

# FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

## PROPOSED POLICY DECISION

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**POLICY TITLE: Non-native game fish and fisheries**

**POLICY NUMBER: C-**

Cancels or  
Supersedes:

Effective Date:

Termination Date (if applicable):

See Also:C-3010, POL 5408

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
[date]

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

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### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) guidance in meeting its dual mission of preserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats while providing recreational fishing opportunities on non-native game fishes.

### Definition and Intent

This policy recognizes that non-native game fish species play an important role in Washington's diverse recreational fishing landscape, generating thousands of angler trips annually, and contributing millions to local and state economies. This policy does not preclude the use of non-native game fish to establish, maintain, or enhance recreational fishing. The intent of this policy is to provide clear and concise context and guidance as to where, when, and how these socially and economically important species can be managed to provide recreational opportunity. In establishing this statewide policy, the Fish and Wildlife Commission provides guidance to address the interests of recreational anglers to fish for non-native game fish species while meeting conservation and recovery of native species.

### Policy Guidelines

Non-native game fishes, (Appendixes A and B), provide popular recreational fisheries. At the same time, some of these species may pose a threat to populations of native species by depredating, competing, altering habitats, and introducing diseases. In some locations, non-native fish species can enhance native ecosystems, provide more balance to the food web, and help rebuild fisheries.

In recent years, non-native game fish fisheries and their potential threats to native species

have been managed through harvest rules in major anadromous waters. This approach has created concerns among anglers about impacts to the quality and quantity of recreational fisheries targeting non-native game fish. While conservation and recovery of native species is our highest priority; for harvest and other fisheries management, the following guidelines are being used to craft recreational fisheries that help meet the needs and interests of non-native game fish anglers where possible.

This policy will:

- support the conservation and recovery of native species;
- apply best available science of known non-native game fish species impacts on vulnerable salmonids and native species of concern to systematically fashion fisheries that meet the needs and interests of non-native game fish anglers where appropriate;
- be consistent with State laws, rules, Commission Policies, and native species conservation plans; and
- use a precautionary approach to manage non-native game fish fisheries within the Department's available budget.

## Definitions

**These definitions are for the purpose of this policy:**

- **Actively manage:** Direct action by WDFW on a specific water body where staff may enhance, control, or suppress fish species.
- **Anadromous:** The life history strategy of certain fishes (e.g., salmon) where rearing occurs in saltwater and spawning occurs in freshwater.
- **Anadromous Waters:** For rivers and streams, where anadromous fishes can access at any life stage. For lakes, ponds, and reservoirs, where anadromous fish are documented to be present.
- **Control:** To physically remove, limit movement, and/or use biological mechanisms on a target fish species via mechanical, chemical, habitat modification, or regulations.
- **Illegal Introduction:** An aquatic species that has been moved from one source to a receiving water of the state without the express consent of the WDFW.
- **Limited Connectivity:** Non-direct and convoluted downstream connection with anadromous waters. Upstream migration by native anadromous fishes and/or native species of concern is either non-existent or significantly restricted by physical and/or biological characteristics.
- **Native Species of Concern:** Fish and wildlife species endemic to Washington state that are listed in State Wildlife Action Plan, the Priority Habitats and Species list, those listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act.
- **Native game fish:** Fish species endemic to Washington state and defined in RCW 77.08.020 and WAC 220-300-380. See Appendices A and B below.
- **Non-native game fish:** Fish species not endemic to Washington state and defined in RCW 77.08.020 and WAC 220-300-380. See Appendices A and B below.
- **Protect:** Actions that protect, preserve, or conserve native anadromous fish species and/or native species of concern. Actions may include targeting non-native game fish.

- **Significant:** For the purposes of this policy, significant is not a specific and permanent number, rate, and/or range, but something sufficiently great or important to be worthy of attention. However, significance must be measured via direct assessment, peer reviewed, and published.
- **Passively manage:** Indirect intervention by WDFW on a specific water body where staff manipulate fish species primarily through fishing regulations.

## Population Management

### Rivers, Streams, and Beaver Ponds

#### With Native Anadromous Fish

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will manage for the benefit of native anadromous fishes, but may also actively manage for non-native game fish species when impacts to anadromous fishes are directly assessed with best available science, are not significant, and are consistent with anadromous fish management and recovery.
Option B: More Conservative	WDFW will only manage for the benefit of native anadromous fishes.

