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November 13, 2009

Dear Shrimp Trawl License Holder:

This letter is to inform you of rule changes the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is proposing for the ocean shrimp trawl fishery.

In March 2009 the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposed to list the southern Distinct Population Segment of *Thaleichthys pacificus*, also known as eulachon, or commonly called Columbia River smelt or candlefish, as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Bycatch of eulachon in commercial fisheries, including the Washington ocean shrimp (*Pandalus jordani*) trawl fishery was identified as a moderate threat to the eulachon population. Bycatch rates of eulachon in the Washington ocean shrimp trawl fishery are unknown. Limited data exists for eulachon bycatch in the Oregon and California shrimp trawl fisheries through their participation in the National Marine Fisheries Service's West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP).

It should be noted that NMFS is just proposing to list eulachon; it has not actually declared them threatened yet. Also, the determination that shrimp trawling poses a moderate threat to the eulachon population does not mean that shrimp trawling has been identified as the cause of the decline.

However, to address the lack of data regarding the incidence of eulachon and as importantly, other non-shrimp species in the Washington ocean shrimp fishery, the Department is proposing to require all ocean shrimp trawl license holders participate in the National Marine Fisheries Service's West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP). As a participant in the program, vessels would be required to carry a federal observer upon request and comply with WCGOP regulations.

Under the Department's proposal, shrimp trawl license holders would be issued a permit, listing conditions to be met while fishing. An example of a permit is enclosed. The permit would be issued annually, at no cost. Vessels carrying

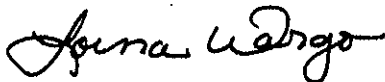
federal observers are required to provide them meals; all other costs (personal equipment, insurance, etc) is covered by the WCGOP.

In October, an informal meeting was held at Westport for shrimp trawlers still active in the fishery at that time. Those in attendance were generally supportive of the proposal. To provide all license holders an opportunity to discuss this issue, another **informational meeting is scheduled for 2 p.m. Wednesday, December 2, at the WDFW Region 6 office** at Montesano.

This proposal will be presented to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission at their January 8-9, 2010 meeting for their consideration; public testimony will be taken at this meeting. A package of information including the proposed rule language, an issue statement (also known as the "green sheet"), and instructions for providing public comment and/or testimony will be mailed to all ocean shrimp trawl license holders in early December.

For questions or more information, please call or email me at: (360) 249-1221;  
[Lorna.Wargo@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Lorna.Wargo@dfw.wa.gov)

Sincerely,



Lorna Wargo  
Marine Fisheries Biologist

cc: Michele Culver, WDFW, Regional Director  
Craig Burley, WDFW, Fish Program, Division Manager

Enclosure (2)

For more information about the proposed listing of eulachon or the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program go to:

*Eulachon:*

[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/fish/pacific\\_eulachon.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/fish/pacific_eulachon.htm)

<http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Other-Marine-Species/Eulachon.cfm>

*West Coast Groundfish Observer Program:*

<http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/research/divisions/fram/observer/>