

## Washington

### Executive Summary

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted the Columbia River Basin Salmon Management Policy (C-3620) in January 2013 and included direction for a comprehensive five-year review by the end of 2018. The comprehensive review began in January 2018, with written questions from the Fish and Wildlife Commission focused on whether the provisions of the Policy were implemented or not and whether the stated purposes and goals of the Policy were successfully achieved. During the course of the review (January to September 2018), Department staff met frequently with commissioners, and as a result, additional questions and information requests were incorporated into the review.

The intent of this review was to assist the Commission in their evaluation of a) whether the Policy was successful in achieving the stated objectives, principles, and provisions; b) areas where the Policy failed or has not been working well, and c) to provide information that might help explain reasons why these potential outcomes may have occurred. The intent can be abbreviated as follows: Has the policy been implemented as written, and what has occurred as a result of policy changes?

The analytical approach was to provide information and analysis for each of the written questions, and then to organize the analysis into seven overarching theme categories. Detailed responses to those questions, as well as public comments on each question, are located in the following seven themed sections of this report: General Fishery Management, Recreational Fisheries, Commercial Fisheries, Tribal Fisheries, Allocation, and Economics.

#### General Fishery Management

This theme encompassed questions about conservation, fishery management, predation and concurrency.

There were few aspects of the Policy that focused on conservation; however, the Policy operated within the conservation guidelines already in place through *U.S. v Oregon*. Meeting *U.S. v Oregon* requirements was an overarching principle, and all fisheries were conducted consistent with the *U.S. v Oregon* court order. The Policy intent was to enhance the conservation benefits for tule fall Chinook and coho, by implementing additional mark-selective fisheries, primarily with the transition to alternative gear commercial fisheries. Very few additional mark-selective fisheries were implemented during the Policy.

During the Policy implementation period, the proportion of hatchery fish on spawning grounds (pHOS) decreased compared to the pre-policy average in five primary Lower Columbia River fall Chinook populations, however; the bulk of this reduction was attributed to the use of weirs, as there were only limited mark-selective mainstem recreational and commercial fisheries that occurred.

Concurrent regulations and/or policies between Oregon and Washington are critical to effectively manage fisheries in the Columbia River. There are several instances where achieving concurrency is difficult due to substantive differences between the current Washington Policy and Oregon rule/policies. These instances can result in unharvested fish or not meeting the objectives of both states. Non-concurrent rules can be very challenging for fishery managers and enforcement officers. These challenges are described in a synopsis at the end the General Fishery Management section.

Though not a direct result of the Policy, predator reduction programs and improvements in management tools are occurring consistent with C-3620's Guiding Principles.

### **Recreational Fisheries**

This theme encompassed questions about the goals to prioritize recreational fishing in the mainstem of the Columbia River, implementation of barbless hooks in mainstem and tributary salmon fisheries, and the charge to evaluate the use of logbooks.

Recreational fisheries have been prioritized in the mainstem as a result of changes to allocations that result in a high proportion of their allocation being utilized. A barbless hook requirement was implemented in the mainstem Columbia River and tributary recreational fisheries with some exceptions where ESA-impacts are negligible. Staff is not aware of any information presented during the consideration of the Policy, on the scientific basis of a difference in mortality due to the use of barbed versus barbless hooks. Legislation has occurred to allow Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to require logbook use for the guide industry but has not been implemented.

### **Commercial Fisheries**

This theme encompassed questions about the goals to explore new Select Areas, monitor the fishery, seek certification as a sustainably managed fishery, and pursue commercial license buy-backs.

Exploration of new Select Areas occurred by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and one potential new site for Washington was identified in their analysis. At this time, no additional work has been done to consider this site. A new Select Area site in Washington was attempted in Cathlamet Channel but was not successful due to poor smolt survival and resulted in no new fishery.

The commercial fishery was monitored in 2017, and results were similar to expectations. A certification for a sustainably managed fishery was not attempted during the Policy. A commercial license buy-back program was initiated, but the effort was abandoned and a new approach has begun.

### Tribal Fisheries

The objectives of the Policy included meeting the subsistence and ceremonial needs of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and the Wanapum Band (RCW 77.12.453). The Colville Tribes and Wanapum Band were allocated sufficient catch to meet their annual needs.

