

Emerging Commercial Fishery Implementation Plan as of September 20, 2023

Timing

Washington and Oregon are planning to offer this Emerging Commercial Fishery for the first time in the fall of 2024, and annually for several years after, to gather information on a variety of alternative commercial gears needed to inform the WA legislature on the commercial viability of those gears.

Eligibility

Applicants must meet the qualifications in WAC 220-360-510 to apply for this fishery. Selected applicants will be chosen from a lottery taking place October 15, 2023. Alternates will be chosen at this time to fill spots in the event a selected applicant is no longer able to participate.

Gear

There are three gears eligible at this time for use in this fishery: pound nets, purse seines, and beach seines. Our initial pre-season modeling will include up to 3 fishers/permits/licenses for pound nets, and up to 3 fishers/permits/licenses for seines.

Funding

WDFW received one-time funding from the WA Legislature to use for gear modifications as a participation incentive in the first year of this fishery. All successful applicants with a Washington Emerging Fishery License (EFL) and an Experimental Fishery Permit (EFP) will be eligible for WA's modified gear grant (up to \$20,000 per fisher in fiscal year 2024) and separate funding for related costs of participation (up to \$5,000 per fisher in fiscal year 2025). Due to budgetary constraints, it is unclear what funding may be available for incentive programs in subsequent years of the fishery. Fees are non-refundable and successful applicants with an Oregon Experimental Gear Permit in lieu of a Washington EFL and EFP will not be eligible for the above grant and separate incentive for related costs of participation. Upon selection, WDFW staff will work with successful applicants on the details of accessing these funds.

Harvest Constraints

This fishery is part of a suite of fisheries managed by the states of Oregon and Washington within various harvest constraints. In January 2023, both states signed a letter stating that the Emerging Commercial Fishery would be managed using up to 2% of available non-treaty commercial ESA impacts for the most constraining stock, as detailed in Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 635-500-6730 and 635-500-6735.

Season Planning

We now have a draft working alternative gear implementation model that we continue to refine based on advisory board input. We plan to use this model annually to help us determine the specifics of a fall Emerging Commercial Fishery in the month leading up to North of Falcon with a decision on the final pre-season structure at the conclusion of the North of Falcon/PFMC discussions in April 2024.

Regulations

The Designation of the Emerging Commercial Fishery and the WACs for applicant qualifications, license and permit conditions, season, area, and gear requirements, and allowable possession and sales are posted on our website (220-360-500 to 220-360-540: [Chapter 220-360 WAC](#):). Note, WAC 220-360-520 was recently modified via permanent rule-making to refine application timelines.

Contact Information

For any additional questions or concerns, please contact WDFW at the information below:

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Data Collection

WDFW is required by statute to deliver a report to the Washington State legislature on the status of the fishery and recommendations for whether and how to move forward with establishing a permanent fishery (RCW 77.70.180). To facilitate the preparation of this report, WDFW will conduct an extensive data collection effort. Observer coverage for all days fished is mandatory and may be supplemented with additional survey data. Data to be collected by our state observers and via surveys to inform commercial viability is likely to include:

Pound Nets

- Fishing start and end time.
- Released fish: species, mark status, adult/jack or length estimation, stock call (Chinook Tule/Bright).
- Kept fish (while fishing): species, mark status, adult/jack estimation.
 - Kept fish also sampled through commercial sampling procedures: species, mark status, fork length measurement, stock call (Chinook Tule/Bright), CWT presence/absence, PIT presence/absence, DNA fin clip (Chinook), scales (Chinook).
- Pinniped encounters.
- Ecology has requested we include kayak/recreational user numbers observed near the pound nets during operation.
- Weekly commercial landings summary.
- Vessel and business costs.

Seines (Drift and Purse)

- Location, net layout, start and end time, sort start and stop time.

- Net length, depth, and mesh size.
- Released fish: species, mark status, adult/jack or length estimation, released status (alive/dead).
- Kept fish (while fishing): species, mark status, adult/jack estimation.
 - Kept fish also sampled through commercial sampling procedures: species, mark status, fork length measurement, stock call (Chinook Tule/Bright), CWT presence/absence, PIT presence/absence, DNA fin clip (Chinook), scales (Chinook).
- Pinniped encounters.
- Weekly commercial landings summary.
Vessel and business costs.

Additional Resources

- [Columbia River alternative gear | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)
- [Columbia River Alternative Gear Advisory Board | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)
- WDFW's initial rule-making to designate the Emerging Commercial Fishery, detail applicant qualification, and describe terms of participation: [Columbia River non-treaty commercial fisheries | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)
- WDFW's recently completed rule-making that refines timelines for applicant selection and gear possession, and clarifies some terms of participation: [2023 Columbia River Emerging Commercial Fishery | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)