Operating Agreement for Shared Programmatic Activities

Between

Southwest Fisheries Science Center and Northwest Fisheries Science Center

I. Purpose and Objective

The Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers implement long-established science programs directed towards assessment and monitoring of the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME). Shared programmatic areas benefiting from improved coordination include West Coast groundfish, salmon, marine mammals, coastal pelagic species and integrated ecosystem assessments (IEAs). These areas encompass all of the federally managed species within the CCLME (with the exception of Highly Migratory Species (HMS) which is covered in the SWFSC/PIFSC operating agreement). The stated objective of this agreement is that these science programs and associated research are well coordinated and that the two Centers work together collaboratively in the CCLME, including estuarine ecosystems, in planning and executing their respective programs to be as effective and efficient as possible, avoiding duplication, and supporting the priority interests of both Centers. Furthermore, adherence to this agreement will ensure that NMFS scientific input to management entities such as the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) and respective NMFS Regional offices is well coordinated.

This document serves as the primary document governing operations between the NWFSC and SWFSC including the designation of programmatic leads and the requirement to generate Biennial Program Plans to determine how Centers will conduct research, coordinate communications, and ensure accountability for shared programmatic activities. These biennial program plans will further define roles and responsibilities and will be supported by joint annual program planning on a fiscal year basis.

II. Definitions

A key element of this operating agreement is the designation of respective Center roles for each shared programmatic area. The definition of roles and responsibilities for the "Lead Center" and the "Supporting Center" are described below. Coordination and planning responsibilities described below for staff will be clearly articulated in their performance plans and outcomes and accomplishments will be discussed and evaluated by the Deputy Directors.

"Lead Center" – The Lead Center will have the lead for the assigned programs. The Lead Center is responsible for coordinating, budgeting, prioritizing, and execution of the program with involvement of the supporting center, and communication of results to management entities. The Lead Center is responsible for ensuring the Supporting Center(s) are engaged in development of the coast-wide program plans, and decisions on staffing and budgets.

"Supporting Center" – The Supporting Center is responsible for providing informed and timely input to science and program plans, advice regarding staffing and budget decisions, conducting specialized supporting science, and meeting deadlines for synthesis products.

"Program Lead" – The Program Lead is a senior leader employed by the Lead Center responsible for overall coordination and performance of the program in meeting agreed upon goals expressed in the program plan.

"Supporting Center Lead" – The Supporting Center Lead is a senior staff member employed by the Supporting Center who coordinates Supporting Center participation in meeting goals of the program plan.

"Lead Center Staff" – Supporting staff at the Lead Center.

"Supporting Center Staff" – Supporting staff at the Supporting Center.

"Biennial Program Plan" – This operating agreement calls for the development of a program plan for each shared program (West Coast Groundfish, Marine Mammals, Coastal Pelagic Species, IEAs) every two years. As described in Section III below, these plans will include science priorities and responsibilities, guidelines for internal team communications, milestones, budget and staffing plans, and guidelines for external communications with constituent and management partners.

III. Designated Programmatic Responsibilities

Using the coast-wide programmatic leadership designations of the Regional Offices as guide, the roles for NWFSC and SWFSC have been determined as described in the categories below and presented in summary in Table 1.

Marine species

The programmatic designations for marine species follows the agreed upon leadership designations between the Northwest and Southwest Regional Administrators. The SWFSC will serve as Lead Center for West Coast Marine Mammals (with the exception of Southern Resident Killer Whales, and harbor seals and porpoises in Pacific Northwest estuaries) and for Coastal Pelagic Species. The NWFSC will serve as Lead Center for West Coast Groundfish.

Anadromous Species

Both Centers possess salmon science expertise in their geographic area. The SWFSC will remain Lead on California salmon science (e.g., Sacramento/Central Valley), and NWFSC the Lead on Pacific Northwest salmon science (e.g., Columbia River, Puget Sound). The SWFSC will be Lead on Klamath River activities, following Regional Office leadership. For ocean salmon research, responsibility for monthly hydrographic lines monitoring ocean conditions is split at Cape Blanco with NWFSC responsible for the existing Newport and proposed La Push lines and the SWFSC responsible for the existing Trinidad Head and proposed Bodega Bay lines. This is the most practical way to share responsibility given the biogeographic break at Cape Blanco and the existing division of resources between Centers. Responsibility for the twice-yearly pre-recruitment juvenile coast-wide salmon surveys will be shared (see Attachment 2). To

effectively leverage existing resources, established expertise from either Center will be used to address management needs throughout the West Coast. The SWFSC and NWFSC will work together on development of program plans, staffing, and budget/spend plans for coast-wide salmon effort to leverage expertise and wise investment of limited resources.

