

8. North of Falcon Policy

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GREEN SHEET

Meeting dates:	January 9-10, 2009, Commission Meeting
Agenda item #8:	North of Falcon Policy
Staff Contact:	Patrick Pattillo, Anadromous Fish & Salmon Policy Lead Intergovernmental Resource Management
Presenter(s):	Patrick Pattillo, Anadromous Fish & Salmon Policy Lead Intergovernmental Resource Management

Background:

The Commission's North of Falcon Policy provides direction and guidance to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) as it conducts the annual process for defining salmon fishing seasons in Pacific Ocean, Columbia River, Puget Sound, and Washington Coastal marine and freshwater areas.

Guidance is provided with respect to conservation objectives and for the prioritization or allocation of fishing opportunity that will achieve a fair balance between sectors, including recreational and commercial fisheries.

Guidance from the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) is consistent with existing conservation and allocation agreements reached in international, federal, and inter-state forums, and with legal requirements of treaty Indian fishing rights.

With respect to prioritization and allocation of fishing opportunity, given the variation in species abundance and availability in Washington fisheries, policy direction is provided by species and by major regions including Puget Sound, the Columbia River, Grays Harbor, Willapa Bay, and the Pacific Ocean.

The current North of Falcon (C-3608) extends through December 31, 2008. The Commission may modify elements of the policy at the February Commission meeting.

Department staff will brief the Commission on key elements of the current policy, discuss some possible shortcomings or controversial aspects of the policy, and provide a perspective on potential improvements for consideration that reflect input from advisory groups and other North of Falcon public process attendees.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

Policy guidance to the Department for defining annual salmon fishing seasons in Washington that meet conservation objectives and provide fair allocation of non-treaty commercial and recreational fishing opportunity.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

WDFW has discussed issues and solicited recommendations for changes to the policy guidance with sport and commercial advisory groups, and has received comments or responses on the current policy from the general public during and since the 2007 and 2008 North of Falcon process public meetings.

Action requested:

Action by the Commission on this item is expected at the February Commission meeting.

Draft motion language:

None at this time

Justification for Commission action:

Current North of Falcon Policy expires December 31, 2008

Communications Plan:

As WDFW had done in the past through emails, phone calls, and meetings with interested constituents and sport and commercial advisory groups, WDFW has discussed the North of Falcon Policy and how it guides the Department during the annual salmon season setting process. Comments and suggestions received from these groups are considered by the Department during the annual review process to modify and improve upon the North of Falcon Policy.

Form revised 10/16/2008 - sdy

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY DECISION

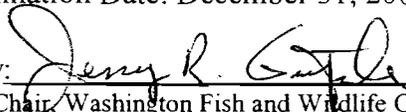
POLICY TITLE: 2007-2008 North of Falcon **POLICY NUMBER:** C-3608

Cancels: C-3608, 2005-2006

Effective Date: February 2, 2007

Termination Date: December 31, 2008

See Also: **POL-C3001**

Approved by: 
Chair, Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

North of Falcon Policy

This Policy will guide Department staff in considering conservation, allocation, in-season management, and monitoring issues associated with the co-management process known as the North of Falcon. When considering management issues, Department staff will insure that decisions are made consistent with the Department's statutory authority, U.S. v. Washington, U.S. V. Oregon, the Endangered Species Act, the Puget Sound Chinook Harvest Management Plan, Pacific Salmon Treaty, the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Framework Salmon Management Plan, pertinent state/tribal agreements, and the applicable Fish and Wildlife Commission policies.

Harvest Management

General

- On a statewide basis, fishing opportunities will be provided when they can be directed at healthy wild and hatchery stocks while minimizing impacts on depressed stocks.
- When assessed from a statewide perspective, fishing directed at chinook, coho, pink, sockeye, or chum salmon will not be exclusively reserved for either sport or commercial users.
- When managing sport fisheries, meaningful recreational fishing opportunities will be distributed equitably across fishing areas and reflect the diverse interests of fishers, including retention and catch and release fisheries.
- The Department will seek non-treaty fishing access to unutilized portions of treaty harvest allocations through the implementation of pre-season agreements, taking into consideration changes in abundance, fishery conflicts, and factors that may influence attainment of spawning escapement objectives.

