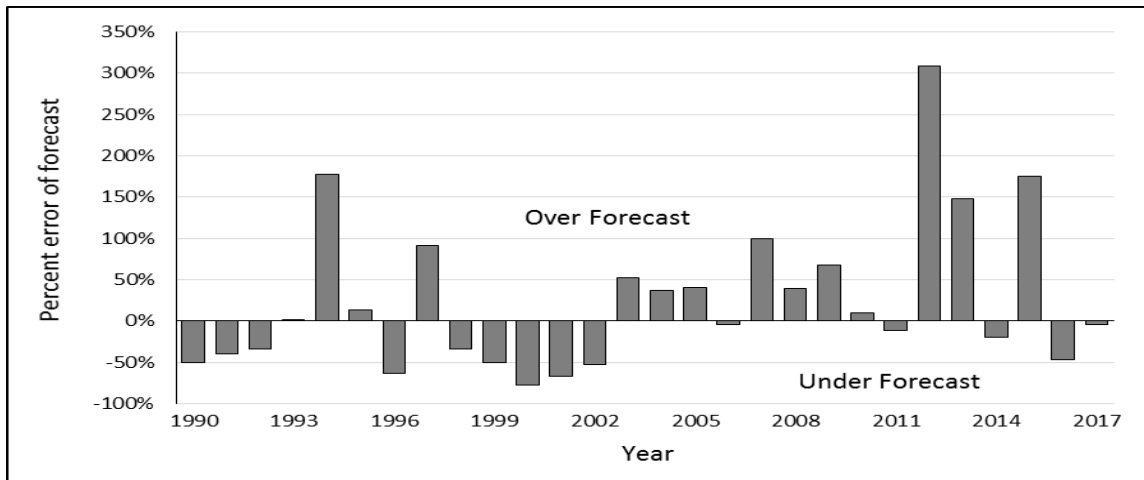


Figure 3.4.1.b. Preseason forecast error when compared to postseason estimates of ocean age 3 abundance of Queets River natural coho. Preseason forecasts are generated by salmon co-managers and postseason FRAM estimates are generated by the PSC CoTC.

Table 3.4.1.a. Preseason and postseason estimates of ocean age 3 abundance for Queets River natural coho. (in thousands of fish; Queets River Fall Natural stock).

| Year | Preseason Forecast | Postseason Estimate ^{a/} | Pre/Postseason |
|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Queets | | | |
| 1990 | 13.6 | 27.3 | 0.50 |
| 1991 | 16.1 | 26.6 | 0.60 |
| 1992 | 11.7 | 17.7 | 0.66 |
| 1993 | 12.9 | 12.7 | 1.01 |
| 1994 | 6.9 | 2.5 | 2.78 |
| 1995 | 12.1 | 10.7 | 1.13 |
| 1996 | 8.3 | 22.6 | 0.37 |
| 1997 | 4.3 | 2.2 | 1.92 |
| 1998 | 4.2 | 6.3 | 0.66 |
| 1999 | 4.3 | 8.6 | 0.50 |
| 2000 | 2.7 | 12.1 | 0.22 |
| 2001 | 12.0 | 35.8 | 0.33 |
| 2002 | 12.5 | 26.3 | 0.47 |
| 2003 | 24.0 | 15.7 | 1.52 |
| 2004 | 18.5 | 13.4 | 1.38 |
| 2005 | 17.1 | 12.1 | 1.41 |
| 2006 | 8.3 | 8.7 | 0.95 |
| 2007 | 13.6 | 6.8 | 1.99 |
| 2008 | 10.2 | 7.3 | 1.39 |
| 2009 | 31.4 | 18.7 | 1.68 |
| 2010 | 21.8 | 19.9 | 1.09 |
| 2011 | 13.3 | 15.1 | 0.88 |
| 2012 | 37.2 | 9.1 | 4.08 |
| 2013 | 24.5 | 9.9 | 2.48 |
| 2014 | 10.3 | 12.8 | 0.80 |
| 2015 | 7.5 | 2.7 | 2.75 |
| 2016 | 3.5 | 6.5 | 0.54 |
| 2017 | 6.5 | 6.8 | 0.96 |

a/ Coho FRAM was used to estimate post season ocean abundance.
2010-2017 postseason values are preliminary.

3.4.2 Exploitation rate forecast errors

The escapement years that contributed to the overfished determination for Queets coho were 2014 through 2016. In most cases, the differences between pre- and postseason exploitation rate (ER) caps, was related to the accuracy of the forecast. For example, in years when the abundance was over forecast, there were less fish available for harvest while still achieving the escapement goal in the post season, thus, the allowable ER was lower in the postseason compared to the preseason. This was most apparent in 2012 and 2013, when the ER caps decreased from 84 percent and 76 percent in the preseason to 36 percent and 41 percent in the postseason, respectively.

Over the eight most recent years with postseason data available, the postseason observed ER was equal to or lower than the preseason ER in all years, with the exception of 2017 where the postseason ER was 1% higher than the preseason ER (Table 3.4.2.a). In four out of the eight years the postseason observed ER exceeded the postseason ER cap. These exceedances were likely caused by over forecasting and the subsequent reduction in ER cap rather than exceeding preseason estimates of ERs (Table 3.4.2.a). Over the three years that contributed to the overfished status, the postseason ER was less than the preseason ER projection in all three years.

It is noteworthy that, over the three years that contributed to the overfished status, postseason exploitation rates in Council fisheries as a whole were lower than those anticipated in the preseason (Table 3.4.2.b). A summary of preseason projected and postseason estimated total exploitation rates, compared to those allowed (cap) since 2010 is provided in the following table. This helps illustrate the change in preseason/postseason exploitation rates, and also the change in the ER ‘cap’. In 2015, the projected preseason ER was greater than the ER cap. This may occur from time to time if the co-managers agree to manage for an escapement level lower than the S_{MSY} identified in the FMP.

Table 3.4.2.a. Preseason and postseason exploitation rates for Queets River natural coho generated in FRAM modeling conducted by the PFMC Salmon Technical Team (preseason) and the PSC CoTC (postseason).

| Return Year | Exploitation Rate | | | |
|-------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| | Preseason | | Postseason | |
| | ER | ER cap ^{a/} | ER ^{b/} | ER cap ^{a/} |
| 2010 | 0.48 | 0.73 | 0.44 | 0.71 |
| 2011 | 0.48 | 0.56 | 0.43 | 0.61 |
| 2012 | 0.62 | 0.84 | 0.53 | 0.36 |
| 2013 | 0.62 | 0.76 | 0.43 | 0.41 |
| 2014 | 0.44 | 0.44 | 0.41 | 0.55 |
| 2015 | 0.31 | 0.24 | 0.26 | 0.20 |
| 2016 | 0.18 | 0.20 | 0.15 | 0.20 |
| 2017 | 0.22 | 0.20 | 0.23 | 0.20 |
| Average | 0.42 | 0.50 | 0.36 | 0.41 |

a/ See CoTC 2013 for information on determination of ER caps

b/ Postseason exploitation rates are preliminary.

Table 3.4.2.b. Preseason forecast and postseason estimates of escapement, total mortality, and exploitation rate by fishery for Queets River natural coho during years that contributed to the overfished classification (2014-16) plus data for the most recent year available (2017). Data Sources: preseason forecasts generated by salmon co-managers, preseason exploitation rates from FRAM modeling by the PFMC STT, and postseason FRAM estimates generated by the PSC CoTC..

| FISHERY COMPONENT | 2014 | | 2015 | | 2016 | | 2017 | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Preseason | Postseason | Preseason | Postseason | Preseason | Postseason | Preseason | Postseason |
| Ocean Age 3 Abundance | 10,348 | 12,801 | 7,590 | 2,729 | 3,520 | 6,526 | 6,590 | 6,797 |
| FMP Smsy | 5,800 | 5,800 | 5,800 | 5,800 | 5,800 | 5,800 | 5,800 | 5,800 |
| Escapement after all fisheries | 5,830 | 7,521 | 5,259 | 2,020 | 2,900 | 5,566 | 5,136 | 5,248 |
| Alaska-Canada | 157 | 572 | 210 | 157 | 100 | 108 | 155 | 174 |
| Council North of Falcon | | | | | | | | |
| Treaty Troll | 498 | 683 | 317 | 34 | 4 | 4 | 128 | 131 |
| Nontreaty Troll | 262 | 155 | 171 | 73 | 34 | 53 | 92 | 42 |
| Sport | 377 | 333 | 287 | 176 | 65 | 54 | 103 | 128 |
| Council South of Falcon | 163 | 157 | 107 | 28 | 43 | 30 | 72 | 53 |
| Council Subtotal | 1,300 | 1,328 | 882 | 311 | 146 | 141 | 395 | 354 |
| Preterminal Other | | | | | | | | |
| Troll | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Net | 395 | 371 | 250 | 41 | 116 | 165 | 210 | 146 |
| Sport | 46 | 81 | 32 | 29 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 7 |
| Terminal Net and Sport | 2,620 | 2,928 | 957 | 171 | 254 | 541 | 683 | 868 |
| Total Fishing Mortality | 4,518 | 5,280 | 2,331 | 709 | 619 | 960 | 1,454 | 1,549 |
| Alaska-Canada | 1.5% | 4.5% | 2.8% | 5.8% | 2.8% | 1.7% | 2.4% | 2.6% |
| Council North of Falcon | | | | | | | | |
| Treaty Troll | 4.8% | 5.3% | 4.2% | 1.2% | 0.1% | 0.1% | 1.9% | 1.9% |
| Nontreaty Troll | 2.5% | 1.2% | 2.3% | 2.7% | 1.0% | 0.8% | 1.4% | 0.6% |
| Sport | 3.6% | 2.6% | 3.8% | 6.4% | 1.8% | 0.8% | 1.6% | 1.9% |
| Council South of Falcon | 1.6% | 1.2% | 1.4% | 1.0% | 1.2% | 0.5% | 1.1% | 0.8% |
| Council Subtotal | 12.6% | 10.4% | 11.6% | 11.4% | 4.1% | 2.2% | 6.0% | 5.2% |
| Preterminal Other | | | | | | | | |
| Troll | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Net | 3.8% | 2.9% | 3.3% | 1.5% | 3.3% | 2.5% | 3.2% | 2.1% |
| Sport | 0.4% | 0.6% | 0.4% | 1.1% | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.2% | 0.1% |
| Terminal Net and Sport | 25.3% | 22.9% | 12.6% | 6.3% | 7.2% | 8.3% | 10.4% | 12.8% |
| Total Exploitation Rate | 43.7% | 41.2% | 30.7% | 26.0% | 17.6% | 14.7% | 22.1% | 22.8% |

3.5 Summary of potential contributing factors

Smolt production was above average for the brood that returned in 2014, but below average for broods returning in 2015 and 2016.

Marine survival was above the median value for the broods returning in 2014 and 2016, but the third lowest on record for the brood returning in 2015. This was the lowest marine survival for any of the broods in the 2004 to 2016 time period, and resulted in the lowest ocean abundance in that time frame. This was most likely the result of marine conditions that deteriorated in 2014 and persisted into 2016.

As described above, salmon fisheries that affect Queets coho are managed under the PST to meet ERs set annually based on forecast stock abundance (see section 2.4). During the three (critical)

years that resulted in the overfished status, 2014-2016, escapement of Queets coho exceeded MSST with the exception of 2015.

Forecasting errors have been large in past years, with forecasts in some years being greater than two times the actual abundance. In 2014 and 2016, the postseason estimate of abundance was greater than the preseason forecast. However, the abundance in 2015 was less than half the forecast value. This coupled with fisheries that were already expected to produce less than 5,800 adult spawners resulted in the lowest spawning escapement since 1997. In each year, 2014-2016, the ER in Council fisheries was less than the preseason expectation, so management error in Council fisheries did not play a role in the stock becoming overfished.

The adult abundance and subsequent escapement of Queets coho in 2015 was the third lowest on record since 1990, primarily due to abnormally low marine survival. This low escapement value has a large impact on the 3-yr geometric mean spawning escapement. Once the 2015 escapement value is no longer included in the most recent 3-yr geometric mean, the chances of reaching the rebuilt criteria will be substantially improved.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

This chapter provides the STT's recommendations for Council action, as required in section 3.1.4.1 of the FMP. Only the alternatives in section 4.2 apply to NMFS' required action to approve a rebuilding plan under the MSA and are the alternatives being analyzed under NEPA. The other recommendations fall outside the scope of an MSA rebuilding plan in that they do not meet the purpose and need for the proposed action because they do not specify control rule and specified rebuilding period (see Section 2.1).

4.1 Recommendation 1: Rebuilt criterion

Consider the Queets coho stock to be rebuilt when the 3-year geometric mean of natural-area adult escapement meets or exceeds S_{MSY} . This is the default rebuilt criterion in the FMP.

4.2 Recommendation 2: Management strategy alternatives

The Council considered two alternative management strategies (i.e., control rules) to guide management of fisheries that impact Queets coho until rebuilt status is achieved. The rebuilding time frame under each of the alternatives are not expected to exceed the maximum rebuilding time (T_{MAX}) of 10 years. The probability of achieving rebuilt status for years 1 (2018) through 10 are projected in Section 4.4., *Analysis of management strategy alternatives*.

The description of alternatives may include references intended to meet NEPA or MSA criteria. Guidelines suggest that alternatives are identified as either an 'action' or a 'no-action' alternative, and that the minimum time (T_{MIN}) and the time estimated to achieve rebuilt status (T_{target}) are acknowledged within the suite of alternatives. See Section 2.1 for a more complete description.

Alternative I: Status Quo. During the rebuilding period continue to use the current management framework and reference points, as defined in the FMP and the PST, to set maximum allowable exploitation rates on an annual basis. Projected rebuilding time, T_{target} , is two years (see Section 4.4). This is considered a 'no-action' alternative and is the preferred alternative.

Alternative II:

If ocean age 3 abundance is less than or equal to 5,800 (S_{MSY}), the total exploitation rate will not exceed 15 percent. During the pre-season process, if spawning escapement is projected to be less than 4,930 (85 percent of the S_{MSY}), the non-treaty Council area fisheries north of Cape Falcon, Oregon would be structured to minimize impacts on Queets River Natural coho. The fishery structure may include area closures, coho non-retention or other measures to maximize the projected spawning escapement.

Between ocean age 3 abundance of 5,800 and 7,250, the total allowable exploitation rate will ramp linearly from 15 percent to 20 percent. Measures to reduce non-treaty Council area fisheries north of Cape Falcon, Oregon would be similar to 2016 non-treaty pre-season structure, using actions such as coho non-retention or minimal area/fishery-specific coho quotas.

In-season actions to convert non-treaty Council area coho fisheries north of Cape Falcon, Oregon from mark-selective to non-selective would be prohibited when ocean age abundance is below 7,250. Treaty troll fisheries would be minimized and complimentary management of terminal fisheries would be recommended as an auxiliary action to meet the ER ceilings above.

Projected rebuilding time, T_{target} , is two years (see Section 4.4). This is considered an 'action' alternative.

For the two alternatives and the T_{MIN} scenario, year 1 for the T_{MIN} and T_{target} calculations is defined as 2018. This convention was adopted for Queets coho due to data availability, as the most recent estimates of ocean abundance and spawner escapement are from 2017. Rebuilding times projected here assume the control rules defined in the alternatives were first applied to 2018 fisheries, and each of the nine years thereafter. However, an adopted rebuilding plan will likely be first implemented in 2020. Therefore, the year associated with T_{MIN} is 2018. The year associated with T_{target} for Alternatives I and II is 2019.

4.3 Recommendation 3: Co-manager recommendations

Habitat topics

If chronic under escapement or low smolt production is indicated, then as co-managers QIN and WDFW should prioritize actions in the Queets and Clearwater basins to improve productivity of habitat or implement supplementation programs.

Suggested recommendations for habitat restoration include the following priorities:

- 1) Facilitate rapid improvements in accessibility and availability of floodplain habitats in the Clearwater and Lower Queets rivers by implementing periodic maintenance of egress to all major off-channel ponds and enlarging or diversifying structure in off-channel habitats.
- 2) Improve habitat quality in low gradient tributaries primarily by increasing large wood structure.

- 3) Restore old-growth characteristics to riparian forests within stream corridors through negotiating conservation set-asides and alternative forestry practices (i.e. replacement of conifer in riparian areas)

In conjunction with habitat restoration actions, redeveloping infrastructure at the Salmon River hatchery and off-channel acclimation sites should also be considered. This would help facilitate native brood outplants into currently under-utilized off-channel habitats and thereby bolstering smolt production. This kind of supplementation program should be designed similar to previous supplementation efforts that minimize potential adverse effects of hatchery-reared fish on the natural environment.

As co-managers, QIN and WDFW should seek funding to initiate and sustain long-term programs to provide information on environmental conditions in the Queets and Clearwater mainstem and tributaries. Land management practices in these systems differ markedly, most notably regarding activities relating to logging. Baseline environmental data would contribute to evaluating impacts of climate change and help identify causes for production failures. The monitoring system should at minimum include stations to record stream flow, water temperature, turbidity, and dissolved oxygen. Other monitoring activities could include significant developments in riparian and land habitats, such as logging activity, road construction, wildfires, road and slope failures, chemical spills, and fish passage culvert conditions. In addition to providing a source of information to support future investigation and analyses, the monitoring system would also serve as an alert system to identify problem areas that may be addressed proactively through cooperative action.

Precautionary measures for preseason planning

Precautionary measures for preseason planning. If a preponderance of evidence indicates hostile environmental conditions prevailed during the marine residence period of the subject recruits, especially during their period of ocean entry, make precautionary adjustments to abundance forecasts or allowable exploitation rates for preseason planning.

Precautionary measures for inseason management

If a preponderance of inseason evidence indicates coho abundance is significantly less than anticipated during preseason planning or coho physical condition is poor, immediate precautionary steps would be taken to reduce exploitation rates including, if necessary, emergency modifications to or closures of coho-directed non-treaty ocean fisheries between the US- Canada border and Cape Falcon, Oregon. Treaty troll fisheries would be minimized and complimentary management of terminal fisheries would be recommended as an auxiliary action. If less severe conditions are indicated, inseason actions on Council area non-treaty fisheries would be limited to actions that would not increase exploitation rates on Queets natural coho relative to the preseason plan.

4.4 Analysis of management strategy alternatives

The STT has developed a model to assess the probability of a stock achieving rebuilt status in the years following an overfished declaration. In this model, future abundance is based on a distribution fitted to past observed abundances (2004-2017), accounting for lag-1 autocorrelation (the dominant lag for Queets natural coho). Realistic levels of error in abundance forecasts, escapement estimates, and exploitation rate implementation contribute to the projected adult spawner escapement. Replicate simulations are performed to allow for projecting of the

probability of achieving rebuilt status by year. The model framework allows for evaluation of alternative rebuilding plans by specifying the rebuilding plans as alternative harvest control rules. Model structure, parameterization, and additional results are presented in Appendix B.

