

Concise Explanatory Statement (CES)

2025 North of Falcon Recreational Fishery Regulations

Rules amended as part of this rule-making:

220-312-020 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Coast
220-312-030 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Southwest
220-312-040 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Puget Sound
220-312-050 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Eastside
220-312-060 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Columbia River
220-313-020 – Closed areas – Saltwater salmon angling
220-313-060 – Puget Sound salmon – Saltwater seasons and daily limits
220-313-070 – Coastal salmon – Saltwater seasons and daily limits

Rules repealed as part of this rule-making:

N/A

Rules created as part of this rule-making:

N/A

1. Background/Summary of Project:

This Concise Explanatory Statement (CES) describes the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW or Department's) reasons for adopting 2025-26 recreational salmon fishing rules and responds to public comments received on the proposed rules. The rules, once adopted, will be set forth in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) listed above. The management year for salmon fishery planning begins on May 1 and ends on April 30 each year.

Rule-making by the Department is guided by resource management policies adopted by the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) at its regularly or specially scheduled meetings that are open to the public. Those policies can be found at:

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/commission/policies>

In addition, the Department's Director and staff interact with the Commission by reporting on policy implementation, and the effect of rule development and implementation, as part of the Commission's public meetings. Commission meeting agendas, and staff reports to the Commission, are available at: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/commission/meetings>

Due to the complexity of the annual salmon season setting process, the Commission typically delegates the authority to the Director, as authorized by law, to adopt the rules to implement the outcomes of the process, while providing policy guidance as described above. For example, the North of Falcon Policy (C-3608) contains policy objectives to guide fishery rule-making and provides an expressed delegation of rule-making authority to the Director.

The Administrative Procedure Act (APA) envisions a rule-making process by which input is solicited from the public during the preproposal (CR-101) phase to aid in the development of proposed rules. This public process is then carried through as the rules, once proposed (CR-102), undergo additional public review and comment. The Director employs agency staff to assist in

the rule-making process but retains the final delegated decision-making authority on such rules. After consideration of the public comment received and staff recommendations, the Director signs the CR-103 rule-making order adopting the final rules.

The APA process for these proposed rules began when the CR-101 notice of intended rule-making was filed on January 21, 2025 (WSR 25-03-120). Thereafter, the Department relied upon several forums to gather information and interact with regional fishery managers and constituent groups to develop the proposed rules that were presented in the CR-102 filed on May 6, 2025 (WSR 25-10-094) and available for formal public review and comment.

These rule-making processes are described in more detail as follows:

North of Falcon (NOF)/Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) processes used to develop proposed rules (the “Pre-notice Inquiry” (CR-101) stage of rule-making)

State, federal, and tribal fishery managers, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) work collaboratively with recreational and commercial stakeholders during the NOF and PFMC meetings to develop fishery options based on the best available science. Data and information examined and considered include expected annual salmon returns, Endangered Species Act (ESA) requirements, expressed as annual stock-specific exploitation rates, treaty fishing rights of Northwest Tribes, and resource management policies of the Fish and Wildlife Commission. The name "North of Falcon" refers to Cape Falcon, Oregon, which is the southern border of active management for Washington salmon stocks. This process consists of a series of public meetings involving federal and state fishery managers, who work together with input from recreational, commercial fishing, and conservation interests to develop fishing seasons.

The NOF planning process deliberately overlaps with the March and April meetings of the PFMC, the federal authority responsible for setting offshore ocean salmon seasons within the Exclusive Economic Zone, which extends from 3 to 200 miles off the Pacific coast. Collaboration with federal fishery managers and fishing interests in offshore waters is essential to ensure coordinated state and federal fisheries for salmon stocks that migrate freely between state and federal waters. In addition to the two PFMC meetings, the states of Washington and Oregon, and the Treaty Tribes, sponsor additional meetings to discuss alternative fishing seasons that meet conservation and harvest sharing objectives. The State of Washington and tribal co-managers also hold a series of government-to-government meetings during the North of Falcon process to develop state and tribal meetings. Additionally, WDFW solicits input from advisory groups whose representatives represent a diverse range of user group interests.

The development of salmon fishing seasons begins with the completion of the previous year's natural spawning escapement and hatchery return estimates by state and tribal biologists. These biologists apportion catch in each area to specific management groups and calculate a total run-size for each group. Biologists complete this analysis, also known as a run-reconstruction, each fall or early winter. Based on total run size, and the associated survival rates, state and tribal biologists forecast the number of salmon and steelhead returning for the coming year. State and tribal biologists, in coordination with PFMC technical representatives, typically complete the forecasts each year by late February. From the run-size forecasts, fisheries managers determine the number of fish available for directed and/or incidental harvest according to the management objectives. Once the forecasts and the number of fish available for harvest are determined, state

and tribal fisheries managers begin the process of developing specific annual fishing regulation proposals to achieve, but not exceed, those harvest levels.

The 2025 North of Falcon forecast kickoff meeting occurred February 28, 2025. WDFW staff presented and reviewed the 2025 pre-season forecasts of salmon abundance with interested stakeholders. Additional public meetings were scheduled as shown below in Table 1. Note that meetings were held using an online, in person, or hybrid format.

Table 1. Public meetings for 2025 North of Falcon season setting process.

Geographic Area	Date(s)	Location
Statewide Forecasts	February 28	Olympia/Hybrid
Ocean - PFMC	March 5-11	Vancouver WA, Hybrid
Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay	March 12	Zoom webinar
Upper Columbia and Snake River	March 18	Wenatchee
NOF #1 (Puget Sound)	March 19	Olympia/Hybrid
PFMC Washington Hearing	March 24	Westport
NOF #2 (Puget Sound)	March 25	Lynnwood/Hybrid
Coastal and Strait of Juan de Fuca	April 1	Zoom webinar
Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay	April 2	Zoom webinar
Lower Columbia	April 3	Ridgefield/Hybrid
Puget Sound Freshwater and Marine Recreational	April 3	Zoom webinar
All / PFMC	April 10-15	San Jose CA, Hybrid

During these public meetings, WDFW gathered input from stakeholders on the structuring of fishing seasons, reviewed possible rule changes, and provided the public with information on the status of the 2025 planning process. WDFW considered the fishing regulation proposals shared at public meetings as a work in progress (i.e., not final proposals) that would be further informed by comments received from meeting participants. Additionally, fishing proposals were informed by the public comments received online via WDFW's website and submitted by e-mail, providing an alternate avenue to provide comment, particularly for those individuals who could not attend the scheduled public meetings and webinars.

During the 2025 NOF season planning process for Puget Sound and coastal terminal management areas, the tribal co-managers and WDFW also conducted technical meetings and policy level discussions to agree upon conservation objectives, run size forecasts, and estimates of the allowable treaty and non-treaty catch shares for the various salmon runs considered in defining fishing levels. WDFW and the tribes also developed fishing schedules for both treaty- and non-treaty salmon fisheries. A summary of some of the larger issues confronted in these government-to-government meetings is included in the Puget Sound marine and freshwater rationale for rules below. Written and oral comments received during this process were considered in the development of WDFW's rule-making package.

The recreational salmon fishing seasons proposed for adoption by WDFW in 2025 are a product of the government-to-government tribal-state negotiations, the open public process component of the annual North of Falcon process, and the APA's rule-making process.

In the Columbia River, most of the fisheries are managed under the current ten-year *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement (2018-27) that was adopted as an order of the United States District Court for the District of Oregon. This agreement outlines the escapement goals, ESA limits, and treaty and non-treaty harvest sharing. Tribal treaty fisheries are developed by the four Columbia River Treaty Tribes and state-licensed buyers are authorized to purchase treaty caught fish through Compact hearings. Written and oral comments received during the NOF process were considered in the development of WDFW's proposed rules. Several tributary and certain seasonal mainstem Columbia River recreational fisheries upstream of Highway 395 at Pasco, WA are not considered *U.S. v. Oregon* fisheries and have separate ESA coverage, where applicable.

The Columbia River recreational salmon fishing seasons proposed for adoption by WDFW in 2025 are a product of the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement, agency and Commission policy guidance and the open public process component of the annual North of Falcon process. In addition, rule proposals developed in connection with these processes have been vetted based upon public input obtained in the public rule-making process undertaken by WDFW pursuant to the APA.

CR-102 rule proposal phase with comment period and formal rule-making hearings.

Based upon all the information and outreach generated through these forums, draft fishery rules were developed for consideration in the public rule-making process that follows the filing of a proposed rule. Accordingly, the CR-102 was filed on May 6, 2025 (WSR 25-10-094), as part of WDFW's initial rule-making proposals for 2025-26. The filing included changes to the WAC sections listed at the top of this document. The package of rules is expressed as a suite of amendments to the pre-existing Washington Administrative Code sections that are referenced. However, the rules package reflect a unitary fishing season proposal. In essence, the amended rules reflect the 2025-26 proposed fishing season, expressed largely as time, place and manner regulations for fishing activity, given the most recent conservation and allocation objectives. Functionally, the amended rules package is a unitary seasonal fishing package and replaces the prior year (2024-25) suite of fishing season rules.

Information regarding the proposed rule changes was posted on the agency website along with a web portal for the public to provide comments. This online comment portal for the public to use was in place during development of the proposed rules and during the official comment period after filing of the CR-102.

A formal APA rule-making public hearing was held on June 12, 2025, via Zoom webinar to provide an additional opportunity for comments to be received on the proposed rules as published in the Washington State Register. A total of eight individuals attended the rule-making hearing with no one providing testimony. One individual asked a few clarifying questions on Puget Sound seasons and bag limits. A summary of the public hearing, the comments provided, and WDFW's responses to those comments has been provided to the Director for his consideration in adopting these rules. In addition to input during the public hearing, comments received by letter, electronic mail, and online on the WDFW North of Falcon webpage during the North of Falcon process and CR-102 comment period were considered throughout the rule-making process.

2. Reasons for adopting the rule:

WDFW considered all the facts and circumstances surrounding the proposed 2025-26 recreational salmon season. The Department carefully reviewed all input from the public regarding preferred fishing rules during North of Falcon public meetings (the APA pre-notice inquiry stage) and the rule-making process used to provide notice and comment on proposed rules (CR-102 filing of proposed rules, additional comment solicitation, and a rule-making hearing). WDFW considered and relied upon the best technical and scientific information available to tribal and state fishery management experts, including pre-season forecasts of the abundance of salmon stocks and data that will be used during the season to update forecasts. Important characteristics of the recreational salmon fishery were considered, including the catch likely to result from the proposed rules, providing significant harvest opportunities, and the economic value of these fisheries. WDFW also considered fishing schedules of state commercial fisheries and the schedules of treaty fisheries, as in some cases these schedules must be coordinated with the state's recreational fishing schedules as part of the co-management process developed under sub-proceedings of *U.S. v. Washington* and *U.S. v. Oregon*.

Regulations for the 2025-26 recreational salmon fisheries were considered with respect to established objectives. These objectives include generally applied statewide objectives, together with detailed regional specific objectives described within regional sections below. WDFW shared these objectives with recreational angler representatives during the 2025 North of Falcon and APA public processes, and they are listed below in order of priority:

1. Conserve the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and shellfish resources in a manner that does not impair the resource (RCW 77.04.012) by achieving conservation objectives for all species and stocks.
 - a. Ensure primary stocks meet escapement goals and/or management objectives (e.g., exploitation rate).
 - b. Manage fisheries consistent with Fish and Wildlife Commission Policies C-3608 (2024-2028 North of Falcon) and C-3624 (Anadromous Salmon and Steelhead Hatchery Policy).
 - c. Monitor fisheries to ensure a & b are met.
2. Harvest the non-treaty share of harvestable salmon while considering the priorities established for various recreational fishing opportunities in terms of time, place, and species of salmon.
3. WDFW shall promote orderly fisheries and shall enhance and improve recreational and commercial fishing in this state.
4. WDFW shall seek to maintain the economic well-being and stability of the fishing industry in the state.

