

Puget Sound Salmon Management Period Revision

The management period for Puget Sound salmon fisheries has been May 1 – April 30 under annual fishing packages that have been submitted to NOAA for Endangered Species Act consultation. That time period was adopted to align with other management processes (e.g., Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) salmon fisheries). In recent years, there have been instances where the sequence of events and necessary administrative work (i.e., final action by PFMC, development of the co-managers' list of agreed fisheries and associated annual management plan, and development of a biological opinion) did not allow for issuance of a final Biological Opinion prior to May 1 to ensure a full fishing year. The PFMC has undertaken Amendment 20 to the Pacific Salmon Fishery Management Plan for similar reasons¹. The Puget Sound state and tribal co-managers are proposing to align the management cycle for Puget Sound with the anticipated PFMC management cycle beginning with the 2021 – 2022 fishing season.

For the 2021 – 2022 season, the cycle would cover May 1, 2021 – May 14, 2022, assuming that the biological opinion is completed on time. In the following year, and any fishing season thereafter that had an annual Chinook management plan, the fishing cycle would be May 15 of the current planning year – May 14 of the following year. The state or tribes may propose spring Chinook fisheries to begin as early as April of the calendar year following a preseason planning process and extending into May of the next annual fishing season (i.e., overlapping the date of transition from one management cycle to the next). For example, for the 2021 – 2022 fishing season, co-managers may propose spring Chinook fisheries that begin as early as April 2022 that would continue until May 2022.

Opening of these fisheries would be dependent on the co-managers submission of a supplemental spring Chinook fishery plan for the spring Chinook management period, for NMFS' review and concurrence. The plan would detail the following: the forecasted spring Chinook MU run size for the next management cycle; the management objectives that would be in place for that run-year; an estimate of allowable impacts and those estimated to be taken during the spring Chinook management period; plans for monitoring this period, and a description of how this fishery would operate within any limits in place for other ESA-listed species incidentally encountered during this fishery. The parameters of this fishery would be subject to modification by the co-managers on submission to NMFS of a revised plan, independently or as part of the annual preseason salmon planning cycle.

¹ <https://www.pcouncil.org/actions/salmon-fmp-amendment-20-annual-management-schedule/>