# FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY DECISION

POLICY TITLE: Grays Harbor Basin POLICY NUMBER: C-3621

**Salmon Management** 

Cancels or Effective Date: March 1, 2014

Supercedes: NA C-3621 Grays Harbor Basin Termination Date: December 31, 2023

Salmon Management (2014)

Approved February 8, 2014
See Also: Policies C-3608, C-3619 C-3633 by: Chair

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

1 Purpose

2 The purpose of this Policy is to set management objectives and to provide management

3 guidance for natural (in-river) and hatchery production, and recreational and commercial

4 harvest of spring and fall Chinook, coho, and chum salmon populations in the Grays Harbor

5 Basin.

6 The objective of this policy is to advance the conservation and restoration of wild salmon. Where-

7 consistent with this conservation objective, the policy also seeks to maintain or enhance the

8 economic well-being and stability of the fishing industry in the state, provide the public with-

9 outdoor recreational experiences and a fair distribution of fishing opportunities throughout the

10 Grays Harbor Basin, and improve the technical rigor of fishery management. Enhanced

11 transparency and information sharing are needed to restore and maintain public trust and

12 support for management of Grays Harbor salmon fisheries.

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**Authority Definition and Intent** 

15 This Policy is established by the Washington State Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission)

and is applicable to the management by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

17 (Department) of spring and fall Chinook, coho, and chum salmon (salmon) in the Grays Harbor

18 Basin as the Commission's interpretation of the Commission and Department mandate

19 described in RCW 77.04.112.

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21 The intent of this Policy is to provide guidance for the management of natural- and hatchery-

22 <u>origin production, and recreational and commercial harvest of salmon in the Grays Harbor</u>

Basin. The Grays Harbor Basin is defined as Grays Harbor and its freshwater tributaries.

24 Management of natural- and hatchery-origin production and harvest will be transparent and

25 consistent with normal agency operations and existing agency and Commission policies (e.g., C-

26 3633).

27 This policy sets a general management direction and provides guidance for Washington

Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) management of all Pacific salmon returning to the Grays Harbor Basin. The Grays Harbor Basin is defined as Grays Harbor and its freshwater tributaries.

## **Policy Objectives**

These policy objectives are a statement of the Commission's values and vision for the future conditions of Grays Harbor environment, the salmon populations in Grays Harbor, and the recreational and commercial fishing opportunities in the marine and freshwaters of Grays Harbor Basin.

- 1. Productive natural-spawning populations that are locally adapted, diverse genetically to maintain adaptability, and occur in densities appropriate for the local environment.
- 2. Sustainable fishing levels for both recreational and commercial fisheries that maximize harvest opportunities.
- 3. Management actions associated with harvest, hatchery production<sup>1</sup>, and naturalorigin escapement adhere to ecosystem-based management principles that consider the risks and benefits to species and habitats within the Grays Harbor Basin system, including vulnerabilities to a changing climate.

<sup>1</sup>Hatchery production falls under the authority of C-3633 Joint Policy Agreement for the Management of Anadromous Salmon and Steelhead Hatcheries Between Treaty Tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

#### **Adaptive Management**

Each year appropriate data (performance measures; see below) on commercial and recreational harvest, and natural- and hatchery- origin escapement into the rivers of Grays Harbor will be collected and evaluated. These data and subsequent analyses must be used to determine if the policy objectives are being achieved. If objectives are not being optimally achieved, harvest and hatchery production levels should be altered, and escapement goals reevaluated until objectives are optimally achieved. Monitoring, data collection, and data analyses are conducted as part of normal agency operations, and the adaptive management process allows for changes in commercial and recreational harvest, and natural-origin escapement goals without approval from the Commission.

#### **General Policy Statement**

This policy provides a cohesive set of principles and guidance to promote the conservation of wild salmon and steelhead and improve the Department's management of salmon in the Grays-Harbor Basin. The Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) recognizes that management decisions must be informed by fishery monitoring (biological and economic), and that innovation and adaptive management will be necessary to achieve the stated purpose of this policy. By improving communication, information sharing, and transparency, the Department shall promote improved public support for management of Grays Harbor salmon fisheries.

 State commercial and recreational fisheries will need to increasingly focus on the harvest of abundant hatchery fish. Mark selective fisheries are a tool that permits the harvest of abundant hatchery fish while reducing impacts on wild stocks needing protection. As a general policy, the Department shall implement mark selective salmon fisheries, unless the wild populations substantially affected by the fishery are meeting spawner (e.g., escapement goal) and broodstock management objectives. In addition, the Department may consider other management approaches provided they are as or more effective than a mark-selective fishery in achieving spawner and broodstock management objectives.

