

The Council directs staff to initiate analysis of updates to the Salmon FMP based on the following draft problem statement, alternatives, and options

Draft problem statement:

Although the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's *Fishery Management Plan for the Salmon Fisheries in the United States Exclusive Economic Zone off the Coast of Alaska* (Salmon FMP) has been amended nine times in the last two decades, no comprehensive consideration of management strategy or scope of coverage has occurred since 1990. State fisheries regulations and Federal and international laws affecting Alaska salmon have changed since 1990 and the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) expanded the requirements for FMPs. The Council recognizes that the Salmon FMP is vague with respect to management authority for the three directed commercial salmon fisheries that occur in the EEZ west of Cape Suckling. The Salmon FMP must be updated in order to comply with the current MSA requirements, and it should be amended to more clearly reflect the Council's desires with regard to the State of Alaska continued management authority over commercial fisheries in the West Area EEZ, the Southeast Alaska (SEAK) commercial troll fishery, and the sport fishery.

Updating the Salmon FMP in the West Area EEZ to include pre-season stock status determination criteria and exploitation rate based annual catch limits through the Council process as described in NS-1 guidelines would not be appropriate for Alaska salmon fisheries given the unique characteristics of salmon biology, the state's escapement-based management strategy for salmon, and current state abundance-based inseason management approaches which have been applied for many years and historically have sustained high yields. The same concerns would apply in establishing annual catch limits in SEAK. The distinction between the East and West Area EEZ's needs to be retained due to Pacific Salmon Treaty and Endangered Species Act issues associated with the SEAK salmon fisheries.

Alternatives: Area of application

Alternative 1: No action, no changes to the FMP.

Alternative 2: Maintain the existing geographic scope of the FMP and update the FMP.

Alternative 3: Modify the FMP to specifically exclude three historical net commercial salmon fishing areas in West Area EEZ from the FMP and update the FMP.

Alternative 4: Maintain the FMP in the East Area EEZ only and update the FMP.

Applicable to Alternatives 2-4: In areas where the Salmon FMP applies, management under any alternative would be deferred to the State of Alaska.

Component: FMP updates

Develop options to update the Salmon FMP to meet the MSA required provisions in section 303(a) for an FMP, using existing state salmon management to the extent possible.

ACL/AM options (not mutually exclusive):

Option 1: Use the NS-1 exception for stocks managed under an international fishery agreement with regard to ACL/AM requirements for Chinook salmon harvests under the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

Option 2: Use the State's salmon management program as an alternative approach to satisfy MSA requirements.