Sockeye, Chum, and Pink Salmon

- Marine area harvest management objectives for chum, pink, and sockeye stocks, except for Puget Sound-origin sockeye, in priority order, are to (1) provide the majority of harvest to the commercial fisheries, and (2) identify and provide meaningful recreational opportunities.
- For fisheries directed at Lake Washington sockeye, the first 200,000 non-treaty harvest will be provided to recreational fishers. If the allowable non-treaty is above this level, commercial harvest directed at this stock may be considered.

Chinook and Coho Salmon

- The Puget Sound harvest management objectives for chinook and coho stocks, in priority order, are to (1) provide meaningful recreational fishing opportunities, and (2) identify and provide opportunities for commercial harvest. When managing sport fisheries in this region, recreational opportunities will be distributed equitably across fishing areas, considering factors such as the: uniqueness of each area, the availability of opportunities for

various species in each area throughout the season, desire to provide high levels of total recreational opportunity, and biological impacts.

- Grays Harbor harvest management objectives shall include opportunities for both the recreational and commercial fisheries.
- Columbia River harvest management regimes shall be developed in cooperation with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife representatives. Commercial and recreational fishing opportunity will be scheduled to optimize the non-treaty harvest of chinook and coho and to provide a balanced opportunity to each fleet. When developing recreational and commercial fishing options, the Department shall consider fair and reasonable catch opportunity, stability and duration of fisheries, as well as sharing of the conservation responsibility.
- Willapa Bay harvest management shall be consistent with Willapa Bay Framework management objectives. The following general intent shall apply: Willapa Bay harvest management objectives shall include meaningful opportunities for both recreational and commercial fisheries.
- Pacific Ocean harvest shall be managed consistent with the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Framework Salmon Management Plan and the National Standards that provide for fair and equitable allocation of fishing privileges among various fishers.

In-Season Management

- When in-season management actions are taken, they should be implemented in a manner that is consistent with pre-season conservation and harvest management objectives and fishery intent developed through the North of Falcon process.

Monitoring

- Fishery participants will be required to comply with fishery monitoring and evaluation programs designed to account for species and population impacts.

Gear and Fishery Conflicts

- Recreational and commercial fisheries shall be structured to minimize gear and other fishery conflicts. Unanticipated fishery interaction issues identified in-season, including conflicts with fisheries directed at other species, shall be resolved by involving the appropriate sport and commercial representatives in a dispute resolution process managed by Department staff.

Incidental Mortalities

- Limits on the incidental mortalities of non-targeted species will be defined as necessary for commercial and recreational fisheries. Management regimes will include strategies to limit seabird mortalities consistent with the federal Migratory Bird Act.

Communications

- The Department shall strive to make ongoing improvements for effective public involvement during the North of Falcon planning process and annual salmon fishery implementation, incorporating the following intents:
 - include representatives of recreational and commercial participants at North of Falcon as observers during appropriate state/tribal discussions of fishery issues.
 - maintain a timely record of all significant fishery discussions and decisions during North of Falcon process to all interested parties, both at the meetings and following the process.

- use a variety of communication tools to effectively communicate with the public and receive timely input on pre-season planning and in-season fishery implementation, including use of the Department web site.

Other Species

- The Fish and Wildlife Commission's policy on Lower Columbia Sturgeon Management (POL-C3001), effective January 1, 2006, shall guide pre-season and in-season planning of Columbia River and coastal sturgeon fisheries and related incidental impacts. Management of Willapa Bay sturgeon fisheries will be further guided by Willapa Bay Framework management objectives.

Delegation of Authority

On November 10, 1999, the Fish and Wildlife Commission permanently delegated the authority to the Director to make harvest agreements with Northwest treaty tribes and other governmental agencies, and adopt permanent and emergency regulations resulting from the agreements made during the annual North of Falcon process.

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION PROPOSED POLICY

POLICY TITLE: 2009-2010 North of Falcon

POLICY NUMBER: C-3608

Supersedes: 2007-2008 North of Falcon (C-3608)

Effective Date: January 1, 2009

Termination Date (if applicable):
December 31, 2009

See Also:

by: _____

Approved

[Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission]

Discussion: The Policy shown below is the 2007-2008 North of Falcon Policy. Suggested modifications to the North of Falcon Policy will be discussed by Department staff at the January 9-10, 2009 Commission meeting.

Policy:

North of Falcon Policy

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