

Bill Robinson

Interim PFMC Guidance for Puget Sound Chinook in 2003

NOAA Fisheries provided guidance to the Council at the March meeting regarding the listed Puget Sound Chinook ESU. At the time, we stated that we might provide further guidance to the Council in April pending its evaluation of the co-managers proposed resource management plan under the requirements of the 4(d) Rule. This revised guidance is a result of further progress on our evaluation of the co-managers' 2003 fishing plan, on-going discussions with the co-managers through the North of Falcon management forum, and updated model inputs that resulted in refinements to predictions of Canadian catches. It is important to note that this guidance should be considered interim pending finalization of NOAA Fisheries' determination on the co-managers' fishing plan under the 4(d) Rule. This is guidance for 2003 only. Future guidance is likely to change as a result of new information and changing population status.

Since the March meeting, NOAA Fisheries has completed its evaluation and preliminary determination with regard to the Resource Management Plan (RMP) provided by WDFW and the Puget Sound Treaty tribes for 2003 to NOAA Fisheries for consideration under Limit 6 of the 4(d) Rule (65 FR 42422, July 10, 2000). Our preliminary determination is that the implementation of the 2003 RMP is consistent with the requirements of Limit 6. However, the document is currently undergoing public review and comment, and that review will not be complete until after the April Council meeting. Fisheries will have to be managed consistent with the final determination. In the interim, until the determination is final, the rates in the accompanying table are consistent with the range of exploitation rates NOAA Fisheries expects to result from implementation of the co-managers' RMP in 2003 for the populations within the Puget Sound chinook ESU. NOAA Fisheries will continue to work with the co-managers during this week to ensure that the package of ocean and inside fisheries meets the needs of the Puget Sound chinook ESU.

Management Unit	Exploitation Rate	Escapement Goal
Nooksack	7% Southern U.S.	
Skagit Summer/Fall	49%	
Skagit Spring	30% ¹	
Stillaguamish	24%	
Snohomish	24%	
Lake Washington	31% ¹	
Green ²	53%	5,500
White River	20% ¹	
Puyallup	55% ¹	
Nisqually		1,100
Skokomish		1,200
Mid-Hood Canal	29% ¹	
Dungeness	23% ¹	
Elwha	23% ¹	

¹ FRAM run 0802 updated for new Canadian catch estimates

² Management for escapement goal or, if the goal cannot be met, an exploitation rate of no greater than 53%.