Region/Rule Specific Rationales

North Coast rivers (220-312-020 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Coast)

Modifications to the North Coastal sport fishing regulations adopted for 2025-2026 through the rule-making process were:

- The daily limit for salmon in the Hoh River was increased to three fish with the retention of two adults allowed of which only one may be a Chinook. This change is based on forecasted abundances for Chinook and coho stocks.
- The daily limit for salmon in the Quillayute River is reduced to four salmon with only two adults retained July 1 through August 31. This change is due to a lower forecast for wild summer run coho. Based on good forecasts for hatchery summer coho, fall coho, and Chinook, the daily limit is increased to four, with three adults retained but release sockeye and wild coho required September 1 through September 15. From September 16 through December 15, the daily limit is four fish with only three adults retained and requires the release of sockeye. The dates closed to avoid gear conflict with treaty fisheries were changed to Mondays and Tuesdays September 1 through September 9 and closed Mondays from September 15 through October 13.
- The daily limit for salmon in the Sol Duc River is reduced to two salmon July 1 through August 31. This change is due to a lower forecast for wild summer run coho. The daily limit is reduced to four fish with three adults retained and only one of which can be a wild origin fish, but require the release of sockeye and wild coho, September 1 through September 15. From September 16 through December 15, the daily limit is reduced to four fish with three adults retained and only one can be of wild origin. The reduction in the daily limit is to provide additional protection to adult salmon.
- The daily limits for salmon in the Bogachiel, Calawah, and Dickey rivers is reduced to two fish July 1 through August 31. This change is due to a lower forecast for wild summer run coho. Based on good forecasts for hatchery summer coho, fall coho, and Chinook, the daily limit for adult salmon is increased to two fish from September 1 through December 15 of which only one may be wild origin.
- Clearwater River (tributary to the Queets River) will be open in September only this year with a daily limit of three salmon, up to two may be adult, release Chinook and wild coho. This reduction in season length is in response to a low forecast of natural coho returning to the Queets River basin. Hatchery coho in this basin are early-timed and typically return in September. Harvest data shows this is the peak month for hatchery coho harvest. Allowing fishing in September provides fishing opportunity targeting hatchery origin fish.
- Salmon River (tributary to the Queets River) will be open in September only this year with a daily limit of six salmon, up to two may be adults, release Chinook and wild coho. This reduction in season length is in response to a low forecast of natural coho returning to the Queets River basin. Hatchery coho in this basin are early-timed and typically return in September. Harvest data shows this is the peak month for hatchery coho harvest. Allowing fishing in September provides fishing opportunity targeting hatchery origin fish.
- Quinault River will open July 1 through September 30 with a daily limit of six jack salmon only and October 1 through November 30 with a daily limit of six salmon, up to two may be adults. Release sockeye and chum.

Grays Harbor (220-312-020 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules and Coast 220-313-070 – Coastal salmon – Saltwater seasons and daily limits)

Fisheries within the Grays Harbor Basin will be managed with the intent of achieving regionally specific escapement goals for natural spawning salmon and conservation objectives listed in Table 2. The understanding of historic catch and effort patterns during fisheries in the adopted rules allowed for evaluation of impacts and predicted harvest within each salmon stock in the Grays Harbor Basin. Impacts are then modeled within the normal distribution of effort and environmental conditions and evaluated to compare with management objectives.

Initial fisheries modeling using this year's forecasted abundance and last year's fishery schedule (New Abundance Last year's Fisheries (NALF)) showed Grays Harbor Chinook and Grays Harbor coho would not achieve escapement goal objectives. Total exploitation rate of Grays Harbor coho would also exceed the Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) ceiling based on this year's forecasted abundance. The annual total exploitation rate ceiling established under provisions of PST is based on an exploitation rate that would allow sufficient escapement to achieve escapement goals. To achieve escapement goals, adjustments to the last year's Grays Harbor fisheries schedule are needed.

Table 2: Grays Harbor Salmon Management Objectives

Grays Harbor Stocks	Objective Type	Objective Criteria	Modeled Results
Grays Harbor fall Chinook	Escapement Goal*	13,326	13,338
Chehalis spring Chinook	Escapement Goal*	1,400	1,481
Grays Harbor coho	Escapement Goal*	35,400	36,591
Chehalis coho	Escapement Goal*	28,506	33,810
Humtulpis coho	Harvest Impact Rate	≤ 5%	2.68%
Grays Harbor chum	Escapement Goal*	21,000	72,065

*Expected escapement after all Grays Harbor WDFW managed recreational and commercial fisheries plus tribal fisheries.

- Grays Harbor natural spawning fall Chinook
 - It is WDFW's intent to develop fisheries that provide escapement that would achieve both the Chehalis and Humtulpis natural spawning goals for Chinook independently. However, fisheries evaluations by PFM, the Pacific Salmon Treaty, and fisheries management by co-managers use the Grays Harbor natural spawning aggregate goal of 13,326. Evaluations of all fisheries will result in 13,338 natural spawning Chinook escaping to Grays Harbor spawning grounds.
- The adopted rules do not include a directed freshwater recreational fishery on Chehalis Spring Chinook due to a low forecasted abundance.
- Grays Harbor natural spawning coho
 - It is WDFW's intent to develop fisheries that provide escapement that would achieve both the Chehalis and Humtulpis natural spawning goals independently. However, like Grays Harbor Chinook, fisheries evaluations in the PFM, Pacific Salmon Treaty, and co-manager realm use the Grays Harbor natural spawning aggregate goal of 35,400 fish.

- Humptulips natural coho will be managed to limit WDFW-managed fisheries to 5 percent or less due to forecasted abundance of natural spawning coho that is 45 percent less than the 6,894 spawner goal prior to the initiation of any proposed fisheries within the Grays Harbor Basin, both treaty and non-treaty fisheries.
 - Chehalis River coho are managed to achieve an escapement of at least 28,506 spawners. The reason for differing management for Chehalis coho is the forecasted abundance exceeding the natural spawning goal by 84 percent.
- Grays Harbor chum are managed to achieve an escapement of at least 21,000 spawners.
- Fisheries in the Humptulips River in the adopted rules are the same as last season, closing to the retention of Chinook salmon earlier than traditionally, beginning October 25th again this year in response to a low forecasted abundance of natural origin Chinook and support diverse fisheries, both treaty and non-treaty.
- The daily limit for fisheries in marine area 2-2 east bay and the Chehalis River and tributaries is reduced to one fish starting November 1st in the adopted rule. This was done to achieve Pacific Salmon Treaty obligations to manage total exploitation of Grays Harbor coho to 50% or less based on the forecasted abundance. Initial modeling exercises using last year's fisheries and this year's forecasted abundances showed Grays Harbor coho exploitation rate would exceed 50% and would not allow enough natural spawning fish to escape to achieve the escapement goal. During discussions with the public, it was apparent that season length was more important than how many fish anglers could retain each day. This adjustment, along with other moves by co-managers, resulted in the total exploitation of Grays Harbor coho to be reduced to less than 50% and allows sufficient escapement of the natural spawning coho to exceed the escapement goal of 35,400.

Willapa Bay (220-312-020 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Coast and 220-313-070 – Coastal salmon – Saltwater seasons and daily limits)

The Commission adopted the Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy (C-3622) in September of 2023, replacing the policy enacted in 2015, which expired in December 2022. This action followed an extensive Commission meeting process with multiple public comment periods. The purpose of C-3622 is to set management objectives and to provide management guidance for natural (in-river) and hatchery production and recreational and commercial harvest of fall Chinook, coho, and chum salmon populations in Willapa Bay. The policy provides general management guidance to WDFW in terms of sharing between the recreational and commercial sectors, and achievement of conservation objectives.

Conservation and management objectives for fisheries in the Willapa Bay Basin are based on Policy C-3622 and interim guidance received from the Commission include:

- Actively manage to not exceed 20% total impacts for natural-origin Chinook salmon on Willapa River.
- Actively manage to not exceed 20% total impacts for natural origin Chinook salmon on Naselle River.

- Actively manage to meet the aggregate natural origin escapement goal for coho and the aggregate naturally spawning escapement goal for chum.

Regulations for the 2025 Willapa Bay recreational salmon fisheries were evaluated with respect to the objectives in the policy. These objectives were shared with industry representatives and the public during the NOF and rule-making process. General or recreational specific pre-season planning objectives are:

1. The fishery management objectives for fall Chinook salmon in 2025 are to:
 - a. Not exceed a 20% impact rate on Willapa and Naselle rivers natural origin fall Chinook salmon during Willapa Bay fisheries.
 - b. Achieve a general priority for recreational fisheries, but to provide meaningful fishing opportunity for both recreational and commercial fisheries.
2. The fishery management objectives for coho and chum salmon are to:
 - a. Achieve spawner goals; and
 - b. Achieve a general priority for commercial fisheries, but to provide meaningful fishing opportunity for both recreational and commercial fisheries when run size are sufficient to support fisheries.

Regulation changes in the adopted rules will continue to provide participation and/or catch during the 2025-26 season. The adult salmon daily limit for the 2025-26 recreational salmon marine and freshwater fisheries throughout Willapa Bay is two adult salmon. Willapa Bay needs additional conservation for unmarked Chinook salmon. To address this concern, all recreational fisheries, both marine and freshwater, are mark-selective and require the release of unmarked Chinook. Marine Area 2.1 regulations are similar to 2024 with a start date of August 1, 2025. Prior to August 1, 2025, Willapa Bay will follow the rules for Ocean Area 2, which are scheduled to begin June 21, 2025.

From August 1 through September 30, 2025, the Willapa Bay Control Zone (WBCZ) at the mouth of Marine Area 2.1 will be OPEN to salmon fishing. The WBCZ is defined as having a westerly boundary line from Leadbetter Point (46° 39.20' N, 124° 3.516' W) due west to 46° 39.20' N, 124° 5.3' W then north to the westerly most landfall on Cape Shoalwater (46° 44.66' N, 124° 5.3' W) and from Leadbetter Point through green marker 11 to landfall. Recreational freshwater fisheries within Willapa Bay for the 2025 fall season are mark selective for unmarked Chinook salmon.

Natural origin coho forecasted for 2025 is expected to be higher than the natural origin escapement goal but lower than the recent 3-year average forecasts. Due to this, freshwater systems with hatchery supplementation (marked hatchery returns), Willapa, Nemah, and Naselle rivers, will be allowed to retain only one natural origin coho in the daily adult limit for the 2025 fall salmon season. Systems without hatchery supplementation or marked hatchery returns, North River, Smith Creek, Bear River, and Palix River, will be allowed to retain two natural origin coho in the daily adult limit for 2025.

Preseason modeling of planned recreational and commercial fisheries is estimated to result in an impact rate of 17.9% and 19.1% on Willapa and Naselle rivers natural origin Chinook, respectively. Combined fisheries modeled in Willapa Bay are expected to result in achievement of escapement goals for both Willapa Bay coho and chum stocks. The Willapa Bay escapement goal for natural origin coho is 13,600 fish. The modeled fisheries predict escapement of 14,013

natural origin coho and 33,170 hatchery-origin coho. This predicted escapement exceeds the 17,200 naturally spawning coho escapement goal established by PFMC. The number of Willapa Bay chum predicted to escape in the adopted fishery is 48,569, exceeding the spawner escapement goal of 35,400.

Modifications proposed for 2025 Willapa Bay marine and freshwater recreational fisheries through this rule-making process include:

- Three systems with retention of only one natural origin coho: Willapa, Nemah, and Naselle rivers.
- Four systems with retention of no more than two adults: North River, Smith Creek, Palix River, and Bear River.

The rules, as originally noticed in the CR-102, WSR 25-10-091, were proposed based upon a conclusion they would produce fisheries consistent with conservation objectives from the Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy C-3622 for the 2025 fall salmon season.

WDFW believes the adoption of the 2025 Willapa Bay recreational fishing regulations will be consistent with the management objectives previously listed. The adopted rules are a result of integrating public, NOF, and rule-making comments, and meeting the primary conservation objectives identified in Policy C-3622. This year's process has shown that Department staff acted in good faith in discussions with the public, shared and discussed conservation and management objectives early and often, listened and considered public input and values, and developed a fishery proposal for 2025 Willapa Bay salmon fisheries that meets conservation and management objectives identified preseason. The Department's 2025 Willapa Bay recreational salmon fishing regulations comply with its statutory mandate and are consistent with WDFW's management objectives for these fisheries.

Columbia River tributaries (220-312-030 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Southwest)

Modifications to the Southwest Washington sport fishing rules (220-312-030) adopted through the 2025 North of Falcon process for fisheries occurring in Columbia River tributaries include:

- Germany Creek: Added a "Closed Waters" area around a tributary weir to account for a weir planned for implementation in the late summer/fall of 2025. A standard best practice for tributary weirs across Region 5 has been to utilize a closed waters area above and below the weir where fish can accumulate.
- Kalama River: modified the "Closed Waters" boundary definition below Kalama Falls Hatchery to posted markers approximately 1,400 feet below the fishway entrance. The previous boundary definition of "1,000 feet below fishway at Kalama Falls Hatchery" is inconsistent with fishing boundary and closed waters markers posted on the river, which have been at their intended locations for decades. In their current location, the closed waters markers support WDFW's fishery management and hatchery broodstock collection objectives. Failure to redefine the boundary would allow fishing in a pool that provides important holding water for migrating salmonids.