This model was applied to Queets natural coho in order to provide projected rebuilding times, with year 1 representing 2018. The projected rebuilding time is defined here as the number of years needed for the probability of achieving rebuilt status to meet or exceed 0.50. Given this assumption, rebuilding times are projected to be two years for both alternatives I and II, with a T_{MIN} (based on a no fishing scenario) of one year (Table 4.4.a). The rebuilding probabilities in Table 4.4.a are displayed graphically in Figure 4.4.a. There were relatively small differences in rebuilding time probabilities between alternatives I and II. While a probability of 0.5 has been used here to define rebuilding times, the Council has the discretion to recommend a probability greater than 0.5 to be used for this purpose.

Simulations were performed under a scenario where abundance forecasts were potentially biased. Results for this scenario can be found in Appendix B.

Table 4.4.a. Projected rebuilding probabilities by year for each of the alternatives and the T_{MIN} scenario.

| | Year | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Alternative I | 0.332 | 0.542 | 0.659 | 0.770 | 0.842 | 0.890 | 0.925 | 0.948 | 0.965 | 0.975 |
| Alternative II | 0.345 | 0.570 | 0.686 | 0.790 | 0.862 | 0.908 | 0.939 | 0.962 | 0.974 | 0.983 |
| T_{MIN} | 0.606 | 0.820 | 0.904 | 0.958 | 0.980 | 0.990 | 0.996 | 0.998 | 0.999 | 1.000 |

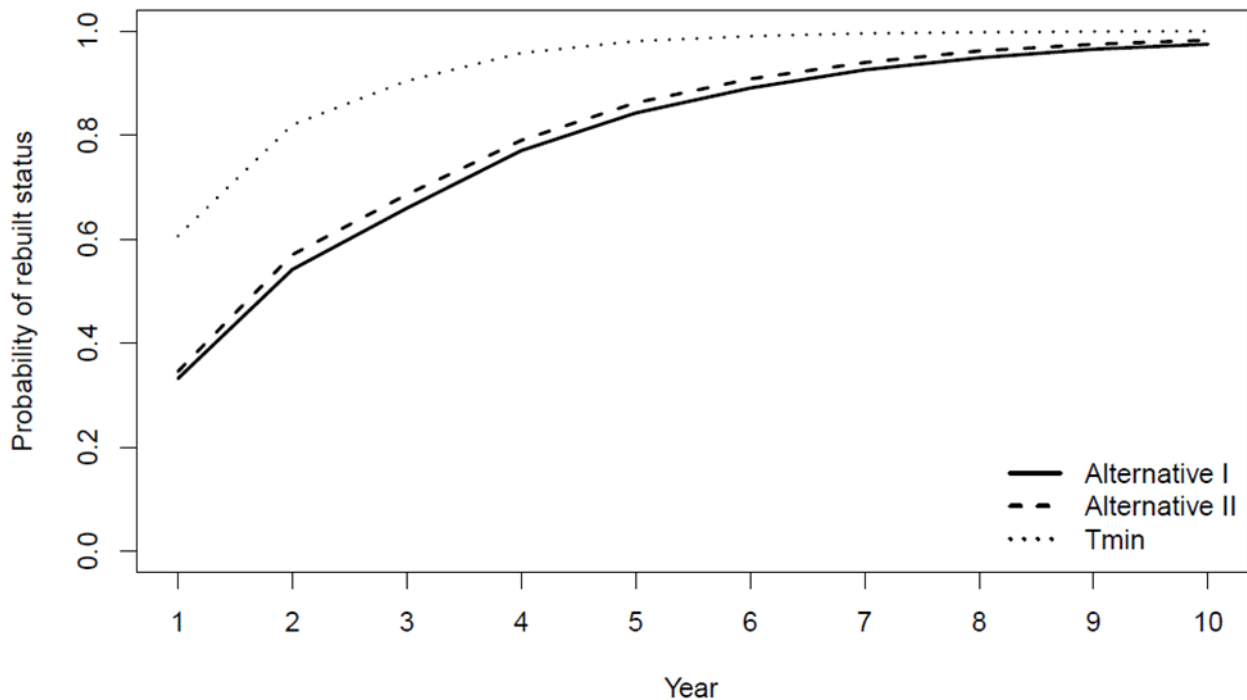


Figure 4.4.a. Projected probability of achieving rebuilt status by year under the two alternatives and the T_{MIN} scenario.

The model described here was created to allow for a quantitative assessment of rebuilding alternatives. The tool has some elements of a management strategy evaluation (MSE), but lacks an explicit biological operating model. It relies on autocorrelated draws from an abundance distribution informed by past abundance levels. As such, no explicit population dynamics are included in the model. Data limitations and the short time frame for development of rebuilding plans did not allow for constructing a more detailed operating model. The model also does not account for mixed-stock effects, where another stock could limit access to Queets natural coho in ocean fisheries and prevent attainment of allowable exploitation rates. Rather, the model assumes that fisheries would be managed to target the exploitation rate specified by the control rule in each year and replicate simulation.

The probability of achieving rebuilt status for alternative rebuilding plans within a 10 year window is the core result of this analysis. The results for particular alternatives may be most useful if interpreted in a relative rather than absolute sense. Actual rebuilding periods may be somewhat shorter or longer than these results suggest due to the vagaries of future production, ocean conditions, and fisheries.

5.0 SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT OF MANAGEMENT STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES

5.1 Approach to the socioeconomic analysis and benchmark/baseline

The approach for the analysis is to provide the best information possible on the impacts of each of the alternatives. To achieve this end the analysis includes both quantitative and qualitative information. As needed to describe potential impacts of the alternatives, the socioeconomic analysis assesses the following.

- The likelihood that the rebuilding stock will be constraining in a particular year:
 - the degree to which the stock has been a constraint historically, and
 - the differences in escapement policy between historical policies and the action alternatives for recent years.
- The potential degree of reduction in ocean fisheries:
 - the differences in escapement policy between no action and action alternatives over a range of stock abundances, and
 - the average reduction in ocean fisheries and attendant changes in personal income that might be expected, assuming the stock is constraining in every year.

It is important to assess the likelihood that a stock will be constraining because when a stock is not constraining a change in the harvest policy might have no impact. Regulations governing ocean fisheries are generally shaped by the most constraining stock (i.e. the stock for which it is most difficult to meet escapement policies because of relatively low abundance.). In such cases there are usually surplus escapements (i.e., escapement levels in excess of the management goal) for non-constraining stocks. If a more conservative harvest policy is imposed for a stock that is non-constraining in a particular year, even without imposing the more conservative harvest policy any surplus escapement of the non-constraining stock may be more than sufficient to meet the more conservative criteria, and thus the policy would have no additional impact on that stock.

Predicting whether or not a particular stock will be constraining in the future is untenable because it requires a projection of the abundance of every other potentially constraining stock in the region. Therefore to assess the likelihood that a stock may be constraining in the future, the approach used here is first to consider whether a stock has been a constraint historically, and second to look at a hindcast of how historical harvest policies would have been different if the action alternative described below had been in place at that time. The hindcast is used to indicate the degree to which the action alternative might have modified historical harvests at the time including whether a stock that was not constraining may have become so under the action alternative.

Setting aside the question of whether the stock was or would be constraining, an upper bound on the potential degree of harvest reduction in ocean fisheries is indicated first by a general comparison of the status quo and alternative harvest policies, and second by using additional results from the STT modeling (see section 4.4, above, and Appendix B) of the probability of a stock achieving rebuilt status under alternative management strategies (see section 5.3). Specifically, the additional results used are the average reductions in exploitation rates derived from 10,000 replicate simulations of 10-year management cycles under each alternative strategy. Differences in average exploitation rates between the alternative simulations are used as an indicator of the magnitude of the difference in socioeconomic impact, and a proportional relationship between the two is assumed (e.g., if exploitation rates are reduced by 10 percent then economic activity associated with salmon fishing will be reduced by 10 percent). In the simulations for Queets coho, the exploitation rate, and assumed economic activity, under the action alternative (Alternative II) is reduced by 4.8 percent compared to the status quo (Alternative I) (see section 5.3). The assumption of a proportional relationship is used because it is not possible to predict *a priori* how the Council might shape a particular season given the status of each stock it is managing. Each year the Council engages in an extensive public process in which it shapes seasons to optimize harvest by addressing allocation issues among various harvesting sectors and geographic areas while ensuring that the preseason expectation is that escapement objectives are met for all stocks. In particular, the Council generally optimizes fishing opportunity by shaping season structures to avoid constraining stocks. Because of this flexibility to use season shaping to mitigate negative impacts, estimates of changes in impacts based solely on proportional differences in exploitation rates should be considered as upper bounds (i.e., the degree of reduction is not likely to be as great as indicated here especially if it is unlikely that the stock will be a constraint on shaping the salmon seasons).

These average proportional changes in exploitation rates are then applied to an average annual personal income impact associated with the fishery (an economic benchmark) to provide an indicator of the change in overall economic activity derived from non-tribal commercial and recreational ocean salmon fisheries each year under a given alternative. These average annual impacts are then multiplied by the projected median number of years to rebuild under the alternative to generate an estimate of the economic effect over the entire rebuilding period.¹

Personal income impacts in this case are the personal income generated as a result of direct expenditures related to fishing (recreational and commercial), processing, and support industry

¹ The analytical approach here is basically a quantitatively informed qualitative analysis. In an approach that was able to provide a more precise quantitative estimate of the expected annual changes in impacts, discount rates would be applied to the stream of expected changes.

activities. These include personal income earned directly by those participating in fishing and processing activities (including charter vessels providing recreational trips), personal income earned by those employed in businesses that supply and service commercial fishing, recreational fishing and processing support activities (e.g., fuel and bait suppliers, mechanics, and truck drivers; also called indirect income), and the personal income generated by other businesses when those with direct and indirect income spend their money in the community (e.g., grocery stores and restaurants). On the one hand, when fishing activity is reduced, personal income impacts may not be reduced proportionally because affected individuals may increase their activity in other fisheries or take up substitute economic activity in the same community. On the other hand, with respect to alternative fishing activity, a recent study indicates that substitution may be minimal and there can be short and long term effects that result in impacts that are more than proportional to the reduction in the salmon fishery. For example, with respect to vessels that remained active during a closure, there was only limited evidence that more diversified vessels made up for their reduced salmon fishing with increased activity elsewhere (Richerson and Holland, 2017). Furthermore, vessels that are more dependent on salmon are likely to cease all fishing activity during a salmon closure rather than increase activity in other fisheries, and a portion of those will exit the fishery permanently (*Ibid.*). Even if other vessels take up the slack as opportunity returns, those vessels may be located in different ports (or some local infrastructure may have disappeared) causing geographic redistributions. Additional information on the modeling and interpretation of personal income impacts (also termed community income impacts) is provided in Chapter IV of the most recent annual salmon review (PFMC 2018b).

It is important to recognize, that despite similarity in terminology, personal income impacts differ from the impacts of an alternative. Personal income impacts are the income associated with a particular activity, while the impacts of an alternative are the changes from status quo that occur as a result of implementing a new policy (i.e., an action alternative). For example, suppose that the personal income impacts associated with fishing under status quo are \$10 million and those under an action alternative \$9 million. Therefore the potential impact of the action alternative, as represented by the reduction or redistribution of personal income compared with status quo, would be \$1 million.

Domestic ocean fisheries impacting the coho stock covered by this rebuilding plan occur mainly in Washington state and north of Cape Falcon, Oregon. These include ocean commercial and recreational fisheries. In addition, when a coho stock constrains ocean fisheries there may be increases in inside fishing opportunity. The focus of this analysis is impacts on ocean fisheries and related economic activity. Therefore for the economic benchmark, personal income impacts for port areas in Oregon and Washington north of Cape Falcon during 2004 to 2016 are used. There are currently five salmon rebuilding plans in development that are using the same 2004-2016 range of years for the economic analysis, including two other Washington coho stocks and two California Chinook stocks. The year 2016 was selected as the last year of the period because it was the most recent year for which data were available when the analytical models were developed. Years prior to 2004 are not included because quality of the coho data in those years was not as strong as the more recent years, and a desire to maintain consistency across rebuilding plans. There are not strong reasons to deviate from using this same period of years across all five rebuilding plans, and this consistency is expected to simplify review and comprehension of the analyses for both decision makers and the public. These years span recent history and describe a

range of harvest and escapement levels that could reasonably be expected to occur in future years, although due to ocean, climate, and other conditions, the actual distribution may tend more toward one end of this spectrum than the other, or exhibit increased variability.

Estimates of total coastal community personal income impacts during 2004-2016 in affected port areas north of Cape Falcon for the non-tribal commercial ocean troll salmon fishery averaged approximately \$3.4 million per year (in inflation-adjusted 2016 dollars), ranging from \$1.6 million in 2008 to \$5.6 million in 2015, and for the ocean recreational salmon fishery averaged approximately \$9.9 million, ranging from \$4 million in 2008 to \$16 million in 2014. Total community personal income impacts in affected areas from the combined non-tribal commercial troll and recreational salmon fisheries conducted in ocean areas averaged approximately \$13.3 million during 2004-2016, ranging from \$5.6 million in 2008 to \$21.3 million in 2014² (Figure 5.1.a and Table 5.1.a).

For the individual port areas, inflation-adjusted personal income impacts during the period from combined ocean non-tribal commercial troll and recreational salmon fisheries averaged approximately \$1.3 million in Neah Bay, ranging from \$0.4 million in 2008 to \$2.2 million in 2004; \$0.7 million in La Push, ranging from \$0.3 million in 2016 to \$1 million in 2015; \$6.7 million in Westport, ranging from \$3 million in 2008 to \$10.2 million in 2015; \$3.3 million in Ilwaco, ranging from \$1.2 million in 2008 to \$5.8 million in 2014; and \$1.5 million in Astoria, ranging from \$0.7 million in 2008 to \$3.1 million in 2014 (Figure 5.1.b and Table 5.1.a).

2008 was the lowest year for combined non-tribal ocean salmon fishery personal income impacts during the period overall and for three of the five affected port areas: Neah Bay, Westport and Ilwaco, while 2016 was the lowest year for La Push and Astoria. 2014 had the highest combined salmon fishery personal income impacts during the period overall and also for two port areas: Ilwaco and Astoria. The highest years for the remaining three port areas were 2004 for Neah Bay, and 2015 for both La Push and Westport (Figure 5.1.b and Table 5.1.a).

Although not included in these non-tribal economic impact estimates, tribal commercial ocean troll salmon fisheries also occur and contribute economically to the coastal communities. In addition, Queets coho are also taken in inriver commercial and tribal net fisheries and recreational fisheries which also contribute economically to the coastal communities. During 2004-2016, estimated Queets coho commercial net fisheries harvests averaged 10,823 fish, ranging from 25,004 fish in 2009 to 2,261 in 2007; ceremonial & subsistence harvests averaged 763 fish, ranging from 1,677 fish in 2009 to 187 in 2007; and inriver recreational harvests averaged 790 fish, ranging from 1,625 fish in 2014 to 46 in 2006.³ Given that these fisheries do occur and contribute to coastal

² It is important to note that income impact estimates produced for years prior to the 2010 data year were derived using a different methodology than estimates for subsequent years. While strictly speaking, estimates produced using the two methodologies may not be directly comparable, for simplicity this limitation was overlooked for this analysis, since the change more or less equivalently affected both the commercial and recreational sectors and all port areas. A description of the transition to the current income impact methodology and comparisons of results from the earlier and current models are found in Appendix E of the Review of 2014 Ocean Salmon Fisheries.

³ Inriver catch data from *Review of 2018 Ocean Salmon Fisheries: Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Document for the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan*. Table B-31.

communities, the economic benefit from affected salmon fisheries is likely higher and more widely distributed than is indicated by the economic benchmark used in this document.

In summary, there are three elements to this analysis: primarily qualitative information on future conditions (related primarily to the likelihood that the stock will be a constraint and whether there will be any impact from an alternative harvest policy), a quantitative indicator of the economic magnitude of the fishery and how future conditions might change relative to a benchmark if the stock is constraining (effects of the action on personal income associated with the fishery), and qualitative caveats regarding the quantitative information (reasons the personal income impact estimates might be off in one direction or another). Information about how future conditions will change even in the absence of any action is taken into account in the cumulative impact section of relevant NEPA documents, which take into consideration current trends as well as the impacts of reasonably foreseeable future actions.

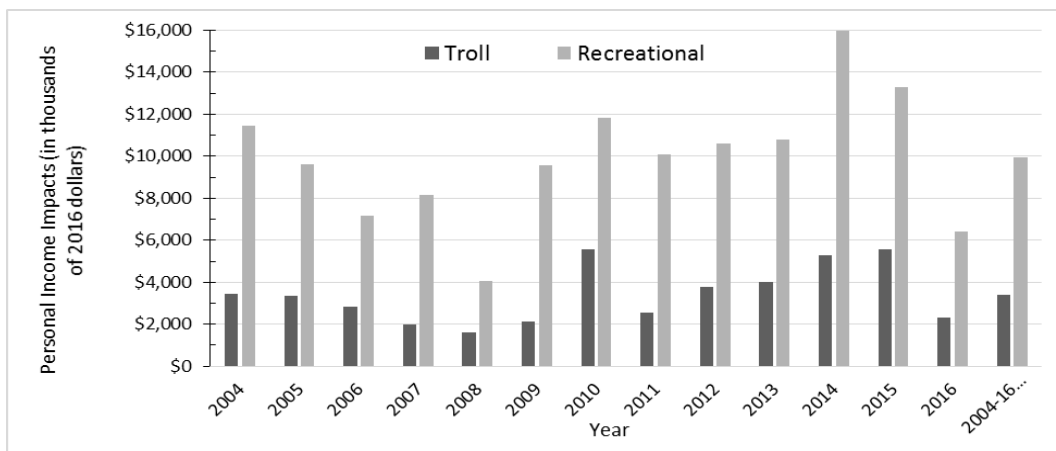


Figure 5.1.a. Estimates of total, aggregated personal income impacts in affected coastal communities in Washington and Oregon north of Cape Falcon in thousands of real (inflation adjusted, 2016) dollars for the non-tribal commercial ocean troll and ocean recreational salmon fisheries.