Integrated Ecosystem Assessments

The roles and responsibilities of each Center in conducting an Integrated Ecosystem Assessment for the CCLME is described in the attached agreement developed with the NMFS Office of Science and Technology (Attachment I).

Contaminants

The NWFSC has served as a national leader in contaminants and ecotoxicology for over 20 years and with this operating agreement is formally designated as the Lead Center for this topic.

Aquaculture

The NWFSC is recognized by NMFS as one of two national Centers of Excellence for aquaculture research, NEFSC housing the second. Given this designation and its long history of research and partnerships with the aquaculture industry, the NWFSC is designated the Lead Center for Aquaculture.

Resource Management Tools & Techniques- Molecular Ecology and Socioeconomics

Both Centers possess considerable capability in applying genetic and socioeconomic tools and techniques to understanding ecological questions. These tools are useful for study of virtually all species throughout the CCLME, justifying the existence of strong capabilities at each Center. However, it is important to minimize duplication of effort and maximize use of resources for this capability to meet the needs for marine mammals, fish, and invertebrates. Deputy Directors of both Centers will form a team for each programmatic area to ensure that molecular ecology and socioeconomic programs are well coordinated with respect to methodology and efficient use of resources including leveraging staff expertise and avoiding duplication in purchase and use of equipment.

Programmatic Areas Not Currently Covered By This Agreement

This agreement covers the major programs with existing overlap between the SWFSC and NWFSC. Formal determination of programmatic roles for many smaller or emerging programs, such as Oceans and Human Health (OHH) and ocean acidification, is not designated at this time. If formal determination becomes necessary, the Science Directors may amend or revise this document as described in Section X: Revisions and Amendments.

Table 1: Summary of Programmatic Responsibility Designations

Programmatic Area	Lead	Supporting Center(s)
Marine Species		
West Coast Marine Mammals	SWFSC	AKFSC and NWFSC
Southern Resident Killer Whales and harbor seals and porpoises in Pacific Northwest Estuaries	NWFSC	SWFSC

Coastal Pelagic Species	SWFSC	NWFSC
West Coast Groundfish	NWFSC	SWFSC
Anadromous Species		
Freshwater California Salmon	SWFSC	NWFSC
Freshwater Northwest Salmon (Oregon and Washington)	NWFSC	SWFSC
Klamath River Basin Salmon	SWFSC	NWFSC
Salmon Ocean Ecology – Northern Hydrographic Survey Lines; North of CA/OR Border (monthly)	NWFSC	SWFSC
Salmon Ocean Ecology – Southern Hydrographic Survey Lines; South of CA/OR Border (monthly)	SWFSC	NWFSC
Coast-wide pre-recruitment juvenile salmon transect surveys (twice yearly)	Shared	Shared
Other Programmatic Areas		
Integrated Ecosystem Assessments	See Attachment 1	See Attachment 1
Contaminants	NWFSC	SWFSC
Molecular Ecology	Joint Team led by DSDs	Joint Team led by DSDs
Aquaculture	NWFSC	SWFSC

IV. Program Planning and Budget Decisions

Joint Program Planning
The Centers will collaboratively conduct joint programmatic planning for the science conducted under the respective programs (West Coast Groundfish, Marine Mammals, etc). A comprehensive planning process will occur every other year led by the Program Lead with support and involvement from the Supporting Center Leads and staff, and will generate the Biennial Program Plans. The joint planning process and resulting plans will include science priorities and responsibilities, guidelines for internal team communications, milestones, budget and staffing plans, and guidelines for external communications with constituent and management partners. Respective Regional Office staffs will be included in these discussions to ensure regional science needs are met. The results will be approved by both Center Directors.

Programs will also conduct annual program planning prior to or at the beginning of each fiscal year to make decisions on budget allocation and priority expenditures, staffing needs, refine communication policies and practices, and plan for any important events during the year. Regional Office staff will be included as observers in these discussions.

Budget and Other Resource Decisions
Budget allocation decisions are to be made by the Science Directors and Deputy Science Directors, with input and advice from senior programmatic staff. The Deputy Directors are incentivized to act in the best interest of the Center, understanding the unique capacities at each Center and recognizing the value to the agency and each Center in minimizing overlap and maximizing coordination.

Annual allotment of Sea Days on NOAA vessels will be made through consultation between Deputy Directors based on each Center's priority needs for that year. Deputy Directors will consult with one another well in advance of the Sea Days allotment process and present a unified position for West Coast needs in the allocation process. Allotments will be made with a view toward maximizing potential for joint use and to ensure focus on the highest priority CCLME needs are being met for all species.