#### With Native Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will manage for the benefit of native species of concern, but may also actively manage for non-native game fish species when impacts to native species of concern are directly assessed with best avail science, are not significant, and are consistent with native fish management and recovery.
Option B: More Conservative	WDFW will only manage for the benefit of native fish species of concern.

#### Without Native Anadromous Fish or Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may actively manage for the benefit of non-native game fish species.
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### Lakes, Ponds, and Reservoirs

#### With Native Anadromous Fish

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will manage for the benefit of native anadromous fishes and may actively manage for the benefit of non-native game fish species.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW will manage for the benefit of native anadromous fishes, but may also actively manage for non-native game fish species when impacts to anadromous fishes are directly assessed with best available science and are not significant, are consistent with anadromous fish management and recovery.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will only manage for the benefit of anadromous fishes.

#### With Native Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will manage for the benefit of fish species of concern and may actively manage for the benefit of non-native game fish species.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW will manage for the benefit of native species of concern, but may also actively manage for non-native game fish species when impacts to native species of concern are directly assessed with best available science, are not significant, and are consistent with native fish management and recovery.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will only manage for the benefit of native fish species of concern.

#### With Limited or no Connectivity to anadromous waters, or waters with no anadromy

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may actively manage for the benefit of non-native and/or native game fish species.
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## Fishing Regulations

### Rivers, Streams, and Beaver Ponds

#### With Native Anadromous Fish

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will promulgate rules that protect native anadromous fish.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW may promulgate rules that reduce impacts to salmonids. Rules are developed based on assessment of impacts to native anadromous fishes.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will promulgate rules that reduce impacts to salmonids.

#### With Native Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will promulgate rules that protect native species of concern.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW may promulgate rules that reduce impacts to native species of concern. Rules are developed based on assessment of impacts to native species of concern.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will promulgate rules that reduce impacts to salmonids.

#### Without Native Anadromous Fish or Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may promulgate rules that protect game fish.
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## Lakes, Ponds, and Reservoirs

### With Native Anadromous Fish

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will promulgate rules that protect native anadromous fish. Rules are developed based on assessment of impacts to native anadromous fishes.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW may promulgate rules that reduce impacts to salmonids. Rules are developed based on assessment of impacts to native anadromous fishes.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will promulgate rules that reduce impacts to salmonids.

### With Native Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will promulgate rules that protect native species of concern. Rules are developed based on assessment of impacts to native species of concern.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW may promulgate rules that reduce impacts to native species of concern. Rules are developed based on assessment of impacts to native species of concern.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will promulgate rules that reduce impacts to salmonids.

### With Limited or no Connectivity to anadromous waters, or waters with no anadromy

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may promulgate rules that protect game fish. Rules are developed based on assessment of target fish populations.
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## Introduction/Supplementation/Translocation

### Rivers, Streams, and Beaver Ponds

#### With Native Anadromous Fish

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will not introduce, translocate, or supplement via hatchery production non-native game fish.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW may introduce, translocate, or supplement non-native game fish via hatchery production if approved via environmental review (e.g. SEPA, NEPA) (e.g. YY brook trout, tiger muskie).

#### With Native Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will not introduce, translocate, or supplement via hatchery production non-native game fish.
Option B: More Conservative	WDFW may introduce, translocate, or supplement non-native game fish via hatchery production if approved via environmental review (e.g. SEPA, NEPA) (e.g. YY brook trout, tiger muskie).

### Without Native Anadromous Fish or Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may introduce, translocate, or supplement non-native game fish via hatchery production if approved via environmental review (e.g. SEPA, NEPA) (e.g. YY brook trout, tiger muskie).
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### Lakes, Ponds, and Reservoirs

#### With Native Anadromous Fish

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will not introduce, translocate, or supplement via hatchery production non-native game fish
Option B: More Conservative	WDFW may introduce, translocate, or supplement non-native game fish via hatchery production if approved via environmental review (e.g. SEPA, NEPA) (e.g. YY brook trout, tiger muskie).