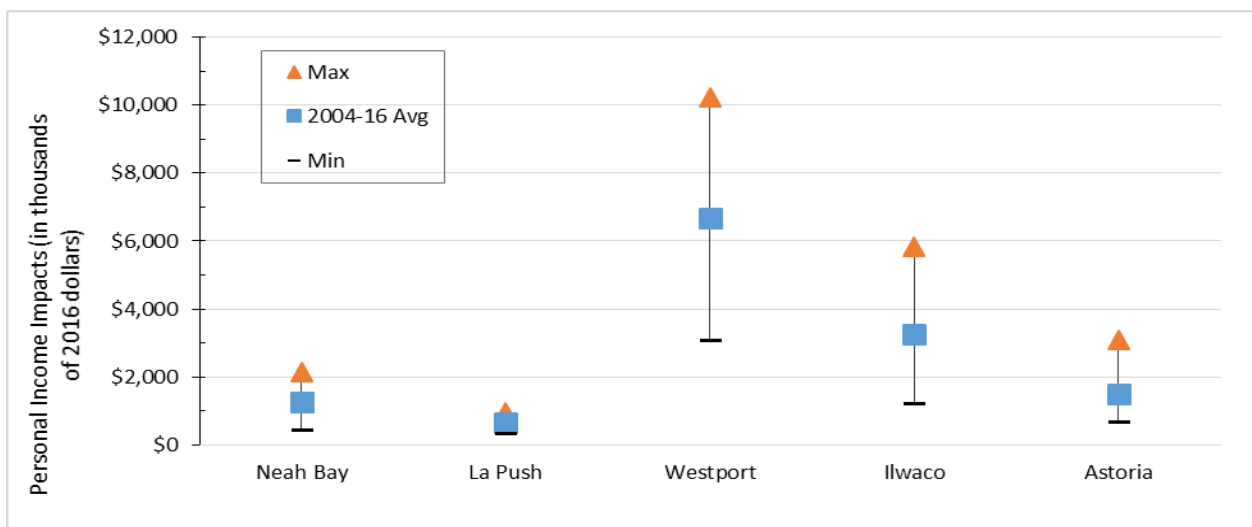


Figure 5.1.b. Estimates of personal income impacts by coastal community in thousands of real (inflation adjusted, 2016) dollars for the combined non-tribal commercial ocean troll and ocean recreational salmon fisheries in Washington and Oregon north of Cape Falcon.

Table 5.1.a. Estimates of personal income impacts by coastal community in thousands of real (inflation adjusted, 2016) dollars for the non-tribal commercial ocean troll and ocean recreational salmon fisheries for major Washington and Oregon port areas north of Cape Falcon.

| OCEAN TROLL | Neah Bay | La Push | Westport | Ilwaco | Astoria | Total |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 2004 | 928 | 293 | 1,154 | 113 | 969 | 3,457 |
| 2005 | 761 | 454 | 1,170 | 144 | 803 | 3,333 |
| 2006 | 566 | 459 | 440 | 295 | 1,050 | 2,811 |
| 2007 | 250 | 254 | 1,038 | 129 | 310 | 1,981 |
| 2008 | 163 | 216 | 616 | 164 | 442 | 1,601 |
| 2009 | 331 | 342 | 1,192 | 83 | 180 | 2,128 |
| 2010 | 251 | 403 | 3,843 | 95 | 972 | 5,563 |
| 2011 | 575 | 228 | 1,407 | 96 | 244 | 2,551 |
| 2012 | 862 | 501 | 1,467 | 234 | 723 | 3,788 |
| 2013 | 485 | 448 | 2,674 | 74 | 354 | 4,035 |
| 2014 | 385 | 445 | 1,528 | 1,108 | 1,840 | 5,305 |
| 2015 | 315 | 641 | 3,021 | 420 | 1,171 | 5,568 |
| 2016 | 206 | 204 | 1,386 | 219 | 305 | 2,321 |
| 2004-16 Avg | 468 | 376 | 1,611 | 244 | 720 | 3,419 |
| Max | 928 | 641 | 3,843 | 1,108 | 1,840 | 5,568 |
| Min | 163 | 204 | 440 | 74 | 180 | 1,601 |
| RECREATIONAL | Neah Bay | La Push | Westport | Ilwaco | Astoria | Total |
| 2004 | 1,228 | 260 | 5,332 | 3,494 | 1,151 | 11,465 |
| 2005 | 842 | 263 | 4,866 | 2,829 | 835 | 9,636 |
| 2006 | 552 | 231 | 3,593 | 2,200 | 600 | 7,176 |
| 2007 | 563 | 180 | 3,687 | 2,875 | 842 | 8,146 |
| 2008 | 244 | 108 | 2,425 | 1,024 | 242 | 4,043 |
| 2009 | 657 | 288 | 4,626 | 3,166 | 848 | 9,586 |
| 2010 | 777 | 332 | 6,312 | 3,422 | 976 | 11,819 |
| 2011 | 758 | 363 | 5,180 | 3,033 | 756 | 10,089 |
| 2012 | 944 | 343 | 5,848 | 2,853 | 606 | 10,594 |
| 2013 | 1,088 | 368 | 5,679 | 2,987 | 687 | 10,810 |
| 2014 | 1,190 | 484 | 8,315 | 4,731 | 1,242 | 15,962 |
| 2015 | 1,059 | 334 | 7,203 | 3,793 | 909 | 13,298 |
| 2016 | 595 | 112 | 2,746 | 2,604 | 352 | 6,410 |
| 2004-16 Avg | 807 | 282 | 5,062 | 3,001 | 773 | 9,926 |
| Max | 1,228 | 484 | 8,315 | 4,731 | 1,242 | 15,962 |
| Min | 244 | 108 | 2,425 | 1,024 | 242 | 4,043 |
| Combined | Neah Bay | La Push | Westport | Ilwaco | Astoria | Total |
| 2004 | 2,156 | 553 | 6,486 | 3,607 | 2,120 | 14,922 |
| 2005 | 1,603 | 718 | 6,036 | 2,974 | 1,638 | 12,969 |
| 2006 | 1,118 | 690 | 4,033 | 2,495 | 1,649 | 9,986 |
| 2007 | 813 | 434 | 4,725 | 3,004 | 1,151 | 10,127 |
| 2008 | 407 | 324 | 3,041 | 1,189 | 683 | 5,644 |
| 2009 | 989 | 630 | 5,819 | 3,249 | 1,029 | 11,715 |
| 2010 | 1,028 | 735 | 10,155 | 3,517 | 1,948 | 17,382 |
| 2011 | 1,333 | 590 | 6,587 | 3,129 | 1,001 | 12,640 |
| 2012 | 1,806 | 845 | 7,315 | 3,087 | 1,329 | 14,382 |
| 2013 | 1,573 | 816 | 8,353 | 3,061 | 1,041 | 14,844 |
| 2014 | 1,576 | 928 | 9,842 | 5,839 | 3,082 | 21,268 |
| 2015 | 1,374 | 975 | 10,223 | 4,213 | 2,080 | 18,866 |
| 2016 | 800 | 316 | 4,132 | 2,824 | 658 | 8,730 |
| 2004-16 Avg | 1,275 | 658 | 6,673 | 3,245 | 1,493 | 13,344 |
| Max | 2,156 | 975 | 10,223 | 5,839 | 3,082 | 21,268 |
| Min | 407 | 316 | 3,041 | 1,189 | 658 | 5,644 |

Income impact estimates from *Review of 2017 Ocean Salmon Fisheries: Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Document for the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan*. Tables IV-17 and IV-18

5.2 Alternative I

Under Alternative I (status quo), the current management framework and reference points⁴ used to set maximum allowable exploitation rates on an annual basis would remain in place. Since Alternative I would not change harvest policy for Queets coho, there would be no direct or indirect economic impact from the rebuilding plan under this alternative relative to status quo, and whether or not Queets coho is a constraining stock would not affect that result.

Under Alternative I, the estimated timeframe needed to achieve rebuilt status (with a probability of at least 50 percent) is two years (Figure 4.4.a and Table 4.4.a). Since harvest policy would not change, economic activity associated with Alternative I would not be expected to change from the baseline, and the general magnitude of that activity is reflected in the benchmark economic data provided in section 5.1 (i.e., inflation-adjusted 2004-2016 average of \$13.34 million per year in income from combined non-tribal ocean commercial and recreational salmon fisheries in the affected coastal communities north of Cape Falcon). At the same time, note that actions under rebuilding plans for other salmon stocks may be associated with deviations from the baseline.

Not including differences in short term impacts (impacts during the rebuilding period), the long-term impacts of Alternative I are expected to be similar to the other alternatives in that all the alternatives are expected to achieve rebuilding in a relatively few number of years.

5.3 Alternative II

Applying the replicate simulations described above in section 5.1 to the alternatives, predicts an average exploitation rate for Queets coho under Alternative II that is 4.8 percent less than under Alternative I (status quo). Alternative II is also estimated to result in rebuilt status in two years; which is the same as Alternative I. The comparative cost of Alternative II is the reduced annual harvest opportunity (here estimated with income impacts) times the number of years it takes to rebuild. Note that if rebuilding takes a longer or shorter period, the costs would be increased or reduced, respectively.

Under status quo, exploitation rates have not been the direct focus of management but rather the escapement targets (numbers of fish) which are then used to calculate a maximum escapement rate and, in years of low abundance, may in turn trigger use of a maximum exploitation rate rather than a spawning escapement goal. When forecasted spawning escapement estimates fall below 5,800, the tribes and state negotiate *de minimis* harvest levels that allow ocean fishing.

The exploitation rate policy under Alternative II would be the same as status quo for ocean abundance forecasts above 7,250 adults, but decline from 20 percent to 15 percent for ocean abundances ranging from 7,250 to 5,800 adults, as shown below:

Above 7,250 adults: greater of the difference between adult forecast and minimum goal divided by the adult forecast

⁴ As defined in the FMP and the PST.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Between 7,250 and 5,801 | allowable exploitation rate ramps linearly between 20 percent (at an ocean abundance of 7,250) and 15 percent (at an ocean abundance of 5,801) |
| At or below 5,800 adults: | exploitation rate not to exceed 15 percent |

A 15 percent exploitation rate is a 25 percent reduction from the 20 percent rate specified by the Pacific Salmon Treaty for low abundance levels.

Alternative II exploitation rates are provided for a range of abundance levels in Table 5.3.b and Figure 5.3.a. Because harvest policies at lower levels are the results of negotiations, a comparison cannot be made between Alternative II and the status quo rates that might be used at those lower abundance levels. However, the hindcast discussed below includes one example of how the two might vary from one another.

The impact of the rebuilding policy in a particular year will depend first on the degree to which the new control rule constrains harvest in that year. As discussed in section 5.1, one indication of the likelihood that a stock will be a constraint is the degree to which it has been a constraint in the past. Because of the large number of considerations that affect the deliberations on each year's salmon season it is sometimes difficult to determine with certainty whether or not a given stock was a harvest constraint in any particular year.

Historically, Queets coho appear to have been a constraint on ocean fisheries in four out of the last five years but not in years previous to that (going back to 2004). Given this recent history, there is probably a greater likelihood that Queets coho will be constraining, as compared to other stocks for which rebuilding plans are being developed (i.e., JDF coho and Snohomish coho). Table 5.3.a summarizes whether the three Washington coho stocks under rebuilding or other coho stocks of concern were constraining to ocean salmon fisheries north of Cape Falcon during the 2004-2019 seasons. Of the other two rebuilding coho stocks, neither JDF coho nor Snohomish coho were the most constraining stock on ocean salmon fisheries north of Cape Falcon in any year during the period. Other natural coho stocks that were constraining on ocean salmon fisheries north of Cape Falcon include: Fraser River stocks during 11 of the 16 years (2004-2007 and 2009-2015), Lower Columbia River natural coho during four years (2006 and 2008-2010), Oregon coastal natural coho during one year (2008), and Grays Harbor coho during one year (2018). In the most recent year shown, 2019, fisheries north of Cape Falcon were shaped to minimize impacts on Puget Sound Chinook. While past patterns indicate a somewhat low likelihood that Alternative II alone would result additional constraints on ocean salmon fisheries compared with the No-action Alternative (Alternative I), with changing environmental conditions in the future it is possible that the frequency with which Queets coho is constraining will increase, making the estimates of changes in personal income impacts more relevant.

Based on preseason ocean abundances, a hindcast comparing the maximum exploitation rates that would have been allowed under Alternative II to actual exploitation rates is provided for 2004-2016 in Table 5.3.b. For this period, only in 2016 was abundance at a level that would have brought into play the (Alternative II) 15 percent maximum exploitation rate policy. The projected preseason exploitation rate for 2016 was 17.6 percent. With Alternative II in place, the maximum exploitation rate would have been 15 percent, a 15 percent reduction from 17.6 percent. A target

exploitation rate is not provided in preseason reports. Here it is assumed that the 17.6 percent expected exploitation rate met or exceeded management criteria. Under the assumptions used for this analysis reducing the exploitation rate to 15 percent would have resulted in a 15 percent reduction in north of Cape Falcon fisheries.

As mentioned above, STT modeling predicts an exploitation rate that is on average 4.8 percent reduced from Alternative I during the rebuilding period. Assuming Queets coho are constraining for the years that the model predicts a reduction in the exploitation rate under Alternative II, and that there would be a comparable proportional reduction in ocean fisheries north of Cape Falcon, the economic impact estimated for combined non-tribal commercial and recreational ocean fisheries in terms of associated personal income would be \$0.64 million per year, or $2 \times -\$0.64 \text{ million} = -\1.28 million over the two-year rebuilding period (in 2016 dollars). In a year in which Alternative II alters fishery management, the single year impacts would likely be higher than the 4.8 percent average (which includes years in which there is no difference between Alternative I and Alternative II and thus no effect). Since the rebuilding period is expected to be very short, the actual conditions are unlikely to reflect the average. As discussed in section 5.1, to the degree that Queets coho are constraining, impacts might be lower than indicated here if other economic activities were substituted for salmon fishing; higher if there is an amplification due to vessels dropping out of fishing entirely for the short or long term; or distributed differently if there is a geographic shifting of activity as a result of season shaping or changes in the location of harvesters and infrastructure over the long term. The amplification effect is probably more likely with a complete closure of the salmon fishery than under an open fishery with a reduced exploitation rate. There might also be offsetting gains in inside fisheries and escapement effects for other stocks that are not quantified here. Note that these impact also do not include effects on tribal fisheries.

Not including differences in short term impacts (impacts during the rebuilding period), the long-term impacts of Alternative II are expected to be similar to Alternative I (no action) and the T_{MIN} scenario in that rebuilding would be achieved in a relatively few number of years.

Table 5.3.a. Stocks that were most constraining to north of Cape Falcon ocean salmon fisheries at the time annual management measures were adopted (Preseason Report III)

| Year | Most Constraining Stock(s) | Graphic depiction of which coho stocks were most constraining (Red indicates constraining, Yellow indicates depressed but not constraining) | | | | | | | |
|--------|----------------------------|--|-------------------|--------------|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------|
| | | Queets R. | JDF ^{1/} | Snohomish R. | Fraser R. | LCN ^{2/} | OCN ^{3/} | GH ^{4/} | Other |
| 2004 | Fraser | | | | | | | | |
| 2005 | Fraser | | | | | | | | |
| 2006 | Fraser and LCN | | | | | | | | |
| 2007 | Fraser | | | | | | | | |
| 2008 | LCN and OCN | | | | | | | | |
| 2009 | Fraser and LCN | | | | | | | | |
| 2010 | Fraser and LCN | | | | | | | | |
| 2011 | Fraser | | | | | | | | |
| 2012 | Fraser | | | | | | | | |
| 2013 | Fraser | | | | | | | | |
| 2014 | Fraser | | | | | | | | |
| 2015 | Fraser and Queets | | | | | | | | |
| 2016 | Queets | | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | Queets | | | | | | | | |
| 2018 | Queets and Grays Harbor | | | | | | | | |
| 2019 | PS Chinook ⁵ | | | | | | | | |
| 16 yrs | No. of years constraining: | 4 | - | - | 11 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

1/ Strait Juan de Fuca coho

2/ Lower Columbia River natural coho

3/ Oregon coastal natural coho

4/ Grays Harbor coho

5/ In 2019 fisheries north of Cape Falcon were shaped to minimize impacts on Puget Sound Chinook.

Table 5.3.b Queets coho historical preseason escapement and exploitation rate projections, relevant management criteria and comparison with Alternative II policy (thousands of fish and percentages).

| | Preseason Estimates | | | Historic Management Criteria | Alt II |
|------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| | Ocean Abundance | Projected Exploitation Rate | Spawning Escapement | Spawner Escapement Criteria (\geq) | Maximum Exploitation Rate (\leq) |
| 2004 | 18.5 | 47.3% | 9.8 | 5.8-14.5 | 69% |
| 2005 | 17.1 | 47.7% | 9.0 | 5.8-14.5 | 66% |
| 2006 | 8.3 | 29.1% | 5.9 | 5.8-14.5 | 30% |
| 2007 | 13.6 | 32.9% | 9.1 | 5.8-14.5 | 57% |
| 2008 | 10.2 | 29.4% | 7.3 | 5.8-14.5 | 43% |
| 2009 | 31.4 | 38.3% | 19.4 | 5.8-14.5 | 82% |
| 2010 | 21.8 | 48.1% | 11.4 | 5.8-14.5 | 73% |
| 2011 | 13.3 | 48.4% | 6.9 | 5.8-14.5 | 56% |
| 2012 | 37.2 | 62.0% | 14.2 | 5.8 | 84% |
| 2013 | 24.5 | 62.2% | 9.3 | 5.8 | 76% |
| 2014 | 10.3 | 43.7% | 5.8 | 5.8 | 44% |
| 2015 | 7.5 | 30.7% | 5.3 | 5.8 | 23% |
| 2016 | 3.5 | 17.6% | 2.9 | 2.9 | 15% |

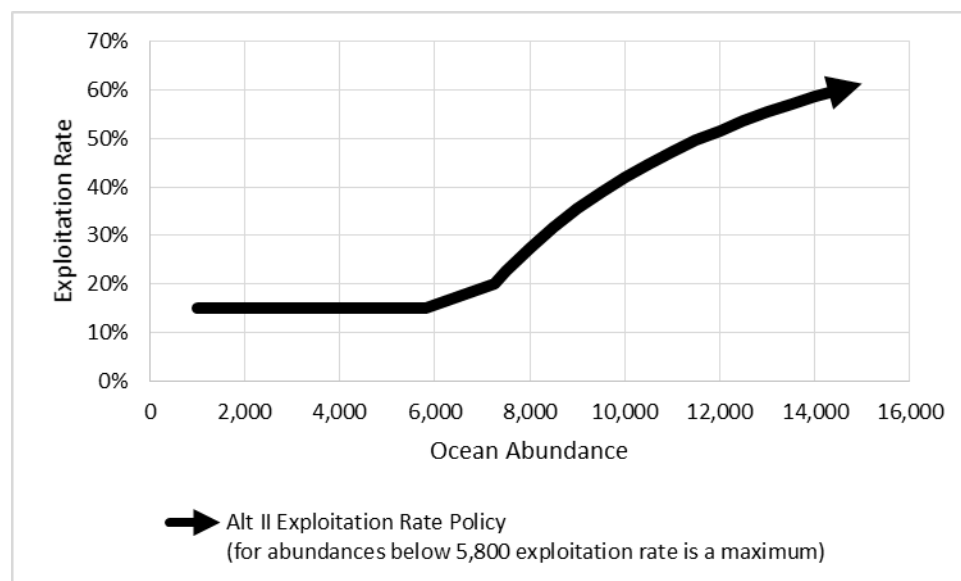


Figure 5.3.a. Relation between Queets coho ocean abundance and exploitation rate policies for Alternative II.

