

North of Falcon Policy

Commission Briefing

October 27-28, 2023 Meeting

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**Current 2019-2023 North of Falcon
Policy C-3608
Expires December 31, 2023**

Purpose

- Brief FWC on current North of Falcon Policy
- Identify potential modifications for new policy
- Outline policy consideration process and schedule
- Seek Commission guidance and public comment on revisions



North of Falcon Policy

Department staff will ensure that management decisions are consistent with:

- Statutory Authority
- *U.S. v. Washington*
- *U.S. v. Oregon*
- Endangered Species Act
- Puget Sound Chinook Harvest Management Plan
- Pacific Salmon Treaty
- PFMC's Salmon Framework Management Plan
- State/Tribal agreements
- Fish and Wildlife Commission Policies



North of Falcon Policy

Provides general guidance to Department staff when planning and managing annual salmon fisheries on:

- Conservation Principles
- Providing Harvest Opportunity
- In-season Management
- Monitoring and Sampling
- Enforcement and Compliance
- Gear and Fishery Conflicts
- Incidental Mortalities
- Communications



North of Falcon Policy

Instructs the Department to implement this Policy consistent with the 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Planning Project, following these principles:

- Salmon and steelhead will be managed to recovery and to assure sustainability in a way that is science-based, well-documented, transparent, well-communicated, and accountable
- Fisheries will be managed to meet or exceed ESA, recovery and conservation goals; and harvest management measures will protect and promote the long-term well-being of the commercial and recreational fisheries



Fishery Management

Guidance on providing fishing opportunities:

- Fisheries will be managed to meet or exceed ESA, recovery, and conservation goals
- Opportunities will be provided when they can be directed at healthy wild and hatchery stocks
- Fisheries will utilize selective methods and gears to maximize fishing opportunity and minimize impacts on depressed stocks to the fullest extent possible
- From a statewide perspective, fishing directed at each species will not be exclusively reserved for either sport or commercial users



Fishery Management

Puget Sound:

- Fishing opportunities will be distributed equitably across fishing areas and reflect the diverse interests of fishers, including retention and catch-and-release fisheries



Fishery Management

Puget Sound:

- For chinook and coho stocks, objectives in priority order are:
 - Provide meaningful recreational opportunities
 - Identify and provide opportunities for commercial harvest
- Puget Sound sockeye will be prioritized for recreational fishing opportunity
- For Puget Sound-origin pink salmon, provide meaningful opportunities to both recreational and commercial fisheries while minimizing fishery conflicts
- For Puget Sound-origin chum, the majority of harvest will be provided to commercial fisheries
- For Fraser River-origin chum, pink and sockeye, the majority of harvest will be provided to commercial fisheries



Fishery Management

- **Grays Harbor** - managed consistent with the Commission's Grays Harbor Policy (POL C-3621), including modifications made to the policy and any guidance or clarifications adopted by the Commission following notice and opportunity for review and comment
- **Willapa Bay** - managed consistent with the Commission's Willapa Bay Policy (POL C-3622), including modifications made to the policy and any guidance or clarifications adopted by the Commission following notice and opportunity for review and comment



Fishery Management

- **Columbia River** - managed consistent with the Commission's Columbia River Policy (POL C-3620), including modifications made to the policy and any guidance or clarifications adopted by the Commission following notice and opportunity for review and comment. Columbia River Harvest regimes shall be developed in cooperation with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife representatives
- **Pacific Ocean** - managed consistent with the PFMC's Framework Salmon Management Plan



In-season management

- Actions will be implemented consistent with pre-season conservation and harvest management objectives, and the fishery intent developed through the North of Falcon process
- In-season updates (ISUs) affecting Puget Sound fisheries will be evaluated for technical merit and potential to improve achievement of conservation and allocation objectives
 - ISUs should be documented
 - Descriptions of potential modifications to fisheries should be included in the List of Agreed Fisheries



Monitoring and Sampling

- Monitoring, sampling and enforcement programs will be provided to account for species and population impacts of all fisheries
- Fishery participants will be required to comply with fishery monitoring and evaluation programs designed to account for species and population impacts



