



635-500-6785

Implementing the Rogue–South Coast Multi-Species Conservation and Management Plan

The Rogue–South Coast Multi-Species Conservation and Management Plan (RSP) (State of Oregon 2021, attached) implements the State’s strategy for protecting, enhancing, and utilizing Oregon populations of winter steelhead, summer steelhead, coho salmon, and coastal cutthroat trout along the Oregon coast from Elk River near Cape Blanco to the Winchuck River.

(1) Policy. The RSP is based on the premise that the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds provides the best vehicle for securing partnerships, both private and governmental, to successfully implement the actions called for in this plan. This rule describes the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission’s (Commission) contribution toward this collective effort and directs the Department’s implementation of the RSP. This rule also describes the Department’s role in implementing the RSP consistent with the Department’s statutory authorities, Native Fish Conservation Policy (OAR 635-007-0502 thru 635-007-0505) and Climate and Ocean Change Policy (OAR 635-900-0001 thru 635-900-0020). The rule is not intended to be prescriptive but rather to identify the range of opportunities the Department should pursue and how the effectiveness of those opportunities should be evaluated, following the template first established in the Native Fish Conservation Policy.

(2) Description of Species Management Units (SMUs) and Populations. The Rogue–South Coast winter steelhead, summer steelhead, coho, and coastal cutthroat trout SMUs (Plan SMUs) which are addressed in the RSP are comprised of geographical strata and independent populations, as listed in RSP Table 2.

(3) Desired Status. The desired status for the Plan SMUs is to maintain or improve SMU status as described in RSP Table 7 and to maintain or improve outcomes for populations or strata based on measurable criteria as described in RSP Table 8. Achieving desired status for SMUs, strata, and populations will increase the ecological, economic, and cultural benefits they provide and increase their resilience to climate and ocean change.

(4) Current Status. The status of the Plan SMUs at the time of the adoption of this rule is described in the RSP. The Current Status chapter Overall Status Assessment Approach section and RSP Table 4 summarize the biological attributes, criteria, and metrics used to assess the status of each SMU. Those biological attributes, criteria, and metrics are adopted by reference into this rule.

(5) Primary Limiting Factors.

(a) Numerous factors contribute to the gap between current and desired status of populations comprising the Plan SMUs. Marine survival associated with ocean conditions



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strongly influences productivity and abundance for Plan SMUs. Although ocean conditions are not manageable at the scale of this plan and are thus not considered a primary limiting factor, attention to other limiting factors will be heightened during periods of poor ocean conditions.

(b) Manageable limiting factors generally causing the gap between current and desired status for the Plan SMUs are broadly defined as:

(A) Habitat access (upstream and downstream passage; access to off-channel habitat);

(B) Water quality;

(C) Water quantity;

(D) Physical habitat structure/complexity; and

(E) Interactions with other species (including predators).

(c) Primary and secondary limiting factors are identified for each population within each SMU in the RSP Limiting Factors chapter, Table 9. The Department will continue to help revise and identify new management actions addressing these factors to aid in reaching desired status. The Department may analyze the limiting factors at a finer, more localized scale when selecting or prioritizing management actions for specific areas within populations. These analyses may find primary and secondary factors different at a local scale than what was found at the SMU or population scale.

(6) Management Strategies. Management strategies to address limiting factors for each population are identified in the RSP Management Strategies and Actions chapter. The Department will consider and attempt to implement these management strategies designed for the Plan SMUs as a whole, and for constituent populations as applicable, as mechanisms to reach the desired status. Short-term (1 to 5 years) and long-term (1 to 25 years) strategies are identified in seven categories:

(a) Habitat:

(A) Promote and implement a tiered approach to habitat restoration efforts and funding to achieve maximum benefit for plan species. Prioritize restoration actions, including actions identified in Coho Strategic Action Plans, in the following order:

(i) actions to address primary limiting factors in population areas with an independent coho salmon population;

(ii) actions to address primary limiting factors in other population areas; and

(iii) actions to address secondary limiting factors for all population areas.



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(B) Within the Rogue and Coastal strata, identify watersheds that will be key to supporting plan populations in the future, and focus habitat protection and restoration activities towards these watersheds.

(C) Consistent with the Department's mission, policies, and laws, continue to coordinate with and advise other agencies, local governments, and regulatory entities to ensure that habitat protection processes and actions provide the best possible outcomes for native fish.

(D) Exhibit leadership in coordinating the implementation of actions to adapt to climate change.

(E) Encourage citizen involvement to help implement habitat protection and restoration actions.

(F) Promote beavers and beaver-related pond habitat to increase water quantity and stream complexity, primarily through riparian restoration and helping landowners learn to live with beaver impacts.

(b) Other Species:

(A) Support programs that reduce conflict between predators and anglers.

(B) Assess predator impacts and feasibility of management options with an over-arching science approach across predators.

(C) Implement a strategic approach to reducing impacts from non-native minnows, with a focus on water quality to favor salmon and steelhead. Remove non-native minnows where possible to reduce impacts on native fish.

(D) Prohibit the introduction of non-native fin fish species into flowing waters, and develop and support programs designed to decrease illegal introductions of non-native species.

