



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

## Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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October 20, 2025

Mr. Peter Hassemer, Chair  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101  
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Chair Hassemer,

I am writing to you on behalf of Oregon's Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission). On February 16, 2024, the Commission listed Southern Resident killer whales (SRKW) as endangered under Oregon's Endangered Species Act. This decision was based on the SRKW population's high risk of extinction, the threats that the population faces (primarily reduced prey availability, vessel and noise disturbance, and environmental contaminants), and the importance of Oregon coastal waters to their critical habitat.

At its August 15, 2025 meeting, the Commission approved endangered species management plans from state agencies involved in SRKW conservation and recovery. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's management plan states that the agency will continue to "support fishery management that considers the prey needs" of SRKW. The Commission is aware that the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (PFMC) SRKW Workgroup conducted a reassessment of the effects of PFMC salmon fisheries on SRKW in 2020 and found that these fisheries have a relatively small impact on the abundance of Chinook salmon in the North of Falcon management area, an important area for SRKW.<sup>1</sup> The Commission also understands that the National Marine Fisheries Service has determined that PFMC ocean salmon fisheries are not likely to jeopardize the survival and recovery of SRKW.<sup>2</sup> However, given the continued poor status of SRKW, the Commission wants to emphasize that it supports management actions such as Amendment 21 of the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan and other potential actions that consider the prey needs of SRKW. In approving the management plan for the Department, the Commission ask that I share this with you and their sense of urgency in considering these needs.

Sincerely,

Debbie Colbert, Director

Cc: Merrick Burden, Executive Director, PFMC

Mary Wahl, Chair, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

<sup>1</sup> Pacific Fishery Management Council Salmon Fishery Management Plan Impacts to Southern Resident Killer Whales – Risk Assessment, Pacific Fishery Management Council SRKW Workgroup (May 2020), <https://www.pcouncil.org/documents/2020/05/e-2-srkW-workgroup-report-1-pacific-fishery-management-council-salmon-fishery-management-plan-impacts-to-southern-resident-killer-whales-risk-assessment-electronic-only.pdf/>.

<sup>2</sup> Consultation on Implementation of the Pacific Fishery Management Council Salmon Fishery Management Plan in 2020 for Southern Resident Killer Whales and their Current and Proposed Critical Habitat, National Marine Fisheries Service (April 29, 2020), <https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/27908>.