

# Amendment to Forage Fish Policy C-3012

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# Outline:

- **Review**
- **Amended Policy**
- **Online Public Comments**
- **Commission questions/discussion**
- **Public Comment**
- **Commission Action**



# Review:

- **March 16, 2023:** Staff provided an overview of policies C-3012 and C-3612 to the Fish Committee.
- **April 6, 2023:** Staff provided recommendations for policies C-3012 and C-3612 to the Fish Committee.
- **April 7, 2023:** The Commission passed a motion to:
  - Rescind the Columbia River smelt policy C-3612.
  - Amend Forage Fish policy C-3012 to clarify that it applies to both marine and freshwater ecosystems.



# Review:

- **June 16, 2023:**

- Staff provided an update to the Fish Committee on the draft forage fish policy changes made to clarify that the policy applies to both marine and freshwater ecosystems.
- The Fish Committee directed staff to post the updated policy on the agency web page for public comment.
- The Full Commission is scheduled to consider and may adopt the revised policy at the August Commission meeting.
- The Fish Committee noted that they may consider revisions to the policy again in the future after the Eulachon Management Plan and the work funded through the biodiversity decision package have been implemented.



# Forage Fish Policy C-3012

## Amendment Revisions:

### Policy

It shall be the policy of the department to maintain healthy populations of forage fish species and individual stocks of forage fish while assuring the integrity of the ecosystem and habitat upon which marine and freshwater resources depend. If insufficient information exists or the condition of the resource is poor, a conservative approach to fisheries will be taken. Fishery management plans will consider the role of forage fish in the marine and freshwater ecosystem and the need to supply sufficient quantities of forage fish for ecosystem needs. A precautionary approach to resource management shall be utilized. The department shall consider the best scientific information available.



# Public Comments

Only two comments received online:

Comment 1: "There is no science based justification to allow, let alone manage, any fishery on forage fishes -- particularly, when other animals higher in their food webs are endangered. Neither sardine, herring, candlefish, sand lance nor eulachon should be subjected to any authorized interception... save them for beleaguered salmon and orcas - even sea lions."

Comment 2: "I am opposed to the provision "Institute a system of marine protected areas which include herring spawning grounds". The policy does not define what "marine protected areas" means, but giving the term its common meaning, the policy does not clarify what kind of marine protected areas would be instituted. Institution of no-take reserves would be overly restrictive in that they would exclude the public from legitimate uses like fishing for other species, boating, and diving which can be done without impact to herring and done during the majority of the year when herring are not spawning."



# Summary:

- Two comments were received online.
  - Neither comment pertained to the proposed amendments
- The WDFW Forage Fish Management Plan (1998) emphasizes the role of forage fish in the ecosystem.
  - Potential harvest is foregone if needed, and the agency uses caution when managing fisheries with limited information.
- WDFW and other agencies have established MPAs to preserve, protect, and/or enhance a variety of marine resources, habitats, and uses. (*MPA policy C-3013*)
  - Specific protections have already been developed for forage fish spawning habitats including herring.



# Draft Motion Language:

**“Move to adopt amendments to Policy C-3012; Forage Fish Management Policy, Goals and Plan as presented by staff. ”**



Young of the year Northern Anchovy.