5.4 T_{MIN} rebuilding scenario

Under the T_{MIN} rebuilding scenario rebuilding is estimated to occur as quickly as possible, 1 year assuming an exploitation rate of zero during that time. Under T_{MIN} there would be no fishing and therefore Queets coho would be constraining (although it might be constraining in conjunction with Snohomish and JDF coho if the T_{MIN} scenario were applied to those stocks simultaneously). Compared with the ‘no action’ or status quo management strategy of Alternative I, under the T_{MIN} scenario the estimated upper-bound economic impact in terms of reduction in non-tribal

commercial and recreational fisheries income impacts is \$13.34 million per year, or $1 \times -\$13.34$ million = $-\$13.34$ million (in 2016 dollars) over the 1-year rebuilding. As discussed in Section 5.1, impacts might be lower than this if other economic activities were substituted for salmon fishing;⁵ higher if there is an amplification due to vessels dropping entirely out of fishing for the short or long term, or distributed differently if there is a geographic shifting of activity as a result of season shaping or changes in the location of harvesters and infrastructure over the long term. The amplification effect may be more likely with a complete closure of the salmon fishery under the T_{MIN} scenario. There might also be offsetting gains in inside fisheries and possible escapement benefits for other stocks that are not quantified here (depending on spawner-recruit relationships, increased escapement that results in increased spawning might positively or negatively impact long-term production). Also note that these estimates exclude effects on tribal fisheries.

There is some chance that rebuilding could take longer than the median one year required under T_{MIN}, thereby increasing total short term economic impacts.

Not including differences in short term impacts (impacts during the rebuilding period), the long-term impacts of the T_{MIN} scenario are expected to be similar to Alternative I (no action) and Alternative II in that rebuilding would be achieved in a relatively few number of years

5.5 Summary of socioeconomic impacts

Table 5.5.a summarizes the short-term economic trade-offs, assuming at least a 50 percent probability of rebuilding for each alternative or scenario. If rebuilding occurs more quickly (i.e., if a lower probability time to rebuilding occurs) then the impacts would be less than indicated, and if rebuilding occurs more slowly than the impacts would be greater than indicated (see the last two lines of the table). In years that Queets coho is not constraining, there may be no differences between Alternative I and Alternative II. Due to the difficulty of plausibly modelling multiple stocks over time, the modeling used to derive the average reductions did not take into account whether the stock would be constraining or not, possibly resulting in an over-estimate of the average reduction in exploitation rate under Alternative II. Also, since the average reductions in exploitation rates were calculated across 10,000 replicate simulations of 10-year management cycles while the rebuilding periods are predicted to be relatively short, the actual conditions encountered during the brief rebuilding period are likely to vary substantially from the modeled average. This could lead to impacts that are substantially above or below the average. These and other assumptions and caveats together with their implications are covered in Table 5.5.b.

⁵ Recent studies have pointed to the difficulty vessels have exhibited in compensating for lost salmon opportunities by increasing activity in other West Coast fisheries, even for vessels with history of participation in those fisheries. Thus, substitute activities might tend to be non-fishing. See, e.g., Richerson, K., and Holland, D. S. 2017. Quantifying and predicting responses to a US West Coast salmon fishery closure. – ICES Journal of Marine Science, doi:10.1093/icesjms/fsx093.

Table 5.5.a. Summary of economic impacts of the Queets coho rebuilding alternatives.

| | Alt I | Alt II | T _{MIN} Scenario |
|--|---|--------------------------|---|
| Key Assumptions | Queets Coho would constrain fisheries in the North of Falcon Area North of Falcon Fisheries would be reduced in proportion to the reduction in the exploitation rate under each alternative. | | |
| Frequency of Queets Coho Constraint Preseason: 2004-2016 | 4 out the most recent 5 years during the 16 year period: | | |
| Alternative Hindcast for 2004-2016 (Relative to projected exploitation rates) | 0 of 13 Years | 2 of 13 Years | 13 of 13 (possibly co-constraining if other rebuilding coho stock are managed under the T _{MIN} Scenario) |
| Rebuilding Time Based on a 50% Rebuilding Probability Threshold | 2 Years | 2 Years | 1 Years |
| Rebuilding Probability for Rebuilding Time | 54% | 57% | 60% |
| Reduction in Mean Exploitation Rate | 0% | 4.8% | 100% |
| West Coast Ocean Area Fishery Economic Impacts Per Year | None | -\$0.64 million per year | -\$13.34 million per year |
| West Coast Ocean Area Fishery Total Impacts | None over 2 yrs | -1.28 million over 2 yrs | -\$13.34 million over 1 yrs |
| Probability of Rebuilding in One Year | 33% | 34% | 60% |
| Probability of Rebuilding Taking 6 or More Years | 16% | 14% | 2% |

Table 5.5.b. Assumptions/caveats used in the analysis and potential implications.

| Assumption/Caveats | Potential Implication |
|---|--|
| Queets Coho will be constraining. | To the degree that they would not be constraining for years in which there is a difference between Alternative I and Alternative II, there would not be a cost associated with Alternative II, relative to Alternative I. Queets coho would always be constraining under the T _{MIN} Scenario. |
| Ocean, habitat, and other conditions will remain within historic ranges. | To the degree that environmental conditions change in coming years, Queets coho may become more constraining (depending on the impact of those conditions on Queets coho relative to other stocks) or have shorter or longer rebuilding time frames with correspondingly lower or higher economic impacts. |
| Ocean fishing is reduced for all sectors and ocean areas north of Cape Falcon in proportion to the average reduction in exploitation rates. | The Council shapes seasons to mitigate impacts of reductions in exploitation rates. Therefore, for Alternative II actual impacts are likely to be lower than indicated here although single year reductions in exploitation rates in certain areas may be substantially greater than the average. Given the short duration of the rebuilding periods, impacts are likely to vary substantially from the average (higher or lower), which was estimated based on 10,000 model runs. |

Table 5.5.b. Assumptions/caveats used in the analysis and potential implications (Continued).

| Assumption/Caveats | Potential Implication |
|--|---|
| Rebuilding times will be equal to the median. | There are reasonably large probabilities that rebuilding times are shorter or longer than the median time (except for the T _{MIN} Scenario), and that the attendant socioeconomic impacts will therefore be less or greater than indicated (see last two lines of the above table). |
| Tribal fishery impacts not included. | There would likely be both social and economic impacts from disruption of Native American tribal fisheries, which are not quantitatively assessed. |
| Impacts to inside fisheries are not included | To the degree that ocean fisheries are constrained there may be increased activity in inside fisheries. |
| Impacts to abundance of other stocks are not included | Achieving escapement objectives for Queets coho could lead to more escapement for other stocks, which may have positive or negative impacts, depending on the spawner-recruit relationships for those stocks. |
| Substitute economic activities are not taken into account in personal income impact estimates. | Economic impacts may be overestimated to the degree that substitute economic activity is available. Recent studies indicate that alternative fishing activities are often not pursued to a significant degree, therefore if there are substitute activities they would likely be non-fishing related. |
| The possibility of amplification and geographic redistribution are not taken into account in personal income impact estimates. ^{a/} | Particularly during a complete closures, some vessels will completely stop fishing thereby reducing overall activity more than proportionally to the reduction in salmon fishing. This reduction may continue to some degree even after the fishery reopens. Geographic redistribution due to season shaping or, when there is a closure, loss of vessels or infrastructure, could result in greater impacts to some ports than others. |

a/ A recent study (Richerson and Holland,2017) also indicates that impacts may be amplified and duration of impacts lengthened if vessels leave the fishery.

6.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF MANAGEMENT STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will analyze the environmental impacts of the alternatives on the resources that would be more than minimally affected by the proposed action. This is a required component to adopt this integrated document as an environmental assessment under NEPA. The proposed action will have no impact on fish and fisheries other than salmon. In addition to targeted salmon stocks, the Proposed Action may have impacts on marine mammals, ESA-listed salmon stocks, cultural resources, and environmental justice, which are discussed in the following subsections. Several resources included in the Affected Environment are not analyzed in detail in this chapter, because they would not be more than minimally affected by the proposed action and differences among effects of the alternatives are insubstantial. These resources, and the effects of this action on them are described below:

- Non-target fish species – Fisheries halibut, coastal pelagic, groundfish, albacore, and invertebrates are all managed separately from salmon fisheries. Species targeted by these fisheries are rarely, if ever, encountered in the salmon fishery. Effort shift among fisheries occurs, but is driven by factors that are largely unrelated to the proposed action, e.g. market forces. Overfished species of groundfish are generally not contacted in the ocean salmon fishery, thus are not expected to be affected by this action. Therefore, we do not expect the proposed action to have more than minimal impacts on non-target fish species.
- Seabirds – Some seabirds prey on juvenile salmon, thus salmon fisheries have the potential to reduce prey available to seabirds by removing adult salmon that could otherwise spawn and produce additional juveniles. Council-area salmon fisheries are managed to meet spawning escapement goals for adult salmon. It is unlikely that the proposed action would have more than a minimal, if any, effect on the availability of juvenile salmon for seabirds, as environmental effects likely limit juvenile abundance more than the proposed action.
- Ocean and coastal habitats and ecosystem function – Council-managed ocean salmon fisheries do not disturb bottom habitat; therefore, the proposed action would not have any effect on the physical environment. The removal of adult salmon by the ocean fisheries is not considered to significantly affect the lower trophic levels or the overall marine ecosystem because salmon are not the only or primary predator in the marine environment (NMFS 2003; Appendix B). Spawning escapement goals for salmon stocks are set in the FMP and would not be affected by the Proposed Action; although alternative II could result in increased escapement during rebuilding, the estimated time to rebuild under this alternatives is two years, the same as Alternative I, after which the spawning escapement goal returns to that specified in the FMP. Therefore, in addition to having no impact on the physical habitat, the Proposed Action is not expected to impact marine nutrient transport beyond a minimal and temporary amount. Therefore, no significant impacts are expected on biodiversity or ecosystem function from the alternatives analyzed in this EA.

The proposed action will affect commercial, recreational, and treaty tribal ocean salmon fisheries from the U.S./Canada border to Cape Falcon, OR (as described in section 3.3.1). The analysis area extends beyond the action area to include state waters, ports that receive landings from these ocean

salmon fisheries, communities and tribes that engage in fishing in state waters and rivers that salmon use to migrate toward their spawning grounds (e.g., the Queets River Basin) in our analysis for economics (Chapter 5, above).

6.2 Targeted salmon stocks

6.2.1 *Affected environment*

Ocean salmon fisheries in the analysis area target Chinook and coho salmon.

The Council manages several stocks of Chinook salmon under the FMP (PFMC 2016a). In the ocean, stocks of salmon comingle which results in mixed-stock fisheries. Non-target stocks, including ESA-listed stocks, will be encountered in mixed-stock fisheries. The Council's Salmon Technical Team (STT) models the degree to which target and non-target stocks are impacted by proposed fisheries, and the Council uses tools such as harvest restrictions, time and area closures, and mark-selective fisheries to limit impacts to non-target stocks (PFMC and NMFS 2017).

In the analysis area, the primary management tools are time and area closures, recreational bag limits, quotas, and mark-selective fisheries that target hatchery fish. The primary salmon stocks targeted in the analysis area are: Lower Columbia River hatchery fall-run Chinook salmon, Columbia River Spring Creek Hatchery fall-run Chinook salmon, and Columbia River late hatchery coho stocks. Coastal coho stocks also contribute to fisheries in the analysis area, but individual stock contributions are minor. Fisheries in the analysis area are managed to meet FMP conservation objectives for these stocks, and to comply with ESA consultation requirements for any ESA-listed salmon stocks that are affected by salmon fisheries in the analysis area.

Detailed information on spawning escapement and fisheries impacts on salmon stocks are reported in the Council's annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document, known as the Annual Review of Ocean Salmon Fisheries. These documents are available on the Council's website (<https://www.pcouncil.org/safe-documents-3/>).

6.2.2 *Environmental consequences of the alternatives on targeted stocks*

Impacts on targeted salmon stocks are limited by reference points in the FMP, including conservation objectives, MSST, MFMT, and annual catch limits (ACLs). Council area fisheries north of Cape Falcon, Oregon, are managed under species-specific quotas for Chinook and coho salmon. Quotas and annual management measures are set preseason to meet these reference points for all targeted stocks.

Alternative I (Status Quo) – The Status Quo Alternative is the NEPA No-action Alternative. Under this alternative, the Council would continue to manage fisheries according to the abundance-based stepped harvest rates of the PST management regime and the related SDC that have been in effect since they were implemented under FMP Amendment 16 in 2012 (see section 2.4, above; see also table 3-1 and figure 3-3 in the FMP (PFMC 2016)). Table 3.3.1.a. in this EA shows coho harvests in ocean salmon fisheries for years 2014 through 2018. Table 2.0.a. shows Queets coho spawning escapement for years 2000 through 2017, which is highly variable from year to year. Under Alternative I, the environmental consequences on target salmon stocks from Council-area fisheries in the analysis area would be similar to what has occurred since 2012.

Alternative II (Limit Exploitation Rate) – Under Alternative II, Southern U.S. fisheries (i.e., ocean and inland fisheries south of the U.S./Canada border) would be managed to limit the total annual exploitation rate on Queets coho, based on abundance (see section 4.2 for a complete description of the alternative). The average annual reduction in exploitation rate for Queets coho under this alternative is estimated at 4.8 percent (see section 5.3, above). Escapement goals in Council area fisheries would not be impacted. Table 4.4.a. in this EA shows that Alternative II would likely result in rebuilding Queets coho in two years, which is the same as under Alternative I.

NMFS understands that there is a level of uncertainty around environmental conditions that could affect T_{target} under any alternative. In section 3.5, we describe that the Queets coho brood that returned in 2015 experienced the third lowest marine survival for that stock on record. This unexpectedly low marine survival resulted in forecasting error in 2015. It is likely that poor marine survival of Queets coho for the brood returning in 2015 led to the overfished determination. Therefore, although the modeling indicates we would expect Queets coho to rebuild in 2 years under either alternative, environmental factors could negate those expectations. Irrespective of that uncertainty, table 4.4.a in this document shows a better than 80 percent probability that under either of the two alternatives, the Queets coho stock would be rebuilt by year five.

6.3 Marine mammals

6.3.1 Affected environment

A number of non-ESA-listed marine mammal species occur in the analysis area. The non-ESA-listed marine mammal species that are known to interact with ocean salmon fisheries are California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*) and harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*), both species will feed on salmon, when available, and have been documented preying on hooked salmon in commercial and recreational fisheries (e.g., Weise and Harvey 1999). Other pinnipeds, including Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*), also occur in the area and may also interact with the ocean salmon fisheries, but there is currently no available information on such interactions. All marine mammals are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). Ocean salmon fisheries employ hook-and-line “troll” gear and are classified under NMFS’ MMPA List of Fisheries as Category III (85 FR 21079, April 16, 2020), indicating there is no record of substantive impacts to marine mammals from these fisheries (MMPA 118(c)(1)). Of the ESA-listed marine mammals that occur in the analysis area, only Southern Resident killer whales (SRKW) (a distinct population segment (DPS) of *Orcinus orca*) are likely to be affected by salmon fisheries.

Salmon fisheries conducted under the FMP may directly affect SRKW through interactions with vessels and gear, and indirectly affect them by reducing prey availability. The Council is currently considering the effects of the FMP on SRKW through an ad hoc workgroup (SRKW workgroup). The SRKW Workgroup risk assessment report, presented at the Council’s March 2020 meeting, provides the most current information on SRKW and their predator-prey interaction with Pacific salmon (the report can be found online at: <https://www.pcouncil.org/documents/2020/02/e-3-a-srkw-workgroup-report-1-electronic-only.pdf/>).

NMFS completed a consultation on the effects of implementing the Council’s 2020 ocean salmon management measures on SRKW and their current and proposed critical habitat. The biological opinion, dated April 29, 2020, considered interactions with vessels and gear, and effects on prey

availability. The biological opinion concluded that effects from the Council’s 2020 salmon fisheries are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the SRKW DPS or destroy or adversely modify its designated critical or proposed habitat. The 2020 salmon fisheries were consistent with the Council’s proposed rebuilding plan for Queets coho.

The SRKW workgroup is continuing to consider a long-term approach and may make further recommendations to the Council. NMFS intends to complete a multi-year biological opinion on the effects of implementing the FMP on SRKW. The annual management measures for Council salmon fisheries are developed to be consistent with all ESA biological opinions. In any year that the terms of the biological opinion for SRKW are more constraining on the fishery than the Queets coho rebuilding plan, the management measures for that year would be developed to be consistent with the SRKW biological opinion and consistent with the ESA.

6.3.2 Environmental consequences of the alternatives on marine mammals

Alternative I (Status Quo) – Under the Status Quo alternative, impacts on marine mammals would be expected to be the same as they have been in recent years and not change the amount of salmon available as prey to marine mammals. Ocean salmon hook-and-line fisheries would continue to be Category III under the MMPA and the harvest of salmon in Council-managed fisheries would continue to be guided by the existing control rules and FMP reference points. Additionally, with respect to ESA-listed marine mammals, fisheries would be managed consistent with any requirements included in current or future biological opinions.

Alternative II (Limit Exploitation Rate) – Under Alternative II, ocean salmon hook-and-line fisheries would continue to be Category III under the MMPA. Alternative II would have no impact on harvest of Chinook salmon in Council-managed salmon fisheries and would have limited impact on harvest of coho salmon in Council-managed salmon fisheries during rebuilding. Rebuilding time is estimated at two years under either alternative, meaning the limited exploitation rates under Alternative II would be in effect temporarily before reverting to the status quo; therefore, any effect from Alternative II on marine mammals would be short-term—i.e., limited to the rebuilding period which is estimated at two years. Alternative II has the potential to provide a short-term additional level of potential prey available during the rebuilding period, when the fishery would be limited beyond status quo. Additionally, with respect to ESA-listed marine mammals, fisheries would be managed consistent with any requirements included in current or future biological opinions. Therefore, we would expect Alternative II to be similar to Alternative I in terms of impacts on marine mammals.

6.4 ESA Listed salmon stocks

6.4.1 Affected environment

Several ESUs of Pacific salmon that are ESA-listed as threatened or endangered occur in the areas where Council-managed ocean salmon fisheries occur. As stated above, the only salmon species regularly encountered in fisheries in the action area are Chinook and coho salmon. ESA-listed Chinook and coho salmon ESUs that occur within the analysis area are listed in Table 6.4.1.a.

Table 6.4.1.a. ESA-listed Chinook and coho salmon ESUs that occur within the analysis area.

| ESA-listed ESUs | Status | Most recent citation |
|--|------------|-----------------------------|
| Chinook (<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>) | | |
| Snake River Fall-run | Threatened | 70 FR 37160 (June 28, 2005) |
| Snake River Spring/Summer-run | Threatened | 70 FR 37160 (June 28, 2005) |
| Puget Sound | Threatened | 70 FR 37160 (June 28, 2005) |
| Lower Columbia River | Threatened | 70 FR 37160 (June 28, 2005) |
| Upper Willamette River | Threatened | 70 FR 37160 (June 28, 2005) |
| Upper Columbia River Spring-run | Endangered | 70 FR 37160 (June 28, 2005) |
| Coho (<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>) | | |
| Oregon Coastal | Threatened | 76 FR 35755 (June 20, 2011) |
| Lower Columbia River | Threatened | 70 FR 37160 (June 28, 2005) |

NMFS has issued biological opinions on the impacts of Council-managed salmon fisheries on ESA-listed salmon. Based on those biological opinions, NMFS provides guidance to the Council during the preseason planning process for setting annual management measures for ocean salmon fisheries based on the coming year’s abundance projections. This guidance addresses allowable impacts on ESA-listed salmon. The Council structures fisheries to not exceed those allowable impacts.

