

# Overview of Forage Fish Policies and Staff Recommendations

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# Timeline of Development



# Forage Fish Policy C-3012

- Sets Policy, Goals and Plan for all populations and stocks of forage fish.
  - Fishery management plans will consider the role of forage fish in the marine ecosystem and the need to supply sufficient quantities of forage fish for ecosystem needs.
  - Fisheries shall be permitted, as appropriate, for sustainable resources.
- Identifies Habitat Surveys and Protection as a high priority for forage fish.
- Provides guidance and expectations for forage fish Fishery Management and Stock Assessment.
  - The achievement of maximum yield shall not be a goal of forage fish management.
- Outlines specific plans of action for: Sardine, Surf Smelt, Anchovies, Eulachon, Sand Lance, and Herring.
  - Plans of action provide additional species-specific details relating to the policy, goals, habitat surveys and protections, fishery management and stock assessments, as well as guidance for engagement, collaboration, and information priorities.



# Columbia River smelt Policy C-3612

**Effective:** December 7, 2000

## **Conservation Policies**

- The Department shall maintain healthy populations of Columbia River smelt while assuring the integrity of the ecosystem and habitat upon which they depend.
- Fishery management plans will consider the role of smelt in both the marine and the freshwater ecosystems and the need to maintain sufficient populations of smelt for proper ecosystem functioning.
- A precautionary approach to resource management shall be utilized.
- If insufficient information exists, or the condition of the resource is poor, a conservative approach to fisheries will be taken.
- The Department shall consider the best scientific information available and shall strive to improve the information base for Columbia River smelt.

## **Harvest Policy**

- Commercial and recreational fishing opportunity shall be maintained in the lower Columbia River, to include opportunities in both the mainstem and tributaries for both fleets.



# Similarities between policies

## C-3612 – Columbia River Smelt

### **Conservation Related Policy**

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- The Department shall consider the best scientific information available and shall strive to improve the information base for Columbia River smelt.

### **Harvest Related Policy**

- Commercial and recreational fishing opportunity shall be maintained in the lower Columbia River, to include opportunities in both the mainstem and tributaries for both fleets.
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- If insufficient information exists, or the condition of the resource is poor, a conservative approach to fisheries will be taken.

## C-3012 – Forage Fish

### **Conservation Related Policy**

- Maintain healthy populations of forage fish in Washington.
- Management plans shall consider by-catch and wastage and provide for estimation of the magnitude of each and recommendations made for their reduction.
- Stock status summary of principal species of forage fish shall be produced every two years.
- Document and protect spawning habitat of forage fish species.

### **Harvest Related Policy**

- Fisheries shall be permitted, as appropriate, for sustainable resources.
- Washington based fishing industries (fishing, processing and marketing) shall receive consideration of an opportunity to utilize harvestable forage fish resources within state waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone.
- The Department will pursue reduced harvest levels of Columbia River smelt until information is available for scientific management of the resource.
- All significant fisheries will have sufficient monitoring to estimate catch and evaluate resource condition and population trends.



# Staff Recommendation

- Rescind the Columbia River smelt policy C-3612 as it is redundant to the Forage Fish Policy
  - Smelt are already explicitly considered in the larger forage fish policy
- Amend Forage Fish policy C-3012 to clarify that it applies to marine and freshwater ecosystems.