Enforcement and Compliance

- Strategies will be developed and staffing provided to promote compliance with regulations
- WDFW Enforcement will seek to establish and maintain effective coordination with Tribal enforcement



Gear and Fishery Conflicts

- Fisheries shall be structured to minimize gear and other fishery conflicts
- Unanticipated fishery interaction issues shall be resolved by involving the appropriate sport and commercial representatives in a dispute resolution process managed by Department staff



Incidental Mortalities

- Manage fisheries to minimize mortalities on non-target species (e.g. rockfish, sea birds, etc.)
- Limit sea bird mortalities consistent with the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act



Communications

- Make ongoing improvements for effective public involvement during the NOF planning process and fishery implementation
 - Include participants as observers during appropriate state/tribal meetings
 - Record decisions in writing
 - Use a variety of tools to communicate effectively
 - Consult with stakeholders prior to making major decisions with the comanagers



Communications

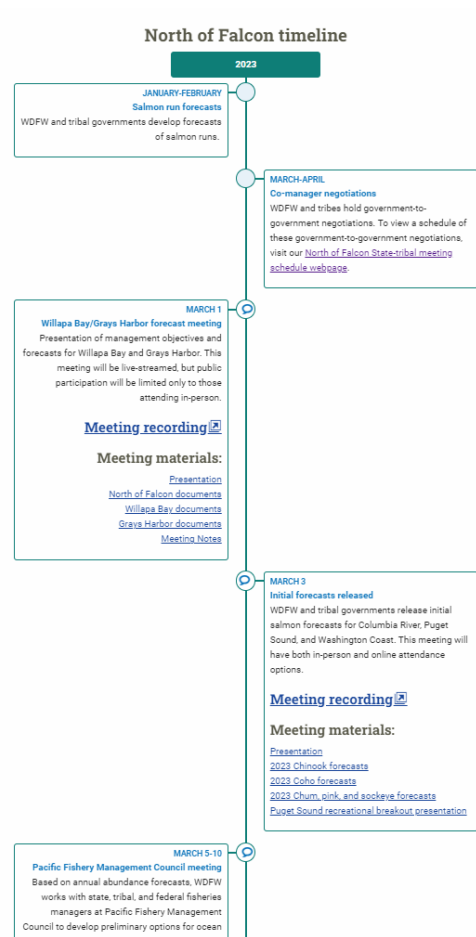
- Public meetings for the 2023 North of Falcon season setting process

Geographic Area	Date(s)	Location
Willapa/Grays	March 1	Hybrid
All	March 3	Hybrid
Ocean - PFMC	March 5-10	Hybrid
All	March 15	Hybrid
North Coast, Straits, and Hood Canal	March 20	Zoom webinar
Columbia River	March 21	Zoom webinar
Willapa Bay	March 21	Zoom webinar
Grays Harbor	March 22	Zoom webinar
Puget Sound	March 23	Zoom webinar
All	March 29	Hybrid
Upper Columbia and Snake River	March 29	Kennewick Irrigation District
Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay	March 30	Zoom webinar
All / PFMC	April 2-7	Zoom webinar
Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay	April 12	Zoom webinar