### Allocation

This theme primarily encompassed questions about allocation between sport and commercial fisheries and allocation within the sport fishery, including area-specific allocations.

Recreational and commercial fisheries have been prioritized in the mainstem and off-channel areas, respectively, through ESA-impact allocations. All of the fisheries were planned pre-season using the Policy allocations. As fisheries occurred, changes to run sizes and actual harvests resulted in alterations to the pre-season plan. Comparing ESA impact sharing may not be the most appropriate way to view how the Policy performed. For most sport and commercial fisheries and within geographic areas, a high percentage of their catch allocation was used, with the exception of the upriver/lower river sharing for spring Chinook.

### Alternative Gear

This theme primarily encompassed questions about development and implementation of alternative gears while phasing out gillnets in the mainstem Columbia.

Implementation of alternative gear was a key component to the success of the Policy, but did not materialize. There have been substantial resources invested to develop and test alternative fishing methods for Lower Columbia River commercial fisheries. Catch rates, bycatch, post-capture fish condition and survival, and gear investment costs have been evaluated for purse seines and beach seines for summer and fall fisheries. Unfortunately, despite these efforts, no alternative gear types have been fully adopted, though coho and spring Chinook tangle net and fall seine net (beach and purse) fisheries have been operated under the Washington Administrative Code and RCW 77.70.180, respectively. There are a number of issues associated with successful implementation of alternative gears, including high handle of non-target species (specifically steelhead,) high-release mortality rates, ESA impact limitations, and high cost to operate the gear. Some commercial licensees have made notable investments to use alternate gears; to date, there has been no return from those investments.

### Economics

The Policy endeavored to *"enhance the overall economic well-being and stability of Columbia River fisheries"* by prioritizing use of alternate commercial gear types in the Columbia River mainstem, increasing commercial harvest in off-channel fishing areas, and boosting recreational angling opportunity. This theme primarily encompassed

questions about whether the expected economic benefits have accrued as a result of Policy implementation and whether adaptive adjustments to the Policy have occurred if the expected benefits were not realized, as prescribed in the Policy.

Estimating economic impacts for this assessment is challenging for a number of reasons. The Columbia River Fishery Management Workgroup process included a multitude of assumptions during the development of their report intended for the Commission, and many of those assumptions were included in this Policy. The expectations from the Workgroup were meant to provide a trend or change over time of fishery angler trips and ex-vessel values. The Policy was expected to increase recreational angler trips by reallocating more impacts or fish to the recreational fisheries, and increase ex-vessel value to the commercial fishery through increased production in Select Areas and implementation of alternative gears.

It is important to note that the analysis of economic benefit that has accrued as a direct result of the Policy is complicated by factors affecting the economic value of both recreational and commercial fisheries that are not under control of the Policy, such as unexpected changes in the abundance of fish returning to the Columbia Basin, changes in the price of commercially caught salmon, and other factors. Nevertheless, when analytical corrections and normalizations regarding such factors are attempted, it remains apparent that the goal of enhancing the overall economic well-being and stability of Columbia River fisheries was not achieved as expected.



After standardizing the data for total salmon returns to the Columbia Basin (angler trips/fish returns), the annual number of angler trips to mainstem fisheries downstream of Bonneville Dam decreased overall during the post policy period despite a slight increase in total fishing days.



Lower than expected commercial landings for spring and summer Chinook were offset by a relatively high price per pound. A small proportion of landings were made via experimental seine and tangle net fisheries. The majority of gillnet ex-vessel value was derived from mainstem fisheries (which Policy C-3620 terminates after 2018), and increased slightly relative to the economic contribution of mainstem fisheries during the pre-policy period. Ex-vessel value derived from off-channel fisheries did not increase as expected during the policy implementation period and primarily benefited Oregon fishers. Overall, the commercial fishery saw a decrease in ex-vessel value after standardizing for run size.

### Conclusions



The large economic benefits for both commercial and recreational fisheries expected from the Policy were not observed during the implementation period. Commercial Select Area enhancements and alternative gear development have not replaced mainstem fisheries. Recreational fisheries have only seen marginal benefits to changes in allocations. The expectations in the development of the Policy were not met.

