



Future of the CWT program: challenges and options. A workshop June 7-10, 2004 in Seattle, WA.

A workshop will be held on June 7-10, 2004 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Seattle – North/Lynnwood, Washington, to examine the capabilities of various methodologies to provide data for managing natural and hatchery chinook and coho salmon stocks along the Pacific coast. Workshop deliberations will inform an invited panel of experts who will provide advice to the PSC by early 2005.

Under the Pacific Salmon Treaty, fishing regimes for chinook and coho salmon are based on constraining stock, age and fishery specific mortality rates for selected naturally spawning populations. Data to permit direct estimation of fishing mortality rates on individual populations of these species currently depend on the coded-wire tag program. Since the early 1980s, inferences for natural populations have been drawn from specific groups of artificially propagated and coded wire tagged fish (the CWT “program”). Concern is now growing over the statistical reliability of this program and our ability to maintain the information expected from it. Reasons for this include reduced marine survival rates and lower fishery mortality rates leading to reduced ocean recoveries of tags, the development of mass marking, mark selective fisheries, and management demands that frequently exceed the resolution of current sampling programs.

The workshop is intended to examine limitations of the CWT program and to evaluate the capacity of alternative technologies to provide data to improve assessment of chinook and coho salmon. While the charge for the workshop is from the Pacific Salmon Commission and concern for our ability to estimate age and stock specific mortality rates by fishery, these data have many other uses (e.g., monitoring compliance with jeopardy standards established pursuant to the U.S. Endangered Species Act and for hatchery specific experiments). Also, data collected using alternative technologies (such as genetic information, otoliths marks, or other tags) may provide opportunities to augment a modified CWT-based system.

Workshop sessions will be structured around the following themes:

1. the advice required by agencies and the PSC which currently depend on the data provided by the CWT program,
2. a technical review of the current CWT program, including the issues surrounding the adequacy of the CWT data, the current levels of uncertainty and modifications that would address the concerns identified, as well as the costs of the program
3. a review of alternative technologies to enhance or replace part of the CWT program.

Presentations at the workshop are by invitation only. However, the expert panel will consider written briefs if they are submitted to the PSC in advance of the workshop. The panel is particularly interested in novel technologies or approaches that are not currently applied in chinook and coho assessment and management regimes. A limited number of briefs will be considered for oral presentation if they are received by the PSC prior to May 1, 2004. Briefs should be sent, as a MS Word file attachment, via E-mail to:

CWT@psc.org. Include the words “CWT Brief” in the subject line of the E-mail message.

The PSC desires that the workshop encourage the maximum interaction possible between the expert panel and the invited presenters. In this regard the PSC would like to limit attendance to those invited to present material. The PSC recognizes the great interest in this subject and intends to provide opportunities for others to give their advice on these issues at the appropriate time. The expert panel's draft report with attached workshop information will be circulated for comment to interested persons, selected reviewers and potentially affected agencies.

For additional information contact either:

Don Kowal, Executive Secretary, Pacific Salmon Commission at (604) 684-8081 or by e-mail at: kowal@psc.org ; or Marianna Alexandersdottir at (360) 438-1181 ext 329 or by e-mail at: malexand@nmifc.org