

**Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission**  
**2015 Willapa Bay Salmon Management Interim Guidance**  
**April 9, 2015**

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission is providing Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) staff with this guidance and expects specific fishing seasons, including time, manner, and place prescriptions, will be developed in the rule-making process that considers both the policy and any public input. The Department shall use the following policy 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 mortality rates on Naselle and Willapa River natural-origin Chinook salmon to no more than 14% to initiate rebuilding the number of natural-origin spawners. Within the conservation constraints of the rebuilding program, manage fisheries with the following goals:

- Manage Chinook salmon for an enhanced recreational fishing season to increase participation and/or catch including consideration of increased daily limits, earlier openings, multiple rods, and other measures.
- Structure recreational and commercial fisheries (e.g., schedule, location, gear) to minimize gear and other fishery conflicts:
  - Commercial fisheries may be scheduled prior to August 8 but shall be limited to a maximum of one 48 consecutive-hour period.
  - No commercial fisheries shall occur from August 8 through Labor Day in areas 2T and 2U.
- Promote the conservation and restoration of Chinook salmon in Willapa Bay by:
  - Closing an appropriate area to protect North River Chinook, for example consider 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 may be scheduled in areas 2T and 2U after Labor Day and before Sept. 16 but shall use mark-selective fishing gear (6.5" maximum mesh, 4.5" maximum mesh tangle net, or other alternative gear) 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.

- Monitoring, sampling, and enforcement programs will adequately account for species and population impacts (landed catch and incidental fishing mortality) of all recreational and commercial fisheries and ensure compliance with state regulations.

### **Coho Salmon:**

Manage fisheries with the goal of achieving the aggregate spawner goal for Willapa Bay natural-origin Coho salmon. Within this conservation constraint, 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:**

Manage fisheries with the goal of achieving the aggregate spawner goal for Willapa Bay natural-origin Chum salmon. For 2015, limit the mortalities on chum salmon to no more than 10% to continue rebuilding the number of natural-origin spawners. Within the conservation constraints of meeting the aggregate escapement goal, manage fisheries with the following goals:

- No commercial fisheries will occur in the period from October 15-31 to further limit mortalities on natural-origin chum.
- Provide recreational fishing opportunities. Recreational fisheries will be allowed to retain Chum salmon.

### **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.