NMFS has previously consulted on the effects of Council-area salmon fisheries on the ESA-listed salmon ESUs in the analysis area, and has produced the biological opinions listed in Table 6.4.1.b.

Table 6.4.1.b. NMFS biological opinions regarding ESA-listed salmon ESUs likely to be affected by Council-area ocean salmon fisheries in the analysis area.

| Date | Duration | Citation | Species Considered |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------|---|
| 8-Mar-96 | Until reinitiated | NMFS 1996 | Snake River spring/summer and fall Chinook (and sockeye) |
| 28-Apr-99 | Until reinitiated | NMFS 1999 | Oregon Coast coho (S. Oregon/N. California Coast coho, and Central California Coast coho) |
| 30-Apr-01 | Until reinitiated | NMFS 2001 | Upper Willamette Chinook, Upper Columbia River spring-run Chinook (Lake Ozette sockeye, Columbia River chum, and 10 steelhead ESUs) |
| 30-Apr-04 | Until reinitiated | NMFS 2004 | Puget Sound Chinook |
| 26-Apr-12 | Until reinitiated | NMFS 2012 | Lower Columbia River Chinook |
| 9-Apr-15 | Until reinitiated | NMFS 2015 | Lower Columbia River coho |

6.4.2 Environmental consequences of the alternatives on ESA listed salmon stocks

Salmon fisheries in the analysis area are managed consistent with the requirements of the biological opinions listed in section 6.4.1. Each biological opinion contains an incidental take statement that describes the amount of take anticipated, as well as reasonable and prudent measures or alternatives and terms and conditions to keep authorized take within the permitted amount. In the case of Council-area salmon fisheries, take is generally synonymous with impacts from mortality (either through hooking mortality or incidental harvest). Because salmon fisheries would be managed consistent with current and future biological opinion under any rebuilding plan alternative, there would be no expected difference among the alternatives in terms of impacts on ESA-listed salmon stocks.

6.5 Cultural resources

6.5.1 Affected environment

Salmon are of nutritional, cultural, and economic importance to Native American tribes living in the analysis area. Salmon are harvested by tribes in commercial fisheries and for ceremonial and subsistence purposes. Tribal ceremonial and subsistence uses pertain to fish that are caught non-commercially by members of Washington Coast and Puget Sound treaty tribes for purposes of maintaining cultural viability, providing a valuable food resource, among other traditional foods, in tribal ceremonies, and meeting the nutritional needs of tribal members.

Treaty trust responsibilities require NMFS and the Council to abide by Court orders in the *U.S. v. Washington (Puget Sound)* and *Hoh v. Baldrige (Washington coast)* cases, governing allocation and management of shared salmon resources. Annual negotiations establishing allocation among the tribes, non-Indian fishing sectors, and ocean and inside interests take place in the North of Falcon process.

As described in section 6.2, Queets coho may be harvested in a variety of mixed-stock fisheries throughout the analysis area, including fisheries conducted by several tribes. Queets coho are also harvested in terminal fisheries by the Quinault Indian Nation and by recreational fishers (see section 3.3.2)

6.5.2 Environmental consequences of the alternatives on cultural resources

Alternative I (Status Quo) – Under the Status Quo alternative, impacts on cultural resources would be expected to be the same as in recent years, with inter-annual variability in abundance and negotiations in the North of Falcon process affecting the amount of Queets coho available for tribal harvest.

Alternative II (Limit Exploitation Rate) – Under Alternative II, the tribal and state co-managers will manage to a limited exploitation rate, based on abundance, during the rebuilding period, as described in section 4.2, above. Under Alternative II it is estimated that fisheries would operate under exploitation rate that, on average, is reduced by 4.8 percent when compared to Alternative I (see section 5.3, above). Under either alternative, Queets coho is expected to be rebuilt in two years; therefore, the environmental consequences of Alternative II on cultural resources are not expected to be substantially different than under the status quo (Alternative I).

6.6 Environmental Justice

6.6.1 Affected environment

NMFS must determine which impacts may be adverse under any alternative, and, if so, whether such impacts may be felt disproportionately by environmental justice (EJ) populations.

Resources: EJ populations may be adversely affected by an action's impacts to economics and cultural resources.

EJ Populations: Executive Order 12898 and the Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ) guidance on Environmental Justice under NEPA (CEQ 1997) identifies EJ populations as low income, minority, or those relying on subsistence fishing or farming including Indian tribes.

While Alternative II may result in adverse economic effects through occasional constraints to fisheries, NMFS cannot identify specific communities, by census block, which may be affected by reductions in commercial or recreational fishing. Commercial and recreational fishermen may capture fish, land fish, and reside in different geographic areas. In addition, NMFS cannot distinguish, based on available data, differences in impacts between EJ and reference populations. Economic models apply the overall harvest management framework to the overall area in order to determine effects of harvest reduction. Further dividing the projections to each county would result in a proportional distribution among the counties in that region. Therefore, if the study area includes EJ communities (based on low income or minority thresholds), NMFS cannot determine whether the economic effects of any alternative result in a disproportionate effect on low-income or minority communities.

6.6.2 Environmental consequences of the alternatives on cultural resources

Cultural Resources: Alternative I (Status Quo) is the preferred alternative and is not expected to adversely affect cultural resources for EJ populations as impacts on cultural resources would be expected to be the same as in recent years, with inter-annual variability in abundance and negotiations in the North of Falcon process affecting the amount of Queets coho available for tribal harvest.

Economic Resources: Alternative I (Status Quo) is the preferred alternative and is not expected to adversely affect economic resources for EJ populations as the inter-annual variability in abundance of Queets coho will continue to determine harvest rates without buffering the exploitation rate, as would occur under Alternative II.

Environmental Justice Determination: It is unlikely that the economic effects of either alternative result in a disproportionate adverse effect on low-income or minority communities. Alternative I (Status Quo) is the preferred alternative and would not make any change to harvest policy. Alternative II would apply a buffer to the exploitation rate under low abundance situations and would be applied to all fisheries through negotiations in the North of Falcon process.

6.7 Cumulative impacts

This section describes the “impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions” (40 CFR 1508.7). Salmon are subject to multiple, diverse, and far-reaching effects in both freshwater and marine environments throughout their complex life cycle, while the Council, state, and tribal fisheries take place near the end of this life cycle. Therefore, the Council and NMFS must consider a wide range of cumulative effects in making a decision on this rebuilding plan.

6.7.1 Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions

A number of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions affect Queets coho. This section does not identify the individual effects of each past action. CEQ’s Guidance on Consideration of Past Actions in Cumulative Effects Analysis (Connaughton 2005) allows

agencies to “conduct an adequate cumulative effects analysis by focusing on the current aggregate effects of past actions without delving into the historical details of individual past actions.”

Noting the change in status of Queets coho, the 2018 Report to Congress on the Status of U.S. Fisheries (NMFS 2019) states that, “Many of the stocks added to the overfishing and overfished list have been impacted by environmental factors or international harvest that the United States has limited ability to control” (NMFS 2019). Section 3.5 of this document, above, summarizes the factors that cumulatively led to a change in Queets coho status, and concludes that unexpectedly low marine survival of the brood that returned in 2015 was essentially the proximate cause of the stock meeting the criterion for overfished.

The temporal scope encompasses past actions that occurred since the FMP was implemented in 1984. The temporal scope of reasonably foreseeable future actions encompasses all known Council, state, and tribal fishery management actions. The dynamic nature of fishery resource management makes it very difficult to predict future decisions or actions; substantive future decisions, such as the annual salmon management measures, will be analyzed in future NEPA documents. Therefore, we do not quantify a temporal scope for the selection of reasonably foreseeable future actions.

The effects of fishery management extend into the future and are unlikely to change until the management action is changed or new management actions are introduced. Therefore, we do not quantify a temporal scope for the effects of future actions but consider the cumulative effects that last beyond the end of the five- to six-year rebuilding period.

Fishery Management Actions

The Council recommends management measures for ocean salmon fisheries annually based on stock forecasts and in accordance with conservation objectives set in the FMP and guidance provided by NMFS for managing impacts to ESA-listed stocks. The Council’s recommended management measures must also be consistent with any applicable rebuilding measures. The Council and NMFS use these management measures to continuously shape salmon fisheries impacts on salmon stocks using an intensive preseason and inseason process, as described in chapters 9 and 10 of the FMP (PFMC 2016). In recent years, Queets coho forecasts have contributed to constrained Council-managed fisheries in , although Washington coho stocks collectively contributed to constraining ocean fisheries in 2015 through 2018 (table 5.3.a.).

The Council also manages other non-salmon fisheries for their impacts on salmon. For example, the groundfish fishery is subject to ESA-driven salmon bycatch guidelines. Fisheries outside of the Council’s jurisdiction also affect salmon spawning escapement – the metric for evaluating salmon stock status. The Council considers impacts from fisheries managed by the states and treaty Indian tribes through the North of Falcon process and Columbia River fisheries managed under U.S. v. Oregon Agreement, as well as obligations for fisheries off Alaska and Canada under the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PFMC and NMFS 2017) in setting annual management measures for salmon. These intensive management processes will continue annually as a reasonably foreseeable future action and will ensure that constraining stocks are not overharvested, and that harvest of abundant stocks can be optimized and achieve the most overall benefit to the nation.

Concurrent with developing the Queets coho rebuilding plan, the Council also developed rebuilding plans for Snohomish natural coho and Strait of Juan de Fuca natural coho (JDF), which were also determined to be overfished. The Council has recommended the Status Quo Alternative for JDF ($T_{\text{target}} = 6$ years) and the Action Alternative for Snohomish ($T_{\text{target}} = 3$ years).

Non-Fishing Related Actions

Because salmon spend part of their lifecycle in fresh water, they are vulnerable to a broad range of human activities (since humans spend most of their time on land) that affect the quantity and quality of these freshwater environments. These activities are generally well known and diverse. They include physical barriers to migration (such as dams and culverts), changes in water flow and temperature (often a secondary effect of dams or water diversion projects), hatchery management, and degradation of spawning environments (such as habitat modification, changes in water quality, quantity, and hydrology, as well as effects of land use changes, forestry, farming, infrastructure, and urban development).

Non-fishing activities in the marine environment (such as transportation, run-off, aquaculture, and energy development) can introduce chemical pollutants and sewage; and result in changes in water temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, and suspended sediment which poses a risk to the affected resources. Human-induced non-fishing activities tend to be localized in nearshore areas and marine project areas. When these activities co-occur, they are likely to work additively or synergistically to decrease habitat quality and may indirectly constrain the sustainability of the managed resources, non-target species, and protected resources. Decreased habitat suitability tends to reduce the tolerance of affected species to the impacts of fishing effort.

The following ongoing and pending actions may further confound the effects of the rebuilding alternatives:

- Climate effects, including changes in river flows and flow variability; stream temperature, sea surface temperature, ocean acidification, and other ocean conditions; and seasonal changes in temperature and precipitation, are affecting salmon. However, our ability to predict future impacts on a specific salmon stock stemming from climate effects remains uncertain. This uncertainty is confounded by the fact that salmon occupy different habitats over their life cycle (tributary, mainstem river, estuary, and marine). Climate effects and subsequent natural adaptation may vary across each of these habitats. For example, early migration of juvenile fish in response to changing river conditions may adversely affect their survival during the marine stage (Crozier et. al 2019).
- During its development of the Queets coho rebuilding plan, the Council received information from NOAA scientists on the poor ocean conditions that affected the California Current Ecosystem and that contributed to poor marine survival of salmon (see section 3.2). Recently, NOAA scientists have identified a new anomaly, designated the Northeast Pacific Marine Heatwave of 2019. NOAA scientists will continue to monitor

these conditions and provide fisheries managers and others with information on how the unusually warm conditions could affect the marine ecosystem and fish stocks.⁶

6.7.2 *Incremental Cumulative Effects*

The following terminology is used to define the incremental effect contributed by each alternative to cumulative impacts:

- Imperceptible: The added effect contributed by the alternative to the cumulative impact is so small that it is impossible or extremely difficult to detect.
- Noticeable: The added effect contributed by the alternative, while evident and observable, is relatively small in proportion to the cumulative impact.
- Substantial: The added effect contributed by the alternative is evident and observable and constitutes a large portion of the cumulative impact.

Biological Resources (target fish, marine mammals, and ESA-listed salmon)

The analysis area for biological resources is the same as the analysis area defined in Section 6.1. Considering past and present actions and environmental conditions, the Queets coho stock is currently in an overfished condition.

As noted in Section 3.5, in recent years (2010-2016) ERs on Queets coho have been below the preseason forecast. Forecast errors have under- and over-predicted abundance; abundance was notably over-predicted in 2015 when marine survival was unexpectedly low. Irrespective of fishing or the selected alternatives, when accounting for reasonably foreseeable future actions, coupled with environmental conditions and normal variations in abundance, there is a greater than 75 percent probability this stock will rebuild within five years (table 4.4.a.).

Because the stock is expected to rebuild under either of the analyzed alternatives, and the difference between the alternatives is largely negligible, the alternatives have an imperceptible incremental contribution to future cumulative effects.

While Alternative II may have a positive short-term effect (two years) on marine mammals (see Section 6.3.2), the alternatives would have an imperceptible incremental contribution to long-term effects on marine mammals or ESA-listed salmon stocks when accounting for all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the analysis area.

Economics

The analysis area for economic resources is the same as the analysis area defined in Section 5, i.e., the economically affected area (north of Cape Falcon, Oregon, to the U.S./Canada border).

As noted in Section 5, quantifying the change in the baseline from historic conditions (the net cumulative effect) is not practical because of the numerous factors that interact to determine future fishing conditions. These conditions are described in Sections 3 and 5 and include variable abundance of Queets coho, fishery closures, trends of other salmon stocks (constraining stocks), shifts to other fisheries, actual time to rebuild, rebuilding of other overfished coho stocks, and a

⁶ <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/new-marine-heatwave-emerges-west-coast-resembles-blob>

Council season setting process during which various biological, economic, and social factors are balanced in shaping each season and determining fishing opportunities. Therefore, this cumulative effect section, like Section 5, will focus on the differences in the incremental cumulative impacts between the alternatives.

At the scale of the entire west coast, both alternatives have an imperceptible incremental contribution to cumulative economic effects because the projected rebuilding time under the alternatives is two years. Queets coho historically contribute little to Council-area fisheries (see table 3.3.3.a and figure 3.3.3.a), most of these fish are caught in terminal and preterminal fisheries in Washington coastal rivers (see section 3.3.3). Localized, short-term cumulative impacts (at the port, tribe, community, family, or individual levels) are difficult to project, as the fisheries north of Cape Falcon, the analysis area, are usually constrained by other salmon stocks separately from, or in addition to Queets coho (see chapter 5). NMFS cannot predict these localized cumulative effects, which depend on other local and macroeconomic conditions as well as personal choices that fishermen and local businesses may make.

Cultural Resources

Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions that have adversely affected salmon stocks have also eroded an important cultural resource. The magnitude of this adverse cumulative effect cannot be quantified. Under the analyzed alternatives, the Queets coho stock is expected to rebuild in two years. Either alternative would have an imperceptible incremental contribution to this cumulative adverse effect on cultural resources.

Environmental Justice

The expected effects of the alternatives on environmental justice communities, described in Section 6.6, found neither alternative is likely to result in a disproportionate adverse effect on Cultural Resources for Indian tribes during the rebuilding period. Given that cultural harvest over the rebuilding period will be largely dependent on salmon abundance, non-fishing related actions, or climate change, the alternatives would likely have an imperceptible contribution to cumulative adverse environmental justice effects.

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APPENDIX A. STATUS DETERMINATION CRITERIA

The following is an excerpt from the Salmon Fishery Management Plan

3.1 STATUS DETERMINATION CRITERIA

“Overfished. A stock or stock complex is considered “overfished” when its biomass has declined below a level that jeopardizes the capacity of the stock or stock complex to produce MSY on a continuing basis.”

NSIGs (600.310 (e)(2)(i)(E))

In establishing criteria by which to determine the status of salmon stocks, the Council must consider the uncertainty and theoretical aspects of MSY as well as the complexity and variability unique to naturally producing salmon populations. These unique aspects include the interaction of a short-lived species with frequent, sometimes protracted, and often major variations in both the freshwater and marine environments. These variations may act in unison or in opposition to affect salmon productivity in both positive and negative ways. In addition, variations in natural populations may sometimes be difficult to measure due to masking by hatchery produced salmon.

3.1.1 General Application to Salmon Fisheries

In establishing criteria from which to judge the conservation status of salmon stocks, the unique life history of salmon must be considered. Chinook, coho, and pink salmon are short-lived species (generally two to six years) that reproduce only once shortly before dying. Spawning escapements of coho and pink salmon are dominated by a single year-class and Chinook spawning escapements may be dominated by no more than one or two year-classes. The abundance of year-classes can fluctuate dramatically with combinations of natural and human-caused environmental variation. Therefore, it is not unusual for a healthy and relatively abundant salmon stock to produce occasional spawning escapements which, even with little or no fishing impacts, may be significantly below the long-term average associated with the production of MSY.

Numerous West Coast salmon stocks have suffered, and continue to suffer, from nonfishing activities that severely reduce natural survival by such actions as the elimination or degradation of freshwater spawning and rearing habitat. The consequence of this man-caused, habitat-based variation is twofold. First, these habitat changes increase large scale variations in stock productivity and associated stock abundances, which in turn complicate the overall determination of MSY and the specific assessment of whether a stock is producing at or below that level. Second, as the productivity of the freshwater habitat is diminished, the benefit of further reductions in fishing mortality to improve stock abundance decreases. Clearly, the failure of several stocks managed under this FMP to produce at an historical or consistent MSY level has little to do with current fishing impacts and often cannot be rectified with the cessation of all fishing.

To address the requirements of the MSA, the Council has established criteria based on biological reference points associated with MSY exploitation rate and MSY spawning escapement. The criteria are based on the unique life history of salmon and the large variations in annual stock abundance due to numerous environmental variables. They also take into account the uncertainty and imprecision surrounding the estimates of MSY, fishery impacts, and spawner escapements. In recognition of the unique salmon life history, the criteria differ somewhat from the general guidance in the NS1 Guidelines (§600.310).

3.1.4 Overfished

“For a fishery that is overfished, any fishery management plan, amendment, or proposed regulations... for such fishery shall (A) specify a time period for ending overfishing and rebuilding the fishery that shall:(i) be as short as possible, taking into account the status and biology of any overfished stocks of fish, the needs of the fishing communities, recommendations by international organizations in which the United States participates, and the interaction of the overfished stock within the marine ecosystem; and (ii) not exceed 10 years, except in cases where the biology of the stock of fish, other environmental conditions, or management measures under an international agreement in which the United States participates dictate otherwise....”

Magnuson-Stevens Act, §304(e)(4)

A stock will be considered overfished if the 3-year geometric mean of annual spawning escapements falls below the MSST, where MSST is generally defined as $0.5 \cdot S_{MSY}$ or $0.75 \cdot S_{MSY}$, although there are some exceptions (Table 3-1). Overfished determinations will be made annually using the three most recently available postseason estimates of spawning escapement.

