

STATEMENT FROM THE QUILEUTE TRIBE ON THE
SRKW ESA CONSULATION UPDATE

The Quileute Tribe does not support a North of Falcon Chinook low abundance threshold. Our concern is that a Chinook low abundance threshold approach could potentially limit the Quileute Tribe's fishing opportunities with little-to-no supporting evidence of SKRW population recovery and impede our ability to exercise our treaty-reserved right to fish in our usual and accustomed areas.

The PFMC SRKW Ad-Hoc Workgroup analyses did not clearly identify any specific areas or seasons that were highly correlated to Southern Resident Killer Whale (SRKW) demographic indices. Moreover, the analyses also showed the percent reduction in Chinook abundance attributed to ocean fisheries in the North of Falcon (NOF) management area is lower than other regions. Over the years, NOF fishery impacts have been reduced to ensure annual stock specific terminal run escapement goals are attained. Lastly, non-fishery impacts to Chinook salmon are affecting abundance, productivity, and spatial structure; and thus, prey availability to SRKW.

The focus of the PFMC SRKW Ad-Hoc Workgroup was on the availability of Chinook for SRKW, however that is only one of the three threats in the 2008 SRKW Recovery Plan, which include prey availability, pollutions and contaminant, and effects from sound and vessels. SRKW survival and recovery is not solely linked to Chinook salmon abundance. It is very likely that all three threats are acting together to impact SRKW recovery and a comprehensive response from the federal government is necessary to achieve SRKW recovery.