

Meeting Columbia River policy commitments

A 2020 supplemental funding request



Emergent Need

\$837,000 for 2019-21
biennium



In 2013, the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission approved the Columbia River Basin Salmon Management Policy, with goals of:

- Establishing a license reduction program
- Transitioning to alternative gear types (pound nets, tangle nets, seines)
- Establishing and increasing production in off-channel (SAFE) fishing areas
- Shifting commercial ESA impact allowances to recreational fisheries

The problem

Despite progress in establishing SAFE fishing areas and exploring the use of purse seine nets, recent review of the Columbia River salmon management policy revealed that some provisions of the policy had not been met. In particular, little progress has been made on either a license reduction program or the development of alternative gear, and exploring whether those measures might improve the economic viability of the Columbia commercial fishery.

The solution

The agency has re-initiated work with the Columbia River commercial gill net fleet to consider alternative gears that might be appropriate for use in the Columbia River, and to scope a fleet reduction program. This funding request would advance that work.

Full implementation of the the Columbia River Basin Salmon Management Policy was delayed to allow the Washington and Oregon commissions to adopt concurrent rules. That work to adopt similar rules, reducing confusion and creating an even playing field on both sides of the Columbia, is advancing now.

Contact

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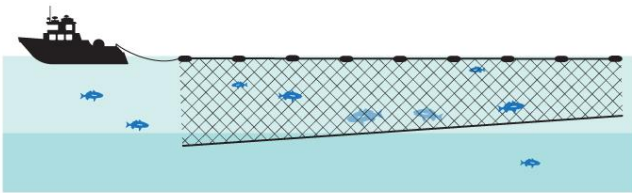
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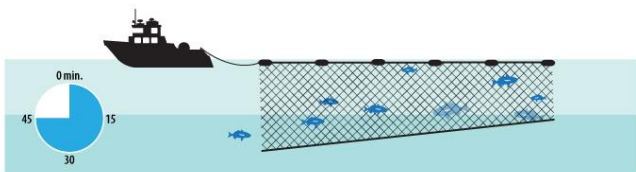
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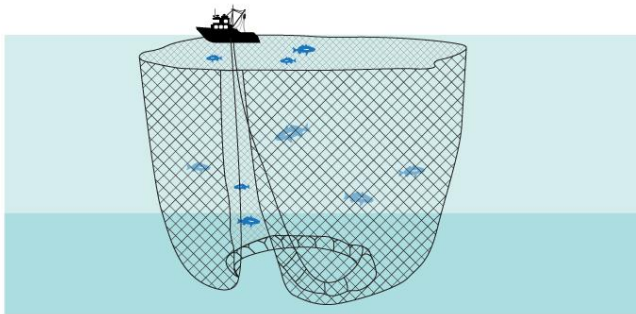
Gill nets

These large-mesh nets are used in selective fishing – targeting certain stocks or species and avoiding others by fishing at specific times and specific areas, and by using mesh sizes that allow smaller fish – such as steelhead and coho – to pass through the net.



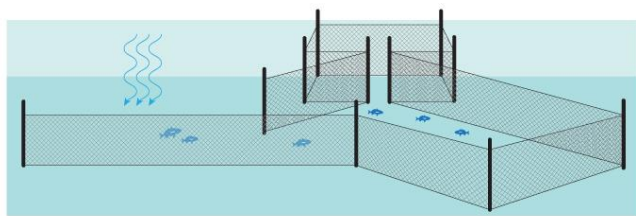
Tangle Nets

Tangle nets are small-mesh nets that tangle the target fish instead of catching them by their gills. Tangle nets have low mortality rates when accidentally caught fish are released. Works well for spring Chinook and coho.



Seine nets

A deep line of small-mesh net is circled around a school of fish and the fish are corralled in the water so they can be sorted. Beach seines and purse seines generally have low mortality rates when fish that are accidentally caught are released, yet catch a large proportion of the fish in a fishing area. The increase in accidental bycatch can offset the low release mortality.



Pound nets

A pound net trap consists of net attached to several pilings driven into the river bottom in a line perpendicular to the river flow. Fish swim along the net to a trap midstream, where they can be sorted and either released or harvested. This gear is still being tested, but has shown

low release mortality rates.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

The Endangered Species Act limits impacts to certain populations of listed salmon and steelhead. These ESA limits are used to offer fisheries targeted at healthy hatchery and wild populations. The total number of wild fish allowed to be killed under ESA rules is the same regardless of whether a fish is accidentally caught by a recreational or commercial angler. Both fisheries result in impacts to wild fish. These impacts to ESA-listed species, which WDFW works to minimize, are the limiting factor to fisheries, regardless of gear or method. When percentages are allocated to commercial and recreational fisheries, as on the Columbia River, those percentages represent the number of ESA impacts, not the percentage of total fish.