Puget Sound Marine and Freshwater

(220-313-060 – Puget Sound salmon – Saltwater seasons and daily limits and 220-312-040 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Puget Sound)

Fishery plans for state and tribal salmon seasons in Puget Sound prioritize achieving conservation objectives for all stocks above achieving harvest goals (see prioritized list of objectives above in section two). Initial 2025 fishery modeling suggested that using the 2024 fishery plan would result in two stocks not meeting management objectives in 2025 (Table 3). The modeled 2024 plan did not include fisheries for pink salmon that were likely to be planned for 2025 and would lead to higher exploitation rate projections for many Chinook and coho stocks once included in fishery models. The initial Chinook model run showed all Puget Sound Chinook stocks meeting their management objectives. Stillaguamish natural Chinook were exactly at their exploitation rate ceiling, several stocks were very close to their exploitation rate ceilings, and increases to rates for many stocks were expected once ocean fisheries and Puget Sound pink fisheries were updated to reflect 2025 expectations. The initial coho model run showed that Hood Canal natural and Interior Fraser (Thompson) coho were above their exploitation rate ceilings. Puget Sound Coho management guidelines are outlined in the Comprehensive Coho Management Plan (1998), the Pacific Salmon Treaty, and co-manager agreements. Puget Sound Chinook management objectives are explained in detail in the Co-manager's 2022 Comprehensive Management Plan for Puget Sound Chinook: Harvest Management Component. WDFW proceeded by initially proposing the same 2024-25 package of fisheries for Chinook in the 2025-26 season and began considering changes to meet Thompson and Hood Canal coho management objectives.

Table 3. 2025 Puget Sound Constraining Stock Table from Initial Fishery Modeling.

Stock	Objective Type	2025 Management Objective	Initial Model Result
Stillaguamish natural Chinook	Southern U.S. Exploitation Rate	9.0%	9.0%
Hood Canal natural Coho	Total Exploitation Rate	45.0%	49.3%
Interior Fraser (Thompson) natural Coho	Southern U.S. Exploitation Rate	10.0%	10.3%

As part of the PFMC process, fishery planning models were updated with new fisheries proposals based on regional forecast abundances. Forecasted abundances for Columbia River Chinook stocks were higher than in 2024. Columbia River Chinook stocks are the major drivers for ocean fisheries, which resulted in larger ocean quotas in the three alternatives for ocean fisheries developed during the March PFMC meeting for the 2025-26 season compared to the 2024 quotas. As fishery planning advanced throughout March, additional fishery changes were introduced to the planning models, including updates to expected Chinook and coho fisheries in British Columbia and Alaska, and to Puget Sound marine and freshwater fisheries to account for pink fisheries that occur in odd years and updates to terminal fisheries based on 2025 abundance

expectations. At the North of Falcon meeting on March 25, projected exploitation rates reflecting the middle alternative for PFMF ocean fisheries and updates to proposed 2025 Puget Sound marine and freshwater fisheries were presented to the public (Table 4). This model run showed several Puget Sound Chinook stocks were now exceeding their exploitation rate ceilings, including Nooksack, Skagit Summer/Fall, Stillaguamish, Snohomish, Skokomish, and the 3 Mid-Puget Sound stocks.

Table 4. 2025 Puget Sound Constraining Stock Table from Updated Fishery Modeling.

Stock	Objective Type	2025 Management Objective	Updated Model Result
Nooksack Spring natural Chinook	Southern U.S. Exploitation Rate	10.9%	13.1%
Skagit Summer/Fall natural Chinook	Southern U.S. Exploitation Rate	17.0%	25.9%
Skokomish natural Fall Chinook	Total Exploitation Rate	50.0%	50.8%
Stillaguamish natural Chinook	Southern U.S. Exploitation Rate	9.0%	13.3%
Mid-Puget Sound natural Chinook (Lake Washington/Cedar, Green, and Puyallup)	Pre-terminal Southern U.S. Exploitation Rate	14.0%	15.3%
Hood Canal natural coho	Total Exploitation Rate	45.0%	45.1%
Interior Fraser (Thompson) natural coho	Southern U.S. Exploitation Rate	10.0%	10.3%

The initial abundance forecast for Hood Canal natural coho in 2025 put the stock in critical status necessitating a 20% exploitation rate cap and making this stock likely to be the most limiting in fishery planning for much of Puget Sound. An error in the forecast was later identified by co-managers, increasing the forecast by a few hundred fish, and changing the status into the low abundance tier. This change allowed an exploitation rate of up to 45% under the co-managed Comprehensive Coho Plan and the Pacific Salmon Treaty. Because allowing a rate as high as 45% would drive escapement even further below the level intended by a 20% cap at the slightly lower abundance, the co-managers agreed to consider a more conservative fishing package, rather than managing to a set management objective. WDFW explored various fishing packages with comanagers, Puget Sound Sport Fishing advisor group (PS Advisors), and the public to find an agreeable fishing package that would minimize impacts on Hood Canal natural coho. The final recreational proposal included converting seven days of non-selective coho fishing in Marine Area 9 at the end of September to mark-selective, converting all Marine Area 12 coho fisheries to mark-selective, and closing recreational salmon fishing in Marine Area 12 for the first two weeks of October.

As ocean fisheries began to focus on a single final alternative during the April PFMC meeting, modeling updates included all of the northern (Alaska/British Columbia) and Puget Sound forecast and fishery updates for 2025. New model runs showed that Nooksack Spring Chinook were likely to be one of the most constraining stocks to SUS fisheries in 2025 and it became the focal stock during fishery meetings with the public and advisors. The forecasted abundance for Nooksack was below its low abundance threshold, as it has been consistently for over the last two decades. However, the projected exploitation rate for similar fisheries was elevated compared to 2024 and other years in the recent past, with the projected exploitation rate exceeding 13% compared to the ceiling of 10.9%. WDFW modeling exercises showed that impacts on Nooksack Spring Chinook were greatest during the winter recreational fisheries in Marine Area 5. Modeling evaluation showed that shifts to forecasted age distributions and updated legal/sub-legal ratios resulted in changes to how fisheries impacted Nooksack Springs compared to 2024 fisheries, particularly for the Marine Area 5 winter fishery. Conversations were held with PS Advisors and the public after modeling results indicated further fishery adjustments were needed. The final adjustments made to meet the Nooksack management objective included eliminating the Marine Area 5 winter fishery in the spring of 2026, reducing the Marine Area 5 October fishery, and adjusting ocean fisheries.

The projected exploitation rate for Interior Fraser (Thompson) coho continued to exceed the limit of 10% in SUS fisheries into the April PFMC meeting. During morning public briefings at the April PFMC meeting, WDFW presented Marine Area impact graphics to highlight when (timestep) and where (Marine Area) Thompson coho stock impacts occurred. WDFW also met with the PS Advisors and solicited input on the best options to both achieve this goal and maximize opportunity. After reviewing several potential options, it was agreed that a proposal to extend the mark-selective portion of the coho fishery into the first six days of September in Marine Area 7 was the preferred option to meet management objectives.

Model runs during the April PFMC meeting continued to show the Sauk River population of the Skagit S/F natural Chinook falling below the low abundance threshold. The co-managers' Chinook Resource Management Plan specifies an SUS exploitation rate ceiling of 17% when below the low abundance threshold for Skagit S/F Chinook. Skokomish natural Chinook were also identified as exceeding the management objective of a total exploitation rate of 50%. Fishery-modeling tools were used to identify how fisheries could be adjusted to reduce impacts to Skagit S/F Chinook and Skokomish natural Fall Chinook. Adjustments made to reduce impacts on Nooksack Spring Chinook and Skokomish natural Fall Chinook benefited Skagit S/F Chinook by reducing the Southern U.S. exploitation rate. Through WDFW's modeling evaluations, fishery adjustments were identified and made to ensure both stocks listed above met their management objectives. Those changes included a reduction in Marine Area 6 summer Chinook total landed catch from 7,258 to 4,258, an adjustment to the start date from August 1 to August 16th in Marine Area 8-1, and closure of Skokomish tidal flats. By making these adjustments and combining them with Tribal fishery adjustments, WDFW and comanagers were able to meet the management objectives for Skagit S/F, Skokomish, and Mid-Sound Chinook stocks including Lake Washington (Cedar River), Green River and Puyallup River Chinook.

2025 forecasts for Puget Sound fall chum salmon were above the 2024 forecasts for several populations, including both the Central/South Sound and Hood Canal populations. These improved forecasts allowed for the retention of chum during the month of October and two

weeks into November in Marine Areas 10 and 11. Chum retention will be allowed in Marine Area 12 for the last two weeks of October through the end of November. Strong chum forecasts also allowed chum retention from piers in Marine Area 13.

Strong pink forecasts to the Fraser, Hood Canal, Duwamish and Nisqually allowed for increased daily limits for two additional pink in marine areas 5 – 13, excluding 8-2. Due to conservation concerns in the Stillaguamish (Stillaguamish pink forecast is below escapement goal), no pink retention is allowed in 8-2.

Overall, the Puget Sound regulations for 2025-26 are based upon North of Falcon discussions with stakeholders and tribal co-managers and the rule-making process. The intent of these changes is to maximize recreational opportunities in relation to identified fishery priorities while meeting conservation objectives.

Additional modifications made between the CR-102 and the CR-103 include Marine Areas 5 and 6 will open July 1 allowing one hatchery Chinook to conserve Chinook encounters so the fisheries are more likely to remain open through the season. The reduction to one hatchery Chinook were preferred by the public for both marine areas to maximize days on the water. In Marine Area 6, reductions in overall encounters were necessary due to its impact on Skokomish Chinook. Additionally, a modification was made for chum retention for piers in marine areas 10 and 11 to make retention rules for them more consistent with the surrounding marine area. The original regulation had unintentionally closed chum retention.

Modifications adopted for 2025 Puget Sound Marine Area recreational fisheries through this rule-making process include:

- Area 5 summer fishery will include an additional two pink fish limit July 1 – September 26.
- Area 5 summer non-selective coho fishery was changed to September 27 – October 9.
- Area 5 winter Chinook season closure.
- Area 6 summer fishery will open to two fish daily limit with one hatchery Chinook July 1.
- Area 6 summer fishery will include an additional two pink to the daily limit July 1 – September 26.
- Area 6 summer coho fishery will remain the same as 2024.
- Area 6 in the South end of Discovery Bay will have a closure area from the mouth of Snow Creek to the overhead powerlines to provide protection for staging coho.
- Area 7 summer Chinook will only open Thursday – Saturday (July 17-19), and additional openings will be contingent on in-season management once again.
- Area 7 will include an additional two pink to the daily limit to the summer fishery when the area is open for hatchery Chinook in July, and August 1 - September 30.
- Area 7 summer coho was changed to mark-selective fishing with a two fish daily limit from September 1 – September 6.
- Area 7 summer coho was changed to non-selective fishing with a two fish daily limit from September 7 – September 30.
- Area 8-1 summer season directed at non-selective coho fishing was delayed to August 16 and will close on October 12.
- Area 8-1 summer season will include an additional two pink to the daily limit
- Area 8-2 summer non-selective coho will remain the same as the 2024 season.

- Area 9 summer Chinook season will only open Thursday – Saturday (July 17-19), and additional openings will be contingent on in-season management.
- Area 9 summer season directed at coho will start August 1 and will remain mark-selective through September 30, with an additional two pink to the daily limit.
- Area 10 summer Chinook season will only open Thursday – Saturday (July 17-19), and additional openings will be contingent on in-season management.
- Area 10 will include an additional two pink to the daily limit August 1 – September 30.
- Area 10 will be open for chum, pink, and coho retention from October 1 – November 15.
- Area 10 winter Chinook fishing will move to April 1 – April 30 in spring of 2026. It will be open Wednesdays through Saturdays or until fishery guidelines are reached.
- Area 11 will open to Chinook retention Wednesdays – Saturdays only in June.
- Area 11 summer Chinook fishing will open Thursdays—Saturdays (July 17-19), and additional openings in July will be contingent on in-season management.
- Area 11 will reopen for Chinook, coho, and pink on August 1 through September 30 with an additional two pink to the daily limit.
- Area 11 will be open for chum, coho, and pink retention from October 1 – November 15.
- Area 11 winter Chinook fishing will move to April 1 – April 30 in spring of 2026. It will be open Wednesdays through Saturdays or until fishery guidelines are reached.
- Area 12 changed to mark-selective for coho this year to meet management objectives on Hood Canal coho.
- Area 12 South of Ayock Point Chinook and coho fishery will open July 1.
- Area 12 North of Ayock point will open July 11 with gear restrictions
- Area 12 (North and South of Ayock) will close to salmon fishing October 1 —October 15.
- Area 12 (North and South of Ayock) was changed to mark-selective for coho October 16 - Oct 31.
- Area 12 July 1-September 30: Closure of Skokomish Tidal Flats portion of Area 12 to shore-based angling, fishing from floating device only.

