



**GULF OF MEXICO SECTOR SEPARATION WORKSHOP  
NOVEMBER 8-10, 2010  
TAMPA, FL**

The following presentation was developed for the Gulf of Mexico Sector Separation Workshop, hosted by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and the Fisheries Leadership & Sustainability Forum, November 8-10 in Tampa, FL.

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**Port Allocations of Coho Salmon in the Pacific Northwest**

**Presentation by Frank Warrens former Pacific Fishery Management Council Member:**

My involvement as a fishery participant began in 1976 as an off-shore salmon charter vessel owner/operator out of the mouth of the Columbia River. Then in the early 1980's I became a member of the Salmon Advisory Subpanel to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) which currently has four separate fishery management plans it administers annually. Management of Pacific salmon stocks harvested off the west coast includes primarily Coho and Chinook in addition to pink salmon every other year and Sockeye, chum and steelhead in the north. All these stocks fall under the PFMC's Salmon Management Plan which is arguably one of the most complex plans due to its plethora of components, participants and stock size variability. There are at least a dozen coastwide separate harvest management areas for both commercial and recreational fisheries. These areas most often have wide variations in seasons and allocation of the two primary stocks of salmon depending on the annual run forecast for each of the stocks.

The salmon plan is co-managed by NMFS, more than 20 Washington Tribal Nations, including Columbia River Tribes, 3 Klamath River tribes in California and the departments of fish and wildlife for Washington, Oregon, Idaho and California. The primary management objective is driven by forecast ocean escapement of returning adult salmon to their river basins of origin. Each stock of salmon is managed to a floor escapement or a range of escapement which provides that each stock replaces its self before any allowable take by harvesters throughout the range of the returning adults. Currently the harvest of several of the Northwest and California stocks are further restricted by a listing as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

There are several sectors involved in the harvest of Pacific salmon. Those sectors include inland tribal and non-tribal commercial net fisheries and inland recreational fisheries. The outside or ocean hook and line fisheries include north coast tribal commercial and subsistence fisheries and non-tribal

commercial and recreational fisheries. Each of these sectors is then allocated a portion of the harvestable returning adults with the tribal fisheries entitled to 50% of all the harvest. Prior to adjudicated tribal shares in the late 1970's, harvests by all ocean fisheries were seasonally driven by the salmon migration patterns as stocks began to school as they approached their natal streams. Historically the most contentious allocation disputes between non-tribal sectors involved equitable sharing of Coho and Chinook salmon between competing commercial sectors and competing recreational sectors after a set aside of 50% for tribal fisheries.

Shortly following the formation of the 8 regional councils under the Magnuson Act in 1976, the Pacific Council initiated annual allocations for salmon which were predicated on historic catches by each sector. In the early 1980's allocations and seasons began to dwindle due primarily to overharvesting and overcapitalized commercial and recreational fleets. In the late 1970's the Washington charterboat fleet had close to 500 six-pack and inspected vessels which prompted them to enact a moratorium on state licensed charter vessels along with a limited entry and buy-back program. This action reduced the Washington charters to approximately 250 total vessels. Oregon did not enact a limited entry nor was there ever the incentive by Oregon charters to do so even though I've personally tried to talk them into doing one on two occasions. The total number of Oregon charter vessels is near 200 with close to 50 of those vessels being inactive.

In the early 1980's Oregon commercial and recreational fishermen were encouraged to define their seasonal objectives and negotiate a reallocation of Coho salmon between those sectors within the state. The recreational objective was to achieve, to the extent possible, a minimum season starting Memorial Day and go through Labor Day. The commercial salmon troll fishermen's objective was to achieve an economically viable allocation at low stock levels with an increasing share as allowed harvest level increased. Those negotiations resulted in the commercial sector receiving an initial small allocation of Coho for hook and release mortality when they were targeting Chinook salmon. Above that number the recreational sector was then allocated a majority of the Coho at very low harvest levels with an increase in sharing going to the commercial sector, based on a sliding scale, with that sector being allocated a majority of the harvest at higher abundance levels. This sharing plan was so successful that it served as a template for a similar harvest plans for both recreational and commercial fisheries in Oregon and Washington.

In addition to the Oregon reallocation plan becoming an amendment to the PFMC's Salmon Plan, there are other elements of this plan that allow the flexibility to trade numbers of fish within and between management areas. If the affected parties agree, trades are allowed between recreational and commercial as well as between recreational port allocations on the northwest Oregon coast and the four coastal ports in Washington within the recreational sector in order to achieve season objectives among all sectors.

There has never been an attempt or suggestion by anyone to separate the west coast recreational charter fleet from the private boat fleet. In fact, within the recreational sector, private boat fishermen rely heavily on the charter operators and owners to represent their interests at meetings of the council and state departments of fish and wildlife throughout the year. This is true, particularly on salmon as

well as groundfish (bottom fish) issues. All sectors including the commercial sectors work cooperatively to insure these relationships are maintained. There has been a long history of this degree of cooperation among all sectors on the west coast starting with their advisory panel representatives on the Council. The Council normally endorses their advisors recommendations for annual harvest and seasons.

In conclusion, it's obvious that what works well in one area may or may not work well in another due to the differences in composition of stocks, participants, geographical characteristics and so on. The key to management success however starts with all parties agreeing to recognize the basic needs of the other participants and a sincere attempt by all parties to avoid harm to the others.

Thank you.

Frank R. Warrens