FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION
POLICY DECISION

POLICY TITLE: 2013-2014 North of Falcon **POLICY NUMBER: C-3608**

Supersedes: C-3608, 2011-2012

Effective Date: February 8, 2013
Termination Date: December 31, 2014

See Also: Policy C-3001
Policy C-3620

Approved by: _____ Chair
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, 02/08/2013

North of Falcon Policy

This Policy will guide Department staff in considering conservation, allocation, in-season management, and monitoring issues associated with the annual salmon fishery planning process known as "North of Falcon." When considering management issues, Department staff will ensure 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; the 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.

The Department will implement this Policy consistent with the purposes and intended outcomes described in the 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Planning Project including:

- Salmon and steelhead will be managed to recover and assure sustainability in a way that is science-based, well-documented, transparent, well-communicated, and accountable.

- Fisheries will be managed to meet or exceed ESA, recovery, and conservation goals; and harvest management measures will protect and promote the long-term well-being of the commercial and recreational fisheries.

Fishery Management

General

- On a statewide basis, fishing opportunities will be provided when they can be directed at healthy wild and hatchery stocks.
- Selective fishing methods and gears that maximize fishing opportunity and minimize impacts on depressed stocks will be utilized to the fullest extent possible taking into consideration legal constraints on implementation and budgetary limits associated with required sampling, monitoring and enforcement programs.
- 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

- For fisheries directed at Fraser River-origin chum, pink, and sockeye stocks, the majority of harvest will be provided to the commercial fisheries.
- For fisheries directed at harvestable Puget Sound-origin chum stocks, the majority of harvest will be provided to the commercial fisheries.
- 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 harvest is greater than 200,000, commercial harvest directed at this stock may be considered.
- For fisheries directed at harvestable Puget Sound origin pink salmon, seasons will be established that provide meaningful opportunities for both recreational and commercial fisheries while minimizing gear and other fishery conflicts.

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; the desire to provide high levels of total recreational opportunity; and the biological impacts.
- Grays Harbor harvest management objectives shall include opportunities for both the recreational and commercial fisheries.
- The Fish and Wildlife Commission's policy on Columbia River Salmon Management (POL-C3620) shall guide pre-season and in-season planning of Columbia River salmon fisheries. Columbia River harvest management regimes shall be developed in cooperation with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife representatives. 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 will be implemented in a manner that is consistent with pre-season conservation and harvest management objectives, and the fishery intent developed through the North of Falcon process.

Monitoring, Sampling and Enforcement

- Monitoring, sampling and enforcement programs will be provided to account for species and population impacts of all fisheries and to ensure compliance with state regulations.
- 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

- The Department will manage fisheries to minimize mortalities on non-target species (e.g. rockfish, sea birds, etc.). Management regimes will include strategies to limit seabird mortalities consistent with the federal Migratory Bird Treaty 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:
    - North of Falcon participants will be included as observers during appropriate state/tribal discussions of fishery issues.
    - all decisions made during the North of Falcon process will be recorded in writing.
    - variety of tools will be used to effectively communicate with the public, to receive input on pre-season planning or in-season fishery issues, and to make available the record of decisions. Such tools will include: recreational and commercial advisory groups; public workshops to address key issues; the WDFW North of Falcon Web site; and in-season tele-conferences.

Other Species

- The Fish and Wildlife Commission's policy on Lower Columbia Sturgeon Management (POL-C3001) 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

The Fish and Wildlife Commission delegates 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.