

The Estuary Module makes another important assumption about implementation: although implementation of actions is constrained, even constrained implementation can make important contributions to the survival of salmonids in the estuary, plume, and nearshore.

It is within the context of these two fundamental assumptions that recovery actions are evaluated in the Estuary Module, in terms of their costs and potential benefits.

Potential Survival Benefits and Time and Cost Estimates

The evaluation of survival benefits and costs is highly uncertain because it relies on estimates not only of what is technically feasible, but also of what is socially and politically practical. To help characterize potential survival improvements, the Estuary Module uses a planning exercise that involves distributing a plausible survival-improvement target of 20 percent across the actions to hypothesize the portion of that total survival-improvement target that might result from each action. The primary purpose of the survival-improvement target is to help compare the relative potential benefits of different management actions. The survival-improvement target does not account for variation at the ESU, population, and subpopulation scales, and is not intended for use in life-cycle modeling, except as a starting point in the absence of more rigorous data.

Costs are developed by breaking each action into a number of specific projects or units and identifying per-unit costs for each project. Both the survival improvements and costs reflect assumptions about the constraints to implementation and the degree to which those constraints can be reduced given the technical, social, and political context in the Columbia River basin.

The Estuary Module estimates that the cost of partial (constrained) implementation of all 23 actions over a 25-year time period is about \$500 million. Costs of tributary actions and the total estimated time and cost of recovery for each affected ESU or DPS will be provided in the locally developed recovery plans.

Monitoring and Adaptive Management

As discussed in chapter 6 of the Estuary Module, several important monitoring and adaptive management activities are occurring throughout the Columbia River Basin that have a direct bearing on the estuary, plume, and nearshore. While NMFS believes that these activities provide an adequate

framework for monitoring in the estuary, there remains a need to ensure consistency of existing monitoring and evaluation programs in the estuary with the NMFS document Adaptive Management for Salmon Recovery: Evaluation Framework and Monitoring Guidance (www.nwr.noaa.gov/Salmon-Recovery-Planning/ESA-Recovery-Plans/Other-Documents.cfm) and to review and evaluate pertinent monitoring programs to identify additional monitoring needs (including indicators, metrics, and protocols; lead entities; costs), particularly in the area of action effectiveness monitoring for the actions identified in the Estuary Module. This work is underway and expected to be incorporated into chapter 6 or as an appendix of the Estuary Module at the time it is finalized.

Conclusion

The Estuary Module contributes to all the Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead recovery plans by analyzing limiting factors and threats relating to survival of listed salmonid species in their passage or residence time in the Columbia River estuary, site-specific management actions related to those limiting factors and threats, and estimates of cost, to be incorporated by reference into all the basin recovery plans. NMFS concludes that the Estuary Module provides information that helps to meet the requirements for recovery plans under ESA section 4(f), and thus is proposing it as a component of Columbia Basin ESA recovery plans.

Literature Cited

- Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership. 1999. Lower Columbia River Estuary Plan (Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan).
- Northwest Power and Conservation Council. 2004. Mainstem Lower Columbia River and Columbia River Estuary Subbasin Plan and Supplement. (Adopted into the Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program).
- Bottom, D.L., C.A. Simenstad, J. Burke, A.M. Baptista, D.A. Jay, K.K. Jones, E. Casillas, and M. H. Schiewe. 2005. Salmon at River's End: The Role of the Estuary in the Decline and Recovery of Columbia River Salmon. U.S. Dept. Commer., NOAA Tech. Memo. NMFS-NWFSC-68, 246p.
- Fresh, K.L., E. Casillas, L.L. Johnson, and D.L. Bottom. 2005. Role of the Estuary in the Recovery of Columbia River Basin Salmon and Steelhead: An Evaluation of the Effects of Selected Factors on Salmonid Population Viability. U.S. Dept. Commer., NOAA Tech. Memo. NMFS-NWFSC-69, 105p.

Public Comments Solicited

NMFS solicits written comments on the proposed Estuary Module as a component of Columbia Basin ESA recovery plans. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to NMFS's decision whether to adopt the Estuary Module. Additionally, NMFS will provide a summary of the comments and responses through its regional web site. NMFS seeks comments particularly in the following areas: (1) survival improvement targets and allocation of benefits among actions; (2) costs and schedule for implementing management actions; (3) strategies for monitoring action effectiveness; (4) oversight and institutional infrastructure needed for implementation of Estuary Module actions.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

Dated: December 26, 2007.

Angela Somma,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN: 0648-XE76

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council); Public Meetings

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will convene public meetings.