V. General Programmatic Coordination and Communication

The Biennial Program Plans (for Salmon, Marine Mammals, Coastal Pelagics, Groundfish, IEAs) will be developed by joint center programmatic teams and shall include a section describing specifically how the Lead Center and Supporting Center will ensure regular communications regarding progress towards implementing the plan, address any obstacles, and coordinate science input to management entities. A guideline for joint collaboration and communication is below.

Meetings
Teams will schedule regular concise conference calls to provide updates, solve problems, and adjust plans if necessary. The annual program plans will include a description of regular meetings (conference calls, VTC, or in person) including purpose, frequency, length, and types of agenda items.

Notification
A team member should notify the Program Lead and/or all team members when any of the following occur:

- Contact or communication with a management body such as Pacific Fishery Management Councils, International Whaling Commission, etc.
- Significant new science results
- Funds are expended on contracts or grants (over $50K), critical equipment purchased, key program staff hired
- Committee or work group meeting scheduled and/or completed

VI. Constituent Relations

The Biennial Program Plan will designate a senior staff Communications Lead for relevant management bodies ('Council Lead' for PFMC, 'Commission Lead' for International Whaling Commission, etc). This individual shall have the lead responsibility for ensuring that the NMFS West Coast scientific input to management bodies is well coordinated. The Lead Center is responsible for managing and tracking interactions and information exchange with relevant management entities, interested constituents and partners to ensure a common message, minimize duplication, and eliminate

contradictions. The Supporting Center is responsible for working with the Lead Center to deliver agreed upon messages.

All reports to external stakeholders, such as PFMC, IWC, or other management bodies, will be coordinated by the designated Communications Lead with the supporting center POC and cleared by the lead Deputy Director well before the report (as a consolidated NMFS report) is submitted formally to the management body. Lead Center staff will remain in close communication with the POC of Supporting Center and Lead Deputy Director on science and communication issues. There will be sufficient documentation using appropriate means (joint memo signed by SDs or DSDs, emails or meeting notes) of communication to assure all parties know of the actions and activities of the Communications Lead. The biennial program plans will explicitly describe this process so that management bodies receive the necessary information without impeding freedom of scientists to communicate research findings.

The Communications Lead is also responsible for ensuring that Science Directors have the information they need to serve as the Chief Science Advisor to their respective Regional Administrators (see Section VI below).

VII. Regional Office Considerations

Regional Office Role
Success of this operating agreement in contributing to stewardship of NMFS' West Coast trust species requires good communication and collaboration between the Centers and the Regions. The commitment of the NWRO and SWRO in communicating their needs to their respective Centers and recognizing the role of scientific advice in conservation and management policies and positions, is vital for sustaining this agreement.

Regional Office Advice
The Science Directors serve as the Chief Science Advisor to their respective Regional Administrator and this role will not change with this operating agreement. Coordination and communication mechanisms laid out in this agreement, including the designation of a Communication Lead for each program, are designed to ensure both Science Directors are informed of science discoveries and program priorities and direction. The Communications Lead is responsible for ensuring that Science Directors have the information they need to effectively provide scientific input to their respective Regional Administrator.

VIII. Personnel, Dispute Resolution, and Accountability

Personnel
The Science Directors in each region remain responsible for the management of the people, facilities, funding, and execution of the budget within their respective FMCs, in accordance with overall Agency policy governing personnel and financial management.

Biennial program plans will include a current staffing plan and identify key (Band II and IV) positions critical to successful implementation of the plan. Hiring or replacement of these key positions will require consultation between both Centers, and a place on the

selection panel will be reserved for a representative from each Center. Final selection for these key positions will be made through consultation between Directors and/or Deputy Directors.

Dispute Resolution
If disputes arise between the Program Lead and the Supporting Center Lead, the issue should be elevated to the Deputy Science Directors. If still unresolved, the issue will be elevated to the Directors of both Centers or the NMFS Director of Science Programs.

Accountability
Failure of responsible parties to adhere to the form and spirit of this Operating Agreement will be considered a performance issue in his/her performance rating and will be brought to the attention of the Science and Research Directors of each Center. Lead and supporting staff at both Centers will include an element in their performance plans reflecting their role in coast-wide efforts and Program Leads will provide input into performance plans and evaluations of key staff and the Deputy Directors will consult in rating the Leads.