Fishery and hatchery management measures should be implemented as part of an "all-H" strategy that integrates hatchery, harvest, and habitat systems. Although the policy focuses onfishery management, this policy in no way diminishes the significance of habitat protection and restoration.

In implementing the policy guidelines, the Department will work with the tribes in a manner-that is consistent with U.S. v. Washington and other applicable state and federal laws and agreements.

#### **Guiding Principles**ance:

The Department will apply the following principles in the management of salmon in the Grays Harbor Basin:

1) Promote the conservation of salmon by managing fisheries consistent with conservation objectives. and restoration of salmon and steelhead by working with our partners (including Regional Fishery Enhancement Groups and Lead Entities) to protect and restore habitat-productivity, implementing hatchery reform, and managing fisheries consistent with conservation objectives.

2) Meet the terms of U.S. v. Washington, with spawning escapement goals and fisheries

developed and jointly agreed to with the Quinault Indian Nation. The Department shall seek agreement with the Quinault Indian Nation to manage fisheries with the intent of meeting salmon spawner goals for the Grays Harbor Basin.

and other federal court orders and promote a strong relationship with the Quinault Indian Nation. Spawning escapement goals, fisheries, and artificial production objectives will be developed and jointly agreed with the Quinault Indian Nation. The Department shall seek agreement with the Quinault Indian Nation to manage fisheries with the intent of meeting the Chinook and coho salmon spawner goals for the Humptulips River and the Chinook and coho spawner goals for the Chehalis River. Agreements between the Department and the Quinault Indian Nation related to salmon in the Grays Harbor Basin shall be made available to the public through the agency web site.

- 3) Calculate performance measures (e.g., proportion of natural spawners that are of hatcheryorigin pHOS) that estimate the consequence of a specific management action with respect to
  one or more of the policy objectives. This will allow for appropriate monitoring of management
  actions and facilitate adaptive management, if necessary. The Department will work through
  the Pacific Salmon Commission to promote the conservation of Grays Harbor salmon and, in a
  manner consistent with the provisions of the Pacific Salmon Treaty, pursue the implementation
  of fishery management actions necessary to achieve agreed conservation objectives.
- 4) <u>Develop and improve, evaluate, and implement in-season fishery management models, procedures, and management measures that are projected to enhance the effectiveness of fishery management relative to preseason predictions. Within the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) process, the Department will support management measures that promote the attainment of Grays Harbor conservation objectives consistent with the Council's Salmon Fishery Management Plan.</u>
- 5) Work with partners (including Regional Fishery Enhancement Groups, Office of the Chehalis
   Basin, nonprofit organizations, the public, and Lead Entities) to protect and restore habitat
   productivity.
- In a manner consistent with conservation objectives, seek to enhance the overall economic
   well-being and stability of Grays Harbor Basin fisheries.
- 6) In a manner consistent with conservation objectives, the Department shall seek to enhance the overall economic well-being and stability of Grays Harbor Basin fisheries.
   When establishing fishery seasons, the Department shall consider the anticipated impact of both Quinault Indian Nation and nontreaty fisheries in the Grays Harbor Basin.
  - 7) Recreational and WFDW-managed commercial fisheries shall be structured (e.g., schedule, location, gear) to minimize gear and other fishery conflicts. WDFW-managed commercial fisheries in a fishing area or aggregate area (i.e., Area 2A/2B/2D; or Area 2C) shall be scheduled with the understanding of the importance of providing periods of unobstructed passage for salmon into freshwater habitats.
  - In a manner consistent with conservation objectives, fishing opportunities will be fairly distributed across fishing areas and reflect the diverse interests of WDFW- managed fishers.
  - 8) Harvest management:

a. State commercial and recreational fisheries will focus on the harvest of hatchery fish. As a general policy, the Department shall implement mark-selective salmon fisheries, unless the wild populations substantially affected by the fishery are meeting spawner (e.g., escapement goals) and broodstock management objectives. In addition, the Department may consider avoidance, alternative gears, or other selective fishing concepts along with other management approaches provided they are as or more

