



Susan Bishop - NOAA Federal <susan.bishop@noaa.gov>

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## RE: Nooksack Issues

1 message

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**Alan Chapman** <AlanC@lummi-nsn.gov>

Mon, Dec 30, 2013 at 5:39 PM

To: Susan Bishop - NOAA Federal <susan.bishop@noaa.gov>

Cc: Ned Currence <ncurrence@nooksack-nsn.gov>, Enrique Patino - NOAA Federal <Enrique.Patino@noaa.gov>, Peter Dygert <peter.dygert@noaa.gov>, William Beattie <wbeattie@nwifc.org>, Amilee Wilson <amilee.wilson@noaa.gov>, "Randy Kinley Sr." <RandyK@lummi-nsn.gov>

Susan:

Sorry to have been delayed in responding to this note, but I thought I had answered these questions before. If you need anything more let me know. I have provided comments below in red relative to the delay in escapement estimates and other items you have enquired about.

Alan

Alan Chapman, ESA Coordinator

Lummi Natural Resources

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Please Note the Change in Address, Phone and Fax

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**From:** Susan Bishop - NOAA Federal [mailto:susan.bishop@noaa.gov]

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 12:20 PM

**To:** Alan Chapman

**Cc:** Ned Currence; Enrique Patino - NOAA Federal; Peter Dygert; William Beattie; Amilee Wilson

**Subject:** Nooksack Issues

Hi Alan,

NOAAF would need the same information we discussed last year. I am assuming at this point it is a joint proposal among the two tribes and WDFW since the fishery description in the summary was attached to a joint letter. Let me know if I'm wrong as that would be the first step. I've excerpted our previous exchange outlining the information below. Information needs encompass both Chinook and steelhead.

I can appreciate that you have addressed those issues generally, but we would need specifics. Without them we can't assess the impacts to the listed species and without the timely receipt of sampling and monitoring information we can't tell whether we are on the right track. As you know, the escapement estimates for NF and SF Nooksack and the HOR/NOR breakouts in the last couple of years are lacking so that increases the emphasis on getting the information when changes are anticipated that would likely increase impacts to listed species. These kind of vulnerabilities in the past have not been treated kindly by the courts. Since this fishery is an aspect of the full plan, it could make the plan vulnerable.

We have not been able to develop the escapement estimates for 2012 and 2013 because the involved nature of the estimation process which requires identification of redds with expansions to estimated to total Chinook spawning population through the end of September and then a by a process of elimination, the proportions hatchery Chinook by stock and origin, and the proportions of NOS Chinook by stock. The first step requires otolith reads to identify the stock and release strategy, In some instances the carcasses may be in a state that will not allow a determination of natural or hatchery status. We then have to have the tissues processed by the WDFW Genetics Lab for stock assignment. We have experienced some difficulties in expedited processing of the necessary samples processed in an expeditious manner in part from a shortage of funds and in another part as to whether the processing was covered under existing grants. We are still in the process of working that out. We expect to have the 2013 escapement estimate by the end of January. With some luck we will also have made progress on the 2012 estimate.

Not sure what effort will be in the later fishery and that'll be important. Also, the description isn't clear as to whether the April-July fishery is a C&S fishery for the full period or includes both a C&S and a commercial fishery. That's important in assessing the level of effort and therefore impacts.

In case it has not been made clear by now, the Lummi fishery will be selective and may extend into July. It is my understanding that Nooksack wants to have the freedom to operate its more limited gill net fishery over the same period of time if river conditions or other factors limit their target catch.

Excerpted/refined from emails sent 4/2/2012 and again 4/18/2013:

- What is the relationship between the impacts from the proposed selective fishery and the ceilings identified in the harvest plan? The total impacts should not exceed the southern U.S. exploitation rate and NOR ceiling of 30 Nooksack Chinook defined in the harvest plan.

Let me know if this is not yet clear in your mind. We have never come close to the 30 NOR mortalities in the Minimum Fisheries Regime that was agreed in 1999. We have taken the hit to stay under the 7% SUS x rate, but the patience here is wearing thin.

- What are the specific data collected from the NOR fish before they are released, the schedule for analysis and availability of the results?

The basic information collected from NOR Chinook, is length, tissue, scale, a guess at sex and condition on release on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being bad. The tabulation of the daily Chinook information is accomplished as soon as the data sheets get back to the office, but entry into the database and further analysis and write ups are dependent on resources.

- Are the numbers of expected encounters of SF Nooksack Chinook at this stage of the rebuilding program enough to provide substantial new information about SF migration timing? What is the anticipated increase in encounters of SF Nooksack Chinook?

The encounters with South Fork Chinook from the supplementation program are not expected to be a factor in the next several years. All of those fish are provided with a CWT and all Chinook without an adipose fin are wanded. For the near term all CWT only fish will be released.

The table below provides a projection of the returns that might be encountered by release year and age. The only hard numbers are in black

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Release year	Numbers Released	Expected Return	3 (.3)	4 (.7)	Return Year	Expected Returns
2011	1,989	10	3		2014	3
2012	32,677	163	49	7	2015	56
2013	155,740	779	234	114	2016	348
2014	600,000	3,000	900	545	2017	1,445
2015	800,000	4,000	1,200	2,100	2018	3,300
2016	1,000,000	5,000	1,500	2,800	2019	4,300
				3,500		

The release strategies and marking regime for the distant future is still being debated amongst technical team. We at some time want to get the release into the Indicator Stock Program.

- How do the expected impacts to steelhead from the proposed selective fishery compare with the harvest impacts evaluated in the biological opinion associated with the current harvest plan? Important because we would take a similar approach.

We encountered 6 steelhead in 2012 and 26 in the 2013 selective fishery. All were released alive, and most were noted to be kelts working their way back down stream. Our focus is on handling the Chinook and getting them on their way with the least possible trauma.

It is highly unlikely that steelhead mortalities in the selective fishery will hardly impact the Nooksack Winters as my understanding is we have one of the healthiest natural origin stocks not subjected to a directed fishery.

- What are the long-term implications of a broader scale selective fishery to the conservation program if the pilot study is successful?

I see nothing but benefits to our understanding of the migration behavior of the Early Chinook from expansion of this fishing effort. With resources we would like to consider radio tagging to duplicate the work in the early 80s. We are encouraged that a fish released in a poor condition was later recovered in the North Fork as a spawned out female. Give the difficulty in recovering carcasses, the recovery of 1 out of 27 was not bad.

We are certainly not harming the NF hatchery program as they had a surplus of 1809 return to the hatchery to support that supplementation program. The HOR escapement to the NF\_MF has not been developed yet, but the information on return per spawner has been below .2 since 2001. It does not appear that the spawners on the ground are limiting recovery. We will be interested to see if the habitat work in the North Fork makes a difference in this statistic.

11/22/21, 4:45 PM

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Mail - RE: Nooksack Issues

I appreciate your concerns for more timely and formal reports, but with limitations in staff and resources, we process the information necessary for understanding management implications quickly and have difficulty finding the time to massage the data into nice scholarly documents.

We are juggling the smolt trap, spawning ground survey and the South Fork Chinook Supplementation and Gene Bank programs with limited resources. We were able to get the wherewithal to start the South Fork Program but not the monitoring that was to support it and validate its effectiveness.

Susan

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Susan Bishop

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