

THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT 1 REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) provides this report on issues relevant to ocean salmon harvest management in 2026.

Rebuilding Plans and Amendments:

Status of Queets Spring/Summer Chinook Rebuilding Plan: On February 19, 2025, NMFS published a Federal Register Notice ([91 FR 7952](#)) proposing to approve and implement the rebuilding plan recommended by the Council for the Queets River Spring/Summer Chinook salmon stock. NMFS determined in October 2023 that this stock was overfished. In 2025, the Salmon Technical Team (STT) reported that the geometric mean for the most recent 3-years (2021-2023) of spawning escapement (updated in 2026 as 562) exceeded the Minimum Stock Size Threshold (MSST)(350). Because the geometric mean exceeded the MSST but remains below the Smsy spawning escapement (700 natural adult spawners), Queets River spring/summer Chinook stock meets the criteria for 'not overfished, rebuilding' status. The rebuilding plan will be part of the framework that guides the development of annual management measures for ocean salmon fisheries until NMFS determines that the overfished stock is rebuilt. Comments on this proposed rule must be received on or before March 23, 2026.

Status of Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing petitions and determinations

Washington Coast Chinook Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU): NMFS received a petition in July 2023 to list either an Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU) of spring-run Chinook salmon on the Washington coast; or, to list the Washington Coast Chinook ESU (which includes both spring- and fall-run Chinook salmon), based primarily on the decline in the status of the spring-run component of the ESU. Following a 12-month review that found the petition warranted further action, NMFS ultimately determined the West Coast Chinook salmon ESU **does not warrant listing** as endangered or threatened because it is at a low risk of extinction ([91 FR 7964, 02/19/2026](#)). NMFS concluded that the ESU has high overall abundance, well-distributed spawning populations, good habitat, and effective Federal, state, and Tribal management strategies. Additionally, NMFS determined (1) the spring-run component does not meet the ESU Policy, and the ESU should not be partitioned by run-timing, and (2) did not find any portions of the West Coast Chinook salmon range that were both significant and facing higher risk of extinction than the ESU rangewide.

Oregon Coast and Southern Oregon Northern California Coast Chinook ESUs: In August 2022, NMFS received a petition to list the Oregon Coast (OC) and the Southern Oregon/Northern California (SONC) Chinook ESUs under the ESA, or, alternatively, to list only spring-run Chinook salmon in each of the ESUs. The 90-day finding issued in January 2023 concluded that (1) the petitioners met the standard for further review to determine if these ESUs warrant listing given new information and (2) that the petitioned action to list only the spring-run components of

the OC and SONCC Chinook salmon ESUs is not warranted. Following a 12-month review, NMFS determined that both ESUs are at low-risk of extinction and **do not warrant listing under the ESA** ([90 FR 56993](#), December 9, 2025). Both ESUs have high overall abundance, with numerous, well-distributed spawning populations. Additionally, their high productivity allows them to maintain abundance even in the face of relatively high exploitation rates. In addition, NMFS did not find any portions of the OC or SONCC ESU's range that were both significant and at risk of extinction.

Olympic Peninsula Steelhead Distinct Population Segment (DPS): In August 2022, NMFS received a petition to list the DPS. The 90-day finding issued in February 2023 concluded that the petitioners met the standard for further review to determine if the DPS warrants listing given new information. Following a 12-month review, NMFS determined that the Olympic Peninsula steelhead DPS **does not warrant listing** under the Endangered Species Act ([91 FR 1449](#), January 14, 2026). Habitat quality and connectivity are generally good within the DPS and are benefitting from ongoing restoration efforts; spatial distribution is good; State and Tribal co-managers have implemented improved harvest and hatchery practices and reduced harvest significantly in recent years; abundance trends suggest declining populations, but the response to recent management actions has yet to be seen; and while environmental variation is expected to have some negative impacts on the DPS, there could also be positive impacts while the precise localized effects are unclear. Additionally, NMFS did not identify any portions of the DPS that were both significant and facing a higher level of extinction risk than the DPS rangewide.

Upper Klamath/Trinity River Chinook ESU: **No change in status.** NMFS received a petition to list the ESU in 2017 and announced a positive 90-day finding in 2018. NMFS continues to evaluate this petition and to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge in the evaluation of the petition.