- 152 effective than a mark- selective fishery in achieving spawner and broodstock 153 management objectives. State commercial fisheries that encounter stocks that are 154 forecasted to be below escapement objectives will utilize gear types that provide the 155 most conservation benefit (e.g., tangle nets). b. The Department shall work through the Pacific Salmon Commission to promote the 156 conservation of Grays Harbor salmon and, in a manner consistent with the provisions of 157 the Pacific Salmon Treaty, pursue the implementation of fishery management actions 158 159 necessary to achieve policy objectives. 160 c. Within the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) process, the Department shall 161 support management measures that promote the attainment of Grays Harbor policy 162 objectives consistent with the Council's Salmon Fishery Management Plan. 163 d. The Department shall conduct Management Strategy Evaluations for stocks to evaluate alternative harvest control rules. Until such actions are implemented, the Department 164 165 shall use the current natural spawner escapement goals: 166 Chehalis spring Chinook: 1,400 167 Chehalis fall Chinook: 9,753 168 iii. Humptulips fall Chinook: 3,573 Chehalis coho: 28,506 169 iv. 170 v. Humptulips coho: 6,894 171 vi. Grays Harbor chum: 21,000 172 173
  - e. Fishery Management: Subject to the provisions of the Adaptive Management section, the following species-specific sections describe the presumptive path for achieving conservation objectives. Grays Harbor fisheries will be structured to result in a fair sharing of harvestable fish between WDFW-managed commercial, marine recreational, and freshwater recreational fisheries. Mixed stock fisheries, WDFW marine commercial, recreational, and lower mainstem Chehalis River recreational fisheries will be managed to the extent that they do not preclude tributary recreational fisheries. WDFW-managed fisheries shall not result in an impact of more than 5% of the return when the natural-origin adult return exceeds the spawner objective by less than 10%.

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- i. **Spring Chinook Salmon:** Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goals for natural-origin spring Chinook.
- ii. Fall Chinook Salmon: Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goals for natural-spawning<sup>1</sup> fall Chinook. The WDFW commercial fishery will be managed to incidental harvest only of fall Chinook during fisheries directed at coho and chum salmon.

- iii. Coho Salmon: Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goals for natural-spawning<sup>1</sup> coho salmon. Provisions within the Pacific Salmon Treaty may prompt further restrictions when forecasted abundances are in the "low abundance category".
- iv. Chum Salmon: Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goals for natural-origin chum salmon.

- 9. Annual Fishery Management Review. The Department shall annually evaluate fishery management tools and parameters and identify improvements as necessary to accurately predict fishery performance and escapement.
- <sup>1</sup> Current escapement goals were calculated prior to mass-marking of hatchery fish; therefore these stocks are managed as natural spawners, i.e., fish that lay eggs in the gravel.

Recreational and WFDW-managed commercial fisheries shall be structured (e.g., schedule, location, gear) to minimize gear and other fishery conflicts. WDFW-managed commercial gillnet fisheries in a fishing area or aggregate area (i.e., Area 2A/2B/2D; or Area 2C) shall be scheduled, if possible, so that in any given calendar week there are a minimum of three consecutive dayswhen no treaty or state-managed commercial fisheries occur. If the treaty fishery occurs 4 or more days in a calendar week, no WDFW-managed commercial fishery shall occur in the remaining days of the week.

9) Monitoring, sampling, and enforcement programs will adequately account for species and population impacts (landed catch and incidental fishing mortality) of all recreational and WDFW-managed commercial fisheries and ensure compliance with state regulations.

10) If it becomes apparent that a scheduled fishery will exceed its preseason catch expectation, and the overage will put at risk the attainment of conservation objectives, the Department shall implement in-season management actions that are projected to enhance the effectiveness of fishery management relative to the attainment of the conservation objectives and impact sharing in the preseason fishery plan.

11) Salmon management will be well documented, transparent, well-communicated, and accountable. The Department shall strive to make ongoing improvements in the transparency of fishery management and for effective public involvement. These shall include: a) clearly describing management objectives in a document available to the public prior to the initiation of the preseason planning process; b) enhancing opportunities for public engagement during the preseason fishery planning process; c) communicating in-season information and management actions to advisors and the public; d) seeking Quinault Indian Nation support for the inclusion of observers in co-management meetings; and e) striving to improve