DATES: The meetings will be held January 28, 2008 through January 31, 2008.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at the Radisson Hotel & Conference Center, 12600 Roosevelt Blvd., St. Petersburg, FL 33716.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Wayne E. Swingle, Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Council**Wednesday, January 30, 2008**

11 a.m. - The Council meeting will begin with a review of the agenda and minutes.

11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., the Council will appoint Council Committees.

1 p.m. - 1:30 p.m., NMFS will present the National Bycatch Report.

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., the Council will receive public testimony on: (1) exempted fishing permits (EFPs), if any; (2) Reef Fish Amendment 30A; (3) Generic Aquaculture Amendment; and (4) Spiny Lobster Scoping Document.

4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., an Open Public Comment Period regarding any fishery issue of concern will be held. People wishing to speak before the Council should complete a public comment card prior to the comment period.

5:30 - 6 p.m., a CLOSED SESSION on Personnel will be held.

Thursday, January 31, 2008

The Council will review and discuss reports from the previous two days' committee meetings as follows:

8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. - Reef Fish Management;

10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. - Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum;

10:45 a.m. - 11 a.m. - Spiny Lobster/Stone Crab Management;

11 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. - Shrimp Management;

11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. - Budget/Personnel;

11:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. - Red Drum Management;

11:45 a.m. - 12 p.m. - Marine Reserves;

12 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. - Administrative Policy;

12:30 p.m. - 12:45 p.m. - Mackerel Management.

12:45 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. - The Council will discuss Other Business items. The Council will conclude its meeting at 1:15 p.m.

Committees**Monday, January 28, 2008**

12 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. - The Reef Fish Management Committee will meet to discuss the Options Paper for Grouper/Tilefish individual fishing quota (IFQ); Reef Fish Amendment 30A; Update on Socioeconomic Panel (SEP) Grouper Allocation Recommendations; Public Hearing Draft of Reef Fish Amendment 30B; and Report of Ad Hoc Recreational Red Snapper AP.

- Informal question and answer session on Draft Aquaculture Amendment.

Tuesday, January 29, 2008

8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. - The Reef Fish Management Committee will continue to meet.

1:30 p.m. - 2 p.m. - The Shrimp Management Committee will meet to discuss the 2008 Cooperative Texas Closure and an update of the 2007 Vessel Effort.

2 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. - The Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum Management Committee will meet to discuss the Generic Aquaculture Amendment.

2:45 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. - The Marine Reserve Committee will hear an update on the National Marine Sanctuary Program's Islands in the Stream Concept.

3:30 p.m. - 4 p.m. - The Red Drum Management Committee will meet to discuss the response by Southeast Fishery Science Center (SEFSC) on the potential for an experimental harvest of red drum from the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

4 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. - The Spiny Lobster/Stone Crab Management Committee will discuss a Generic Scoping Document for an International Minimum Size Limit.

4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. - The Budget/Personnel Committee will review the Status of the 2007 Funding; the 2008 proposed Council Operational Budget; the Statement of Organization Practices and Procedures (SOPPs) provisions for Leave Without Pay; and have a CLOSED SESSION to discuss Personnel.

Wednesday, January 30, 2008

8 a.m. - 10 a.m. - The Administrative Policy Committee will discuss NMFS Guidelines for Annual Catch Limits (ACL) and Accountability Measures (AM) (if available); a staff ACL/AM Discussion Paper; and the development of an Outreach and Education Committee.

10 a.m. - 11 a.m. - The Mackerel Management Committee will discuss the Terms of Reference for a SEDAR Assessment of king mackerel.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agendas may come before the Council and Committees for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings. Actions of the Council and Committees will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agendas and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under Section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's

intent to take action to address the emergency.

The established times for addressing items on the agenda may be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the timely completion of discussion relevant to the agenda items. In order to further allow for such adjustments and completion of all items on the agenda, the meeting may be extended from, or completed prior to the date established in this notice.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Tina Trezza at the Council (see ADDRESSES) at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.

Dated: December 27, 2007.

Tracey L. Thompson,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

RIN: 0648-XE50

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings; Correction

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of a correction of a public meeting notice.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will convene a public meeting of the Ad Hoc Recreational Red Snapper Advisory Panel (AP).

DATES: The meeting will convene at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, January 9, 2008 and conclude no later than 12 p.m. on Friday, January 11, 2008.

ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held at the Quorum Hotel, 700 N. Westshore Blvd., Tampa, FL 33609; telephone: (813) 289-8200.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steven Atran, Population Dynamics Statistician; Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: (813) 348-1630.