(c) Hatchery:

(A) Manage hatchery programs to provide optimal harvest opportunities and meet mitigation goals while being consistent with desired status targets for wild populations.

(B) Manage hatchery programs to minimize risk to the long-term adaptive capacity of wild populations.

(C) Manage for wild fish emphasis or mixed emphasis in the appropriate Management Areas as outlined in RSP Figure 14 and obtain Commission approval



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for starting new or eliminating existing hatchery programs in a Management Area relative to those in RSP Table 14 (excluding educational and research programs and conservation actions).

(d) Fishing:

(A) Manage recreational fisheries to provide harvest and angling opportunities consistent with conservation of naturally produced steelhead, coho salmon, and cutthroat trout, and achievement of desired status goals for each SMU.

(B) Manage fisheries proactively for the future and respond to changing environmental conditions.

(C) Collect appropriate data to manage wild fisheries.

(e) Research and Monitoring:

(A) Identify and implement sustainable monitoring approaches that align with management and status determination needs.

(B) Monitor appropriate metrics to document changing climate and ocean conditions and the impacts of those changes on plan species and their habitats.

(C) Prioritize research that resolves critical uncertainties about SMU status and management strategy effectiveness.

(D) Conduct research to reduce key uncertainties related to the response of plan species and their habitats to climate and ocean change.

(f) Outreach/Enforcement:

(A) Encourage angler stewardship to reduce impacts without adding layers of regulation and increase cooperation with Oregon State Police to help enforce existing regulations.

(B) Increase and diversify public participation in fishing and native fish conservation.

(C) Improve communication with the public; provide more information through more diverse avenues of communication and collect information to inform management.

(D) Encourage citizen involvement to help implement habitat protection and restoration actions, and encourage landowner participation in these critical actions.

(g) Facilities:

(A) Invest in infrastructure that best supports the Department's mission.



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(B) Develop and maintain public access to increase fishing opportunity and improve angler experience.

(7) Adaptive Management. The Department shall employ adaptive management principles within its statutory authority in support of optimizing fisheries and achieving the desired status goals for the SMUs. The Department's adaptive management of the SMUs will include five elements: research; monitoring; evaluation; a feedback loop; and reporting.

(a) Research. The Department shall support high priority research that addresses uncertainties related to SMU or population status and management strategies and actions needed to optimize fisheries and achieve desired status as funding and staffing allow. Future research needs may be identified, or research needs described at the time of plan adoption may be modified, as a result of periodic assessments of the RSP and with the development and update of research plans for the Department and Oregon Hatchery Research Center.

(b) Monitoring. The Department shall continue to identify, implement and support monitoring needed to assess the status of SMUs, strata, or populations relative to desired status criteria, evaluate habitat status trends and understand fishery characteristics as funding and staffing allow. Future monitoring needs may be identified, or monitoring needs described at the time of plan adoption may be modified, during periodic assessments of the RSP and with the development and update of monitoring plans for the Department.

(c) Evaluation. The Department shall identify and support evaluation needed to apply research and monitoring results to modify monitoring and management, re-assess status and determine the effectiveness of management strategies and actions in achieving their intended outcomes as funding and staffing allow. Future evaluation needs may be identified, or evaluation needs described at the time of plan adoption may be modified, as a result of periodic assessments of the RSP.

(d) Feedback Loop. The Department shall review the results of reports and assessments identified in OAR 635-500-6785(7)(e) and modify management strategies and actions as appropriate and within its statutory authority based on the review results. The Department shall implement the Adaptive Management processes and recommend to other agencies or entities, as necessary, appropriate modifications to management strategies and actions needed to optimize fisheries and support attainment of the desired status goals for each SMU. This feedback shall include refinement of management actions, research, monitoring



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and evaluation programs and desired status criteria based on the best available scientific information.

(A) The Department shall propose modifications to the RSP if the listing status under the federal Endangered Species Act changes for any species addressed in the RSP.

(B) If a status assessment described in OAR 635-500-6785(7)(e) indicates deterioration of populations or SMUs, or a noticeable lack of progress toward desired status, the Department will determine if the strategies being used to achieve desired status need to be substantively changed or modified. If so, a public process will be undertaken, with Commission approval necessary for such changes.

(C) The annual review of monitoring data necessary to produce annual reports described in OAR 635-500-6785(7)(e) will serve as an early warning system that will inform the need for additional or modified research, monitoring, evaluation, or management actions. If review of annually collected data or other information appears to show that measurable criteria as identified in RSP Appendix VII – Management Triggers and Actions are not being met, the Department will determine and implement necessary modified actions. The modification of management actions will be detailed in annual reports.

(e) Reporting. Annual and periodic evaluations of RSP implementation and SMU status shall be made available to the public. The Department shall prepare annual reports and conduct a 12-year status assessment of SMUs and populations. Additional assessments will be conducted as necessitated by new information or significant population declines.

(8) Impact on Other Native Fish Species. Management strategies identified in the RSP are likely to be beneficial to other native, indigenous fish species present in the SMUs because they focus on restoring natural processes. New or modified actions shall consider impacts to other native, indigenous fish species, as appropriate, to minimize harm and optimize benefits.

Statutory/Other Authority: ORS 496.138, 496.146 & 506.119

Statutes/Other Implemented: ORS 506.109 & 506.129