*Jim Wells  
Public Forum*

**2010**

MONTH	CHINOOK	COHO	CH JK	CO JK	TULE	REDSIDE WH	STUR	SOCKEYE	CHUM	PINK
JAN										
FEB	857						647			
MAR	15005						957			
APR	53590						371			
MAY	72676						427			
JUN	21117						1401			
JUL	2160						5004			
AUG	102491	23038	277	127	34617		21188			
SEP	34985	112215	1233	1004	27262	965	1543			
OCT	2379	21497	4	94	654	3442	3777		476	

TOTALS: 305260 156750 1514 1225 62533 4407 35315 0 476

*567,480 lbs.*

**2011**

MONTH	CHINOOK	COHO	CH JK	CO JK	TULE	REDSIDE WH	STUR	SOCKEYE	CHUM	PINK
JAN	18									
FEB	1252						25			
MAR	4221						467			
APR	25914						250			
MAY	45497		3				244			
JUN	25269		7				2796			
JULY	8971		22				7944	37		
AUG	129716	14182	47		37804		13508			7
SEP	86919	129718	929	658	30971	11	5716			26
OCT	1362	6464	26	16	569	1281	505		24	

TOTALS: 329139 150364 1034 674 69344 1292 31455 37 24 33

*583,396 lbs.*

# 2012

MONTH	CHINOOK	COHO	CH JK	CO JK	TULE	REDSIDE WH	STUR	SOCKEYE	CHUM	PINK
JAN										
FEB	406						359			
MAR	1708						20			
APR	25015						94			
MAY	22536						198			
JUN	19829						1124			
JULY	5197						4937		178	
AUG	102720	2027	1995		69873		9497			
SEP	43261	34527	3652	1295	21781		2223		34	
OCT	2215	2764	45	57	1882		22		12	
TOTALS:	222887	39318	5755	1352	93536	0	18511	37	178	46
										0

381583 lbs

# 2013

MONTH	CHINOOK	COHO	CH JK	CO JK	TULE	REDSIDE WH	STUR	SOCKEYE	CHUM	PINK
JAN										
FEB	127						119			
MAR	4068						36			
APR	19480						253			
MAY	15042		74	89			2539			
JUN	10312		15				2935			
JULY	11434						693		46	
AUG	168606	3531	332	189	35901		4141			
SEP	78760	40464	214	1162	9182		1482			
OCT	1077	3769	39	113	227		272			5
TOTALS:	308906	47764	763	1464	45310	331	12198	46	0	5

446787 lbs

2014

MONTH	CHINOOK	COHO	CH JK	CO JK	TULE	REDSIDE WH	STUR	SOCKEYE	CHUM	PINK
JAN										
FEB	126									
MAR	2430									
APR	8395		19							
MAY	8014		134							
JUN	2785		5							
JULY	8829		4						11	
AUG	98303	935	125	1	19015					
SEP	108658	259159	2886	919	38264	458				5
OCT	9692	40047	200	30	632	528				
TOTALS:	247232	300141	3373	950	57911	986	0	11	0	5

610,609 lb

2015

MONTH	CHINOOK	COHO	CH JK	CO JK	TULE	REDSIDE WH	STUR	SOCKEYE	CHUM	PINK
JAN										
FEB	247									
MAR	5346		2							
APR	14745		4						5	
MAY	29250		82							
JUN	14885		17							
JULY	4666		16		76			76		
AUG	62712	1002	107	3	17073			33		5
SEP	61865	21296	60	126	23430					
OCT	2514	3070	40	30	241	727				
TOTALS:	196230	25368	328	159	40820	727	0	114	0	5

263,751 lb

2016

MONTH	CHINOOK	COHO	CH JK	CO JK	TULE	REDSIDE WH	STUR	SOCKEYE	CHUM	PINK
JAN										
FEB	1431									
MAR	3556									
APR	5976									
MAY	25893		78							
JUN	21250		17							
JULY	9906		6	9					171	
AUG	87887	7230		345	585	24129			6	
SEP	131771	43658		447	2213	6724				9
OCT	90	3674		7	313	239				3169