Modifications proposed for 2025 Puget Sound Freshwater recreational fisheries through this rule-making process include:

- The daily limit will increase in the mainstem Nooksack River to six fish to provide additional opportunity for pink, chum, and hatchery coho but wild Chinook release required. Like last year, salmon fisheries will be delayed and open August 1 to protect spring Chinook.
- Fisheries on the North Fork Nooksack will be delayed for one month and open October 1 due to low forecast for spring Chinook.
- Whatcom Creek will be open Saturdays and Sundays only from August 2 through September 14 from the mouth to the footbridge below Dupont Street with a two fish daily limit.
- Samish River from the mouth to the yellow marker at the wing wall approximately 1000 ft upstream will have additional gear restrictions this year to reduce snagging activities. These will be other than a swivel, anglers may not add any weight to their line; no weight may be attached or molded directly to the hook; and require the use of bait in the form of eggs only. Also, there are two dates with restricted participation, September 6th will be a

youth-only fishing day and September 14th will be limited to Veterans and Active Military members only.

- Cascade River from Rockport-Cascade Road Bridge upstream 300 feet will be closed waters February 1 through December 31 to address enforcement issues.
- Skagit Summer/Fall Chinook were identified as a secondary stock of concern, see above. To reduce impacts on this stock, the adopted rule restricts gear to only one single-point barbless hook during Skagit River summer timestep fisheries starting June 1.
- The daily salmon limit on the Skagit River was increased from two to four fish to allow opportunity for pink salmon but restricts harvest to pink and coho only and only allows two of each species each day.
- Adjustments for the Baker Lake sockeye fishery were in response to a strong forecast, data analysis on lengths of anadromous life history, and to reduce conflict during fourth of July weekend. The daily limit was increased to six fish, and the minimum size is reduced to 12 inches. Sampling data shows a portion of returning adult sockeye are less than 18 inches. The opening date will be Saturday July 12th.
- Snohomish River will open for non-selective coho retention (limit two) and pink (limit two) fishery from August 23 through November 30. The length of this season is contingent on in-season updates of incidental recreational fishery impacts on wild Chinook. This expended opportunity is based on a more robust forecast of local hatchery and wild salmon stocks.
- Skykomish River Chinook fishery was closed in 2024. Based on a more robust forecast for local salmon stocks, the Skykomish River will open for hatchery Chinook only starting June 10 through July 10. Fisheries targeting non-selective coho (limit two) and pink salmon (limit two) will open October 13 through November 30, the length of this season is contingent on in-season updates of incidental recreational fishery impacts on wild Chinook.
- Snoqualmie River was closed in 2024. Based on a more robust forecast for local salmon stocks, the Snoqualmie River will open to non-selective coho only fishery from November 1 through November 30. The length of the season is contingent on in-season updates of incidental recreational fishery impact on wild Chinook.
- The daily retention limit in the Wallace River is increased from two to four salmon. This is a coho and pink targeted fishery requiring the release of Chinook and chum and only allowing the retention of two wild coho.
- Stillaguamish River from Marine Drive to the forks will be open to salmon fishing for coho only from September 22 through November 30. The length of the season is contingent on in-season updates of incidental recreational fishery impacts on wild Chinook.
- Stillaguamish, North Fork and South Fork and associated tributaries gamefish openings are delayed by two weeks compared to 2024 and open November 1, except the lower NF from mouth to Hwy 530 (Cicero Bridge) will open two weeks earlier starting September 1. These changes to the timing of opening fisheries are to protect spawning Chinook.
- The daily adult salmon limit on the Puyallup River increased from two to four fish this year. This increase will only allow two Chinook or coho each. This increase is in response to high abundances of pink salmon returning in odd years.

- Minter Creek from Creviston Drive to 50' downstream of the hatchery rack closed from September 1-October 14 due to angler behavior and snagging issues.
- Nisqually River is open from July 1-November 22 for hatchery Chinook and hatchery coho, with day closures to reflect tribal fisheries and meet conservation and hatchery escapement goals for Chinook. The section of the lower Nisqually River between Clear Creek and Kalama Creek is closed to salmon from July 1st-October 25 to reduce impacts on wild Chinook and to focus the fishery on the portions of river below hatcheries where hatchery Chinook are returning.
- Hoko River fly fishing only restriction was extended by two weeks to be in effect September 1 through November 15 to provide additional protection for Chinook.
- Selective gear rules are implemented in the Lyre and Clallam rivers September 1 through January 31 to provide additional protection Chinook salmon.
- Dungeness River salmon fisheries will open October 23 this year, one week later than last year, to address potential lower flow conditions that have occurred routinely over the several years.

Columbia River (220-312-060 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Columbia River and 220-312-050 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Eastside)

Mainstem Columbia River recreational fisheries during the spring management period are primarily driven by abundance-based ESA impact limits of upriver origin spring Chinook including Snake River Wild (SRW) spring Chinook. The 30% buffered preseason (pre-update) forecast is used to develop the initial March/April season and daily adult limit which is conducted late February via Joint State hearing and emergency rule effective March 1. Additional opportunity from April onward is dependent upon fishery and forecast performance which is managed in-season. The standard recreational permanent rule in place for over a decade from Buoy 10 upstream to I-5 Bridge is January 1 through March 31: daily limit six including no more than two adult salmon or two hatchery steelhead or one of each. Release all salmon other than hatchery Chinook. However, the emergency rule effective March 1 will include only one adult salmon or two hatchery steelhead or one of each in all initial seasons. To avoid confusion between the permanent rules listed in the pamphlet and the standard March 1 emergency rule daily adult limits, the permanent rule listed in the pamphlet was better aligned with the current March daily adult limit.

- January 1 through Last Day of February: daily limit six including no more than two adult salmon or two hatchery steelhead or one of each. Release all salmon other than hatchery Chinook.
- March 1 through March 31: daily limit six including no more than one adult salmon and one hatchery steelhead or two hatchery steelhead. Release all salmon other than hatchery Chinook.

For the 2025 summer and fall management periods, Columbia River fisheries are driven primarily by certain key constraining stocks (Table 5). The pre-season forecast for Lower River Hatchery Chinook (LRH), also referred to as Tule Fall Chinook is 121,900. At this return size, the ESA impact limit is 41%. The Upriver Bright (URB) Chinook pre-season forecast is 328,100 and is a surrogate for the Snake River Wild (SRW) Fall Chinook ESA limit for non-treaty

fisheries. The *U.S. v. Oregon* 2018-2027 Management Agreement abundance based URB/SRW harvest rate schedule allows a 15.0% harvest rate in non-treaty fisheries for run sizes greater than 200,000 URB and 8,000 SRW. In-season adjustments are made by Washington and Oregon via emergency regulations within the Columbia River Compact process.

Harvest allocations by recreational and commercial sectors were adopted based upon concurrence between Washington Commission Policy and Oregon Columbia River rules. Due to efforts with rule simplification, public input led fishery managers to provide concurrent regulations between the two states.

Table 5. 2024 Columbia River Constraining Stock Table.

Stock	Objective Type	Objective Criteria	Modeled Result
Upper Columbia summer Chinook	Harvest Rate/Escapement	50% of surplus above 29,000	50% of surplus above 29,000
SNAKE RIVER SOCKEYE	ESA impact rate	<1%	<1%
Lower Columbia River Tule Fall Chinook	ESA impact rate	<41.0% total	41.0%
SNAKE RIVER WILD FALL CHINOOK	In-river ESA impact rate	<15.0%	14.0%
UPRIVER BRIGHT FALL CHINOOK	In-river harvest rate	<15.0%	15.0%
Lower Columbia Natural Coho	ESA impact rate	<23.0%	21.5%
NATURAL B-INDEX SUMMER STEELHEAD	ESA impact rate	<2%	<2%

Buoy 10 to Bonneville Dam – mainstem

1. All proposed modifications below from the mouth to the Oregon-Washington state line upstream of McNary Dam are occurring, in addition to the reasoning provided, to achieve concurrency with Oregon on annual regulations and policy guidance.
2. The 2025 summer Chinook forecast does not allow for Chinook retention opportunity from the Megler-Astoria Bridge upstream to Bonneville Dam. However, sufficient release mortalities are available to prosecute summer-season sockeye and hatchery steelhead fisheries. One hatchery steelhead is allowed from June 16 through July 31.
3. The 2025 Columbia River sockeye forecast is 350,200. Sockeye retention is allowed June 22 through July 6 and the daily limit is one. Sockeye and hatchery steelhead retention is closed downstream of Megler-Astoria Bridge.
4. Due to low steelhead forecasts of stocks destined to areas above Bonneville Dam, conservation measures including reduced daily limit of one fish when open and the following steelhead retention closures:
 - Buoy 10 upstream to The Dalles Dam from August 1 through October 31, 2025.

- The Dalles Dam upstream to Highway 395 Bridge at Pasco from September 1 through December 31, 2025.
- 5. The recreational fishery from Buoy 10 upstream to the west end of Puget Island will be open August 1-6 and August 26 through September 6 with a daily limit of two salmon, no more than 1 Chinook (non-mark selective). From August 7-25 the daily limit remains the same, except Chinook (mark-selective) must be adipose fin clipped and coho must be adipose fin clipped from August 1 through December 31.
- 6. From the west end of Puget Island upstream to the Bachelor Island/Warrior Rock line, Chinook retention will be open from August 1 through September 6 with a daily limit of six, up to two adult salmon, no more than one Chinook. September 7 will be closed to salmon and steelhead angling, then reopen to salmon angling October 1 through December 31 with a daily limit of six, up to two adult hatchery coho. Steelhead retention is prohibited from August 1 through October 31.
- 7. From the Bachelor Island/Warrior Rock line upstream to Bonneville Dam, Chinook retention will be open August 1 through September 17 with a daily limit of 6, up to two adults, no more than one Chinook. September 18 through September 30 will be closed to salmon and steelhead angling, then reopen to salmon angling October 1 through December 31 with a daily limit of 6, up to two adult hatchery coho. Steelhead retention is prohibited from August 1 through October 31.
 - A new fishing boundary line will be in effect beginning August 1 from Warrior Rock lighthouse to lower Bachelor Island and is now defined as: a line projected from the Warrior Rock lighthouse to the marker atop the piling dolphin located at the downstream end of Bachelor Island on the Washington shore.
 - Removing prior midstream point red buoy #4 provides for a simplified projected straight line with no “dogleg” which was fully supported by Columbia River recreational advisors and the general public throughout the 2025 North of Falcon process.

Bonneville Dam to Hwy. 395 Bridge at Pasco – mainstem

1. All proposed modifications below from the mouth to the Oregon-Washington state line upstream of McNary Dam are occurring, in addition to the reasoning provided, to achieve concurrency on annual regulations and policy guidance.
2. The 2025 summer Chinook forecast does not allow for Chinook retention opportunity from Bonneville Dam upstream to Highway 395 Bridge at Pasco. One hatchery steelhead is allowed June 16 through July 31. Sockeye retention is scheduled to occur June 22 through July 6 with a one sockeye daily limit. Due to low steelhead forecasts of stocks destined to areas above Bonneville Dam, conservation measures including reduced limits and rolling closures will be in effect.
 - A night closure remains in effect for salmon and steelhead fishing.
 - The daily limit is one hatchery steelhead from June 16 through August 31 with the exception of the following closures:
 - Bonneville Dam upstream to The Dalles Dam from August 1 through October 31, 2025.

- The Dalles Dam upstream to Highway 395 Bridge at Pasco from September 1 through December 31, 2025
- 3. From August 1 through September 17 Chinook retention is allowed with the daily limit six, up to two adult salmon, no more than one Chinook. September 18 through September 30 will be closed to salmon and steelhead angling, then reopen to salmon angling October 1 through December 31 with a daily limit of six, up to two adult coho. Only hatchery coho may be retained downstream of the Hood River Bridge.