3.1.4.1 Council Action

When the overfished status determination criteria set forth in this FMP have been triggered, the Council shall:

- 1) notify the NMFS NWR administrator of this situation;
- 2) notify pertinent management entities;
- 3) structure Council area fisheries to reduce the likelihood of the stock remaining overfished and to mitigate the effects on stock status;
- 4) direct the STT to propose a rebuilding plan for Council consideration within one year.

Upon formal notification from NMFS to the Council of the overfished status of a stock, a rebuilding plan must be developed and implemented within two years.

The STT’s proposed rebuilding plan shall include:

- 1) an evaluation of the roles of fishing, marine and freshwater survival in the overfished determination;
- 2) any modifications to the criteria set forth in section 3.1.6 below for determining when the stock has rebuilt,
- 3) recommendations for actions the Council could take to rebuild the stock to S_{MSY} , including modification of control rules if appropriate, and;
- 4) a specified rebuilding period.

In addition, the STT may consider and make recommendations to the Council or other management entities for reevaluating the current estimate of S_{MSY} , modifying methods used to forecast stock abundance or fishing impacts, improving sampling and monitoring programs, or changing hatchery practices.

Based on the results of the STT’s recommended rebuilding plan, the Council will adopt a rebuilding plan for recommendation to the Secretary. Adoption of a rebuilding plan will require implementation either through an FMP amendment or notice and comment rule-making process. Subject to Secretarial approval, the Council will implement the rebuilding plan with appropriate actions to ensure the stock is rebuilt in as short a time as possible based on the biology of the stock

but not to exceed ten years, while taking into consideration the needs of the commercial, recreational and tribal fishing interests and coastal communities. The existing control rules provide a default rebuilding plan that targets spawning escapement at or above MSY, provided sufficient recruits are available, and targets a rebuilding period of one generation (two years for pink salmon, three years for coho, and five years for Chinook). If sufficient recruits are not available to achieve spawning escapement at or above MSY in a particular year, the control rules provide for the potential use of *de minimis* exploitation rates that allow continued participation of fishing communities while minimizing risk of overfishing. However, the Council should consider the specific circumstances surrounding an overfished determination and ensure that the adopted rebuilding plan addresses all relevant issues.

Even if fishing is not the primary factor in the depression of the stock, the Council must act to limit the exploitation rate of fisheries within its jurisdiction so as not to limit rebuilding of the stock or fisheries. In cases where no action within Council authority can be identified which has a reasonable expectation of contributing to the rebuilding of the stock in question, the Council will identify the actions required by other entities to recover the depressed stock. Due to a lack of data for some stocks, environmental variation, economic and social impacts, and habitat losses or problems beyond the control or management authority of the Council, it is possible that rebuilding of depressed stocks in some cases could take much longer than ten years. The Council may change analytical or procedural methodologies to improve the accuracy of estimates for abundance, harvest impacts, and MSY escapement levels, and/or reduce ocean harvest impacts when it may be effective in stock recovery. For those causes beyond Council control or expertise, the Council may make recommendations to those entities which have the authority and expertise to change preseason prediction methodology, improve habitat, modify enhancement activities, and re-evaluate management and conservation objectives for potential modification through the appropriate Council process.

In addition to the STT assessment, the Council may direct its Habitat Committee (HC) to work with federal, state, local, and tribal habitat experts to review the status of the essential fish habitat affecting the overfished stock and, as appropriate, provide recommendations to the Council for restoration and enhancement measures within a suitable time frame. However, this action would be a priority only if the STT evaluation concluded that freshwater survival was a significant factor leading to the overfished determination. Upon review of the report from the HC, the Council will consider appropriate actions to promote any solutions to the identified habitat problems.

3.1.5 Not Overfished-Rebuilding

After an overfished status determination has been triggered, once the stock's 3-year geometric mean of spawning escapement exceeds the MSST, but remains below S_{MSY} , or other identified rebuilding criteria, the stock status will be recognized as "not overfished-rebuilding". This status level requires no Council action, but rather is used to indicate that stock's status has improved from the overfished level but the stock has not yet rebuilt.

3.1.6 Rebuilt

The default criterion for determining that an overfished stock is rebuilt is when the 3-year geometric mean spawning escapement exceeds S_{MSY} ; the Council may consider additional criteria

for rebuilt status when developing a rebuilding plan and recommend such criteria, to be implemented subject to Secretarial approval.

Because abundance of salmon populations can be highly variable, it is possible for a stock to rebuild from an overfished condition to the default rebuilding criterion in as little as one year, before a proposed rebuilding plan could be brought before the Council.

In some cases it may be important to consider other factors in determining rebuilt status, such as population structure within the stock designation. The Council may also want to specify particular strategies or priorities to achieve rebuilding objectives. Specific objectives, priorities, and implementation strategies should be detailed in the rebuilding plan.

3.1.6.1 Council Action

When a stock is determined to be rebuilt, the Council shall:

- 1) notify the NMFS NWR administrator of its finding, and;
- 2) notify pertinent management entities.

3.1.7 Changes or Additions to Status Determination Criteria

Status determination criteria are defined in terms of quantifiable, biologically-based reference points, or population parameters, specifically, S_{MSY} , MFMT (F_{MSY}), and MSST. These reference points are generally regarded as fixed quantities and are also the basis for the harvest control rules, which provide the operative guidance for the annual preseason planning process used to establish salmon fishing seasons that achieve OY and are used for status determinations as described above. Changes to how these status determination criteria are defined, such as $MSST = 0.50 * S_{MSY}$, must be made through a plan amendment. However, if a comprehensive technical review of the best scientific information available provides evidence that, in the view of the STT, SSC, and the Council, justifies a modification of the estimated values of these reference points, changes to the values may be made without a plan amendment. Insofar as possible, proposed reference point changes for natural stocks will only be reviewed and approved within the schedule established for salmon methodology reviews and completed at the November meeting prior to the year in which the proposed changes would be effective and apart from the preseason planning process. SDC reference points that may be changed without an FMP amendment include: reference point objectives for hatchery stocks upon the recommendation of the pertinent federal, state, and tribal management entities; and Federal court-ordered changes. All modifications would be documented through the salmon methodology review process, and/or the Council's preseason planning process.

APPENDIX B. MODEL DESCRIPTION

Introduction

Salmon rebuilding plans must include, among other requirements, a specified rebuilding period. In addition, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis of rebuilding plans requires the development of rebuilding plan alternatives. In past assessments, the rebuilding period and alternative rebuilding plans were developed using expert knowledge, with no particular quantitative assessment. Beginning in 2018, the Salmon Technical Team (STT) developed a simple tool to assess the probability of a stock achieving rebuilt status in each year following an overfished declaration. Here we describe this model and provide additional results for the Queets natural coho salmon stock.

Methods

The methods described here are for a single replicate simulation.

For Queets natural coho, there is evidence for positive lag-1 autocorrelation in log-transformed values of the pre-fishery ocean abundance, with autocorrelation coefficient $\rho = 0.295$. To account for this, model log-scale abundance, $\log(N_t)$, is characterized by lag-1 autocorrelated draws from a Normal distribution with parameters estimated from the abundance series. Simulated abundance $\log(N_t)$ is thus a function of $\log(N_{t-1})$, ρ , and the distribution of past abundance on the log scale,

$$\log(N_t) = \rho[\log(N_{t-1})] + (1 - \rho)Y_t, \quad (1)$$

with Y_t a random draw from the distribution

$$Y_t \sim \text{Normal} \left[\log(\bar{Q}) - 0.5\sigma_{\log(Q)}^2, \sqrt{\frac{(1 - \rho^2)\sigma_{\log(Q)}^2}{(1 - \rho)^2}} \right] \quad (2)$$

and where \bar{Q} is the arithmetic mean of the observed Queets natural coho ocean abundance time series and $\sigma_{\log(Q)}^2$ is the variance of the log-transformed abundance time series. The standard deviation term in Equation 2 is derived from the expression for the standard deviation of a sum of two random variables. Simulated log-scale abundance in year t is then back-transformed to the arithmetic scale, $N_t = \exp[\log(N_t)]$.

The forecast abundance (\hat{N}) is drawn from a lognormal distribution,

$$\hat{N}_t \sim \text{Lognormal}[\log(N_t) - 0.5\sigma_{\log(\hat{N})}^2, \sigma_{\log(\hat{N})}] \quad (3)$$

with the bias corrected mean and standard deviation specified on the log scale. The log-scale standard deviation was calculated as

$$\sigma_{\log(\hat{N})} = \sqrt{\log(1 + CV_{\hat{N}}^2)} \quad (4)$$

with $CV_{\hat{N}}$ representing the coefficient of variation for the abundance forecast. $CV_{\hat{N}}$ is a model parameter that defines the degree of abundance forecast error.

The forecast abundance \hat{N}_t is applied to a harvest control rule to determine the allowable exploitation rate, \hat{F}_t . A several step process was used to determine \hat{F}_t or Queets natural coho. For Alternative I, the steps were: (1) randomly draw, with replacement, from the set of non-terminal exploitation rates (Council and non-Council area fisheries) estimated for years 2010-2017, (2) specify the terminal exploitation rate by applying \hat{N}_t to the parameters of a linear regression fitted to preseason abundance and terminal exploitation rate data for years 2010-2017 (slope = 0.000008448, intercept = 0.09142), (3) cap the terminal exploitation rate at a maximum of 0.35, (4) sum the non-terminal and terminal exploitation rates, (5) if \hat{N}_t is greater than 7,250, \hat{F}_t equals the summed non-terminal and terminal exploitation rate, and (6) if \hat{N}_t is less than or equal to 7,250, \hat{F}_t equals 0.20. For Alternative II, \hat{F}_t was specified by following steps 1-5 described for Alternative I. Then, if \hat{N}_t is between 7,250 and 5,800, \hat{F}_t is set at an exploitation rate between 0.20 and 0.15 based on a linear relationship that ramps down the exploitation rate from 0.20 to 0.15 between abundances of 7,250 and 5,800. Finally, if \hat{N}_t is less than or equal to 5,800, \hat{F}_t equals 0.15. The hat notation for \hat{F} indicates that this exploitation rate is a target exploitation rate that is derived from an abundance forecast.

Adult spawner escapement E_t is thus

$$E_t = N_t \times (1 - F_t) \quad (5)$$

where N_t is the “true” abundance and F_t is the realized exploitation rate. The realized exploitation rate is a random draw from the beta distribution

$$F \sim \text{Beta}(\alpha, \beta) \quad (6)$$

with parameters

$$\alpha = \frac{1 - \hat{F}_t(1 + CV_F^2)}{CV_F^2} \quad (7)$$

and

$$\beta = \frac{\frac{1}{\hat{F}_t} - 2 + \hat{F}_t + (\hat{F}_t - 1)CV_F^2}{CV_F^2}. \quad (8)$$

The coefficient of variation for the exploitation rate implementation error, CV_F , is a model parameter that determines the degree of error between the target and realized exploitation rates.

Because escapement is estimated with error, escapement estimates \hat{E}_t are drawn from a lognormal distribution,

$$\hat{E}_t \sim \text{Lognormal}[\log(E_t) - 0.5\sigma_{\log(\hat{E})}^2, \sigma_{\log(\hat{E})}] \quad (9)$$

where the bias corrected mean and standard deviation are specified on the log scale. The log-scale standard deviation was computed in the same manner as Equation 4.

The procedure described above is repeated for each year (years 1 [2018] through 10), and each replicate. Simulations are initiated with the 2017 estimated abundance; simulated abundance in $t = 1$ (2018) is therefore a function of the 2017 abundance, the autocorrelation coefficient, and a draw from the abundance distribution (Equation 1).

A stock is assumed to be rebuilt when the geometric mean of \hat{E} computed over the previous three years exceeds the maximum sustainable yield spawner escapement, S_{MSY} . The probability of achieving rebuilt status in year t is the cumulative probability of achieving a 3-year geometric mean greater than or equal to S_{MSY} by year t .

Results

Results for Queets natural coho presented here are the product of 10,000 replicate simulations of 10 years. The probability of being rebuilt in year $t = 1$ is the proportion of the 10,000 simulations that resulted in the geometric mean of the estimated escapement in $t = -1$ (5,156: the 2016 natural adult escapement), the estimated escapement in $t = 0$ (5,232: the 2017 natural adult escapement), and the simulated escapement estimate in year $t = 1$ (2018) exceeding S_{MSY} . For $t = 2$, the probability of being rebuilt is the probability that the stock was rebuilt in either $t = 1$ or $t = 2$.

Table 4.4.a and Figure 4.4.a in the body of the report display the probabilities of achieving rebuilt status under two management strategies: (I) status quo and (II) a management strategy with lower exploitation rates at low abundance. A no-fishing scenario was also evaluated to establish T_{MIN} . For these simulations the following parameter values were assumed: $CV_{\hat{N}} = 0.2$, $CV_{\hat{E}} = 0.2$, and $CV_F = 0.1$. The parameter values were chosen because they produce plausible levels of abundance forecast error, escapement estimation error, and implementation error for realized exploitation rates.

Rebuilding probabilities were also computed for the status quo control rule under an increased CV of the abundance forecast error ($CV_{\hat{N}} = 0.6$), the escapement estimation error CV ($CV_{\hat{E}} = 0.5$), and the CV of the exploitation rate implementation error ($CV_F = 0.2$). Figure 1 displays distributions depicting the levels of abundance forecast error, escapement estimation error, and exploitation rate implementation error given the base case CVs and the CVs used for the alternative scenarios. Figure 2 displays results for these alternative scenarios under the status quo control rule. Overall, the probability of achieving rebuilt status by year is relatively insensitive to increased values of these parameters.

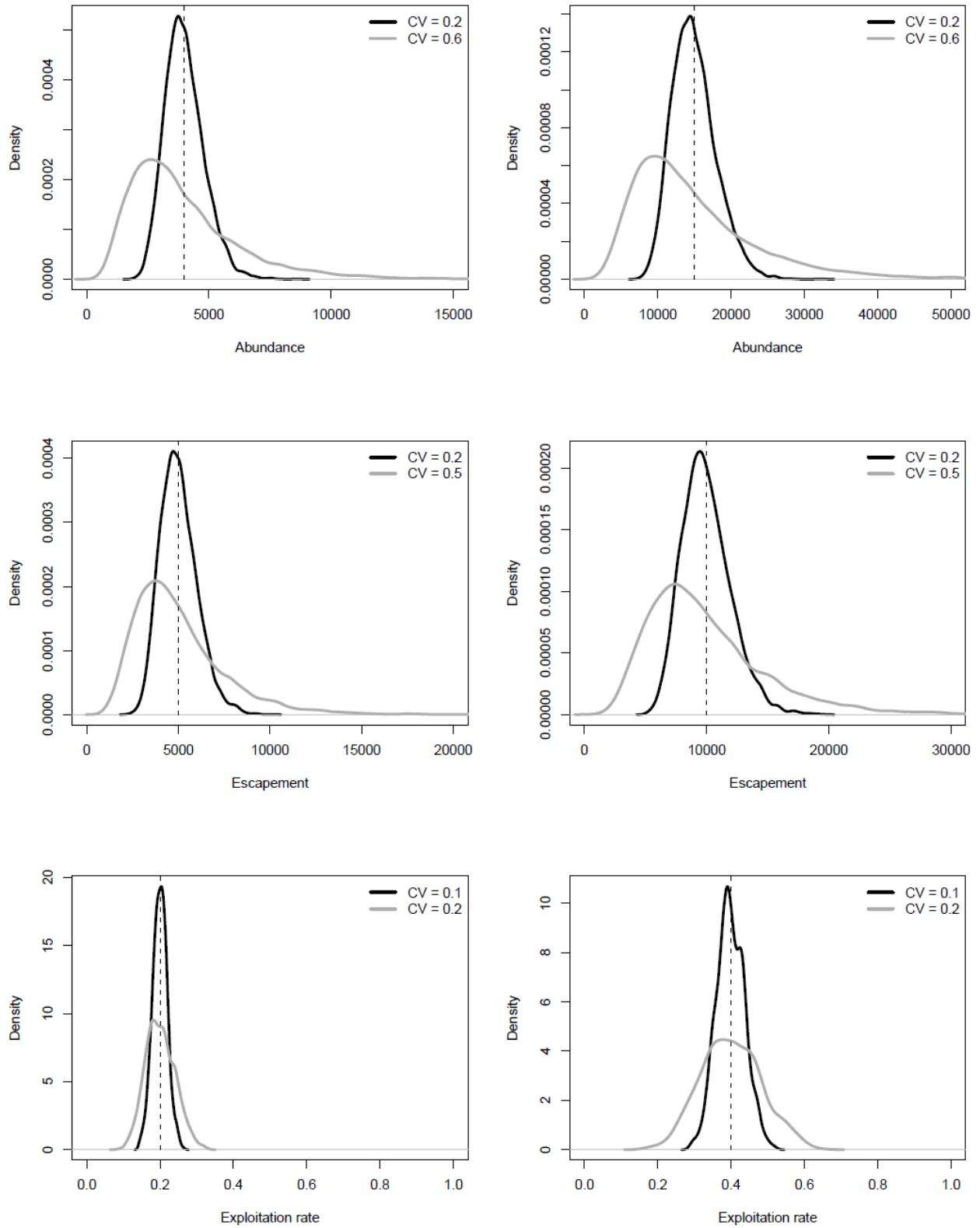


Figure 1. Distributions of the forecast abundance (top row), estimated escapement (middle row), and realized exploitation rate (bottom row) under different levels of known abundance, known escapement, and predicted exploitation rate. Known values are indicated by vertical dashed lines.