228 communication with the public regarding co-management issues that are under discussion. 229 230 12) The Department shall seek to improve fishery management and technical tools through 231 improved fishery monitoring, the development of new tools, and rigorous assessment of fishery 232 models and parameters. 233 234 13) The Department shall explore and pursue options to increase hatchery production in the 235 Grays Harbor Basin in a manner consistent with the Hatchery and Fishery Reform policy (C-236 3619). These shall include: 237 a. The-Department shall work with the public and parties to the Wynoochee Settlement-238 Agreement with the goal of submitting to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission by 239 September 30, 2014 the Wynoochee Dam mitigation plan and initiate spending of the 240 mitigation funds in an expeditious manner thereafter. 241 b. The Department shall seek restoration of hatchery funding cut in the Grays Harbor-242 Basin since the 2007-2009 biennium. 243 244 14) When a mark-selective fishery occurs, the mark-selective fishery shall be implemented, 245 monitored, and enforced in a manner designed to achieve the anticipated conservation-246 benefits. 247 248 **Fishery and Species-Specific Guidance** 249 Subject to the provisions of the Adaptive Management section, the following fishery-and-250 species-specific sections describe the presumptive path for achieving conservation objectives-251 and a fair sharing of harvestable fish. 252 253 **Spring Chinook Salmon** 254 Subject to the adaptive management provisions of this policy, the Department will manage spring Chinook salmon fisheries consistent with the Guiding Principles and the following 255 256 objectives: 257 1) Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goals for wild-258 spring Chinook. In no case, shall WDFW-managed fisheries result in an impact of more-259 than 5% of the return when the natural-origin adult return exceeds the spawner-260 objective by less than 10%. 261 2) Prioritize freshwater recreational fisheries, with an objective of opening freshwater 262 areas no later than May 1. 263 264 **Fall Chinook Salmon** Subject to the adaptive management provisions of this policy, the Department will manage fall-265

Chinook salmon fisheries consistent with the Guiding Principles and the following objectives:

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- 1) Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goals for wild and hatchery Chinook. In no case, shall WDFW-managed fisheries result in an impact of more than 5% of the return when the natural-origin adult return exceeds the spawner objective by less than 10%.
- 2) The fishery management objectives for fall Chinook salmon, in priority order, are to: a) achieve spawner goals;
  - b) provide meaningful recreational fishing opportunities; and
  - c) limit commercial fishery impacts to the incidental harvest of fall Chinookduring fisheries directed at other species.
- 3) The following guidelines describe the anticipated sharing of fishery impacts in the Grays Harbor Basin between WDFW-managed commercial, marine recreational, and freshwater recreational fisheries. Variation from these guidelines may occur if it will-result in fisheries that more closely achieve the stated purpose of this policy.
  - a) WDFW managed commercial fisheries in the Grays Harbor Basin shall have the following impact limits:
    - Areas 2A, 2B, 2D: the impact rate of the state-managed commercial-fishery shall be 0.8% on natural-origin Chehalis fall Chinook when the impact of the recreational fishery is equal to or greater than 4.2%. The impact rate of the WDFW-managed commercial fishery may be less than 0.8% when conservation concerns for natural-origin Chehalis fall Chinook result in a less than 4.2% impact rate in the recreational fishery.
    - When the terminal run of natural-origin Chehalis fall Chinook reaches an abundance of 18,793, the impact rate of the WDFW- managed commercial fishery shall linearly increase from 0.8% to a maximum of 5.8% at a terminal run of 25,000 natural-origin Chehalis fall Chinook.
    - Area 2C: the impact rate of the state-managed commercial fishery shall-be 1.2% on natural-origin Humptulips fall Chinook when the impact of the recreational fishery is equal to or greater than 3.8%. The impact rate of the WDFW-managed commercial fishery may be less than 1.2% when conservation concerns for Humptulips natural origin fall Chinook result in a less than 3.8% impact rate in the recreational fishery.
    - When the terminal run of natural-origin Humptulips fall Chinook reaches an abundance of 3,779, the impact rate of the WDFW- managedcommercial fishery shall linearly increase from 1.2% to a maximum of 5.4% at a run of 4,070 natural-origin Humptulips fall Chinook.
  - b) Chehalis Fall Chinook. Fisheries shall be developed with the intent of achieving

Run Size	% to Freshwater	% to Area 2-2
<del>Small<sup>1</sup></del>	<del>73%</del>	<del>27%</del>
<del>Large</del>	<del>52%</del>	4 <del>8%</del>

<sup>1</sup>A small run is defined as a run size less than 110% of the spawner goal. A largerun is defined as more than 182% of the spawner goal for fall Chinook salmonand more than 156% of the spawner goal for coho and chum salmon. c) Humptulips Fall Chinook. Fisheries shall be developed with the intent ofachieving the following sharing of impacts within the recreational fishing sector:

Run Size	% to Freshwater	% to Area 2-2
<del>Small</del>	<del>78%</del>	<del>22%</del>
<del>Large</del>	<del>63%</del>	<del>37%</del>

# Coho Salmon

Subject to the adaptive management provisions of this policy, the Department will manage coho salmon fisheries consistent with the Guiding Principles and the following objectives:

- 1) Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goals for wild and hatchery coho salmon. In no case, shall WDFW-managed fisheries result in an impact of more than 5% of the return when the natural origin adult return exceeds the spawner objective by less than 10%.
- 2) The following guidelines describe the anticipated sharing of fishery impacts in the Grays Harbor Basin between marine recreational and freshwater recreational fisheries. Variation from these guidelines may occur if it will result in fisheries that more closely achieve the stated purpose of this policy.
  - a. Chehalis Coho. Fisheries shall be developed with the intent of achieving the following sharing of impacts within the recreational fishing sector:

Run Size	% to Freshwater	% to Area 2-2
<del>Small</del>	<del>73%</del>	<del>27%</del>
<del>Large</del>	<del>55%</del>	<del>45%</del>

b. Humptulips Coho. Fisheries shall be developed with the intent of achieving the following sharing of impacts within the recreational fishing sector:

Run Size	% to Freshwater	% to Area 2 2
<del>Small</del>	<del>82%</del>	<del>18%</del>
<del>Large</del>	<del>66%</del>	<del>34%</del>

Chum Salmon

Subject to the adaptive management provisions of this policy, the Department will manage

336 chum salmon fisheries consistent with the Guiding Principles and the following objectives: 337 1) Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goals for wild and hatchery chum salmon. In no case, shall WDFW-managed fisheries result in an impact of 338 339 more than 5% of the return when the natural origin adult return exceeds the spawner-340 objective by less than 10%. 2) No fisheries directed at chum salmon shall occur unless the adult coho salmon return-341 342 exceeds spawner objectives, or if coho salmon impacts remain after coho and Chinook 343 salmon fisheries. 344 3) The following guidelines describe the anticipated sharing of fishery impacts between 345 marine recreational and freshwater recreational fisheries. Variation from theseguidelines may occur if it will result in fisheries that more closely achieve the stated-346 purpose of this policy. 347 a. Fisheries shall be developed with the intent of achieving the following sharing-348 349 of impacts within the recreational fishing sector: Run Size % to Freshwater % to Area 2-2 **Small** >98% **S2%** >98% 52% **Large** 350 351 **Adaptive Management** 352

The Commission recognizes that adaptive management will be essential to achieve the purpose of this policy. Department staff may implement actions to manage adaptively to achieve the objectives of this policy and will coordinate with the Commission, as needed, in order to implement corrective actions. Components of the adaptive management will be shared with the public through the agency web site and will include the following elements:

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1) Annual Fishery Management Review. The Department shall annually evaluate fishery management tools and parameters and identify improvements as necessary to accurately predict fishery performance and escapement.

As a component of the annual fishery management review, the Department shall assess—if spawner goals were achieved for Chehalis spring Chinook, Chehalis fall Chinook,—Humptulips fall Chinook, Chehalis coho, Humptulips coho, and Grays Harbor chum—salmon. If the number of natural-origin spawners was less than the goal in 3 out of the—last 5 years (beginning in 2009), the Department shall implement the following—measures:

a. The predicted fishery impact for that stock in WDFW-managed fisheries in the Grays Harbor Basin will not exceed 5% of the adult return to Grays Harbor; and b. If a spawner goal for fall Chinook salmon is not achieved, the Grays Harbor control zone<sup>2</sup> off of the mouth of Grays Harbor will be implemented no later than the second Monday in August and continue until the end of September.

2) In-season Management. The Department shall develop, evaluate, and implement

fishery management models, procedures, and management measures that are projected to enhance the effectiveness of fishery management relative to management based on preseason predictions.

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39 Spawner Goals. The Department shall review spawner goals to ensure that they reflect the current productivity of salmon. The review shall be initiated with Chinook salmon in 2014.

To promote improved management of chum salmon, the Department shall include in the 2015annual review an evaluation of options to improve chum salmon stock assessments. The Department shall subsequently initiate in 2015 a review of the spawner goal for chum salmon.

## **Delegation of Authority**

spawner goal for cohe and chum salmon.

The Commission delegates the authority to the Director, through the North of Falcon stakeholder consultation process, to set seasons for recreational and WDFW-managed commercial fisheries in Grays Harbor, to adopt permanent and emergency regulations to implement these fisheries, and to make harvest agreements with treaty tribes and other government agencies. The Commission fully expects that the Director and agency staff will continue to communicate with the public, and the Commission, to consider new information, evaluate alternate means for carrying out policy objectives, and consider instances in which it may make sense to deviate from the presumptive path forward. That is the nature of both adaptive management and policy implementation, when faced with a dynamic natural environment.

1. A small run is defined as a run size less than 110% of the spawner goal. A large run is defined as more than 182% of the spawner goal for fall Chinook salmon and more than 156% of the

2.The Grays Harbor control zone is defined as an area at the entrance to Grays Harbor bounded by a line from the lighthouse 1 mile south of the south jetty to buoy #2 to buoy #3 to the tip of the north jetty to the tip of the exposed end of the south jetty.