

# 2021 Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor North of Falcon Forecast Public Meeting

## Via Zoom Platform

February 25, 2021 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

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WDFW Staff: Ron Warren, Mark Baltzell, Kyle Adicks, Leah Snyder, Marlene Wagner, Barbara McClellan, Mike Scharpf, Kim Figlar-Barnes, Jody Pope, James Losee

Mark Baltzell –

- Opening statement
- PowerPoint presentation
  - Staff introductions and structure
  - Meeting purpose

Marlene Wagner

- NOF Management Process explanation
- NOF Regional public meeting schedule for 2021

Kyle Adicks

- Administrative Procedures Act (APA) process – formal process we go through behind the scenes
- CR-101's for coastal commercial and recreational were filed in early January 2021

Jody Pope

- Willapa Bay 2021 Forecasts
  - Chinook = 3,924 natural, 30,470 hatchery. Natural Chinook runsize is already below escapement goal of 4,353
  - Coho = 19,040 natural, 61,614 hatchery
  - Chum = 38,013 natural, 1,064 hatchery
  - Graphs of recent salmon trends
    - Chinook trend is slightly up since 2018 but still below escapement goal
    - Coho has continued to decline over the last several years. This will require us to make difficult decisions relative to coho this year.
    - Chum trend is slightly variable over time

Mike Scharpf

- Grays Harbor 2021 Forecasts
  - Chehalis
    - Spring Chinook forecast = 1,082 natural
    - Fall chinook forecasts = 10,852 natural, 1,862 Hatchery
    - Coho forecasts = 42,324 natural, 23,801 hatchery. These values are prior to prosecuting ocean fisheries.
    - Graphs of recent salmon trends
      - Spring Chinook trend variable but overall low. Last year's forecast about 1200. Performed a bit better than the forecast.
      - Fall Chinook trend lower than previous years. We have had a decent return the last three years.
      - Coho trend is similar to Willapa with a continuous decline since 2015. Last year's forecast was about 40,000. 2020 escapement not yet complete.
  - Humptulips
    - Fall Chinook forecasts 4668 natural, 5696 hatchery
    - Coho forecasts 2519 natural, 7874 hatchery

- Trends for fall Chinook continue to decline
  - Grays Harbor Chum forecast 40138 natural and 2110 hatchery
    - Trend for GH Chum are performing consistently
  - Quinault River coho forecasts = 15,005 natural, 24,645 hatchery
  - Queets River coho forecasts = 3,919 natural, 11,780 hatchery. The natural forecast is extremely low this year.
    - Trends for Queets coho have not been performing very well and things do not appear to be getting better
    - Trends for Quinault coho have been fairly good
  - Grays Harbor management objectives
    - Will not be able to target spring Chinook on the Chehalis
    - Humptulips coho are below escapement goal. Will need to stay under 5% impact rate cap
    - Chehalis Coho have missed the goal 3 of the last 5 years. Will need to stay within the 5% impact rate cap. Pacific Salmon Treaty limitations will be similar to 2018.
    - All other stocks will be managed to meet escapement goals

#### Jody Pope

- Management objectives for Willapa Bay
  - Expect to receive guidance from the Fish and Wildlife Commission for how we will manage fall chinook in 2021. This meeting will be held this Saturday, February 27, 2021
  - Chum – we have made escapement 3 of the last 5 years so we will manage to the natural escapement goal
  - Coho – this will also depend on the FWC meeting this Saturday

#### Public Questions:

##### Lance Gray

- Would it be possible to put the predicted values from the past compared to the actual values?

Mark Baltzell response – I’m sure if it’s something we’ve done in the past, I’m sure we can get that together for the public. Those data are available.

James Losee response – We use lots of different tools each year. Maybe it would be better where we show the methods and the performance.

Ron Warren response – For Saturday’s presentation to the Fish Commission, we will show some data referencing what you are referring to.

##### Dave Hamilton

- If the 2020 data were available now, would it make a difference for the 3 out of 5 years for coho?

Mike Scharpf response – maybe but we are still counting coho. Looks like we will be just at or slightly below the goal. We’ve never had coho escapements available at this time historically

- I do not have an issues restricting fisheries for conservation. I’ve noticed that some groups will bear the burden of any closure. I suggest looking at something like in the ocean for terminal fisheries. i.e. Lose 2 days a week rather than all the days in a row. It’s a way to ensure the conservation burden is shared and equitable across the groups in case the fish return in early or late.

Mike Scharpf made note of his comment

### Ty Wyatt

- Would like to see the harvest per year with the escapement numbers so you can see the benefit of the closures?

Mike Scharpf response – Are you referring to terminal and preterminal data? We can add those data for upcoming meetings

James Losee response – we can discuss this together if you want to chat off this call

### Jessica Weigel

- Who measures escapement in the Chehalis basin? Are the staff biologist or temporary, seasoned crew?

Mike Scharpf response – These data are preterminal, meaning our coho values in this presentation will end up being reduced after ocean fisheries. Historically, the runsizes will be reduced by about 7%. Our crew are the staff that estimate the escapements. Curt Holt has been in the basin for 40 years and is well experienced along with staff with experience

Mark Baltzell response – Curt Holt has trained a lot of biologists through the years. We are very confident in his abilities

### Eric Williamson

- Grays Harbor coho – you made the statement that coho have missed escapement the 3 of the last 5 years. As a recreational fishermen, could we be looking at a quota fishery instead of a typical fishery due to the 5% impact?

Mike Scharpf response – All of our fisheries are based on harvest rates. If the runsize is larger, you will catch more but the rate will be the same and vice versa.

### Francis Estalilla

- In the big picture, we are fishing to the 5% for everything but Chum in Grays Harbor. The only other time we have been in this situation was 2016. It's ridiculous to have anyone release a hatchery fish beyond broodstock needs. The target species we should focus on is hatchery coho and chum this year. Suspect we will be at one fish bag this year. Need to conserve on wild coho and Chinook.

### Melanie Rabagila

- I agree with Francis Estalilla comments. Those fish are there for us to take and we should take them.

### Dave Hamilton

- Those hatchery Chinook in Chehalis have one origin, East Fork Satsop. Need to recognize that not all hatchery fish are the same. Those fish are there to help maintain the natural run.
- Spring Chinook – are you going to shut down the entire river or do some other restriction that protects Spring Chinook, a more targeted approach?
- No reason to close everything the entire time but the upper basin is where the spring Chinook spawn. There is no way for the recreational fishers in that area not to bear most of the conservation. This run cannot take the pressure.
- The Skookumchuck dam is working the way the agency wanted. Now you must deal with it.

Mike Scharpf response – Do not know yet. There is still a lot of NOF to go. We are seeing a little rebound after years of low runsizes. Noted: We will evaluate where shutdowns could be more effective for Spring Chinook.

Greg McMillan

- Willapa Bay – Since the department will be talking to the FWC, escapement numbers look low. Is there any to make a note for these data? Do any of the high flows or fish going over the weir get accounted for in these data?

James Losee response – All the data is accounted for. When the weir goes down, we all are notified but we know there are flaws.

No other questions or comments from the public.

Mark Baltzell

- Thanked staff for putting this all together but there is a lot of work that goes into forecasts making sure we get it right as possible.
- Statewide forecast meeting tomorrow. It will be on TVW and on our website
- We will be at PFMC soon and get our sideboards for the ocean fisheries then move into terminal areas

Meeting ended early 7:15 p.m.