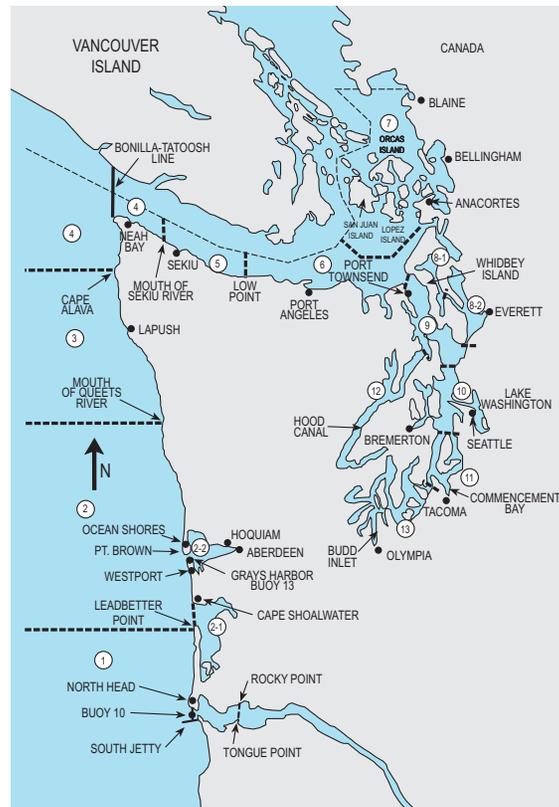


Estimation Methods

The data collected from dockside sampling, boat and aerial surveys, and test fishing and Salmon Trip Reports, is all used to estimate the number Chinook salmon encounters in a fishery, which includes fish that are both kept and released.

Information on the number of salmon encounters during recreational fisheries for each Marine Area and season can be found in-season at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/reports/creel/seasonal>. Seasonal information for past seasons is included in the annual summer and winter post-season reports located on WDFW's publication page.

Public participation and cooperation with WDFW's sampling and monitoring programs are essential to the management of sustainable salmon fisheries.



**For additional information,
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WASHINGTON STATE
Recreation and
Conservation Office

Puget Sound Recreational Mark- Selective Chinook Salmon Fisheries



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Background

Chinook salmon of natural-origin in Puget Sound were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1999. To continue to provide recreational fishing opportunities on abundant hatchery Chinook salmon, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) implemented mark-selective fisheries for Chinook salmon in some Puget Sound marine areas beginning in 2003. In these fisheries, anglers can harvest Chinook salmon with a removed adipose fin (marked) and must release natural-origin salmon (unmarked). To ensure the state meets management objectives for these fisheries, WDFW staff perform creel surveys and fisheries sampling during mark-selective Chinook salmon fisheries throughout Puget Sound.

Where

Puget Sound fisheries include the waters of Marine Areas 5 through 13, which extend from the mouth of Sekiu River to the west, east through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and north to the Canadian border. This area encompasses the San Juan Islands and south into the waters of Hood Canal and South Puget Sound.

When

Puget Sound salmon fishing has summer and winter seasons. Summer fisheries run from May 1 through Sept. 30 and winter “blackmouth” fisheries run from Oct. 1 through April 30, though seasons vary by Marine Area.

Salmon fishing seasons are currently established during the annual North of Falcon salmon season setting process. Anglers can find current salmon seasons through the Fish Washington App or in the Washington Sport Fishing Rules Pamphlet, which is published annually in July. Anglers should also check for emergency rule changes, as fisheries may change in-season in response to conservation needs or when additional opportunities are identified.

What/How

Sampling

WDFW collects biological and fishery data for Puget Sound Chinook salmon in three primary ways:

1. Dockside Sampling

WDFW’s Puget Sound Sampling Unit staff, sometimes referred to as “port samplers” or “fish checkers,” talk with anglers at docks and boat ramps throughout Puget Sound during open fishing for salmon and other marine fish. By answering the sampler’s questions as accurately as you can (RCW 77.12.071), you’ll be part of a collaborative effort to maintain the most up-to-date fisheries estimates throughout the fishing season. Samplers also scan the snout of all Chinook and Coho salmon for Coded-Wire Tags (CWTs), which contain a unique code that identifies when and where the fish was released as a juvenile. Samplers will ask to collect a salmon’s snout if it contains a CWT.

2. Test fishing and Salmon Trip Reports (STRs)

Depending on the area and season, WDFW sampling staff also use test fishing and/or voluntary Salmon Trip Reports to obtain the ratio of the four size and mark-status categories: legal marked, legal unmarked, sub-legal marked and sub-legal unmarked, which are used in the fisheries estimates. The legal size for Chinook salmon can vary by season and Marine Area but is typically a total fish length of 20” or 22” in Puget Sound.

Test Fishing

In some marine areas, sampling staff conduct a test fishery, which is representative of the same time, area and fishing methods used by recreational salmon anglers. Test fishing is conducted to obtain the ratio of the four size and mark status categories listed above. Sampling staff also collect other biological data during test fishing.

Salmon Trip Report Forms

Sampling staff are unable to conduct test fishing during all open salmon fisheries, so WDFW relies on information that the public voluntarily shares by way of Salmon Trip Reports to collect the same ratio information on fish size and mark categories.

Complete the form in person, by mail, or online: <https://str.wdfw-fish.us/home>. Online forms are preferred because the information can be used more quickly in-season.

The information obtained from test fishing and Salmon Trip Reports is used for estimating the ratio of each size and mark category. This data is used in combination with the dockside data, both of which are important, and does not result in “double-counting” of fish. The information provided by the angling public, both dockside and in the Salmon Trip Reports, is critical to robust fisheries estimates.

3. Effort Surveys

Boat Surveys

While out on the water you may encounter WDFW staff who will ask what species you are targeting and where you will be taking your boat out at the end of the day. This information is used to determine how to distribute the dockside sampling effort and how to weight the use of individual sampling sites.

Aerial Surveys

In Marine Areas that are too large to effectively survey by boat, sampling staff conduct aerial surveys to obtain information on the location, number and type of recreational fishing boats.