Hwy. 395 Bridge at Pasco upstream to I-182 Bridge

1. Due to low forecasts of steelhead, retention is prohibited year-round.
2. Summer Chinook and sockeye salmon retention is closed to enhance survival of Yakima River returns with the exception of a new bank angling only area which extends from Columbia Point (approximately ¼ mile downstream of I-182 Bridge) upstream to I-182 Bridge on the west shore (Richland side of river). From June 16 through July 15, the daily limit is four sockeye, release all salmon and steelhead other than sockeye. Fishing from a floating device or any method other than hand-cast lines from the west shore is prohibited.
3. Based on input from co-managers this section has been moved to a later start date. This is to reduce impacts to Yakima River fish staging in this reach prior to the dissipation of an annual thermal barrier at the mouth of the Yakima River. The fall salmon fishery will be open September 15 through October 31. This area of the Columbia River has limited spawning habitat and the extension of the fishery through October 31 will provide additional angler opportunity without impacting spawn success of Hanford Reach up-river bright fall Chinook. Daily limit six salmon, two adult salmon (only one wild Chinook), release all salmon other than Chinook and coho.

I-182 Bridge upstream to Old Hanford townsite powerline crossing – mainstem

1. Steelhead retention is allowed Oct. 1-Mar. 31 Min. size 20". Daily limit one. Steelhead must be both adipose fin clipped and ventral fin clipped to be retained. Apr. 1-Apr. 15 open to fishing from the bank on the hatchery side of the river only.
2. Sockeye retention is allowed June 16 through July 31 with a daily limit of four sockeye. Release all salmon and steelhead other than sockeye.
3. Based on input from co-managers and the public, this section has been bifurcated to allow for a later start date in the portions near the Yakima River. This is to reduce impacts to Yakima River fish staging in this reach prior to the dissipation of an annual thermal barrier at the mouth of the Yakima River. The fall salmon fishery will be open September 15 through December 31 below the Snyder/Selph Landing line, and from Aug 16-Dec 31 above the Snyder/Selph Landing line. This area of the Columbia River has limited spawning habitat and the extension of the fishery through December 31 will provide additional angler opportunity without impacting spawn success of Hanford Reach up-river bright fall Chinook. Daily limit six salmon, two adult Salmon (only one wild Chinook), release all salmon other than Chinook and coho.

Old Hanford townsite wooden powerline towers to Priest Rapids Dam – mainstem

1. Due to low forecasts of steelhead, retention is prohibited year-round.
2. Sockeye salmon retention is allowed June 16 through July 31, and the daily limit is four sockeye, release all salmon and steelhead other than sockeye.
3. The fall Chinook salmon fishery will be open August 16 through October 15. This area of the Columbia River is the primary spawning grounds for Hanford Reach Up-River Bright fall Chinook. Fall Chinook begin spawning in this section of the Columbia River approximately the third week of October. Daily limit six, no more than one adult, release all salmon other than Chinook and coho.

Priest Rapids Dam to Wanapum Dam

1. The 2025 pre-season forecast does not allow for harvest opportunity of summer Chinook. Only fall Chinook and sockeye harvest will be available.
2. Open from July 1 through August 31.
3. Daily limit is four sockeye only, release all other salmon.
4. Open from September 1 through October 15.
5. Daily limit is six, no more than two adult Chinook may be retained, release sockeye and coho.

Wanapum Dam to Rock Island Dam

1. The 2025 pre-season forecast allows for harvest opportunity of sockeye and fall Chinook only.
2. Open from July 1 through August 31.
3. Daily limit is four sockeye, release all other salmon.
4. Open from September 1 through October 15.
5. Daily limit is six, no more than two adult Chinook may be retained, release all other salmon.

Rock Island Dam to Wells Dam

1. The 2025 pre-season forecast allows for harvest opportunity of sockeye only.
2. Open from July 1 through August 31.
3. Daily limit is four sockeye only, release all other salmon

Wells Dam to Highway 173 Bridge at Brewster

1. The 2025 pre-season forecast allows for harvest opportunity of sockeye only.
2. Open from July 16 through August 31.
3. Daily limit is four sockeye only, release all other salmon

Highway 173 Bridge at Brewster to the Corps of Engineers safety marker on the Douglas County shore to the rock jetty at the upstream shoreline of Foster Creek.

1. The 2025 pre-season forecast allows for harvest opportunity of sockeye.
2. Open from July 1 through August 30.
3. Daily limit four. Release all salmon other than sockeye.

Changes to Upper Columbia River tributary sport fishing seasons/rules adopted through the 2025 North of Falcon process include:

1. Okanogan River (Mouth to Highway 97 Bridge Immediately Upstream of Mouth):
 - a. Closed to salmon fishing in 2024. No change in 2025.
2. Okanogan River (Highway 97 Bridge Immediately Upstream of Mouth to Highway 97 Bridge at Oroville):
 - a. Closed to salmon fishing in 2024. No change in 2025.
3. Similkameen River (Mouth to 400' Below Enloe Dam):
 - a. Closed to salmon fishing in 2024. No change in 2025.
4. Wenatchee River (from mouth upstream to Icicle Rd. Bridge):
 - a. Initially open to salmon fishing in 2024 but closed in-season via FRC. Closed to salmon fishing in 2025.
5. Entiat River (from mouth {railroad bridge} to boundary marker/markers located approx. 1500' upstream of the upper Roaring Creek Rd. Bridge {immediately downstream of Entiat National Fish Hatchery}):
 - a. Initially open to salmon fishing in 2024 but closed in-season via FRC. Closed to salmon fishing in 2025.
6. Chelan River (from the railroad bridge to the Chelan P.U.D. safety barrier below the powerhouse):
 - a. Initially open to salmon fishing in 2024 but closed in-season via FRC. Closed to salmon fishing in 2025.

220-313-020 – Closed areas – Saltwater salmon angling

A minor change was proposed by WDFW to this regulation as a house keeping measure. Section 7 of this WAC identifies a closure area at the mouth of the Seiku River between Marine Areas 4 and 5 that is intended to be closed during planned annual seasons for Chinook salmon, but open when regulations are the same between the Areas or when Area 4 is closed. The proposed change aligns historical and intended closure dates.

3. Differences between the text of the proposed rule and the rule as adopted:

- WAC 220-312-040 (182.a.i) Change October to January 31
- WAC 220-312-040 (182.a.ii) Open August 1 through January 31
- WAC 220-312-040 (182.a.iii.A) August 1 through November 30: Closed
- WAC 220-312-040 (182.b.i) Change October to January 31
- WAC 220-312-040 (182.b.ii) Open August 1 through January 31
- WAC 220-312-040 (182.b.iii.A) August 1 through November 30: Closed
- WAC 220-312-040 (182.c.i) Change December to January 31

- WAC 220-312-040 (182.c.ii) Open August 1 through January 31
- WAC 220-312-040 (182.c.iii.A) Change October 1 to August 1
- WAC 220-312-040 (182.d.i) Change October 1 to August 1 and December 31 back to January 31
- WAC 220-312-040 (182.d.ii) Open August 1 through January 31
- WAC 220-312-040 (182.d.iii.A) Change October 1 to August 1
- WAC 220-312-040 (183.b.iii) Open October 1 through November 30
- WAC 220-312-040 (183.b.iv.A) removed Open December 1 through January 31: Statewide minimum size/daily limit.
- WAC 220-312-040 (183.b.A) Change November 30 to October 14
- WAC 220-312-040 (183.b.v.A.II) Added Release pink, and wild Chinook
- WAC 220-312-040 (183.b.v.B) Added Open October 15 through November 30
- WAC 220-312-040 (183.b.v.B.I) Added Daily limit 4; up to 2 may be wild coho
- WAC 220-312-040 (183.b.v.B.II) Added Release chum and pink
- WAC 220-312-040 (183.c.i) change October to August and November to January
- WAC 220-312-060 (kk.iii.I) Correction to daily limit 4 sockeye only
- WAC 220-312-060 (kk.iii.II) Correction to release all other salmon
- WAC 220-313-060 (3.b.i) Changed daily limit to include up to 1 may be a hatchery Chinook
- WAC 220-313-060 (8.n.iii) Removed “release chum” for October 1 through April 30
- WAC 220-313-060 (9.k.iii) Removed “release chum” for October 1 through April 30
- WAC 220-313-060 (10.c.ii) Changed season to run through July 31
- WAC 220-313-060 (10.c.iii) Added season August 1 through September 30
- WAC 220-313-060 (10.c.iii.A) Daily limit 4 salmon, plus 2 additional pink salmon may be retained as part of the daily limit.
- WAC 220-313-060 (10.c.iii.B) Release chum, sockeye, Chinook, and wild coho.

4. Public comments, response to comments, and consideration of comments

Region/Rule Specific Responses to comment

North Coast rivers

(220-312-020 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Coast)

WDFW received several public comments during the NOF process pertaining to regulations proposed for the Quillayute, Sol Duc, Bogachiel, Calawah, Dickey, and Hoh rivers.

Comment: Close the Quillayute during summer coho due to low forecast?

Discussions with co-managers during the NOF process determined that there are sufficient summer coho impacts available to provide fishing opportunity for spring Chinook and hatchery summer coho in the Quillayute basin. To address concerns of the low forecast for Quillayute summer coho, daily salmon limits in the adopted rule are reduced compared to last year. Throughout the basin, the daily salmon limit is reduced to two fish per day, this includes both jack and adult fish through August 31.

Comment: Reduce the jack limit in the Quillayute.

Concerns were heard that impacts to adult salmon were elevated as anglers continued to fish in attempts to obtain the jack portion of the daily limit after the adult portion had been obtained. WDFW reduced the total daily bag limit in the Quillayute and Sol Duc rivers to two total fish before August 31 and from six fish a day to four fish starting September 1. This move was done to address concerns expressed by anglers to reduce impacts to adult salmon. Daily limits in the Bogachiel, Calawah, and Dickey rivers were already reduced to two fish through August and three fish per day starting in September.

Comment: Reduce the adult daily limit to one adult fish in the Quillayute system until September 15, then increase during the fall season.

The daily adult limit is reduced to two total fish from July 1 through August 31 in the adopted rule. During conversations with co-managers, it was determined there are sufficient summer coho impacts to support a 2-fish limit directed at hatchery Chinook and hatchery coho. This is a reduction from last year and addresses low forecast of wild summer coho. The daily limit is increased during the fall timing to provide more opportunities on the more abundant fall coho, Chinook, and hatchery origin fish.

Grays Harbor

(220-313-070 – Coastal salmon – Saltwater seasons and daily limits and 220-312-020 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Coast)

No comments were received during the open public comment period from May 6, 2025, through June 13, 2025, and no oral comments were received during the June 12, 2025, public hearing regarding Grays Harbor fisheries. The Department also considered comments received during the 2024 NOF salmon season setting process.

Comment: There were comments concerning August 1 through September 15th Chehalis River jack fishery, whether it was worth the impacts to adult Chinook that may occur, stating that Chehalis River Chinook are “extremely bitey” that time of year and swallowing bait is an issue. There were also requests to increase the daily limit for jacks during this time frame.

Based on the number of comments received during the rule making process in favor of continuing this fishery and comments heard during past seasons, interest in retaining this fishery is high and shows evidence there is value to the fishing committee in providing this opportunity. Incidental impacts to any non-targeted fish are very important when implementing fisheries. WDFW has taken actions in the past to reduce potential impacts on adult salmon during this fishery by restricting gear and the use of bait. Using information from local WDFW Enforcement offices, discussions with anglers, and fisheries biologist’s knowledge of the fisheries, areas of most benefit to reducing adult fish encounters were identified and gear and bait restricting are implemented.

Jack salmon are known to contribute to natural production and are an important component to each population. The daily limit is set to provide opportunity while still allowing sufficient escapement to provide for future productivity. Increasing the jack daily limit would indirectly

increase impacts on adult fish. Anglers attempting to obtain a larger daily limit would spend more time on the water increasing the probability of encountering non-targeted adult fish. To offset the potential increase of impacts on adult fish, other fisheries would need to be reduced to meet management objectives. This was not supported by the public.

Comment: There was a request to allow a “bonus chum” in the daily limit based on the large forecast for Grays Harbor chum, similar to the bonus pink salmon provided in Puget Sound fisheries.

The adopted rules do not provide for bonus chum in recreational fisheries in Grays Harbor. Based on initial fishery modeling (NALF), Grays Harbor Chinook and coho would not achieve the natural spawning escapement conservation objectives. Adjustments to last year’s season structure are needed to reduce impacts on these two stocks to achieve spawning escapement goals. As a result of adjustments, the adopted rule does not include any directed Chinook fisheries in the Chehalis Basin and reductions to the daily limit were made during part of the season. Adding a bonus chum essentially increases the daily limit. Anglers seeking to catch an additional chum would spend more time on the water, indirectly increasing impacts on non-targeted stocks. To keep impacts to Chinook and coho neutral by allowing a bonus chum, other fisheries in Grays Harbor would need to be reduced in area and time, or implement gear restrictions, which was not supported.

