

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION
PROPOSED POLICY DECISION
DRAFT 4

07/06/ 07/16/2009

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

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 recovery plans and 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 a establishing clear goals for each hatchery, conducting scientifically-defensible operations, and using informed decision-making to improve management. Artificial production programs ~~with~~ will be designated as one of 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 laws and agreements or federal laws and agreements.
- 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 and implement improved broodstock management (including selective removal of hatchery fish) to reduce the impacts of hatchery fish and improve the fitness and viability of natural production, working toward a goal of achieving the HSRG broodstock standards for 100% of the hatchery programs by 2015.
- 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)/Distinct Population Segment (DPS) levels. Action Plans will include development of stock (watershed) specific population designations and application of HSRG broodstock management standards. ~~appropriate PNI and PHOS levels to their management.~~ In addition, plans will include a timeline for implementation, strategies for funding; estimated costs including updates to cost figures each biennium.
- 5) Externally mark all artificial salmon and steelhead production that is intended to be used for harvest except as modified by state-tribal agreements or for conservation or research needs.
- 6) Secure necessary funding to eEnsure that Department-operated hatchery facilities comply with environmental regulations are “wild fish friendly” with for 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 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Framework.
- 8) Provide an annual report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission on progress of implementation.
- 9) Develop, promote and implement alternative fishing gear to maximize catch of hatchery-origin fish with minimal mortality to native salmon and steelhead.

- 10) Seek funding from all potential sources to implement hatchery reform and selective fisheries.
- 11) Define “full implementation” of mark selective fisheries and develop an implementation schedule.
- 12) Work with tribal co-managers to establish a network of ~~w~~Wild Salmonid Management Zones (WSMZ)¹ ~~stock gene banks.~~ ~~Establish a network of wild stock gene banks~~ across the state where wild stocks are largely protected from the effects of same species hatchery programs. ~~Establish~~ The Department will have a goal of establishing at least one WSMZ wild stock gene bank for each species in each major population group (bio-geographical region, strata) in each ESU/DPS. Each stock selected for inclusion in the WSMZ must be sufficiently abundant and productive to be self-sustaining in the future. Fisheries can be conducted in WSMZ if wild stock management objectives are met as well as any necessary federal ESA determinations are received. ~~Single population strata, ESU or DPS may be excluded from this requirement based on the need for conservation hatchery programs. A candidate for wild stock gene bank must meet criteria below:~~
- ~~a) Each stock selected for inclusion in the gene bank must be sufficiently abundant and productive to be self-sustaining in the future.~~
 - ~~b) No release of same species hatchery fish will occur in streams where spawning of the stock occurs, or in streams used exclusively by that stock for rearing.~~
 - ~~c) Fisheries can be conducted in wild stock gene banks if wild stock management objectives are met as well as any necessary federal ESA determinations are received.~~

¹ Wild Salmonid Management Zone is equal in meaning and application to the term of “Wild Stock Gene Bank” as used and defined in the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan.