Revised Guidance for the PFMC on Management Objectives for Puget Sound Chinook

When NOAA Fisheries presented its guidance in March for Puget Sound Chinook, we indicated that we were working with the co-managers to reconcile the differences in our guidance with the management objectives provided by the co-managers. NOAA Fisheries indicated at that time that it might provide additional guidance to the Council in April pending further discussions with the Puget Sound co-managers and based on information developed through the North of Falcon process.

The following table provides additional guidance on the management objectives for the Puget Sound Chinook salmon ESU. The factors considered in developing the guidance include the status of the populations and their various roles in recovery of the ESU, NOAA Fisheries updated Rebuilding Exploitation Rates (RER), the forecast abundance in 2018 and provisions in the co-managers proposed RMP. NOAA Fisheries also considered projected escapements of natural-origin spawners in 2018 relative to the population specific escapement thresholds and escapement trends. We have revised guidance for the Skagit spring Chinook, Snohomish, Lake Washington, Green River, and Puyallup Management Units based on additional information received and discussion with the co-managers. In other cases, our guidance for 2018 remains the same although we note that current model runs indicate the fishery regime would meet both NOAA Fisheries guidance and the co-manager objectives.

While this document provides formal guidance for Puget Sound Chinook management units for the PFMC fisheries in 2018, we reiterate that we are mindful of the importance of the integrated management structure between the Council and North of Falcon planning processes. Because impacts in Council fisheries are relatively low, management actions taken to meet conservation objectives will occur primarily in Puget Sound fisheries. However, since impacts in all fisheries are considered in meeting the objectives, NOAA Fisheries must be assured that the final option adopted at the April 2018 Council meeting when combined with Puget Sound fisheries negotiated during the North of Falcon process are consistent with the conservation objectives for each Puget Sound Chinook management unit based on the anticipated 2018 abundances.

Management Unit/Population	Exploitation Rate Ceiling	
	Total	**Southern US**
Nooksack spring NF Nooksack SF Nooksack		10.5%
Skagit Summer/Fall Upper Skagit Lower Skagit Lower Sauk	45%	
Skagit Spring Upper Sauk Upper Cascade Suiattle	28.4% Couple with projected NOR escapement Upper Sauk ≥ 1,110 Upper Cascade ≥ 261 Suiattle ≥ 596	
Stillaguamish NF Stillaguamish SF Stillaguamish	24%	13%[1]
Snohomish Skykomish Snoqualmie	19.1% Couple with projected NOR escapement Skykomish ≥ 2,622 Snoqualmie ≥ 743	
Lake Washington Cedar River Sammamish		19.9% Couple with projected NOR escapement Cedar ≥ 1,250
Green	A combination of fishery and NOR broodstocking actions will be taken to achieve a minimum of 1,200 NOR spawners.	
White River[2]		22%
Puyallup	50%	
Nisqually[3]	49% (47% base + 2% for experimental selective fishery)	
Skokomish	48.0%	
Mid-Hood Canal		12.0%
Dungeness		10.0%
Elwha		10.0%

[1] Provisions of the 2018 RMP state that the total exploitation rate (including AK and Canadian salmon fisheries) cannot exceed 24%. If northern fisheries exceed 11%, SUS impacts will be lowered to maintain NOR impacts to not exceed 24% ER.

[2] NOAA Fisheries expects Canadian fisheries to remain constrained similar to the recent 5 years. Therefore, the total exploitation rate for White River Chinook in 2018 is expected to be 28% or less.

[3] Implementation of experimental selective fishery in 2018 is dependent on NOAA Fisheries receipt of rationale for 2% ceiling and detailed implementation plan for the experimental fishery prior to completion of the biological opinion.