

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY DECISION

POLICY TITLE: *Anadromous Salmon and Steelhead Hatchery Policy*

POLICY NUMBER: C-3619

Effective Date: *October 24, 2020*

Supersedes: *Policy C-3619 Adopted November 5, 2009*

See Also:

Approved by:

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

Purpose

The purpose of this Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife policy is to *guide hatchery programs to advance the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead (salmon) by continuing to implement of hatchery reform measures; to perpetuate salmon as mitigation for lost abundance due to permanently blocked or lost habitat; and to provide sustainable economic and stability benefits to recreational, commercial and tribal fisheries in Washington State.*

Definition and Intent

Hatchery reform is the scientific and systematic redesign of hatchery programs to help recover wild salmon and steelhead and support sustainable fisheries. The intent of hatchery reform is to improve hatchery effectiveness, ensure compatibility between hatchery production and salmon recovery plans and rebuilding programs, and support sustainable fisheries. *{Yet to be completed: rewording of this paragraph to reflect changed purpose statement above.}*

General Policy Statement

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) shall promote the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead and provide fishery-related benefits by establishing clear goals for each state hatchery, conducting scientifically defensible-operations, and using informed decision making to improve management. Furthermore, it is recognized that many state operated hatcheries are subject to provisions under U.S. v. Washington and U.S. v. Oregon and that hatchery reform actions must be done in close coordination with tribal co-managers. *{Yet to be completed: adding phrasing about providing for a greater level of salmon abundance to achieve ecological, socio-cultural, legal, and fishery-related purposes.}*

Artificial production programs will be designated as one of the following:

- Conservation Programs. Artificial production programs implemented with a conservation objective shall have a net aggregate benefit for the diversity, spatial structure, productivity, and abundance of the target wild population.
- *{Yet to be completed: inserting a paragraph adding mitigation hatcheries as a program designation using a “permanently lost habitat” definition that refers to perpetuation.}*
- Harvest Programs. Artificial production programs implemented to enhance harvest opportunities shall provide fishery benefits while allowing watershed-specific goals for the diversity, spatial structure, productivity, and abundance of wild populations to be met.

Hatchery reform should be implemented as part of an “all-H” strategy that integrates hatchery, harvest, and habitat actions. Although this policy focuses on hatchery operations, in no way does it diminish the significance of habitat protection and restoration. *{Yet to be completed: modifying and adding language to clarify the relationship between mitigation for permanently lost habitat and continuing to work on restorable habitat; to strengthen the policy commitment to habitat protection and restoration of currently damaged habitat that can be restored; and to clarify that this Policy does not alter the harvest intent to pursue and implement mark-selective fishing practices.}*

In implementing the policy guidelines, the Department shall work with the tribes in a manner that is consistent with U.S. v. Washington and U.S. v. Oregon and other applicable state laws and agreements or federal laws and agreements. *{Yet to be completed: strengthening this paragraph to more directly recognize Treaty Indian fishing right obligations and describe a strong Co-Manager relationship on salmon hatchery operations.}*

{Yet to be completed: adding a final paragraph to this section stating that upon adoption of this policy by the Commission, the Director is tasked to begin development of a joint policy on salmon hatchery programs with Tribal Co-Managers that has similar development and joint commitment provisions to those in the current joint policy on hatchery disease protocols.}

Policy Guidelines

1. *{Yet to be completed: adding as the first policy guideline, language that describes and achieves policy recognition of the various genetic risks of hatchery programs.}*
2. *{Yet to be completed: adding as the second policy guideline, language that describes and achieves policy recognition of the ecological risks of hatchery programs.}*
3. *{Yet to be completed: adding a strong Hatchery Genetic Management Plan (HGMP) directive as the third policy guideline. This language will replace old*

guidelines 1, 2, and 3 with a guideline calling for the development of a strong HGMP for every salmon program, done in consultation with all co-managers. Wording is to include requiring the strong HGMPs to be based on the best available and evolving science on hatchery-wild interactions and to include at least the detail described in the Commission direction adopted April 10, 2020 under item 3 of the Policy Guidelines section of the approved document.

4. Externally mark all Chinook, coho and steelhead artificial production except as modified by state-tribal agreements, for conservation *hatchery purposes*, or research needs.
5. Secure necessary funding to ensure that Department-operated hatchery facilities comply with environmental regulations for passage facilities, water intake screening, and pollutant control systems. {Yet to be completed: adding language to clarify the intent to pursue adequate funding necessary for salmon hatchery programs to be fully compliant with environmental protection regulations and fully functional in accordance with the provisions of this Policy.}
6. Work with tribal co-managers to establish network of Wild Salmonid Management Zones (WSMZ)¹ across the state where wild stocks are largely protected from the effects of same species hatchery programs. The Department will have a goal of establishing at least one WSMZ for each species in each major population group (bio-geographical region, strata) in each ESU/DPS. Each stock selected for inclusion in the WSMZ must be sufficiently abundant and productive to be self-sustaining in the future. Fisheries can be conducted in WSMZ if wild stock management objectives are met as well as any necessary federal ESA determinations are received. {Yet to be completed: preparing an alternative to this guideline that calls for providing the highest level of protection from negative effects of hatchery programs to natural origin populations that have not had substantial genetic modification from past hatchery practices or are now in a healthy condition with little or no same species/run hatchery influence, and a process for identifying such populations.}
7. {Yet to be completed: adding a guideline calling for the expanded use of weirs to separate hatchery and natural origin salmon below natural spawning grounds where logistically feasible and agreed to with area-specific Tribal Co-Managers.}

{Yet to be completed: adding an **Adaptive Management** section to the Policy document that contains at least the following elements.

- A section describing the rationale and need for adaptive management, including scientific and management uncertainty, effects of climate change, etc.
- A periodic review reporting section that describes written annual reviews, includes a written qualitative review in 2024 of policy performance over the past 15 years and adds a 10-year comprehensive written review in 2030. The reports should include any proposed adaptive management changes and be provided to the Commission with an opportunity

¹ Wild Salmonid Management Zone is equal in meaning and application to the term of 'Wild Stock Gene Bank' as used and defined in the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan.

for public comment, and to the Tribal Co-Managers for consideration in their governmental processes.

- *Proposals for more extensive monitoring, evaluation or research that is appropriate for an HGMP for a particular hatchery program, or for overarching regional or state-wide short or long-term assessment purposes.*
- *A process for policy adjustments when significant new information or changes in relevant factors occur, including a Co-Manager involvement process.*

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