Comment: There was a request to open the Satsop River on September 16th to target hatchery coho and to align the season with the lower Chehalis mainstem fishery.

Initial fishery modeling (NALF) indicated Grays Harbor Chinook and coho would not meet natural spawning conservation objectives this year. Reductions to last year’s fisheries are necessary to reduce impacts to these two stocks to ensure natural spawning conservation objectives are achieved in 2025. This proposal is an increase in fishing and would increase impacts on both Chinook and coho compared to 2024. Creel survey data collected over the last three years shows adult Chinook are encountered in mainstem Chehalis River fisheries during September 16 through September 30. Spawning ground survey data documents live Chinook are annually observed as far up the Satsop River as river mile 12.6 in September. Additionally, river conditions in September typically have low flows and higher water temperature which can further increase mortality, as Chinook tend to congregate in pools while waiting for improved flow conditions. To further provide protection for Chinook, the department implemented selective gear rules last year from Aug. 1 to Sept. 30 which will continue this year. This was implemented to reduce Chinook catch-and-release mortalities that occurred during game fish and trout fisheries. This comment was not implemented for 2025.

Comment: Allow the retention of hatchery Chinook when encountered.

WDFW understands the intent of the comment is to allow anglers to keep a hatchery Chinook when encountered during open salmon fisheries. However, based on increased angling efforts observed during past Grays Harbor fisheries when Chinook retention was allowed, providing this opportunity would increase impacts to natural Chinook. Initial modeling of last year’s fisheries with this year’s forecasted abundance showed the Grays Harbor Chinook would not achieve the escapement goal. Reductions to fisheries are needed to meet conservation objectives. This proposal would essentially increase fishing effort and impacts to natural Chinook and decrease the probability of achieving conservation objectives. This proposal was not implemented in 2025.

Comment: There was a concern about the planning model results for Chehalis River Basin fall Chinook escapements after all fisheries are prosecuted.

The modeling result of the final Grays Harbor fishery plan, including the adopted rules, projects a natural spawning escapement of Grays Harbor fall Chinook of 13,338. This exceeds the natural spawning escapement of 13,326. The commenter refers to the escapement of wild Chehalis River fall Chinook population falling short of its escapement goal. It is WDFW's intent to develop fisheries that provide escapement that would achieve both the Chehalis and Humptulips natural spawning goals for Chinook independently. However, fisheries evaluations by PPMC, the Pacific Salmon Treaty, and fisheries management by co-managers use the Grays Harbor natural spawning aggregate goal of 13,326. This escapement goal was established in 2014 based on a joint stock-recruitment analysis by WDFW and the Quinault Indian Nation. This analysis, which estimates the number of spawning adults needed to sustain a healthy fall Chinook population, requires data from many generations to be informative. Although hatchery fall Chinook production has a long history in Grays Harbor, first releases reported in the 1950s, total mass marking of hatchery fall Chinook has only been in place for a few generations, with the first fully marked adult generation returning in 2011. The analysis accounts for the productivity of all spawning fish, regardless of origin, in relationship to natural origin recruitment. This analysis determined that 13,326 natural spawning fall Chinook are needed to maintain the fall Chinook population in the Grays Harbor basin, including 9,753 required for the Chehalis subpopulation. The final fishery plan, with the adopted rules, projects a natural spawning escapement of 13,338.

Recreational fisheries in the Chehalis River Basin do not include any Chinook targeted fishery.

Willapa Bay

(220-313-070 – Coastal salmon – Saltwater seasons and daily limits and 220-312-020 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Coast)

There was a total of four public comments received during the open public comment period regarding the proposed Willapa Bay recreational fisheries. No individuals testified and provided public comment during the public hearing held on June 12, 2025, two public comments were provided directly to Department staff via email, and two public comments were received using WDFW's online portal. In addition, the Department considered substantive comments received during the 2025 NOF salmon season setting process. The Department carefully reviewed the information gathered during the rule development process following the issuance of the CR-101, together with all input (verbal and written) from fishing industry representatives, recreational anglers, and the public. The Department relied upon internal technical and scientific expertise for the NOF and PPMC planning process.

During the NOF salmon season setting process, the Department received additional comments that were outside the scope of freshwater fishery rule changes and are not specifically addressed in this document. These include, among others, 1) Comments geared to alter hatchery practices, such as increasing hatchery broodstock production at Forks Creek Hatchery. Hatchery Management Plans (HMPs) are currently under development for each facility in Willapa Bay (Forks Creek, Naselle, and Nemah hatcheries) under the authority of Commissioner Policy C-3624 and each hatchery program shall operate in accordance with the provisions of its HMP; 2) Private land-use and property issues, including trespassing on private property by the public.

Comment #1: Commenter proposed prohibiting the use of jig heads or twitching jigs in the Naselle River from August 1 to October 15 to reduce snagging behavior. This is an on-going comment since 2021.

The Department is aware that snagging has been an issue on the Naselle River during salmon season for several years, and this is an issue in multiple freshwater systems across the state. In previous seasons, the Department implemented a variety of regulations in the Naselle River to reduce snagging behavior. For example, in 2020 and 2021, the Department required that bait or lure must be suspended below a float on some sections of the Naselle River. This regulation was met with varying success. Based on these observations, the Department believes restricting jig use might encourage anglers to snag with alternative lures or other creative methods rather than specifically decreasing snagging behavior. The Department understands that jigs, specifically twitching jigs, are an effective method for fishing legally, but these jigs are also commonly used to intentionally snag fish especially during periods of low flows early in the season. Prior to this year's North of Falcon salmon setting process, the Department discussed with WDFW regional enforcement creative ideas for new proposed rules to specifically discourage snagging behavior. Rather than broadly banning a fishing method for all anglers, the Department plans to focus on better enforcement of current anti-snagging rules and exploring other fishing methods to limit snagging behavior during this time of year, such as adding the bobber and float rule back to the Naselle River this upcoming 2025 salmon season discussed in comment #4 below.

Comment #2: Commenters proposed adding the rule to prohibit fishing from a floating device on the Naselle River between the concrete abutment at Naselle Hatchery upstream to the Big Hill bridge from October 16 to January 31.

This proposed rule from the public was intended to reduce gear conflict between bank and boat anglers and reduce pressure on wild fish being released upstream from the hatchery after the re-designed Naselle weir is constructed. The Department received additional public comment at the March 12th virtual public meeting suggesting taking drift boats off the entire Naselle River, where we do not currently have a conservation or policy reason to support. Internal discussions with Fish program management and the Department's Director during the North of Falcon process determined that limited benefit to wild fish did not outweigh the loss of fishing opportunity by restricting a particulate angler group. The Department communicated our intent to not move forward with this proposed rule change at the virtual Willapa Bay/Grays Harbor public meeting on April 2nd, 2025. It was also communicated at this same meeting that the Department is open to re-evaluating the efficacy of this proposed rule to support conservation above the Naselle Hatchery in future years following the construction of the re-designed weir in response to further public comment. A related comment was received during the public comment at the March 12th virtual public meeting suggesting taking drift boats off the entire Naselle River. This was not supported because it suggests limiting a particular angling group without conservation or policy reason to support.

Comment #3: Commenter objects to managing Willapa and Naselle rivers to river-specific natural coho escapement goals rather than the aggregate escapement goals we have managed to in the past.

Natural coho escapement has been below river-specific goals in the Willapa and Naselle rivers for the last several years. This policy is intended to reduce natural coho harvest and increase natural coho escapement in these rivers to preserve these populations into the future. This

management strategy is consistent with the Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy (C-3622), which stipulates, “Tributary recreational fisheries for coho salmon shall be managed to achieve natural origin spawning escapement goals and provide meaningful opportunity prior to spawning area closures in a manner consistent with law enforcement concerns and low water situations.” The 2025 fishery proposal meets the aggregate natural origin coho escapement management objectives for Willapa bay, while still addressing river-specific natural origin coho concerns specifically for Willapa and Naselle rivers. The Department intends to continue to evaluate spawner escapements each season and adjust regulations, if warranted.

Comment #4: Commenter requested a bobber rule (bait or lure must be suspended below a float, with an exemption when trolling, be added to Naselle River freshwater regulations starting Aug. 1 through Oct. 15 from the confluence of the South Fork upstream to Hwy 4 Bridge. There was also a comment provided via the online portal asking for clarification on specific rules of the bobber and how it can be used.

This comment was provided as a written comment and verbally stated during the virtual open public meetings on March 12th and April 2nd, 2025, during the NOF salmon season setting process. This rule was proposed to reduce snagging behavior on the Naselle River. This rule was also suggested as an extension of the language in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) for the Naselle River from the Hwy 4 Bridge to 300 feet below the upstream entrance of the Naselle Hatchery attraction channel, that “August 16 through Oct 15: Bait or lure must be suspended below a float,” however, this section of the Naselle River will not be open to fishing during these dates for the 2025-26 salmon season, and therefore, this rule will not take effect.

This rule was in effect for two previous salmon seasons, 2020 and 2021. During this year’s North of Falcon salmon season setting process, the effectiveness of this rule was discussed at both open public meetings on March 12th and April 2nd, 2025. After hearing the public’s request for this additional rule to help reduce snagging, the Department decided to move forward with this additional bobber rule in the 2025-2026 salmon season with the reasoning that this rule in conjunction with the anti-snagging rule already in place on this river may help discourage snagging behavior. Specifics of the bobber restriction such as bobber location on the line, depth of water being fished, type of bobber to use, or color are not being implemented in the 2025-2026 salmon season. The requirement will only be to have the bait or lure suspended below a float. The Department is committed to greater enforcement of the existing rules for this upcoming salmon season. This regulation, in addition to the existing anti-snagging rule, will provide our enforcement staff more tools to cite anglers who intentionally snag and discourage the behavior to maintain a more orderly fishery. The Department, however, does not agree the exemption for trolling should be added because it further complicates our ability to enforce this bobber regulation by separating when the rule would be allowed and when it would not.

Comment #5: Commenter suggests having two separate Catch Record Card (CRC) codes used by freshwater recreational anglers to document their landed catch for the section above and below the weir in the Naselle River prior to the new weir construction being completed.

This comment was provided during this year’s North of Falcon virtual public meeting on April 2, 2025. Department staff felt this comment was a worthwhile suggestion to evaluate freshwater recreational catch data in the Naselle River in future years. Therefore, the Department began the process of separating the Naselle River into separate CRC codes above and below the hatchery weir. This CRC change was approved and will be in effect in the adopted rules for the upcoming

2025-26 salmon season and will be added to the upcoming recreational fishing pamphlet available to the public.

Comment #6: Commenter proposed banning professional fishing rafts and drive boats from the Big Hill Bridge downstream to the Hwy 4 Bridge in the Naselle River.

The Department is aware of the concern regarding boat traffic in the Naselle River; however, the Department does not have the jurisdiction to restrict floating vessels from transiting in any freshwater river. The authority to restrict vessels in freshwater systems resides with the county. The Department can only restrict fishing from a floating device, not the floating vessel itself. The commenter referred to trespassers as a reason for banning fishing rafts and drift boats from the river, however, anglers would be forced to anchor their boat and fish from the banks if the Department were to ban fishing from a floating device, which would cause additional issues.

Comment #7: Commenter suggests increasing the natural origin Chinook impact rate for the recreational fishery and lowering the natural origin Chinook impact rate for the commercial fishery.

The Department believes this comment was motivated by the predicted percent allocation by sector for recreational and commercial fall Chinook fisheries for the planned 2025-2026 season rather than the natural origin Chinook impact rate management objective. The natural origin Chinook impact rate management objective is an aggregate objective for all fisheries combined. Willapa Bay fisheries have been mark selective for natural origin Chinook since 2010, therefore, any allocation totals presented at the open public meetings during the NOF salmon season setting process pertained to hatchery Chinook harvest by sector.