Communications

- Meeting recordings and materials all easily accessible via WDFW website



Communications

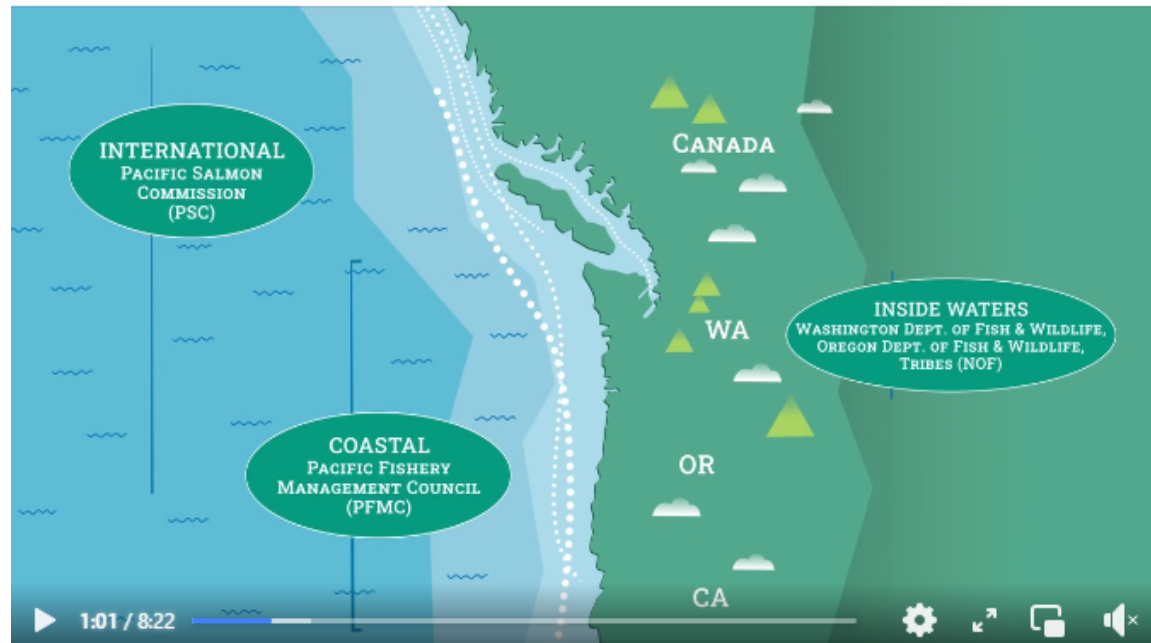


Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

March 10 · 🌐

Managing salmon populations in Washington means navigating complex ecosystems across the Pacific Northwest, requiring partnership and collaboration at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels. WDFW works to balance conservation and recovery of Endangered Species Act-listed salmon stocks while providing fishing opportunity that supports recreational and commercial fisheries critical to the health and economic well-being of Washington.

A big part of this effort is the annual North of Falcon salmon season-setting process, which is happening now and relies on input from stakeholders to help inform upcoming salmon fishing seasons. Learn more at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/nof>



Other Species

- The Department will continue to consider effects of salmon fisheries on Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) when setting fishing seasons. The Department will work with the National Marine Fisheries Service to refine tools to assess the effects of fisheries on available prey for SRKW, and will plan fisheries to ensure that they do not have unacceptable impacts from reduction to prey availability or from fishery vessel traffic, consistent with the Endangered Species Act.
- Reference to Commission's Lower Columbia Sturgeon Management Policy for planning Columbia and coastal sturgeon fisheries



Delegation of Authority

- The Fish and Wildlife Commission delegates authority to the Director to:
 - Make harvest agreements with the Northwest Treaty Tribes and other governmental agencies
 - Adopt permanent and emergency regulations resulting from those agreements
 - Adopt regulations for the protection, preservation and management of species other than salmon that are promulgated through the North of Falcon process, to the extent that such regulations are necessary to implement court orders, co-manager agreements or Columbia River Compact agreements, to achieve Washington management objectives, or to comply with ESA requirements



Potential modifications to Policy

- Last renewal of policy:
 - Housekeeping changes
 - Updated Puget Sound sockeye priority
 - Added clauses in references to other Commission policies about modifications/guidance from the Commission
 - SRKW language in other species section



Potential modifications to Policy

- Potential changes for the 2024-2028 policy
 - Remove the reference to the 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Planning Project, retain language saying that the Department will implement this policy consistent with the two bulleted principles
 - Remove direction to seek access to unutilized portions of treaty harvest allocations (last bullet on page 1).
- Housekeeping changes
 - Clarify reference to PFMC Salmon Framework Plan to “Pacific Fishery Management Council’s Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan”
 - Update dates



Policy Process

- October 2023 Commission briefing:
 - Brief Commission and seek guidance on modifications
 - Initial public comment
- December 2023
 - Briefing on potential revisions to draft policy and provide revised draft
 - Additional public comment
 - Additional Commission guidance for revised draft
 - New revised draft posted online for public comment after meeting
- January 2024
 - Commission considers adoption of revised policy



North of Falcon Policy (P-3608) Expires December 31, 2023

Questions/Guidance?

