

NOAA Fisheries' 2015-2016 Endangered Species Act 5-year Reviews for 32 Species of West Coast Salmon & Steelhead, Eulachon, and Puget Sound Rockfishes

Background

Section 4(c)(2)(A) of the ESA requires that we (NOAA Fisheries) conduct a review of listed species at least once every five years. On the basis of such reviews, we determine whether a species should be delisted, or reclassified from endangered to threatened or from threatened to endangered. On February 6, 2015, we published a notice in the Federal Register (80 FR 6695) announcing the initiation of 5-year reviews for 32 species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA): 17 evolutionarily significant units (ESUs) of Pacific salmon; 11 distinct population segments (DPSs) of steelhead; 3 DPSs of Puget Sound rockfishes, and the southern DPS of eulachon.

Timeline

As part of the Federal Register notice announcing the 5-year reviews, we opened a public comment period and solicited specific information to inform the reviews. Please refer to the Federal Register notice for details on the information solicited¹. The comment period closes May 7, 2015. We anticipate announcing the findings of these reviews in winter 2016.

Scope of Reviews

In addition to our determination of whether the ESA-status of each species should be delisted or reclassified, our 5-year review findings will include: a summary of updated information on ESU/DPS viability; any recommended ESU/DPS boundary adjustments; in the case of salmon and steelhead species, any recommended changes to the inclusion of specific hatchery programs as part of a listed salmon ESU or steelhead DPS; and any new information on the limiting factors and threats affecting a species' recovery. These 5-year reviews also provide the opportunity to: report on progress toward recovery goals; highlight key accomplishments and successes; underscore key challenges and information gaps; provide recommendations for priority recovery; and recommend needed updates to recovery plans.

List of Species under Review

We will undertake reviews for the following 17 Pacific salmon ESUs: (1) Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon, (2) Upper Columbia River spring-run Chinook salmon, (3) Snake River spring/summer-run Chinook salmon; (4) Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon; (5) California Coastal Chinook salmon; (6) Puget Sound Chinook salmon; (7) Lower Columbia River Chinook salmon; (8) Upper Willamette River Chinook salmon; (9) Snake River fall-run Chinook salmon; (10) Hood Canal summer-run chum salmon; (11) Columbia River chum salmon; (12) Central California Coast coho salmon; (13) Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast coho salmon; (14) Lower Columbia River coho salmon; (15) Oregon Coast coho salmon; (16) Snake River sockeye salmon; and (17) Ozette Lake sockeye salmon. We will undertake reviews for the following 11 steelhead DPSs: (1) Southern California; (2) Upper Columbia River; (3) Middle Columbia River; (4) Snake River Basin; (5) Lower Columbia River; (6) Upper Willamette; (7) South-Central California Coast; (8) Central California Coast; (9) Northern California; (10) California Central Valley; and (11) Puget Sound. We will also conduct reviews for 4 non-salmonid DPSs: the three Puget Sound/Georgia Basin rockfish DPSs of yelloweye rockfish, canary rockfish, and bocaccio rockfish; and the southern DPS of eulachon.

¹ <http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/frn/2015/80fr6695.pdf>