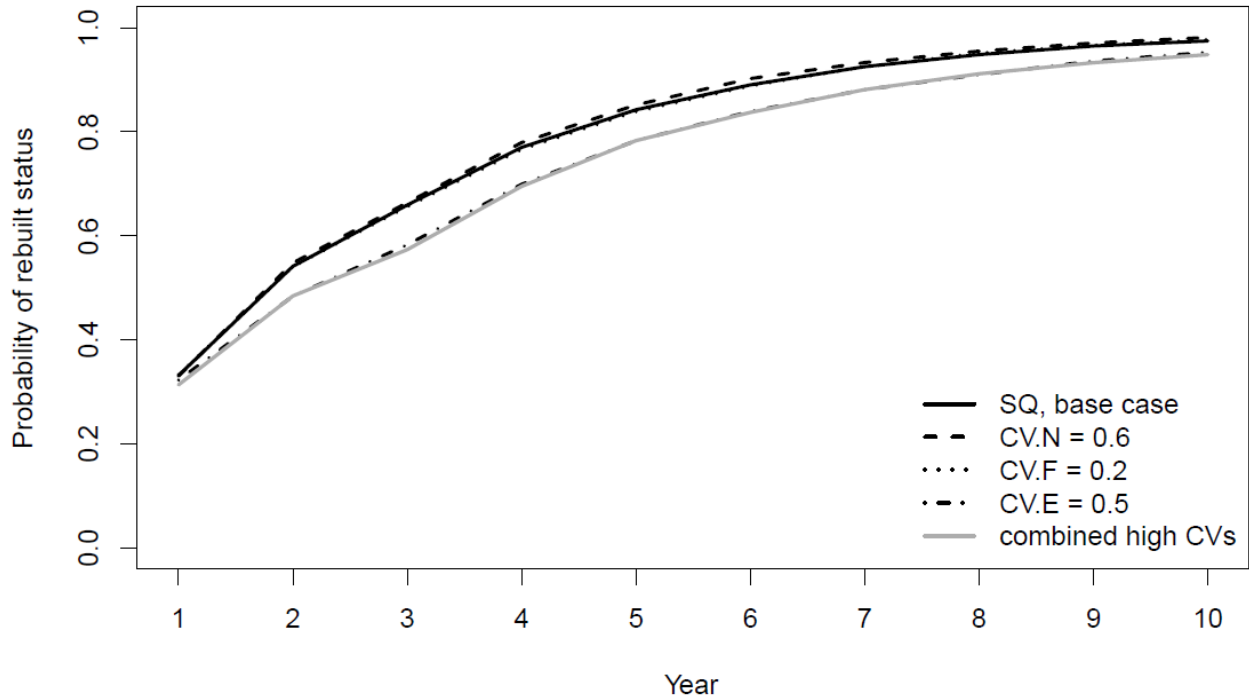


Figure 2. Probability of achieving rebuilt status in years 1 through 10 for the status quo control rule (Alternative I), given different parameter values for abundance forecast error (CV.N), exploitation rate implementation error (CV.F), and escapement estimation error (CV.E).

Simulations were also performed assuming biased abundance forecasts. Bias was incorporated by modifying the log-scale mean term in Equation 3 by adding the log of the observed ratio of the preseason forecast of abundance to the postseason estimate of ocean abundance. Thus, the mean term in Equation 3 becomes $\log(N_t) - 0.5\sigma_{\log(N)}^2 + \log(r)$, where r is a draw (with replacement) from the set of 14 ratios of forecast to observed abundance (years 2004-2017). On the arithmetic scale this ratio ranges from 4.08 to 0.54 and $r > 1$ in 9 of 14 years. Figure 3 displays the effect of including this bias in abundance forecasts, given management under the status quo control rule. Positively biased forecasts (on average) result in lower probabilities of achieving rebuilt status through the 10 year rebuilding period.

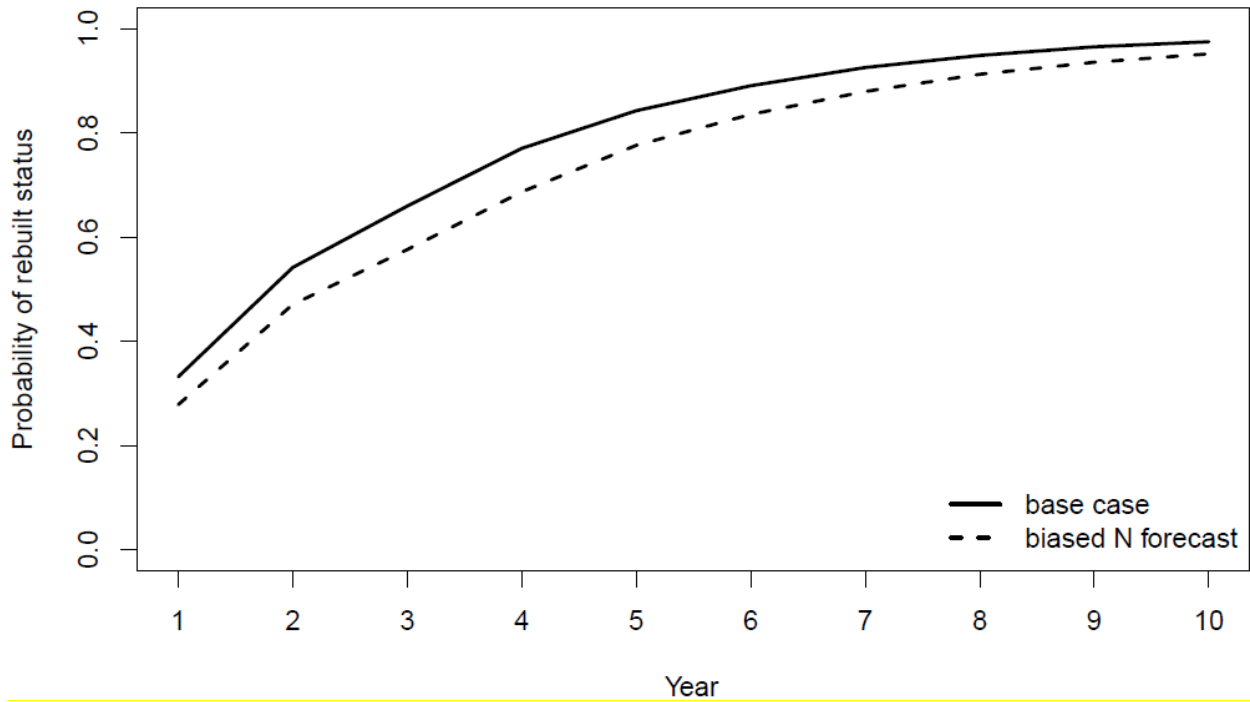


Figure 3. Probability of achieving rebuilt status under unbiased abundance forecasts and simulated abundance forecasts that are on average biased high, based on the observed ratios of preseason forecasts to postseason estimates of ocean abundance.

APPENDIX C. LIST OF AGENCIES AND PERSONS CONSULTED

The following public meetings were held as part of the salmon management process (Council-sponsored meetings in bold):

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| March 2018 | Rohnert Park, CA |
| April 2018 | Portland, OR |
| May, 2018 | Public Webinar |
| June, 2018 | Public Meeting in Olympia, WA |
| August 2018 | Public Webinar |
| September 2018 | Public Webinar |
| September 2018 | Seattle, WA |
| November 2018 | San Diego, CA |
| March 2019 | Vancouver, WA |
| April 2019 | Rohnert Park, CA |
| June 2019 | San Diego, CA |
| September 2019 | Boise, ID |

The following organizations were consulted and/or participated in preparation of supporting documents:

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission
West Coast Indian Tribes

California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

National Marine Fisheries Service, West Coast Region, Sustainable Fisheries Division
National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service, Southwest Fisheries Science Center
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Columbia River Fisheries Program Office
United States Coast Guard

APPENDIX D. REGULATORY IMPACT REVIEW

As applicable, rulemakings must comply with Executive Order (E.O.) 12866 and the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA). To satisfy the requirements of E.O. 12866, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) undertakes a regulatory impact review (RIR). To satisfy the requirements of the RFA, NMFS prepares an initial regulatory flexibility analysis (IRFA) and final regulatory flexibility analysis (FRFA), or a certification.

The NMFS Economic Guidelines that describe the RFA and E.O. 12866 can be found at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/op/pds/documents/01/111/01-111-05.pdf>

The RFA, 5 U.S.C. § 601 *et seq.*, can be found at: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/laws_policies/economic_social/rfa_revised_through_2010_jobs_act.pdf

Executive Order 12866 can be found at: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/laws_policies/economic_social/eo12866.pdf

REGULATORY IMPACT REVIEW

The President of the United States signed E.O. 12866, “Regulatory Planning and Review,” on September 30, 1993. This order established guidelines for promulgating new regulations and reviewing existing regulations. The E.O. covers a variety of regulatory policy considerations and establishes procedural requirements for analysis of the benefits and costs of regulatory actions. The E.O. stresses that in deciding whether and how to regulate, agencies should assess all of the costs and benefits of available regulatory alternatives. Based on this analysis, they should choose those approaches that maximize net benefits to the Nation, unless a statute requires another regulatory approach.

NMFS satisfies the requirements of E.O. 12866 through the preparation of an RIR. The RIR provides a review of the potential economic effects of a proposed regulatory action in order to gauge the net benefits to the Nation associated with the proposed action. The analysis also provides a review of the problem and policy objectives prompting the regulatory proposal and an evaluation of the available alternatives that could be used to solve the problem.

The RIR provides an assessment that can be used by the Office of Management and Budget to determine whether the proposed action could be considered a significant regulatory action under E.O. 12866. E.O. 12866 defines what qualifies as a “significant regulatory action” and requires agencies to provide analyses of the costs and benefits of such action and of potentially effective and reasonably feasible alternatives. An action may be considered significant if it is expected to: (1) Have an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more or adversely affect in a material way the economy, a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or state, local, or tribal governments or communities; (2) Create a serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency; (3) Materially alter the budgetary impact of entitlement, grants, user fees, or loan programs or the

rights and obligations of recipients thereof; or (4) Raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, the President’s priorities, or the principles set forth in the EO.

Statement of the Problem

See Purpose and Need statement in this document ([Section 2.2.2](#)).

Description of the fishery and other affected entities

See Ocean and Puget Sound fishery descriptions in this document ([Section 3.3.1](#), [Section 3.3.2](#), and [Appendix B](#)).

Description of the management goals and objectives

See conservation objectives and management strategy in this document ([Section 2.4.1](#) and [Section 2.4.2](#)).

Description of the Alternatives

See management strategy alternatives, analysis, and additional information in this document ([Section 4.2](#), [Section 4.6](#), and [Appendix C](#)).

An Economic Analysis of the Expected Effects of Each Selected Alternative Relative to the No Action Alternative

See socioeconomic impact of management strategy alternatives considered in this document ([Section 5.0](#)).

RIR-Determination of Significant Impact

As noted above, under E.O. 12866, a regulation is a “significant regulatory action” if it is likely to: (1) have an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more or adversely affect in a material way the economy, a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local, or tribal governments or communities; (2) create a serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency; (3) materially alter the budgetary impact of entitlements, grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations of recipients thereof; or (4) raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, the President’s priorities, or the principles set forth in this Executive Order. Pursuant to the procedures established to implement section 6 of E.O. 12866, the Office of Management and Budget has determined that this action is not significant.

APPENDIX E. INITIAL REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS

REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS

For any rule subject to notice and comment rulemaking, the RFA requires Federal agencies to prepare, and make available for public comment, both an initial and final regulatory flexibility analysis, unless the agency can certify that the proposed and/or final rule would not have a “significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities”. This determination can be made at either the proposed or final rule stage. If the agency can certify a rule, it need not prepare an IRFA, a FRFA, a “Small Entity Compliance Guide,” or undertake a subsequent periodic review of the rule under Section 610 of the RFA. The NMFS Regional Administrator/Office Director, using analyses and rationale provided by the Council or NMFS, prepares a memorandum from the Chief Counsel for Regulation (CC/Regs) of the DOC to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy certifying and setting forth the factual basis for the certification.

The CC/Regs will sign and transmit the certification to SBA at the time the notice of proposed rulemaking or final rulemaking is published in the FR, along with a statement providing the factual basis for such certification.

Request for comment on proposed rules

In addition to comments on the analysis below, the agency requests comments on the decision to certify this rule.

Description of the reasons why action by the agency is being considered

The reasons why agency action is being considered are explained in Section 2.2 of the respective rebuilding plans (Pacific Fishery Management Council. 2019. Salmon Rebuilding Plan for Queets River Natural Coho; Salmon Rebuilding Plan for Snohomish River Natural Coho; Salmon Rebuilding Plan for Strait of Juan de Fuca Natural Coho).

Statement of the objectives of, and legal basis for, the proposed rule

The reasons why agency action is being considered are explained in Section 2 of the rebuilding plans cited above.

Reporting and recordkeeping requirements

There are no applicable reporting and recordkeeping requirements associated with this rulemaking. A description and, where feasible, estimate of the number of small entities to which the proposed rule will apply

Part 121 of Title 13, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), sets forth, by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) categories, the maximum number of employees or average annual gross receipts a business may have to be considered a small entity for RFAA purposes. See 13 C.F.R. § 121.201. Under this provision, the U.S. Small Business Administration established criteria for businesses in the fishery sector to qualify as small entities. Standards are expressed either in number of employees, or annual receipts in millions of dollars. The number of employees or annual receipts indicates the maximum allowed for a concern and its affiliates to be considered small (13 C.F.R. § 121.201).

The SBA size standard for Subsector 487, “Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation”, which includes charter fishing, is \$7.5 million in gross receipts (13 CFR § 121.201).

Provision is made under SBA’s regulations for an agency to develop its own industry-specific size standards after consultation with Advocacy and an opportunity for public comment (see 13 CFR 121.903(c)). NMFS has established a small business size standard for businesses, including their affiliates, whose primary industry is commercial fishing (80 FR 81194, December 29, 2015). This standard is only for use by NMFS and only for the purpose of conducting an analysis of economic effects in fulfillment of the agency’s obligations under the RFA.

NMFS' small business size standard for businesses, including their affiliates, whose primary industry is commercial fishing is \$11 million in annual gross receipts. This standard applies to all businesses classified under North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code 11411 for commercial fishing, including all businesses classified as commercial finfish fishing (NAICS 114111), commercial shellfish fishing (NAICS 114112), and other commercial marine fishing (NAICS 114119) businesses. (50 C.F.R. § 200.2; 13 C.F.R. § 121.201).

According to the PacFIN database (discussed in greater detail in the assumptions discussion below); 357 distinct vessels caught salmon in the North of Cape Falcon or Puget Sound areas in 2018. All of these vessels had revenue less than the threshold for small entities defined above, and because no data on affiliation are available, each of these is assumed to be a small entity. From the recreational effort database (RecFIN), in 2018 during the peak months of July and August there were a maximum of 189 boat trips a day in the ocean recreational fishery. Assuming each boat trip is one vessel, it is assumed that 189 ocean recreational businesses will be directly regulated under this rule. There are no data available about the size of these entities so all are considered small. RecFIN does not provide effort estimates for recreational fisheries in Puget Sound that would also be impacted by this rule, so the true number of recreational entities is assumed to be higher than the 189 vessels in the ocean fisheries.

Description and estimate of economic effects on entities, by entity size and industry.

A detailed description and estimate of the economic effects of the proposed rule is available in Section 5.3 of the rebuilding plans cited above. To summarize, there are no expected economic effects of the Juan de Fuca and Queets coho rebuilding plans as the Council selected the No Action alternative. The impacts in the Snohomish rebuilding plan are expected to be relatively minor (~\$140,000 per year) for a total of \$430,000 over three years (with a 23 percent chance of rebuilding before three years).

An explanation of the criteria used to evaluate whether the rule would impose “significant” economic effects.

Because all directly regulated entities are small, these regulations are not expected to place small entities at a significant disadvantage to large entities. Without detailed data available to inform a distributional analysis, it is assumed that the 357 commercial vessels and 189 (plus unknown number of Puget Sound charter vessel) would all be impacted equally. The 2004-2016 average community income contribution of commercial and recreational salmon fisheries is \$13.3 million. As discussed above, the estimated impacts from the Alternative II Snohomish rebuilding plan and

No Action Queets and Juan de Fuca rebuilding plans is \$0.14 million, or about 1 percent of the total coastwide community income. Thus while there are short-run negative impacts associated with this rule, these are not expected to be “significant” relative to the size of the fishery. There may be localized impacts that are greater or lower than the regional average.

An explanation of the criteria used to evaluate whether the rule would impose effects on “a substantial number” of small entities.

This rule would impact the salmon fishery north of Cape Falcon, which as described above included 171 distinct commercial entities and at least 189 recreational entities, which is a substantial number of small entities.

A description of, and an explanation of the basis for, assumptions used.

Data used to inform this analysis come primarily from PacFIN, which includes data provided by the states of Oregon, California, and Washington on commercial fishing trips and landings; in addition to the West Coast Region permit database and the recreational fisheries database (RecFIN). The number of entities predicted to be impacted is generally based on the level of participation in the previous year (2018). However, it is possible that environmental or management conditions change in other fisheries that would impact the level of participation in the salmon fishery beyond what is predicted here. For a detailed description of assumptions made in the economic analysis, see Sections 5.1 and 5.5 cited above.

Relevant Federal rules that may duplicate, overlap or conflict with the proposed rule:

There are no relevant Federal rules that may duplicate, overlap, or conflict with this action.

Certification statement by the head of the agency

The agency finds per 5 U.S.C. § 605 (the RFA) that “the proposed rule, if promulgated, will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.”

Reviewed by West Coast Regional Economist Abigail Harley

APPENDIX F. CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER APPLICABLE LAWS ANALYSIS

Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA)

The MSA provides parameters and guidance for Federal fisheries management. Overarching principles for fisheries management are found in the MSA's National Standards, which articulate a broad set of policies governing fisheries management. In crafting fisheries management regimes, the Councils and NMFS must balance their recommendations to meet these different national standards.

National Standard 1 requires that, upon notification that a stock or stock complex is overfished or approaching an overfished condition, a Council must prepare and implement an FMP, FMP amendment, or proposed regulations (i.e., rebuilding plan) within two years of notification, consistent with the requirements of section 304(e)(3) of the MSA. The Council's rebuilding plan must specify a time period for rebuilding the stock or stock complex based on factors specified in MSA 304(e)(4). This target time for rebuilding (T_{target}) shall be as short as possible, taking into account: the status and biology of any overfished stock, the needs of fishing communities, recommendations by international organizations in which the U.S. participates, and interaction of the stock within the marine ecosystem. In addition, the time period shall not exceed 10 years, except where biology of the stock, other environmental conditions, or management measures under an international agreement to which the U.S. participates, dictate otherwise. The rebuilding plan will specify the minimum time for rebuilding the overfished stock (T_{min}), the maximum time for rebuilding (T_{max}).

The alternatives in section 4.2 of this document were developed to be consistent with the requirements of the MSA. The preferred alternative (Alternative I – Status quo) has a T_{target} of two years and would rebuild the stock as quickly as Alternative II while providing consideration of the needs of fishing communities. Alternative II would rebuild the stock in the same length of time as Alternative I, but would potentially impact fishing communities by constraining fisheries in some years to meet an exploitation rate cap. Because the Council does not have jurisdiction over fisheries shoreward of the EEZ, a No-fishing Alternative was not considered; however, rebuilding time under a no-fishing scenario was modelled and provided an estimate for T_{min} of one year. When T_{min} is 10 years or less, NS1 states that T_{max} is 10 years. Therefore, the alternatives are consistent with NS1. Year 1 for the JDF coho analysis is 2018:

- T_{target}
 - Alternative I – 2 years (2019)
 - Alternative II – 2 years (2010)
- T_{min} – 1 years (2018)
- T_{max} – 10 years (2027)

National Standard 2 requires the use of the best available scientific information. The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed and recommended the methods used to develop alternatives for SRFC rebuilding plans and the analyses used to estimate T_{target} and T_{min} . The alternatives were crafted based on up to date scientific information regarding abundance and the methods approved by the SSC.

National Standard 3 requires individual stocks of fish to be managed as a unit throughout their ranges and interrelated stocks of fish to be managed as a unit. The conservation objectives and ACLs are established for individual stocks in the Salmon FMP and are based on either escapement or on total fishery exploitation rate, both of which account for impacts to stocks from fisheries throughout their range. All salmon stocks are managed as a unit in Council-area fisheries to ensure all conservation objectives are met. The alternatives were developed to be consistent with, or more conservative than, the conservation objectives and ACLs in the FMP in order to rebuild the overfished stock.

