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## “GREEN SHEET”

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**Meeting dates:** June 5-6, 2009

**Agenda item #8** Proposed Commission Policy on Hatchery and Fishery Reform – Briefing & Public Testimony

**Staff Contacts:** Andy Appleby, Hatchery Reform Coordinator, Fish Program (lead)  
Sara Laborde, Special Assistant to the Director, Director’s Office  
Heather Bartlett, Salmon and Steelhead Resources Division Manager, Fish Program

**Presenters:** Andy Appleby, Hatchery Reform Coordinator, Fish Program (lead)  
Sara Laborde, Special Assistant to the Director, Director’s Office  
Heather Bartlett, Salmon and Steelhead Resources Division Manager, Fish Program

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**Background:**

This briefing is the result of the Commission’s March 6, 2009, request to the Department for developing a draft Commission policy on hatchery reform (see attached “blue sheet”).

Hatchery reform has been an ongoing initiative in Puget Sound and Coastal Washington state for several years. The Department has embraced hatchery reform as a means to achieving salmon recovery while maintaining economically important harvest opportunities. In 2000, Congress formed the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) – an expert panel of independent scientists funded by federal dollars – to study salmon and steelhead populations in Puget Sound/Coastal Washington and the Columbia River Basin. Many WDFW staff scientists participated in the HSRG review. The Department believes that production at levels similar to today can be maintained at most facilities and at the same time provide protection for wild fish and the recovery of wild stocks. Hatchery and harvest reform are critical to sustaining healthy fisheries and the future of fishing in the state of Washington.

Conclusions from the 2007 HSRG Progress Report to Congress indicate that, if properly-managed, hatcheries can provide significant benefits to the citizens of Washington. If managed improperly, they can confound efforts to rebuild wild salmon populations and undermine efforts to recover wild fish.

Columbia River hatcheries operated by the states and/or USFWS receive funding from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Hatcheries must be reformed consistent with the HSRG recommendations in order to continue receiving federal money, and Washington’s lower river and coastal fisheries depend on those dollars to operate.

Department staff presented a draft proposed policy at the May 8-9, 2009, Commission meeting in Olympia, at which time commissioners suggested various changes and additions. The resulting changes have been incorporated into the draft found in Commissioners’ meeting notebook materials and posted on the web site.

Department staff will brief the Commission on the DRAFT Hatchery and Fishery Reform Policy (C-3619), review input received since the May 8-9, 2009, meeting, and recommend changes. The Commission will also hear public testimony. A final proposed policy will be presented for the Commission’s consideration at the July 10-11, 2009, Commission meeting in Olympia.

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

A Commission policy on hatchery and fishery reform will provide guidance and support for the Department’s implementation of HSRG recommendations by clearly stating the Commission’s commitment to long-term hatchery and sustainable fishery strategies.

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**Public involvement process used and what you learned:**

Comments on the draft policy have been sought from the public through various methods. Following the May 8-9, 2009, Commission meeting in Olympia, the updated DRAFT Commission Policy on Hatchery and Fishery Reform (C-3619) was posted on the Department's web site at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/management/hatcheries.html> , along with web links to related information such as:

- Fish and Wildlife Commission's January 2009 Report to Governor
- Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) reports
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Salmon Initiative

The proposal was also posted on the Commission's web page <<http://wdfw.wa.gov/commission/>> and a news release issued on May 13, 2009 was widely distributed (available to view on the Internet at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/do/newreal/release.php?id=may1309a> ).

WDFW citizen advisory groups were notified about the draft policy and members were encouraged to provide comments. Department staff announced the comment opportunity during fisheries related advisory committee meetings.

Written comments received by June 1<sup>st</sup> will be summarized and presented to the Commission during the June 5-6, 2009, meeting presentation.

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**Action requested:**

None at this time; this is a briefing only. Staff requests that the Commission consider final approval of a policy at its July 10-11, 2009, Commission meeting in Olympia.

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**Draft motion language:**

N/A

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**Justification for Commission action:**

As the governing body for the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Commission establishes policies to preserve, protect and perpetuate wildlife, fish, and wildlife and fish habitat (RCW 77.04.055, Commission -- Duties).

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**Communications Plan:**

Following the Commission approval at a future meeting, Commission Policy C-3619 will be circulated to Department staff, distributed to the public and posted on the Department's website.

