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Region

Update Mitchell Act Hatchery Funding Report

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March 8, 2017

November NMFS Report to the Council Overview

History of hatchery reviews under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) leading to reforms.

Completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in November 2014 including guidance for hatchery funding decisions.

NMFS funding decisions under the EIS for 57 hatchery programs and the status of Section 7 consultation under the ESA.

Follow-up Letter to the Council

- Provided a preview of the NMFS biological opinion.
- Explained that NMFS intends to work with the Council, Indian tribes, and stakeholder groups to implement the opinion.
- Asked the Council for assistance with refining the analysis of fishery effects and engaging stakeholders in dialogue over the future of the Mitchell Act program.

More Recently

In January, NMFS completed Section 7 consultation and issued a biological opinion under the ESA and a Record of Decision (ROD) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Following compliance with the ESA and NEPA, NMFS released \$12.22 million to tribal and state managers to operate 57 hatchery programs.

NMFS previously released \$2.85 million following completion of Section 7 consultation under the ESA and a ROD under NEPA for 5 hatchery programs operated by the USFWS.

The New Biological Opinion

The biological opinion is expected to advance salmon and steelhead recovery in the Columbia River by:

- Reducing threats to diversity,
- Reducing competition and predation, and
- Funding new research to increase our understanding of ecological interactions i.e., competition and predation in the mainstem Columbia River and in the Columbia River estuary and plume.

The New Biological Opinion

- Terminates hatchery broodstocks, at Mitchell Act funded hatchery programs, that originate from outside the Columbia River basin.
- Reduces straying of hatchery fish into natural spawning areas.
- Encourages the development of hatchery broodstocks that originate locally and terminates the practice of moving or transferring fish around the basin.
- Decreases hatchery production and releases for some programs and increases production at others.

Consequences for Fisheries

- NMFS' preliminary assessment indicates that depending on the fishery, these changes in hatchery production will result in a four to seven percent reduction in the catch of tule Chinook salmon and a two to five percent increase in the catch of coho salmon.
- These estimates deserve further review and NMFS requests the Council's assistance in refining our preliminary assessment.

NMFS Expects to Collaborate on the Next Tule Chinook Harvest Matrix

- Next three year review of LCR tule harvest matrix – 2018
- Good time to review break points to consider -
 - Magnitude of LRH reduction resulting from Mitchell Act biop
 - Phasing LRH reductions and when will those reductions affect forecast abundance
- Current break points based on average 1998-2008 LRH hatchery production of 22 million

Lower River Hatchery Abundance Forecast	Total Exploitation Rate Limit
0 – 30,000	0.30
30,000 – 40,000	0.35
40,000 – 85,000	0.38
>85,000	0.41

Next Steps

- Under the biological opinion, NMFS will share emerging monitoring, evaluation, and research information and analysis and work with the managers, stakeholders and others to try and mitigate impacts to the most affected fisheries, consistent with the survival and recovery of ESA-listed salmon and steelhead.

Continuing into the Future

- NMFS welcomes ideas and input on how hatchery production in the lower Columbia River could be restructured to better serve both fisheries and ESA recovery.

Wrap-Up and Questions