Measuring Success
Success of this agreement will be measured by the following:

- Completion of biennial program plans for salmon, coastal pelagics, groundfish, marine mammals, and IEAs
- Science Centers seen as a unified front on all West Coast shared programs, prepare and distribute unified science reports and advice to management organizations (Council, Commission, etc)
- Any disputes are resolved internally in a timely manner
- Contribution of supporting center and staff is acknowledged
- Duplication of effort is minimized or eliminated
- Resources are distributed efficiently and in a way that supports NMFS and NOAA priorities

IX. Other Guiding Principles

No Surprises
This document promotes a "no surprises" policy and facilitates a high degree of consultation between the partners. It is the intention of the signatories that the working relationship resulting from this agreement is based on a high level of trust. To ensure that trust is generated and maintained, parties should avoid actions that place either Center or the agency in an untenable or embarrassing position.

Proper attribution of science
Proper attribution is a foundation of science and both Centers will uphold this ethic. Therefore there is joint responsibility to appropriately credit the science done by the other Center in any publication or communication, internal or external. This includes adequate consultation on any publication or communication that includes or should include the science produced by the other Center. Any formal written advice using the science of the other Center shall be offered for formal signoff by the other Center.

X. Revisions and Amendments

Revisions and amendments to this document may be made with agreement and signature of both Science Directors. If agreement is not reached the existing agreement will remain in place.

Science Directors and Deputy Directors will review this agreement after two years to evaluate and improve upon its effectiveness by making jointly approved revisions.

Usha Varanasi 6/21/10

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Acting Director, SWFSC

Usha Varanasi 6/21/10

Dr. Usha Varanasi *Date*
Director, NWFSC

Kristen Koch 6/21/10

Ms. Kristen Koch *Date*
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John E. Stein 6/21/10

Dr. John Stein *Date*
Deputy Science Director, NWFSC

Steven J. Murawski 6/16/2010

Dr. Steve Murawski
NMFS Director of Scientific Programs and Chief Science Advisor

Attachment 1: Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Operating Agreement

Operating Agreement
Joint Execution of a California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA)

BACKGROUND: A California Current IEA Program will be jointly implemented by the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers along with relevant regional partners. This operating agreement defines how the Centers will work cooperatively to develop a single, seamless California Current IEA, develop and implement a joint annual statement of work, and submit joint products. Also, included is a description outlining the roles and responsibilities of key individuals from each Center.

Program Management: John Stein and Kristen Koch, Deputy Science Directors for the NWFSC and SWFSC, respectively, have overall management responsibility for the joint IEA Program. The Deputy Science Directors are responsible for program oversight, development of a joint budget and implementation plan, review, approval and timely delivery of products, and fostering strong communication and cooperation among staff from both Centers responsible for executing the IEA. John Stein will be the primary point of contact (POC) for the Program with the Office of Science and Technology and external partners. Kristen Koch is the alternate.

Science Leads: Drs Frank Schwing and Phil Levin are the science leads for the SWFSC and NWFSC, respectively, and are responsible for joint scientific leadership and oversight of the IEA program and for cooperative execution of the annual work plan and associated outreach. The science leads will work through the Deputy Directors so there will be a single POC communicating with the Office of Science and Technology and, as appropriate, with external IEA partners.

Budget: The Deputy Science Directors will coordinate the development of single annual budget and implementation plan for the program that will then be submitted to the Office of Science and Technology through the POC. Funds will be distributed from the Office of Science and Technology to each Science Center based on the annual budget approved by the Deputy Science Directors of both Centers.

APPROVAL:

Usha Varanasi

_____ Date: 12/10/09

Usha Varanasi
Acting Director, NW and SW Fisheries Science Centers

John E. Stein

_____ Date: 12/10/09

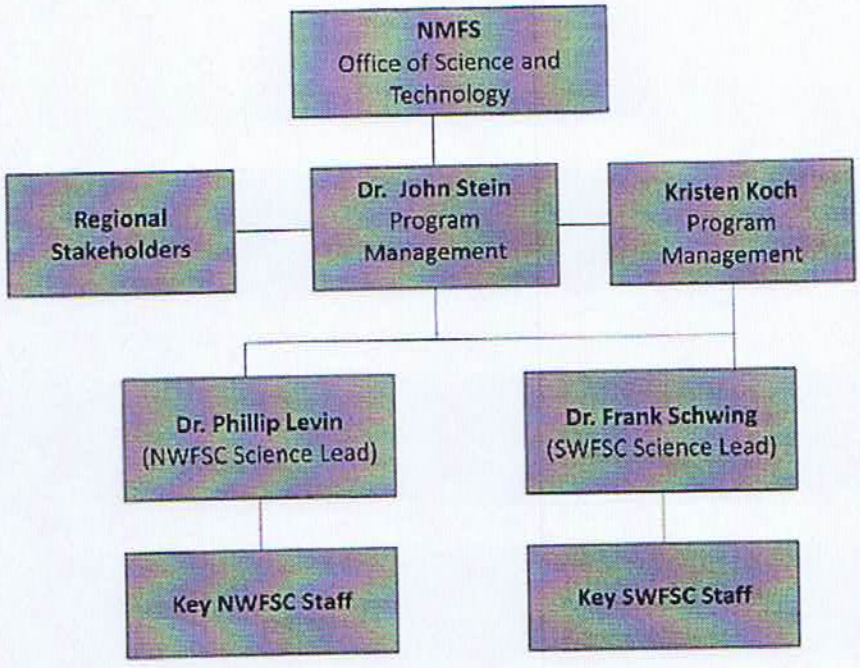
John Stein
Deputy Science Director, Northwest Fisheries Science Center

_____ Date: 12/11/09

Kristen Koch
Deputy Science Director, Southwest Fisheries Science Center

_____ Date: _____

Approved by Ned Cyr, director Office of Science Technology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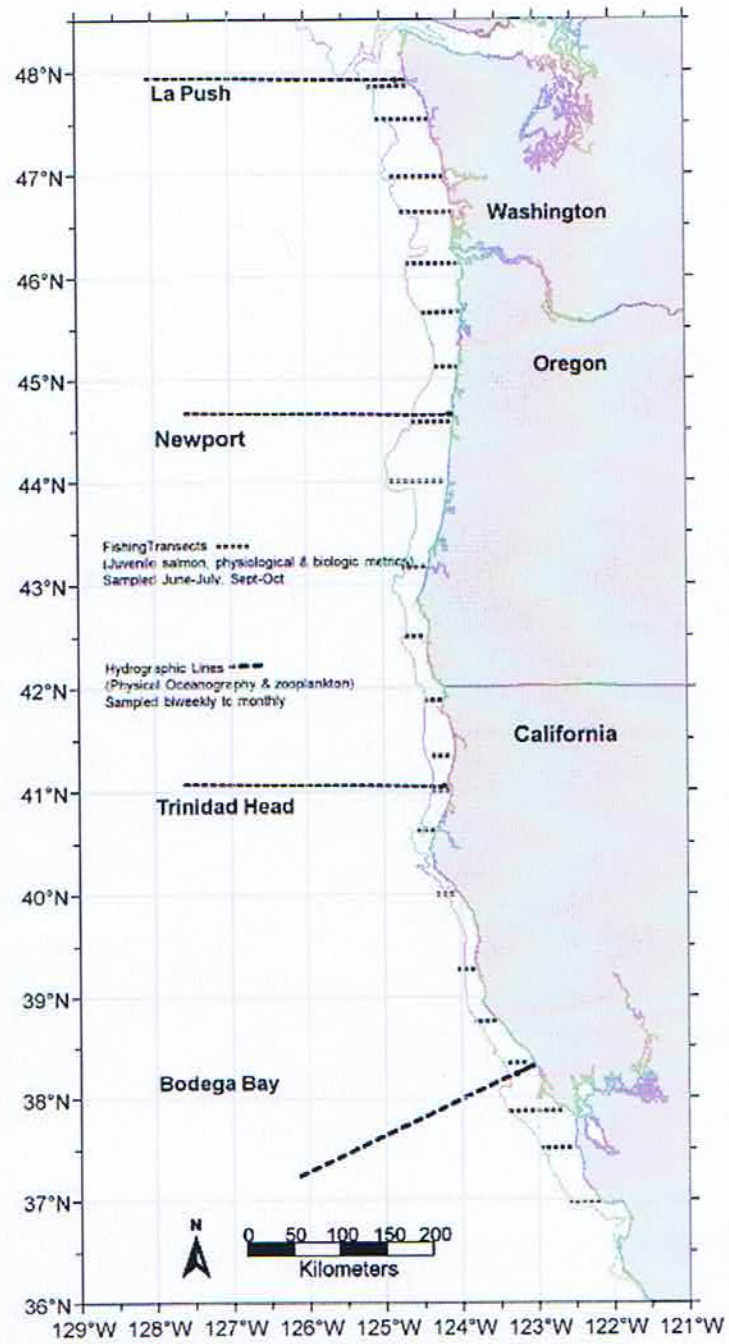
Attachment 2: West Coast Ocean Salmon Monitoring Lines