TOTALS: 169160 54568 903 3111 31092 3178 0 177 0 0

262,189.1

2017

MONTH	CHINOOK	COHO	CH JK	CO JK	TULE	REDSIDE WH	STUR	SOCKEYE	CHUM	PINK
JAN										
FEB	228		7							
MAR	1455									
APR	11515									
MAY	32855									
JUN	43286		3							
JULY	8496		9						1017	25
AUG	16410	482	69		6194				1054	
SEP	23948	68518	58	424	8253				1348	
OCT	217	5484	173		228				1297	

TOTALS: 138410 74491 312 424 14675 1488 4716 25 0 11

234,552.11

Select Area Winter, Spring, Summer  
Chinook Catches

2014 - 4644  
2015 - 13,703  
2016 - 10,496  
2017 - 17,598  
2018 - 10,981  
2019 - 3,141

Select Fall Totals

Chinook

2014 - 24,198  
2015 - 18,179  
2016 - 12,443  
2017 - 12,034  
2018 - 6,604  
2019 - 3,369

Coho

14 - 168,497  
15 - 27,445  
16 - 34,723  
17 - 37,979  
18 - 12,111  
19 - 17,539 - (10-15-19)  
19,291 - (11-21-19)

Mainstem Fall Chinook

2015 - 81,252 - 9" 8" 6" Tangle Net Zones 1-5  
2016 - 57,940 - 9" 8" - Zone 4-5 - only  
2017 - 19,398 - 9" Zone 4-5 - only  
2018 8,320 9" Zone 4-5 - only

= Numbers from ODF&W website -

# Pound Net Trap Results

## 2018 Fall Trap

40+ Days - AUG 25 - OCT 18

Chinook

1508

907 - released

601 SOLD

Coho

954

469 - released

485 - SOLD

Steelhead

322

22 wild B's

## 2019 Trap Spring - Summer

May 5 - July 3 - 40 days

Chinook

137

Sockeye

891

Shad

357

Chin Smolts

550

Steelhead

251

## 2019 Fall Trap

AUG 28 - OCT 10 -

Chinook

302

131 - released

171 SOLD

Coho

2740

1073 - released

1667 SOLD

Steelhead

223

13 wild B's

# 2019 NON-TREATY AUGUST (Early-Fall) GILLNET FISHERY

FINAL Catch Estimate  
(FINAL Fish Receiving Tickets 10 - 7 - 2019)

## (Zones 4 - 5)

DATE	CHINOOK		COHO		WHITE STURGEON		Deliveries
	(Nos.)	(Ave Wt.)	(Nos.)	(Ave Wt.)	(Nos.)	(Ave Wt.)	
<b>August 14 - 15</b> (9pm Wed - 6am Thu) 9 hrs Zones 4 - 5 (9-inch min. to 9-3/4 inch max. mesh restr.)	419	17.1	7	4.6	136	32.9	37
<i>Mainstem White Sturgeon Possession And Sales Limit = 7 / vessel / week</i>							
<b>WEEK 33 (Zones 4 - 5)</b>	419		7		136		
<b>August / Early-Fall CUML. TO DATE</b>	419		7		136		
<b>August 19 - 20</b> (9pm Mon - 6am Tue) 9 hrs Zones 4 - 5 (9-inch min. to 9-3/4 inch max. mesh restr.)	1,493	15.6	18	5.1	110	32.3	51
<b>August 21 - 22</b> (9pm Wed - 6am Thu) 9 hrs Zones 4 - 5 (9-inch min. to 9-3/4 inch max. mesh restr.)	1,684	15.6	24	5.2	69	32.6	57
<i>Mainstem White Sturgeon Possession And Sales Limit = 7 / vessel / week</i>							
<b>WEEK 34 (Zones 4 - 5)</b>	3,177		42		179		
<b>August / Early-Fall CUML. TO DATE</b>	3,596		49		315		
<b>August 26 - 27</b> (9pm Mon - 6am Tue) 9 hrs Zones 4 - 5 (9-inch min. to 9-3/4 inch max. mesh restr.)	2,866	15.6	157	5.3	194	32.4	63
<i>Mainstem White Sturgeon Possession And Sales Limit = 7 / vessel / week</i>							
<b>WEEK 35 (Zones 4 - 5)</b>	2,866		157		194		
<b>August / Early-Fall SEASON TOTALS</b>	6,462		206		509		

OCT 8-9 Zone 4-5 -  
8" - 48 hrs.

1694 - 14.5  
8,156