National Standard 4 requires that “Conservation and management measures shall not discriminate between residents of different States.” And that “allocation shall be: (A) fair and equitable...; (B) reasonably calculated to promote conservation; and (C) carried out in such manner that no...entity acquires an excessive share.” The alternatives do not affect the allocation guidelines in the FMP, which were in turn developed to meet National Standard 4.

National Standard 5 requires efficiency, where practicable, in the utilization of fishery resources. All alternatives in this EA are expected to have no significant effects on the efficiency in the utilization of fishery resources.

National Standard 6 requires conservation objectives and management measures to take into account and allow for variations among, and contingencies in, fisheries, fishery resources, and catches. The FMP allows for inseason management of Council-area salmon fisheries to meet conservation objectives and preseason management objectives. None of the alternatives would affect that.

National Standard 7 requires that conservation and management measures shall, where practicable, minimize costs and avoid unnecessary duplication. All alternatives in this EA meet this standard.

National Standard 8 requires that conservation and management measures shall, consistent with the conservation requirements of the MSA, take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities in order to “(A) provide for the sustained participation of such communities, and (B) to the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impacts on such communities.” The alternatives represent a range of management measures with various economic impacts. The Final Preferred Alternative (Alternative I) was developed to provide the optimum balance between the short-term needs of the communities and the long-term needs of the communities, needs which rely on long-term health of the salmon stocks.

National Standard 9 requires the reduction, to the extent practicable, of bycatch or bycatch mortality. All alternatives in this EA are expected to have no significant effects due to bycatch mortality on non-target species.

National Standard 10 requires, to the extent practicable, conservation and management measures to promote the safety of human life at sea. The Alternatives in this EA are not expected to impact risks to salmon fishermen.

Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)

Section 307(c)(1) of the CZMA of 1972 requires all Federal activities that directly affect the coastal zone be consistent with approved state coastal zone management programs to the maximum extent practicable. The proposed action was developed to rebuild the overfished Snohomish natural coho stock and was determined by NMFS to be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the approved coastal zone management programs of the affected states (i.e., Washington and Oregon). This determination was sent to the responsible state agencies in Washington, on November 22, 2019, and Oregon, on November 26, 2019, for review under section 307(c)(1) of the CZMA. The State of Washington has concurred with NMFS' finding. The State of Oregon has not responded; therefore, concurrence is assumed.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

Ocean salmon fisheries conducted under the FMP do affect ESA-listed salmon species. The alternatives analyzed in this EA do not superseded conservation measures required to protect ESA-listed species. Implementation of the proposed action will be consistent biological opinions issued by NMFS.

Of the ESA-listed marine mammals described above (see MMPA section, EA section 6.3), Council-managed salmon fisheries only impact endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales. NMFS consulted on the effects of the ocean salmon fisheries on the ESA-listed Southern Resident killer whale (SRKW) distinct population segment (DPS) in 2009. As discussed above, NMFS reinitiated consultation in 2019 to consider new information. NMFS completed the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7(a)(2) Biological Opinion and Conference Opinion Consultation on Implementation of the Pacific Fishery Management Council Salmon Fishery Management Plan in 2020 for Southern Resident Killer Whales and their Current and Proposed Critical Habitat. The biological opinion concluded that the 2020 Council-area ocean salmon fisheries would not jeopardize the SRKW DPS and does not adversely modify critical habitat. The Council is continuing to develop a long-term approach and NMFS intends to complete a multi-year biological opinion on the effects of implementing the FMP on SRKW. The annual management measures for Council salmon fisheries are developed to be consistent with all ESA biological opinions. In any year that the terms of the biological opinion for SRKW are more constraining on the fishery than the Queets coho rebuilding plan, the management measures for that year would be developed to be consistent with the SRKW biological opinion and consistent with the ESA.

Effects on listed Puget Sound yelloweye rockfish and bocaccio, and Pacific eulachon were addressed in a 2010 biological opinion. The effects to ESA-listed North American green sturgeon were considered in a 2007 biological opinion.

Biological opinions and Section 4(d) determinations have been prepared for West Coast salmon and steelhead stocks by NMFS are listed in the table below.

Table G-1. NMFS ESA Biological Opinions regarding Evolutionarily Significant Units (ESUs) and Distinct Population Segments (DPSs) affected by PFMC Fisheries.

| Date | Duration | Species Considered |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Salmonid Species | | |
| March 8, 1996 | until reinitiated | Snake River spring/summer and fall Chinook Snake River sockeye |
| April 28, 1999 | until reinitiated | S. Oregon/N. California Coastal coho Central California Coast coho Oregon Coast natural coho |
| April 28, 2000 | until reinitiated | Central Valley Spring-run Chinook California Coastal Chinook |
| April 27, 2001 | until withdrawn | Hood Canal summer-run chum |
| April 30, 2001 | until reinitiated | Upper Willamette River Chinook Columbia River chum Ozette Lake sockeye Upper Columbia River spring-run Chinook Ten listed steelhead DPSs |
| June 13, 2005 | until reinitiated | California Coastal Chinook |
| April 4, 2015 | until reinitiated | Lower Columbia River coho |
| March 3, 2018 | until reinitiated | Sacramento River winter-run Chinook |
| April 29, 2004 | until reinitiated | Puget Sound Chinook |
| April 26, 2012 | until reinitiated | Lower Columbia River Chinook |
| Non-Salmonid Species | | |
| April 29, 2020 | Reinitiated in 2019 | Southern Resident Killer Whales |

Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)

The MMPA of 1972 is the principle Federal legislation that guides marine mammal species protection and conservation policy in the United States. Under the MMPA, NMFS is responsible for the management and conservation of 153 stocks of whales, dolphins, porpoise, as well as seals, sea lions, and fur seals; while the US Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for walrus, sea otters, and the West Indian manatee.

Off the west coast, the SRKW DPS is listed as endangered under the ESA; Guadalupe fur seal, and Southern sea otter California stock are listed as threatened under the ESA. The sperm whale (WA, OR, CA stock), humpback whale (WA, OR, CA, Mexico stock), blue whale eastern north Pacific stock, and Fin whale (WA, OR, CA stock) are listed as endangered under the ESA. Any marine mammal species listed as endangered or threatened under the ESA is automatically considered depleted under the MMPA.

The commercial salmon troll fisheries off the west coast are classified as Category III fisheries under the MMPA, indicating a remote or no likelihood of causing incidental mortality or serious injury to marine mammals (85 FR 21079, April 16, 2020). Recreational salmon fisheries are assumed to have similar impacts as they use similar gear and techniques.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)

The MBTA of 1918 was designed to end the commercial trade of migratory birds and their feathers that, by the early years of the 20th century, had diminished populations of many native bird species. The act states it is unlawful to take, kill, or possess migratory birds and their parts (including eggs, nests, and feathers) and is a shared agreement between the United States, Canada, Japan, Mexico, and Russia to protect a common migratory bird resource. The MBTA prohibits the directed take of seabirds, but the incidental take of seabirds does occur. None of the alternatives directly affect any seabirds protected by the MBTA.

Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA)

The purposes of the PRA are to minimize the burden of information collection by the Federal Government on the public; maximize the utility of any information thus collected; improve the quality of information used in Federal decision making, minimize the cost of collection, use and dissemination of such information; and improve accountability. The PRA requires Federal agencies to obtain clearance from the Office of Management and Budget before collecting information. This clearance requirement is triggered if certain conditions are met. “Collection of information” is defined broadly. In summary it means obtaining information from third parties or the public by or for an agency through a standardized method imposed on 10 or more persons. Collection of information need not be mandatory to meet the trigger definition. Even information collected by a third party, if at the behest of a Federal agency, may trigger the clearance requirement. Within NMFS, the Office of the Chief Information Officer is responsible for PRA compliance. Obtaining clearance can take up to 9 months and is one aspect of NMFS review and approval of Council decisions.

The proposed action does not include a collection-of-information requirement and, therefore, authorization under the PRA is not required.

Executive Order 12898 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 obligates Federal agencies to identify and address “disproportionately high adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations in the United States” as part of any overall environmental analysis associated with an action. NOAA guidance, NAO 216-6, at 7.02, states that “consideration of Executive Order 12898 should be specifically included in the NEPA documentation for decision making purposes.” Agencies should also encourage public participation “especially by affected communities” as part of a broader strategy to address environmental justice issues.

The environmental justice analysis must first identify minority and low-income groups that live in the project area and may be affected by the action. Typically, census data are used to document the occurrence and distribution of these groups. Agencies should be cognizant of distinct cultural, social, economic or occupational factor that could amplify the adverse effects of the proposed action. (For example, if a particular kind of fish is an important dietary component, fishery management actions affecting the availability or price of that fish could have a disproportionate effect.) In the case of Indian tribes, pertinent treaty or other special rights should be considered. Once communities have been identified and characterized, and potential adverse impacts of the alternatives are identified, the analysis must determine whether

these impacts are disproportionate. Because of the context in which environmental justice developed, health effects are usually considered and three factors may be used in an evaluation: whether the effects are deemed significant, as the term is employed by NEPA; whether the rate or risk of exposure to the effect appreciably exceeds the rate for the general population or some other comparison group; and whether the group in question may be affected by cumulative or multiple sources of exposure. If disproportionately high adverse effects are identified, mitigation measures should be proposed. Community input into appropriate mitigation is encouraged.

This EA includes an environmental justice analysis (see section 6.6, above) that determined that the Preferred Alternative (Alternative I) would not have a disproportionate impact on cultural resources compared with Alternative II. The determination also found that economic impacts among the alternatives would be short-term and not expected to disproportionately affect minority and low-income communities. West Coast Indian tribes are part of the Council's decision-making process on salmon management issues, and tribes with treaty rights to salmon, groundfish, or halibut have a seat on the Council. Additionally, the Quinault Indian Nation contributed substantially to this document.

Executive Order 13132 Federalism

Executive Order 13132 enumerates eight “fundamental federalism principles.” The first of these principles states “Federalism is rooted in the belief that issues that are not national in scope or significance are most appropriately addressed by the level of government closest to the people.” In this spirit, the Executive Order directs agencies to consider the implications of policies that may limit the scope of or preempt states’ legal authority. Preemptive action having such “federalism implications” is subject to a consultation process with the states; such actions should not create unfunded mandates for the states; and any final rule published must be accompanied by a “federalism summary impact statement.”

The Council process offers many opportunities for states and Indian tribes (through their agencies, Council appointees, consultations, and meetings) to participate in the formulation of management frameworks and management measures implementing the framework. This process encourages states and tribes to institute complementary measures to manage fisheries under their jurisdiction that may affect federally managed stocks.

The proposed action would not have federalism implications subject to Executive Order 13132.

Executive Order 13175 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments

Executive Order 13175 is intended to ensure regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of Federal policies that have tribal implications, to strengthen the United States government-to-government relationships with Indian tribes, and to reduce the imposition of unfunded mandates upon Indian tribes.

The Secretary recognizes the sovereign status and co-manager role of Indian tribes over shared Federal and tribal fishery resources. At Section 302(b)(5), the MSA reserves a seat on the Council for a representative of an Indian tribe with Federally-recognized fishing rights from California, Oregon, Washington, or Idaho.

Several tribes with Federally-recognized fishing rights may be impacted by the proposed action. The proposed action and the other alternative have been developed through the Council process. Through the tribal representative on the Council and tribal comments submitted to NMFS and the Council, the tribes have had a role in the developing the proposed action and analyzing the effects of the alternatives; therefore, the proposed action is consistent with EO 13175.

Executive Order 13771 Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs

Executive Order 13771 requires federal agencies to remove two regulations for every new regulation for rulemakings that are determined to be “significant” by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). As the proposed action has not been determined to be significant by OMB, there is no applicability of this executive order.

APPENDIX G. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Background

Proposed Action:

The proposed action is for the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) to adopt and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to approve a rebuilding plan for the Queets River natural coho salmon stock (Queets coho), which has been determined by NMFS to be overfished under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). Details can be found in the Environmental Assessment (EA).

Alternatives Evaluated in the Environmental Assessment:

Alternative I. Status quo control rule. This is considered the 'no-action' alternative and is the preferred alternative.

Alternative II. Limit Exploitation Rate. Southern U.S. fisheries (i.e., ocean and inland fisheries south of the U.S./Canada border) would be managed to limit the total annual exploitation rate on Queets coho, based on abundance.

Selected Alternative:

Alternative I. Status quo control rule.

Related Consultations:

There are no consultations specific to the proposed action; however, there are several Endangered Species Act (ESA) section 7 consultations on the ocean salmon fisheries impacts on ESA-listed evolutionarily significant units (ESUs) of salmon. Table 6.4.1.b below, reproduced from the EA, lists the current applicable ESA section 7 biological opinions relative to ESA-listed salmon ESUs.

Table 6.4.1.b. NMFS biological opinions regarding ESA-listed salmon ESUs likely to be affected by Council-area ocean salmon fisheries in the analysis area.

| Date | Duration | Citation | Species Considered |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------|---|
| 8-Mar-96 | Until reinitiated | NMFS 1996 | Snake River spring/summer and fall Chinook (and sockeye) |
| 28-Apr-99 | Until reinitiated | NMFS 1999 | Oregon Coast coho (S. Oregon/N. California Coast coho, and Central California Coast coho) |
| 30-Apr-01 | Until reinitiated | NMFS 2001 | Upper Willamette Chinook, Upper Columbia River spring-run Chinook (Lake Ozette sockeye, Columbia River chum, and 10 steelhead ESUs) |
| 30-Apr-04 | Until reinitiated | NMFS 2004 | Puget Sound Chinook |
| 26-Apr-12 | Until reinitiated | NMFS 2012 | Lower Columbia River Chinook |
| 9-Apr-15 | Until reinitiated | NMFS 2015 | Lower Columbia River coho |

In addition to ESA-listed salmon, NMFS has consulted on the effects of the ocean salmon fisheries on ESA-listed Southern Resident killer whales (SRKW). As stated in section 6.3.1 of the EA, NMFS completed a consultation on the effects of implementing the Council's 2020



ocean salmon management measures on SRKW and intends to complete an opinion analyzing operation of the fishery under the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP), including this rebuilding plan, prior to the 2021 ocean salmon fishing season.

Significance Review

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations state that the determination of significance using an analysis of effects requires examination of both context and intensity, and lists ten criteria for intensity (40 C.F.R. § 1508.27 (1978)). In addition, the Companion Manual for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrative Order 216-6A provides sixteen criteria, the same ten as the CEQ Regulations and six additional, for determining whether the impacts of a proposed action are significant. Each criterion is discussed below with respect to the proposed action and considered individually as well as in combination with the others.

1. Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to cause both beneficial and adverse impacts that overall may result in a significant effect, even if the effect will be beneficial?

The proposed action is expected to have the beneficial impact of rebuilding the overfished Queets coho salmon stock. However, the selected alternative is the No-action Alternative; therefore, the stock is expected to rebuild irrespective of the proposed action, and there is no significant effect expected.

2. Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to significantly affect public health or safety?

No, there are no effects on public health or safety from the proposed action. The proposed action implements a harvest control rule to be used in setting annual ocean salmon fishery management measures while the Queets coho salmon stock is rebuilding.

3. Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to result in significant impacts to unique characteristics of the geographic area, such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas?

No, the proposed action has no physical action. The proposed action implements a harvest control rule to be used in setting annual fishery management measures while the Queets coho salmon stock is rebuilding.

4. Are the proposed action's effects on the quality of the human environment likely to be highly controversial?

No, the proposed action is not likely to be highly controversial. The proposed action was developed through a series of public meetings and with the involvement of stakeholders and co-managers. NMFS received no comments on the draft EA.

5. Are the proposed action's effects on the human environment likely to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks?

No, the proposed action's effects are not likely to be highly uncertain as they are based on well-documented methodologies.

6. *Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration?*

No, rebuilding plans are developed on a case-by-case basis with the unique circumstances of each instance taken into consideration.

7. *Is the proposed action related to other actions that when considered together will have individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts?*

No, the proposed action will inform the setting of annual management measures for ocean salmon fisheries. These annual management measures are analyzed in a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The annual management measures are developed to meet the cumulative conservation objectives and other requirements for all MSA-managed salmon stocks on the West Coast.

8. *Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources?*

No, the proposed action has no physical action. The proposed action establishes a harvest control rule to be used in setting annual fishery management measures while the Queets coho salmon stock is rebuilding.

9. *Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to have a significant impact on endangered or threatened species, or their critical habitat as defined under the Endangered Species Act of 1973?*

No, annual management measures for ocean salmon fisheries are developed to be consistent with biological opinions on the impact of the ocean salmon fisheries on ESA-listed species.

10. *Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to threaten a violation of Federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for environmental protection?*

No, the proposed action was prepared with consideration of MSA, NEPA, and other applicable laws.

11. *Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to significantly adversely affect stocks of marine mammals as defined in the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)?*

No, the proposed action will not have any significant impact on marine mammals. The MMPA is one of the applicable laws that were considered in the development of the proposed action.

12. Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to significantly adversely affect managed fish species?

No, as described in chapter 6 of the EA, non-salmonid managed fish species are managed under their other West Coast fishery management plans and are uncommonly encountered in the salmon fishery; therefore, the proposed action will not have any effect on those managed fish species. The proposed action will not adversely affect any managed salmon species, and is specifically designed to rebuild a managed stock of salmon.

13. Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to significantly adversely affect essential fish habitat as defined under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act?

No, there are no adverse effects to essential fish habitat from the proposed action. The proposed action implements a harvest control rule to be used in setting annual ocean salmon fishery management measures while the Queets coho salmon stock is rebuilding.

14. Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to significantly adversely affect vulnerable marine or coastal ecosystems, including but not limited to, deep coral ecosystems?

No, the proposed action will not adversely affect vulnerable marine or coastal ecosystems. The proposed action implements a harvest control rule to be used in setting annual ocean salmon fishery management measures in a sustainable manner while the Queets coho salmon stock is rebuilding.

15. Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to significantly adversely affect biodiversity or ecosystem functioning (e.g., benthic productivity, predator-prey relationships, etc.)?

No, the proposed action will not adversely affect biodiversity or ecosystem functioning. The proposed action implements a harvest control rule to be used in setting annual ocean salmon fishery management measures in a sustainable manner while the Queets coho salmon stock is rebuilding.

16. Can the proposed action reasonably be expected to result in the introduction or spread of a nonindigenous species?

No, the proposed action does not affect the introduction or spread of nonindigenous species. The West Coast states have regulations in place for vessel inspections to address this issue.

Determination

In view of the information presented in this document and the analysis contained in the supporting Environmental Assessment prepared for the Queets coho salmon Rebuilding Plan, it is hereby determined that the Queets coho salmon Rebuilding Plan will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment as described above and in the supporting Environmental Assessment. In addition, all beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action have been addressed to reach the conclusion of no significant impacts. Accordingly, preparation of an environmental impact statement for this action is not necessary.



Regional Administrator
West Coast Region
National Marine Fisheries Service

December 14, 2020

Date