#### With Native Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will not introduce, translocate, or supplement via hatchery production non-native game fish.
Option B: More Conservative	WDFW may introduce, translocate, or supplement non-native game fish via hatchery production if approved via environmental review process (e.g. SEPA, NEPA) (e.g. YY brook trout, tiger muskie).

#### With Limited or no Connectivity to anadromous waters, or waters with no anadromy

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may introduce, translocate, or supplement non-native game fish via hatchery production if approved via environmental review process (e.g. SEPA, NEPA) (e.g. YY brook trout, tiger muskie).
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### Habitat

#### Rivers, Streams, and Beaver Ponds

##### With Native Anadromous Fish

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects that benefit native anadromous fishes and/or non-native game fish.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW will provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects that benefit native anadromous fishes and/or non-native game fish, where impact of the project to anadromous fishes is not significant.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects that only benefit native game fish, native anadromous fish, or species of concern.

With Native Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects to benefit native species of concern and/or non-native game fish.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW may provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects to benefit native species of concern and/or non-native game fish, where impact of the project to native species of concern is not significant.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects that only benefit native game fish, native anadromous fish, or species of concern.

Without Native Anadromous Fish or Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects to benefit game fish.
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Lakes, Ponds, and Reservoirs

With Native Anadromous Fish

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW will provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects that benefit native anadromous fishes and/or non-native game fish.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW will provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects that benefit native anadromous fishes and/or non-native game fish, where impact of the project to anadromous fishes is not significant.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects that only benefit native game fish, native anadromous fish, or species of concern.

With Native Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects to benefit native species of concern and/or non-native game fish.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW may provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects to benefit native species of concern and/or non-native game fish, where impact of the project to native species of concern is not significant.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects that only benefit native game fish, native anadromous fish or species of concern.

With Limited or no Connectivity to anadromous waters, or waters with no anadromy

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects to benefit non-native game fish where appropriate.
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## Illegal Introduction

### Rivers, Streams, and Beaver Ponds

#### With Native Anadromous Fish

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may utilize passive management techniques to control the illegal introduction of non-native game fish populations. This may include actions like, but not limited to, season or harvest regulations, habitat/flow modifications, etc.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW may actively or passively manage illegally introduced non-native game fish to remove them or control their expansion. This may include actions like, but not limited to, netting, electrofishing, rotenone, or other active removal techniques.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will actively or passively manage to control the establishment or expansion of non-native game fish.

#### With Native Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may utilize passive management techniques to control the illegal introduction of non-native game fish populations. This may include actions like, but not limited to, season or harvest regulations, habitat/flow modifications, etc.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW may actively or passively manage illegally introduced non-native game fish to remove them or control their expansion. This may include actions like, but not limited to, netting, electrofishing, rotenone, or other active removal techniques.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will actively or passively manage to control the establishment or expansion of non-native game fish.

#### Without Native Anadromous Fish or Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may utilize passive management techniques to control the illegal introduction or of non-native game fish populations. This may include actions like, but not limited to, season or harvest regulations, habitat/flow modifications, etc.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW may actively or passively manage illegally introduced non-native game fish to remove them or control their expansion. This may include actions like, but not limited to, netting, electrofishing, rotenone, or other active removal techniques.

### Lakes, Ponds, and Reservoirs

#### With Native Anadromous Fish

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may utilize passive management techniques to control the illegal introduction of non-native game fish populations. This may include actions like, but not limited to, season or harvest regulations, habitat/flow modifications, etc.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW may actively or passively manage illegally introduced non-native game fish to remove them or control their expansion. This may

	include actions like, but not limited to, netting, electrofishing, rotenone, or other active removal techniques.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will actively or passively control the establishment or expansion of non-native game fish.

#### With Native Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may utilize passive management techniques to control the illegal introduction of non-native game fish populations. This may include actions like, but not limited to, season or harvest regulations, habitat/flow modifications, etc.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW may actively or passively manage illegally introduced non-native game fish to remove them or control their expansion. This may include actions like, but not limited to, netting, electrofishing, rotenone, or other active removal techniques.
Option C: Most conservative	WDFW will actively or passively control the establishment or expansion of non-native game fish.