The predicted allocation for recreational fishery presented at the April 2nd open public meeting was 44% and 56% for commercial hatchery fall Chinook. Specific allocation between recreational and commercial fisheries, while an aspect of our fisheries planning, is not the primary metric for priority as defined by policy. The Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy (C-3622) stipulates “*Fall chinook fisheries shall be managed to achieve a general priority for recreational fisheries, but to provide for meaningful fishing opportunity for both recreational and commercial fisheries. This general priority shall be accomplished with a management intent to provide the first opportunity for directed fall Chinook fishing to the mixed stock recreational fishery in the northern portion of Willapa Bay (Marine Areas 2T and 2U) as well as an opportunity for recreational fisheries in Willapa Bay tributaries.*” Planned marine and freshwater recreational fisheries for the upcoming 2025 salmon season maintain the first opportunity for directed fall Chinook fishing in the mixed stock recreational fishery in the northern area of Willapa Bay and hatchery freshwater tributaries June 21st and August 1st, 2025, respectively, which is consistent with our policy.

Comment #8: Commenter proposed allowing a bonus hatchery origin coho in the Willapa and Naselle rivers.

The Department has concerns regarding any additional impacts anglers may incur on natural origin coho if allowed to continue to fish for an additional hatchery coho. During this year's North of Falcon salmon season setting process, higher level discussions with Department staff determined the current proposal of two adults in a six fish daily limit, including one wild coho provides a reasonable rate of harvest, while ensuring long-term conservation objectives are attained.

Comment #9: Commenter proposes modifying language to read, "It is unlawful to possess a fish that was not hooked in the mouth from August 1 to October 15."

The Department defines snagging as "an effort to take fish with a hook and line in a manner that the fish does not take the hook or hooks voluntarily in its mouth." The Department also stipulates in the pamphlet that, "It is unlawful to possess a fish taken from freshwater that was not hooked inside the mouth or on the head. The head is defined as any portion forward of the rear margin of the gill plate. Given these rules already in place for statewide recreational fisheries, the Department does not believe additional regulations to define whether a fish is hooked in the mouth are necessary. Because of this, the Department decided not to move forward with this change for the 2025-2026 salmon season.

Comment #10: Commenter proposes keeping the Naselle River closed until at least mid-October from Hwy 4 Bridge upstream.

The current regulation in the adopted rule opens the section from Hwy 4 upstream on Oct 16. The Department intends to maintain this regulation in the 2025-2026 salmon season in the Naselle River to continue to reduce snagging issues, support landowner concerns regarding trespassing and littering, and ensure hatchery broodstock goals are met for Chinook salmon in the early part of the salmon season.

Comment #11: Commenter suggests planning fisheries to the 20% management objective on natural origin Chinook salmon for both Willapa and Naselle rivers rather than leaving a buffer when the policy states not to exceed 20% total impact rate.

The management objectives in the Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy C-3622 adopted in September 2023 are to actively manage to not exceed a 20% harvest rate on natural origin Chinook salmon for Willapa and Naselle rivers separately. The current harvest rates in the adopted rules are 17.9% and 19.1% for Willapa and Naselle natural origin Chinook salmon, respectively. The current objectives in the adopted fisheries are below the 20% management objective threshold identified by C-3622. While we understand there are remaining harvestable fish available within the 20% management objective to schedule additional time, the Department feels that providing a small buffer to account for the possibility of a poor return in-season, while remaining below the 20% harvest rate is beneficial to management objective post-season.

Public Hearing

During the public hearing held virtually on June 12, 2025, no public testimony regarding Willapa Bay fisheries was provided.

Columbia River

(220-312-060 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Columbia River, 220-312-030 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Southwest, and 220-312-050 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Eastside)

Comment #1: Multiple commenters provided input to limit guide/charter effort and catch in the Buoy 10 fishery located at the mouth of the Columbia River.

The mainstem Columbia River from Buoy 10 upstream to Hwy. 730 at the Washington/Oregon border is joint-state waters co-managed by WDFW and ODFW. Currently, WDFW has limited entry rules in effect for food fish charter licenses downstream of the Longview Bridge. WDFW does not offer other food fish guide licenses in this area, except for the charter license. No additional charter licenses have been allowed.

Comment #2: What are the steelhead regulations in Drano Lake and suggests closing fishing down in the interior portion of Drano Lake due to steelhead utilizing the cold water.

Drano Lake is closed to fishing for and retaining steelhead from July 1 through October 31. Fishery impacts to upriver summer steelhead occurring in Drano Lake are monitored and accounted for thorough angler creel surveys. Impacts occurring in non-treaty, “dip-in” fisheries (including Drano Lake) are summarized and reported annually in Joint State Staff Reports. In the majority of years (including recent years inclusive of record low steelhead returns to the Columbia Basin), the combination of pre- and in-season management of non-treaty fisheries has kept total fishery impacts below allowable limits defined in the *2017-2028 U.S. v. Oregon Management Agreement*. WDFW fishery managers have been able to implement time, area, and manner regulations to allow harvest of healthy salmon stocks, while meeting conservation objectives for non-local steelhead stocks. While WDFW has used in-season, sub-area closures in Drano Lake, these closures have occurred in response to regulation compliance rather than a failure to meet conservation objectives. For these reasons, WDFW does not believe that all-species, pre-season closures are appropriate for Drano Lake.

Comment #3: What are the fall Chinook and steelhead regulations in the Cowlitz River?

Cowlitz River – From the mouth up to the fishing boundary signs below the Barrier Dam. Salmon: Daily limit 6, up to three adults may be retained (hatchery coho only). Steelhead: Min. size 20”. Daily limit three hatchery. Open year-round. Angling permitted at night.

Comment #4: Uncertain to justification for a 2/3 hatchery steelhead limit in the lower river tributaries?

The 3-hatchery steelhead limit is consistent with the rules established for hatchery steelhead during rule simplification. The proposed steelhead rules in the lower reaches of the Cowlitz, Kalama and Lewis River also provide consistency with the adjacent, upstream tributary reaches. The rationale for these proposals were presented during public meetings and posted to the agency website. Fishery impacts to upriver summer steelhead in these areas are believed to be very limited for several reasons: the confluence areas are small in geographical area, utilization by upriver stocks is thought to be in tributary plumes in the mainstem Columbia, angler effort in

these areas is low. Additionally, impacts occurring in this area are not accounted for in the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement.

Comment #4: Coldwater Refugia white-paper produced by WDFW should not be considered final and would like justification to why lower reaches of the tributaries are ok to re-open.

WDFW published the paper titled '[Fishery Management in Columbia River Cold Water Refuge for Salmonids](#)' on August 9, 2022. This report was in part created due to policy guidance from C-3630, historic low steelhead returns in 2021 and to provide data, analyses, and facts on how fisheries are managed and fishery impacts are accounted for in the Columbia River. This report was developed and reviewed by staff throughout the Columbia River basin and presented to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission's Fish Committee on March 17, 2022, and the public was invited to submit comments to staff prior to finalization of the report.

While some tributaries below Bonneville discharge sufficient volumes of cold water to function as cold water refugia (CWR), staff believe that impacts accrued in these specific areas are minimal for several reasons. The largest of these tributaries is the Cowlitz River. The Kalama and Lewis Rivers are smaller in area, have lower discharge, and less angler utilization in their CWR zones, therefore impacts are assumed to be even lower than on the Cowlitz. The cold water from the Cowlitz attracts out of basin fish as dip-ins, potentially within the lower ~10 miles of the river, but the bulk of the fish are thought to utilize the cold-water plume in the mainstem Columbia at the mouth. There is angling activity for steelhead in the Cowlitz River and in the mainstem plume, but angler impacts to dip-ins are assumed to be minor. This assumption is based on four observations:

- Channel morphology: the mouth and lower reach of the Cowlitz River is shallow and continues to silt-in over time. In the summer months, steelhead dip-ins must navigate a very shallow bar at the mouth, which likely discourages most dip-in fish from moving into the Cowlitz River.
- Timing: the time at which summer steelhead are at their highest prevalence in this area coincides with fall Chinook and early coho run timing. As a result, most of the angling fleet are pursuing salmon in the mainstem plume where incidental steelhead impacts are low.
- Residence duration: steelhead may use this area but likely tend to have a much shorter residency as compared to areas such as Drano Lake or the Wind River resulting in lower potential fishery encounter rates.
- The steelhead impacts available to non-treaty fisheries tend to not be fully utilized, allowing for additional fishery opportunity in other areas not addressed in the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement.

This rule change proposal provides additional opportunity for anglers to harvest local hatchery steelhead, while maintaining limited fishery impacts that provide conservation to upriver stocks.

Puget Sound Marine and Freshwater

(220-313-060 – Puget Sound salmon – Saltwater seasons and daily limits and 220-312-040 – Freshwater exceptions to statewide rules – Puget Sound)

Comments received regarding salmon fishing seasons in Puget Sound prior to June 12, 2025, were received in Public Meetings, through an on-line commenting portal on WDFW's website, and through communications received by individual staff within the agency. The comments received generally fell into the following categories:

1. Winter Chinook Opportunity, with specific consideration to shift MA-7 Chinook quota and impacts from summer fishery to allow for a winter fishery
2. Lake Washington Chinook Fishery
3. Open MA 9, 10, and 11: 7 days/ week fishing during summer fisheries
4. Extend MA 10-11 through November 30 for coho/chum
5. Extend Bellingham Bay Fishery (days and/or area)
6. Allow shore fishing for coho salmon in MA 9 in July when Chinook retention is closed
7. Extend non-selective coho fishing seasons across Marine Areas
8. Maximize days on the water and expand current opportunity
9. Management Objectives for Nooksack spring Chinook and Hood Canal coho
10. Misc
 - Annual Limit
 - Catch and Release
 - 2 pole endorsements
 - Gear Restrictions

Comment: Winter Chinook Opportunity, with specific consideration to shift MA-7 Chinook quota and impacts from summer fishery to allow for a winter fishery

WDFW received numerous comments in support of reallocating a portion of the MA 7 summer Chinook quota to create a limited winter fishery. WDFW did not support this proposal for these reasons: a short-duration, small quota winter opening increases uncertainty in estimates, and creates high anticipated angler participation. This raises the risk of exceeding management objectives and conservation limits. Additionally, these fisheries must be sampled to evaluate impacts on stocks of concern. With limited other fisheries occurring during this time frame and WDFW facing significant budget constraints in the next biennium, monitoring staff and resources are unavailable.

Alternative suggestions, such as opening winter Chinook fisheries in other marine areas, were also explored. However, modeling showed that any winter openings in other marine areas would result in too many impacts on stocks of concern—particularly Nooksack spring Chinook, which was a central consideration in this year's planning process.

Comment: Open a Lake WA Chinook fishery (Labor Day weekend)

A number of comments were received proposing to implement a recreational salmon fishery directed at hatchery Chinook salmon in Lake Washington. Proponents cited an abundance of hatchery fish that are forecasted to return. WDFW did not consider this opportunity for several reasons including limited available resources to the Department for monitoring and evaluation of impacts from a proposed fishery, impacts to the portion of the natural population returning to the

Cedar River, and recent year increased non-fishing related mortality due to environmental conditions in the Lake.

Comment: Open MA 9, 10, and 11: 7 days/ week fishing during summer fisheries

There was public interest in opening Marine Areas 9, 10, and 11 concurrently for 7 days a week during summer Chinook seasons. However, given the high popularity of these fisheries and the limited harvest quota, there was broad public agreement that the best way to preserve access and maximize days on the water was to distribute angling effort across the areas. High catch rates during a 7-day opener would result in exceeding fishery management guidelines on Chinook, which may limit future fishing opportunities. As a result, Marine Areas 9, 10, and 11—along with Marine Area 7—will open for a three-day fishery to help manage harvest rates while maintaining meaningful opportunity. Additional days will be provided if sufficient impacts remain within fishery guidelines.

Comment: Extend MA 10-11 through November 30 for coho/chum

WDFW received proposals to extend the recreational chum fishery in Marine Areas 10 and 11 through November 30. These fisheries are currently planned through November 15th. The option to extend the fishery to November 30th was explored, but it was not supported given the management constraints for Chinook and coho stocks this season. Hood Canal coho was a limiting stock in this year's planning process. Extending the fishery by two weeks would increase impacts to Chinook and coho stocks. This would require reducing time in other Marine Areas, which lacked public support.

Comment: Extend the Bellingham Bay Fishery

WDFW received interest in extending the Bellingham Bay fishery and opening earlier than the original August 15 start date. The Skagit summer/fall Chinook stock was already over the management objective, and added time to this fishery would contribute additional impacts. Given this conservation concern, there was no opportunity to extend it further. There was also a proposal to expand the fishery area, but we have limited data on fish presence in time and space outside the current boundaries. That makes it difficult to model how an area expansion would affect exploitation rates on stocks of concern. Because of that uncertainty, WDFW was unable to support an area extension.

