except those in the North and Middle Forks of the Nooksack River, were reported to be of native origin. In the planned 1995 revision of the Washington State Salmon and Steelhead Inventory, the WDF intends to recommend that Elwha River pink salmon be classified as extinct since no adult fish have been observed since 1989 despite extensive annual surveys (Northwest Fisheries Science Center BRT, 1995).

Based on available data, it is difficult to ascertain with any degree of certainty the extent of the ESU that contains the Snohomish River even-year pink salmon population. The small size of the current Snohomish River even-year population suggests that it may be part of a larger geographic unit over evolutionary time. The Snohomish River even-year population is geographically isolated by several hundred kilometers from other evenyear populations of appreciable size; however, similar life history characteristics, such as time of peak spawning, are similar to that of evenyear British Columbia pink salmon. Results of genetic data are heavily dependent on whether an adjustment is made for possible differences in methods for recording data. Further, it is not clear which analyses should be preferred, those with or without adjustment for possible bias.

Given the uncertainty associated with the extent of the even-year ESU, NMFS considered the status of this ESU under two scenarios: (1) The ESU is composed solely of the Snohomish River pink salmon population, and (2) the ESU contains populations of even-year pink salmon from British Columbia in addition to the Snohomish River population. Under both scenarios, NMFS was unable to demonstrate that this ESU is currently at risk of extinction or endangerment. Available information indicates that the Snohomish River pink salmon population is relatively small with, generally, an increasing trend in abundance in recent years. Further, even-year pink salmon populations in British Columbia are generally stable or increasing. Therefore, under both ESU scenarios, NMFS has concluded that even-year pink salmon do not presently warrant listing under the ESA.

Similar to the even-year ESU, uncertainty remains regarding the extent of the odd-year pink salmon ESU. Environmental and ecological characteristics generally show a strong north-south trend; however, NMFS was unable to identify any substantial differences that consistently differentiate Washington and British

Columbia odd-year pink salmon populations. Although odd-year pink salmon show considerable variation in body size among populations in Washington, the range of variation does not exceed that found in British Columbia. Genetic information shows a clear distinction between nearby evenyear pink salmon and more northerly odd-year populations. Within the southern British Columbia and Washington pink salmon group, evidence of geographic population structure exists; however, none of the genetic differences is very large in absolute magnitude. Even though genetic differences among odd-year pink salmon are relatively small, the consistent genetic differences among geographically isolated groups of populations suggest that there has been some degree of reproductive isolation among pink salmon populations in this region.

Most populations in the odd-year pink salmon ESU appear to be healthy, and overall abundance appears to be close to historic levels. The two most distinctive Puget Sound populations, the Nooksack and Nisqually River populations, both show non-significant trends in recent abundance. No other factors were identified by NMFS which would threaten the near-term survival of these populations. However, the two populations on the northern Olympic Peninsula (both of which occur in the Dungeness River and one of which, in the lower river, was petitioned for listing) appear to be at the greatest risk of extinction in this ESU. Nevertheless, because (1) most of the populations in this ESU are stable or increasing and (2) the two populations at greatest risk are not consistently differentiated from other populations in the ESU with regard to genetic or life history characters, NMFS concludes that the odd-year pink salmon ESU is not presently at risk of extinction or endangerment. Furthermore, NMFS concludes that the geographic boundaries of the even- and odd-year pink salmon ESUs should be regarded as provisional. As such, these geographic boundaries are subject to revision should substantial new information become available. The NMFS welcomes the submission of any new information that may help resolve uncertainties regarding the extent of these pink salmon ESUs.

Determination

After a thorough analysis of all available information, NMFS has determined that neither Elwha River nor lower Dungeness River pink salmon, as petitioned, constitute a "species" under

the ESA. However, Elwha River and lower Dungeness River pink salmon are part of a larger ESU that includes all odd-year pink salmon stocks in Washington as far west as the Elwha River and in southern British Columbia, Canada (including the Fraser River and eastern Vancouver Island), as far north as Johnstone Strait. Further, NMFS has identified a second ESU for pink salmon which includes even-year pink salmon residing in the Snohomish River, WA. NMFS has determined that, at the present time, neither ESU warrants listing as a threatened or endangered species.

References

A list of references is available upon request (See ADDRESSES).

Dated: September 28, 1995.
Rolland A. Schmitten,
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.
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[I.D. 092895D]

Atlantic Tuna Fisheries; Bluefin Tuna Quota Reallocation

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

ACTION: Quota reallocation and opening of the General category fishery in the New York Bight area.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces a transfer of 10 metric tons (mt) of Atlantic Bluefin Tuna (ABT) from the longline-south Incidental subcategory to the General category and establishes a geographic set-aside for the New York Bight area. NMFS has determined that the fisheries landing ABT under the longline-south Incidental subcategory will not achieve the full 1995 allocation. NMFS has also determined that variations in the seasonal distribution and migration patterns of ABT have prevented fishery participants in the New York Bight area from harvesting a share of the General category quota. This action is being taken to extend the season for the General category, provide for fishing opportunities in the New York Bight area, and ensure additional collection of biological assessment and monitoring data.

EFFECTIVE DATES: The longline inseason transfer is effective September 29, 1995. The General category fishery is opened in the New York Bight area effective