#### With Limited or no Connectivity to anadromous waters, or waters with no anadromy

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may utilize passive management techniques to control the illegal introduction of non-native game fish populations. This may include actions like, but not limited to, season or harvest regulations, habitat/flow modifications, etc.
Option B: Conservative	WDFW may actively or passively manage illegally introduced non-native game fish to remove them or control their expansion. This may include actions like, but not limited to, netting, electrofishing, rotenone, or other active removal techniques.

### Targeted Control

#### Rivers, Streams, and Beaver Ponds

##### With Native Anadromous Fish

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may perform localized control of non-native game fish where appropriate to meet conservation and/or fish management objectives.
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##### With Native Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may perform localized control of non-native game fish where appropriate to meet conservation and/or fish management objectives.
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##### Without Native Anadromous Fish or Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may perform localized control of non-native game fish where appropriate to meet conservation and/or fish management objectives.
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Lakes, Ponds, and Reservoirs

With Native Anadromous Fish

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may perform localized control of non-native game fish where appropriate to meet conservation and/or fish management objectives.
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With Native Species of Concern

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may perform localized control of non-native game fish where appropriate to meet conservation and/or fish management objectives.
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With Limited or no Connectivity to anadromous waters, or waters with no anadromy

Option A: Least Conservative	WDFW may perform localized control of non-native game fish where appropriate to meet conservation and/or fish management objectives.
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Appendix A. List of both native and non-native game fish species found in Washington, as recorded RCW 77.08.020.

<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Native</b>
<i>Ambloplites rupestris</i>	rock bass	No
<i>Coregonus clupeaformis</i>	lake whitefish	No
<i>Ictalurus furcatus</i>	blue catfish	No
<i>Ameiurus melas</i>	black bullhead	No
<i>Ameiurus natalis</i>	yellow bullhead	No
<i>Ameiurus nebulosus</i>	brown bullhead	No
<i>Ictalurus punctatus</i>	channel catfish	No
<i>Lepomis cyanellus</i>	green sunfish	No
<i>Lepomis gibbosus</i>	pumpkinseed	No
<i>Lepomis gulosus</i>	warmouth	No
<i>Lepomis macrochirus</i>	bluegill	No
<i>Lota lota</i>	burbot	Yes
<i>Micropterus dolomieu</i>	smallmouth bass	No
<i>Micropterus salmoides</i>	largemouth bass	No
<i>Oncorhynchus nerka</i>	kokanee (landlocked)	Yes
<i>Perca flavescens</i>	yellow perch	No
<i>Pomoxis annularis</i>	white crappie	No
<i>Pomoxis nigromaculatus</i>	black crappie	No
<i>Prosopium williamsoni</i>	mountain whitefish	Yes
<i>Oncorhynchus aquabonita</i>	golden trout	No
<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii</i>	cutthroat trout	Yes
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	rainbow or steelhead trout	Yes
<i>Salmo salar</i>	Atlantic salmon (landlocked)	No
<i>Salmo trutta</i>	brown trout	No
<i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i>	eastern brook trout	No
<i>Salvelinus malma</i>	Dolly Varden trout	Yes
<i>Salvelinus namaycush</i>	lake trout	No
<i>Sander vitreus</i>	Walleye	No
<i>Thymallus articus</i>	arctic grayling	No

Appendix B. List of native and non-native game fish species found in Washington, as recorded in WAC 220-300-380.

<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Native</b>
<i>Catostomus columbianus</i>	Bridgelip Sucker	Yes
<i>Catostomus macrocheilus</i>	Largescale Sucker	Yes
<i>Catostomus catostomus</i>	Longnose Sucker	Yes
<i>Catostomus platyrhynchus</i>	Mountain Sucker	Yes
<i>Ctenopharyngodon idella</i>	Grass Carp	No
<i>Esox masquinongy x E. lucius</i>	Tiger Muskellunge	No
<i>Mylocheilus caurinus</i>	Peamouth Chub	Yes
<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>	Chinook salmon (landlocked)	Yes
<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>	Coho salmon (landlocked)	Yes
<i>Pylodictus olivaris</i>	Flathead Catfish	No
<i>Ptychocheilus oregonensis</i>	Northern Pikeminnow	Yes
<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>	Bull Trout	Yes
<i>Salmo trutta x Salvelinus fontinalis</i>	Tiger Trout	No

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