Comment: Allow shore fishing for coho salmon in July when Chinook retention is closed

Comments were received to open shore fishing for coho in Marine Area 9 during July on Chinook non-retention days. There are a few concerns and limitations preventing the implementation of this option. First, there are limitations from enforcement staff and sampling staff to monitor compliance and collect catch data. Additionally, when coho-directed fisheries are modeled, there is an associated impact to Chinook due to non-retention mortality. The fishery plan for 2025 has coho directed fisheries beginning August 1 in Marine Area 9. When evaluating

the limited available impacts to Chinook for all the recreational fisheries, this additional opportunity for coho was not prioritized.

Comment: Extend non-selective coho fishing seasons across Marine Areas

We received proposals to extend non-selective coho fishing opportunities across Puget Sound marine areas. In any given year, WDFW evaluates selective and non-selective recreational opportunities for coho and adjusts fisheries based on stock status and available impacts that meet all the agreed to management objectives. For the 2025 season, there were limitations on fisheries for coho due to Hood Canal natural coho and Interior Fraser (Thompson) coho. Additional non-selective fisheries in any of these areas would mean reduced fisheries in other areas.

Comment: Maximize days on the water and expand current opportunity

Several suggestions were submitted to increase fishing opportunities in Puget Sound, especially in Marine Areas 7, 10, 11 and Elliot Bay. Some anglers supported opening areas like Commencement Bay during the MA 11 fishery, Port Angeles Harbor, or all of Marine Area 6 during the Chinook selective fishery. A variety of fishing packages were modeled and evaluated to reflect these recommendations. In any given fishery year, there are a limited number of available impacts to ESA listed Chinook salmon either from directed fisheries or from release in directed fisheries on other species. Any expansion of opportunity in any given area means that there will be less opportunity in another. Doing so risks violating Commission policy on providing diverse opportunity throughout all the fisheries and gear groups. WDFW assembled the proposed fishing package that provided the most diverse opportunities that met all conservation and management objectives.

Comment: Annual Limits

Several comments were received that advocated for WDFW to implement an annual limit for each angler fishing Chinook in Puget Sound. Proponents of this regulation believe this is a way to reduce impacts on stocks of concern and potentially provide longer or more stable fishing opportunities. WDFW previously conducted a cursory analysis which found that most anglers that returned Catch Record Cards caught two or less Chinook in a given year. This information suggests any impact reduction from this measure would likely be minimal and insufficient to support additional opportunities in Puget Sound. This regulation also has the potential to reduce total Chinook catch by the recreational fishing fleet, thereby exacerbating hatchery surplus concerns in numerous facilities that already experience large surpluses. In addition, implementing an annual limit would involve a complex regulatory process, including potential revisions to multiple WAC sections, modifications to the catch record card system, and a thorough review of applicable RCWs to ensure the changes fall within WDFW's authority. Due to the complexity of this proposal, any consideration of an annual limit would need to proceed through a separate rule-making process outside of the annual season-setting process.

Comment: Catch and release fisheries

Early in the rule-making process, WDFW heard from PS Advisors and Charter/Guide boat advocates about increasing time on the water by offering catch and release opportunities for salmon. Proponents of these regulations cite the low mortality and impacts associated with non-

harvest opportunities. WDFW did not consider specific Marine Area/Time periods for catch and release seasons in 2025. In the past, WDFW has received clear feedback from the public favoring using limited available impacts for harvest opportunities over catch and release opportunities.

Comment: 2-Pole Endorsement expansion

A number of comments were received to expand the 2-pole endorsement in Marine and Freshwater areas. Expanding 2-pole endorsements to additional waters was considered, but this raised concerns about increased catch rates in mixed-stock areas, which could put additional pressure on vulnerable fish populations. These endorsements are currently allowed in specific areas where the impacts are more controlled and the fishing effort is generally low.

Comment: Gear Restrictions

WDFW received proposals to consider different gear regulations, particularly for winter fisheries directed at Chinook salmon. The proponents of this regulation assert that fishing with larger gear minimizes encounters with sub-legal-size fish. Encounters with smaller fish often restrict winter Chinook opportunities. These proposals ranged from hook size restrictions to leader length restrictions in freshwater fisheries as means to reduce impacts to non-targeted fish. Although expanded winter Chinook opportunity with gear changes was not considered for 2025, hook size restrictions were implemented in a few freshwater areas and in Marine Area 12, North of Ayock point, to reduce interactions with Chinook and to promote orderly fisheries. Leader length restrictions were not implemented due to uncertainty in the benefits to targeted fish.

Comment: Please specify when the hook gap restriction ends in MA 12 North of Ayock.

Marine Area 12, North of Ayock, will have a hook size restriction of 1/2" hook gap or less, to protect Chinook, while still allowing opportunity for coho and pink salmon. This restriction will be in effect from July 11 through July 31st. WDFW modified the regulation to reflect the intended time in which the regulation would be in effect.

Comment: The closure in Port Angeles Harbor during the July 1-August 15 MSF for Chinook is not warranted, as fishing in the harbor is not a terminal area. There is no natural Chinook production from any of the small creeks inside of the Harbor. The Harbor provides a safer spot for small boat operators during the windy at times July -August time frame. Inside of the hook the USCG shoreline anglers have a place to angle for Chinooks from the beach as well. Current regs have the boundary as the TIP of the Hook to the ITT Rayonier Dock, confusing many anglers, as there is No Marker at the TIP of the hook. Why add to the confusing regs for shoreline angler and boats and just have the regulation of: West of a true north/south line through the #2 Buoy immediately East of Ediz Hook. This will simplify the regs and enforcement.

The Port Angeles Harbor closure is part of the closure of waters East of Ediz Hook. This closure was implemented after the listing of Puget Sound Chinook under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), over 20 years ago. The closure is intended to protect natural stocks of concern in a large,

mixed stock area. WDFW will continue to monitor and evaluate this fishery to allow opportunity as conservation measures allow.

Freshwater Salmon Fisheries

Comment: Provide opportunity for hatchery spring Chinook in the North Fork Nooksack River

Wild North Fork Nooksack spring Chinook are in a low abundance threshold based on this year's forecasted abundance. WDFW chose to prioritize the limited available impacts on Nooksack spring Chinook to use in marine fisheries on the Washington Coast and in Puget Sound. This prioritization allows for a greater number of angler trips to occur in a larger geographic area when compared to an in-river angling opportunity.

Comment: increase daily limit for pink salmon in the Nooksack and Skagit and increased the daily limit for sockeye in Baker Lake.

Forecasts for pink salmon returning to the Nooksack and Skagit basins are large enough to allow an expanded daily limit for salmon in the adopted rules. The daily salmon limit is expanded in the Nooksack River to six salmon a day with up to four pink salmon. In the Skagit River, the daily limit for salmon was increased to four fish of which two can be pink salmon. The adopted rules also include an increase in the daily limit of sockeye in Baker Lake to six fish.

Comment: open Baker Lake to sockeye harvest on the first Saturday after July 4th.

The adopted rule opens the Baker Lake sockeye fishery on Saturday July 12th, with a six fish limit. July 4th falls on Friday this year and the Forest Service requested that WDFW delay the opening day until after the fourth of July weekend. The Forest Service has maintained the position that the fishery should not open on a fourth of July weekend to address potential overutilization of the available facilities around the lake.

Comment: go back to 3/4-inch point to shank hook restriction in the Samish River.

The adopted rule restricts hook gap to 1/2-inch point to shank in the Samish River to reduce snagging activity that has been documented in this river and to promote orderly fisheries. Smaller hook gaps will also help to reduce injury to fish that may be foul hooked.

Comment: Disagree with the proposal to close the Nooksack River below I-5.

A proposal to close a portion of the Nooksack River below the I-5 bridge was presented during the April 3rd public meeting. This proposal was to address gear conflicts that were identified during co-manager discussions. As part of the co-management responsibility, WDFW looks to develop non-treaty fishing opportunities while promoting orderly fisheries in coordination with treaty fisheries. However, due to administrative issues, this proposal was not implemented into the adopted rules. WDFW will work with the Treaty co-manager to address this issue in-season.

Comment: Allow jack Chinook retention during fisheries targeting sockeye.

Skagit summer/fall Chinook were identified as a constraining stock this year. The result of the initial fishery model run showed the Sauk River population of the Skagit summer/fall natural Chinook fell below the low abundance threshold. The co-managers' management plan specifies an Southern U.S. exploitation rate ceiling of 17% when below the low abundance threshold. The majority of Chinook returning to the Skagit basin in the summertime period are natural origin fish. Also, jack salmon are known to contribute to natural production and are an important component to each population. Fisheries that would increase impacts on Skagit summer/fall Chinook were not considered this year.

Comment: provide opportunity in the summer of Chinook fishing in the Skykomish River and allow the use of bait.

The adopted rules allow hatchery Chinook retention starting June 10th in the Skykomish River this year and allows the use of bait. Although Snohomish fall Chinook abundance falls in a low abundance threshold, the final fishery modeling run, which includes Skykomish hatchery Chinook retention from June 10th through July 10th, allowing the use of bait, results in the total Southern U.S. exploitation below the management objective of 8.3%.

Comment: provide Trout and gamefish opportunity in Skykomish and Snoqualmie rivers.

The original CR-101 filing did not open WAC's for gamefish fisheries in this rule-making cycle. The comments have been recorded and will be considered during rule-making for those fisheries.

Comment: provide June Chinook opportunity in the Wallace River.

WDFW is interested in expanding fisheries in this area but based on this year's forecast for natural Chinook returning to the Snohomish basin, expanding fisheries to this area wasn't an option this year. Impacts to unmarked Chinook in this area and time are not understood and additional monitoring would need to accompany any fisheries in this area. Resource limitations prevent addition monitoring activities in 2025. Also, attempts to model impacts to unmarked Chinook in this area would be arbitrary due to the lack of existing creel data.

Comment: open the recreational fishery on the Puyallup River on August 1st and seven days per week in August.

Closures to recreational fisheries in the adopted rules within the Puyallup River during August are implemented to reduce conflict with tribal fisheries and to ensure orderly fisheries (Objective 3, pg. 5 above). During the NOF process, as discussed on pages two and three above, WDFW and treaty tribes discuss management objectives and identify issues. Gear conflict between treaty and non-treaty fisheries in the Puyallup River were identified. Discussions with co-managers during the NOF process identified area and times where adjustments to fishery schedules would best reduce conflicts while maximizing recreational fishing opportunities. The August 16th opening data has been consistent across recent years and was negotiated to align with the treaty tribal fishing schedule.

Comment: Provide a recreational fishery for winter chum in the Nisqually River.

The adopted rule does not open chum directed fisheries in the Nisqually River during the winter chum management period. This population has not been achieving conservation objectives consistently and a precautionary approach is being used this year. A recreational fishery during the winter chum management period (November 23-January 31) will be dependent on the In-Season Update (ISU) model in Yelm Creek indicating the Nisqually winter chum population will meet the escapement goal (a live count of 389 adults or greater on or before January 2nd). If the Yelm Creek ISU reaches the needed threshold, the season schedule and duration will be determined in-season.

Comment: With the projection of over 1 million pink salmon returning to the Nisqually River, why isn't a limit of 2 extra pinks being allowed along with the 2-adult limit?

The schedule and daily limits for the recreational salmon fishery in the Nisqually River were negotiated with tribal co-managers to meet conservation objectives and stay under the Southern U.S. exploitation rate ceiling for the natural origin fall Chinook population in the Nisqually River. Allowing an additional adult limit for pink salmon would increase angler effort and time on the water and result in elevated impacts to unmarked Chinook.

Comment: Why have you closed Tahuya and Dewatto rivers to salmon fishing?

Salmon fisheries in the Tahuya River were closed in 2016 to address disorderly fisheries. Access to the Tahuya River is primarily through private property. Property owners reported frequent disorderly fishing activity and expressed their intent to enforce trespassing laws, due to instances of property damage, trespassing, and littering. Salmon fisheries in the Dewatto River were closed in response to critically low abundance of its summer chum population. Dewatto summer chum are part of the recovery plan, and a healthy population is needed to achieve recovery.

Comment: Allow the retention of pink salmon in the Dungeness River.

This proposal was not implemented due to conservation concerns for wild spring/summer Chinook.

Miscellaneous Comments and considerations:

WDFW received a comment supporting healthy prey levels for Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW). WDFW works annually with co-manager tribes and staff at NOAA to ensure that each annual fishing season setting process considers the number of salmon (prey) that are removed through fisheries, to ensure that an adequate amount of prey remains available and does not contribute to the long-term decline of the species.