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Native Fish Society Testimony to Commission

Chair Wahl, Commissioners, and Director Melcher. I'm Kirk Blaine, Southern Oregon Regional Coordinator for the Native Fish Society. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and thank you for reinstating the public forum.

This fall, the department released the 5 year review of the Coastal Multi-species Management Plan or CMP. The results of the review raise serious concerns for Oregon Coast steelhead populations and current management.

The review shows three out of four Oregon Coast winter steelhead strata saw population abundance below critical thresholds established in the plan. The mid-coast dropped below critical abundance in 2017, the mid-south coast in 2017 and 2019, and the north coast in 2018 and 2019.

The CMP states population declines such as this would trigger distinct management action by specifying, "If Critical Abundance levels for a stratum are observed in two successive years, ODFW shall initiate an evaluation of additional actions that are warranted to protect the stratum from long-term decline."

Included in the CMP review was an evaluation of pHOS or Percent Hatchery Origin Spawners of steelhead. Many populations saw over 10% pHOS, which is indicated in the CMP as excessive. In particular, pHOS for North Umpqua summer steelhead is dangerously high with a nine year average of 30%. Likewise, Mid-south coast winter Steelhead are seeing an average pHOS of 20%.

These declines in population and increases in hatchery origin spawners combined with Dr. Shaun Clements Climate and Ocean Change evaluation create utmost concern for the future of Oregon Coast Steelhead.

What management actions is ODFW taking to resolve these issues? A state sensitive species is characterized as any species having small or declining populations, a population at-risk, and/or a population of management concern. Implementation of appropriate conservation measures to address existing or potential threats may prevent these populations from declining to the point of qualifying for threatened or endangered status. Based on this definition, Native Fish Society has submitted a request to

the department to evaluate whether Oregon Coast winter Steelhead warrant re-listing as a state sensitive species and Oregon Coast Summer Steelhead warrant uplisting to a sensitive critical species.

Again thank you for the opportunity to testify today. We look forward to seeing public awareness on this issue and precautionary management to conserve these species.

Kirk Blaine