# COMMISSION REQUEST TO DEPARTMENT

a.k.a. "Blue Sheet"

**Title of Request:** COMMISSION POLICY ON HATCHERY REFORM

**Commissioner:** MAHNKEN

**Priority Level (put one check in each row):**

Importance:  High                       Medium                       Low

Urgency:     High                       Medium     Low

**Date Requested:** March 6, 2009    **Date Assigned:** March 10, 2009  
*[Dep. Director use]*

**Assigned To** (Program/staff person): Fish Program, with IRM  
*[Dep. Director use]*

**Requested Due Date:**    May 8-9, 2009, Commission Meeting

**Knowledge or Action Being Requested (narrative). Describe what you want to know. Be specific.**

With Department staff input, develop a DRAFT Commission Policy on hatchery reform, using selective fisheries as a primary harvest management tool to protect and recover natural populations.

**Output Requested (e.g., telephone call, memo, material from files, new report, presentation, other):**

Briefing at the May 8-9, 2009, Commission meeting, along with DRAFT policy for Commission consideration.

**FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION**  
**PROPOSED POLICY DECISION**  
**DRAFT 2**

05/12/2009

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**POLICY TITLE: Hatchery and Fishery Reform**

**POLICY NUMBER: C-3619**

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 2009

Supersedes: N/A

Termination Date: December 31, 2012

See Also:

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

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**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to advance the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead by promoting and guiding the implementation of hatchery reform.

**Definition and Intent**

Hatchery reform is the scientific and systematic redesign of hatchery programs to help recover wild salmon and support sustainable fisheries. The intent of hatchery reform is to improve hatchery effectiveness, ensure compatibility between hatchery production and salmon rebuilding programs, and support sustainable fisheries.

**General Policy Statement**

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) shall promote the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead and provide fishery-related benefits by implementing artificial production programs with the following characteristics:

- Conservation Programs. Artificial production programs implemented with a conservation objective shall have a net aggregate benefit for the diversity, spatial structure, productivity, and abundance of the target wild population.
- Harvest Programs. Artificial production programs implemented to enhance harvest opportunities shall provide fishery benefits while allowing watershed-specific goals for the diversity, spatial structure, productivity, and abundance of wild populations to be met.

Commercial and recreational fisheries will need to increasingly focus on the harvest of abundant hatchery fish. As a general policy, the Department shall implement mark-selective salmon and steelhead fisheries, unless the wild populations substantially affected by the fishery are meeting spawner and broodstock management objectives.

In addition, the Department may consider other management approaches provided they are as or more effective than a mark selective fishery in achieving spawner and broodstock management objectives.

## Policy Guidelines

The Department shall:

- 1) Work with the tribes in implementing hatchery reform and selective fisheries including acting in a manner that is consistent with U.S. v. Washington and U.S. v. Oregon and other applicable state or federal law.
- 2) Use the principles, standards, and recommendations of the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) to guide the management of hatcheries operated by the Department.
- 3) The Department will prioritize improved broodstock management to reduce the impacts of hatchery fish and improve the fitness and viability of natural production.
- 4) Develop an action plan that systematically implements hatchery reform as part of a comprehensive, integrated (All-H) plan for meeting conservation and harvest goals at the watershed and Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) levels, including an action plan that systematically implements hatchery reform. For programs affecting the wild populations of importance for conservation and recovery, the plan will include goals with the following elements:
  - a) Integrated programs implemented to enhance harvest opportunities (i.e., integrated harvest program) will achieve a proportionate natural influence (PNI) equal to or greater than 0.70 on average, use hatchery practices that reduce the risks of domestication, and use broodstock that is indigenous to the watershed.
  - b) Segregated programs implemented to enhance harvest opportunities (i.e., segregated harvest program) will result in an average gene flow of less than 2% from the hatchery to the wild population.
  - c) Integrated conservation programs will be implemented to minimize genetic divergence between the hatchery broodstock and the wild population and to maximize PNI (ideally at least 0.70). However, PNI in the initial stages of the program will depend on the degree extinction risk and logistical challenges with the goal of the PNI being as high as practical.
- 5) Externally mark all artificial salmon and steelhead production that is intended to be used for harvest unless the production is explicitly excluded through state-tribal agreements signed by the Director and the appropriate tribal government(s).
- 6) Ensure that Department-operated hatchery facilities are “wild fish friendly” with passage facilities, water intake screening, and pollutant control systems that comply with environmental regulations.
- 7) Implement hatchery reform actions on a schedule that meets or exceeds the benchmarks identified in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Salmon and Steelhead Framework. Provide an annual report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission on progress of implementation.

- 8) Develop and promote the use of fishing techniques that allow non-target fish to be released with minimal mortality.
- 9) Seek funding from all potential sources to implement hatchery reform and selective fisheries.
- 10) Define “full implementation” of mark selective fisheries and develop an implementation schedule.

DRAFT