

## **Marine Area 7 (San Juan Islands) summer Chinook fishery fact sheet**

### **Background**

The summer Chinook fishery in Area 7 (San Juan Islands) has remained under nonselective regulations during the months of July, August, and September while many other areas have switched to mark-selective (MSF) regulations, except July 2016 which was MSF. The Area 7 summer fishery is considered a mixed-stock fishery that harvests fish from both Puget Sound and Canadian river systems. The Pacific Salmon Treaty (Canada and U.S.) provides protection to wild salmon stocks compelling both countries to limit impacts on wild stocks of concern, with the conservation burden relying more heavily on the country of origin. Each year fewer wild Chinook return to Puget Sound, comprising an expected 15% of the total Chinook forecast. The Commission issued a North of Falcon policy (policy C-3608), which provides guidance to maintain meaningful opportunity, uniqueness of fisheries, and utilize MSF regulations in order to aid in maximizing fishing opportunity and minimize impacts on depressed stocks.

### **July Fishery Proposal**

- Convert July Chinook fishery to MSF (release wild Chinook)
  - Daily limit of Chinook would increase from 1 to 2
  - Southern Rosario and Eastern Strait closure would be considered for removal
- August and September would remain a nonselective Chinook fishery and the Rosario and Eastern Strait closures would remain in effect

### **Data analysis from dockside samples**

- Legal-sized mark rates (mark rate has improved by 5% from 2011-13 to 2014-16 average)
  - July: 68%
  - August: 34%
  - September: 32%
- Coded Wire Tag proportions used in FRAM model for North of Falcon during July
  - Nooksack-Samish: 18%; Skagit: 17%; Stilly-Sno: 7%; Mid Sound: 12%; South Sound: 7%; Hood Canal: 6%; Canada: 29%; Other: 4%
- Genetics (2009 study)
  - July: Puget Sound: 79%; Canada: 19%; Other: 2%
  - August: Puget Sound: 43%; Canada: 54%; Other: 3%
  - September: Puget Sound: 49%; Canada: 45%; Other: 6%

### **Justification**

Nearly all Chinook released from Puget Sound hatcheries are marked (>99%). The high July mark rate in Area 7 makes it a strong candidate for converting to MSF as almost 2 out of every 3 legal-sized Chinook encountered could be kept, and fewer wild fish die due to the release mortality rate for legal-sized Chinook (at an assumed mortality rate of 10%). Further, anglers would have an increased daily limit from 1 to 2 Chinook. Most of the wild Chinook encountered during July are from Puget Sound stocks, thus converting to MSF would help stabilize Puget Sound fisheries, including Area 7 and allow for additional conservation.