

Columbia River Selective Commercial Fishing Gear Implementation

2009-2011	<p>WDFW and ODFW Initiate Alternative Gear Pilot Test Fisheries for Purse Seine, Beach Seine, Trap Net, and Troll Gear to determine effectiveness of commercial gears and observed release mortality.</p> <p><i>Result (Fall 2011): Purse Seine – 17,334 total catch/23 mortalities; Beach Seine – 12,054 total catch/6 mortalities. Grand total – 29,388 total catch / 29 mortalities – <u>Observed Mortality Rate of 1/10th of 1%</u> Steelhead – 2,892 handled/1 mortality.</i></p>
2011-2012	<p>WDFW conducts long-term release mortality testing for purse seines and beach seines using PIT tags.</p> <p><i>Result: Study shows long-term release mortality rates much high than observed mortalities. Rates ranged from <u>50% for Coho in beach seines to 22% for fall bright Chinook.</u> Study authors and subsequent studies identify potential flaw in study. Quote from WDFW report:</i></p> <p><i>“The survival estimates produced from this study for these two years may underestimate the survival following release from commercial fishing gear if fish in the treatment groups were a mix of fish destined for spawning localities above Bonneville Dam and those intending to spawn in the lower river below Bonneville Dam.”</i></p>
2013	<p>WDFW conducts additional year of long-term release mortality testing for purse seines and beach seines using PIT tags and radio tags.</p> <p>Result: Study confirms that over 20% of tagged Chinook may have been destined for tributaries below Bonneville, rather than fish experiencing mortality. The 2013 study finds mortality rates <u>of 7% for tule Chinook, 13% for bright Chinook, and 16% for Coho.</u></p>
2009-2011	<p>ODFW conducts testing of small mesh gillnets (tangle nets) for fall Coho fishery to determine effectiveness of gear and observed release mortality.</p> <p><i>Result: Immediate mortality rate varied on mesh size/soak time, but for selected soak time (30 min) the observed mortality was 6.8%.</i></p>
2013-2014	<p>ODFW/WDFW adopt a long-term mortality rate for fall tangle net Coho fisheries -- the gear is used in fall 2013 and 2014 fisheries with this rate.</p> <p><i>Result: 13.6% rate adopted by multiplying 6.8% observed mortality rate x 2 (based on data from a spring Chinook fishery). No corresponding long-term mortality study was conducted similar to seine fishery.</i></p>

2013	Seines and alternative gears are made legal again in Oregon when Senate Bill 830 is enacted into law.
2014	<p><i>US v. Oregon</i> Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – comprised of state, federal and tribal officials -- adopts “interim” long-term mortality rates for seines based on 2011-2013 studies. High rates limits the ability to use the gear within allowable ESA impacts for tule Chinook and “B” run steelhead:</p> <p><u><i>Result: Chinook: 22.5% - purse, 34.3% - beach; Coho: 28.9% - purse, 38.4% - beach; Steelhead: 3.3% - purse, 8.3% - beach.</i></u></p>
2014	First Year of Commercial Pilot Seine Fishery – Limited to 10 applicants chosen by lottery. NOAA provides extra ESA-impacts to conduct the fishery for “research.” Commercial seine fishers limited to Zones 1-3 where they must release wild, unmarked fish in a run with a low mark rate (38% Chinook / 32% Coho).
2014-2015	<p>WDFW reanalyzes long-term mortality data to correct for study flaws and submits for TAC review in the hopes of reducing release mortality rates:</p> <p><i>Result: TAC rejects WDFW data suggesting lower release mortality rates – maintains high “interim” rates.</i></p>
2015	Commercial purse and beach seine fisheries are conducted within the overall ESA-impacts of the commercial sector. Only a handful of commercial fishers participate.

Recommendations:

- Take immediate action to conduct additional research and develop data to present to the TAC and NOAA in support of a lower release mortality rate for seines.
- Subject tangle nets and any other commercial fishing gears to the same level of testing and scrutiny as the seines.
- Until release mortality rates are corrected, ODFW and WDFW should allocate sufficient ESA impacts and fishing opportunity in zones 4/5 to provide economic viability to those individuals who have/will invest in seine operations.
- Clearly communicate the commitment and need to implement selective gears.