

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission
2015 Willapa Bay Salmon Management Interim Guidance
March 13, 2015 Draft

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) shall use the following guidance for managing salmon fisheries in Willapa Bay and tributary rivers in 2015.

Fall Chinook Salmon:

The Department shall initiate a rebuilding program to conserve and restore wild Chinook salmon in Willapa Bay. For 2015, limit harvest rates on Naselle and Willapa River natural-origin Chinook salmon to no more than 20% to initiate rebuilding the number of natural-origin spawners. Within the conservation constraints of the rebuilding program, fisheries will be managed within the following intent:

- Chinook salmon will be managed to provide for a full recreational fishing season with increased participation and/or catch.
- For all fisheries through September 30, close the area north of a line from Toke Point channel marker 3 easterly through Willapa Harbor channel marker 13 (green) then, northeasterly to the power transmission pole located at 46 degrees 43.19'N, 123 degrees 50.83'W.
- Commercial fisheries prior to August 8 shall be limited to one 48 consecutive-hour period. No commercial fisheries shall occur from August 8 through Labor Day. Commercial fisheries in areas 2T and 2U after Labor Day but before Sept. 16 shall use mark-selective fishing gear (6.5" maximum mesh or 4.5" maximum mesh tangle net) and recovery boxes.
- If it becomes apparent that scheduled commercial fisheries will exceed the aggregated pre-season natural-origin Chinook mortality expectation, the Department shall implement in-season management actions so that mortalities of natural-origin Chinook shall not exceed the aggregated pre-season projection.

Coho Salmon:

Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving the aggregate spawner goal for Willapa Bay natural-origin Coho salmon. Within the conservation constraints of meeting the aggregate escapement goal, fisheries will be managed within the following intent:

- Prioritize commercial fishing opportunities during the Coho fishery management period (September 16 through October 14 and after October 31); and
- Provide recreational fishing opportunities.

Chum Salmon:

Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving the aggregate spawner goal for Willapa Bay natural-origin Chum salmon. Within the conservation constraints of meeting the aggregate escapement goal, fisheries will be managed within the following intent:

- The maximum fishery impact shall not exceed a 10% harvest rate.
- No commercial fisheries will occur in the period from October 15-31.
- Provide recreational fishing opportunities. Recreational fisheries will be allowed to retain Chum salmon if retention is not prohibited in the commercial fishery.

Adaptive Management:

The Commission recognizes that adaptive management will be essential to achieve the intent of this interim guidance. Department staff may implement actions to manage adaptively and will coordinate with the Commission, as needed, in order to implement corrective actions.