

Draft native trout harvest management policy options

July 2024

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is considering a range of options for the resident native trout harvest management policy. Management considerations include both geographic location and assessment of the conservation category for the populations in that area. WDFW staff have grouped management consideration into two geographic areas:

- Areas that have no or limited connectivity to the anadromous zone.
- Areas within the anadromous zone.

Within each geographic location, there are differing management considerations based on levels of conservation concern. In assessing the level of conservation concern, WDFW staff are focused on the presence of, and protection needs directly related to resident native trout species. WDFW must also consider species of greatest conservation need (SGCN), including margined sculpin, island butterfly, leopard frog, Olympic mud minnow, pygmy whitefish, and more.

Each of these categories is followed by two or three alternative management approaches that will provide general management guidance to staff, based on the final policy direction adopted by the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Geographic area: no or limited connectivity to anadromous zone

Conservation categories:

1. **No known conservation concerns** – primarily related to resident native trout, include consideration for other native species such as those identified as species greatest conservation need (SGCN, see above).

Policy options

- a) WDFW may promulgate new special rules for resident native trout that maximize recreational angler harvest. Rules will be biologically based.
- b) WDFW manages resident native trout under current statewide general fishing rules and existing special rules.

c) WDFW may promulgate new special rules that restrict harvest of resident native trout. Rules can be biologically or socially based.

2. **Known conservation concerns** – primarily related to resident native trout, include consideration for other native species such as those identified as species greatest conservation need (SGCN, see above).

Policy options

- a) WDFW may manage resident native trout under current statewide general fishing rules.
- b) WDFW may promulgate special rules to minimize or eliminate recreational angler harvest of resident native trout. This may include changes to size and/or daily limits, seasons, and/or gear restrictions. Rules will be biologically based.

Geographic area: anadromous zone

Conservation categories:

1. **No known conservation concerns** – primarily related to resident native trout, include consideration for other native species such as those identified as species greatest conservation need (SGCN, see above).

Policy options

- a) WDFW may promulgate new special rules for resident native trout that maximize recreational angler harvest. Rules will be biologically based.
 - b) WDFW manages resident native trout under current statewide general fishing rules and existing special rules.
 - c) WDFW may promulgate new special rules that restrict harvest of resident native trout. Rules can be biologically or socially based.
2. **Known conservation concerns** – primarily related to resident native trout, include consideration for other native species such as those identified as species greatest conservation need (SGCN, see above).
 - a) WDFW may manage resident native resident under current statewide general fishing rules.
 - b) WDFW may promulgate special rules to minimize or eliminate recreational angler harvest of resident native trout. This may include changes to size and/or daily limits, seasons, and/or gear restrictions. Rules will be biologically based.
 - c) Close recreational fishing for resident native trout. Closures will be biologically based.
 3. **Known conservation concerns** - impacts to juvenile salmon/steelhead production, rearing, or outmigration.

- a) If it can be demonstrated that implementing special rules will minimize or eliminate impacts to juvenile salmon and/or steelhead when fishing for resident native trout, WDFW may make changes to size and/or daily limits, seasons, and/or gear restrictions. Rules will be biologically based and/or a term and condition of ESA.
- b) WDFW will close resident native trout to recreational fishing to eliminate recreational impacts to threatened, depressed, or ESA listed species.