

# FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

## POLICY DECISION

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**POLICY TITLE:** Resident Native trout harvest management **POLICY NUMBER:** C-

Cancels or  
Supersedes: *N/A – requested policy is new*

Effective Date: TBD

Termination Date: N/A

See Also:

- Statewide Steelhead Mgmt. Plan.*
- A Basic Fishery Management Strategy for Resident and Anadromous Trout in the Stream Habitats of the State of WA.*
- C-3632 – Non-native game fish and fisheries.*

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

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### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) to ensure the recreational fishing opportunities for resident native trout, specifically, coastal Rainbow Trout *Oncorhynchus mykiss*, Columbia River redband rainbow trout *O. mykiss gairdneri*, coastal Cutthroat Trout *O. clarkii*, and Westslope Cutthroat Trout *O. clarkii lewisi*, are consistent with the agency's mandate under [RCW 77.04.012](#). It is not the intent of this policy to specify fishing rules for any given situation. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to staff when developing fishing rules for resident native trout, when appropriate, in a manner that meets conservation objectives of native species and provides sustainable recreational opportunities.

This policy addresses recreational fishing opportunities for resident native trout (*Oncorhynchus spp.*). Guidance for native char species (*Salvelinus spp.*) is provided within state and federal recovery plans and permits. Guidance for non-native trout and char species is provided within the Commission's non-native game fish policy (C-3632).

### Policy Objectives

The Department acknowledges that both *O. mykiss* and *O. clarkii* exhibit diverse life-history strategies, each having resident (including fluvial and adfluvial life histories) and anadromous forms with each form providing some contribution to the other. The portion of each life-history strategy and its rate of contribution to the other is dependent on a variety of environmental conditions and are highly variable.

The Department is directed through legislation to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage

fisheries resources. The Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) further directs Department staff through commission policy and the strategic plan. Department staff implements these directives through monitoring and enhancement activities and a variety of fishing rules to achieve conservation objectives while providing fishing opportunity. The ‘stream strategy’ – developed in 1984 – established a science-based management paradigm for resident trout and serves as the foundation for native trout regulations. Since its development and advancements in our knowledge and understanding, the department has implemented site-specific rules to provide additional protection and/or diversify fishing opportunity where needed. It is the intent of this policy to affirm basic principles of management and provide additional guidance to the Department, to:

- Maintain consistency with state laws, rules, commission policies, and species conservation plans.
- Maintain science-based conservation principle for the assessment and management of resident native trout.
- Develop and implement appropriate fishing rules;
  - As a priority, fishing rules should seek to achieve conservation objectives for resident native trout,
  - Where appropriate, fishing rules may provide for diverse and sustainable recreational fishing opportunities.
- Use best available science when developing fishing rules.

### Guiding Principles

In implementing this policy, statewide freshwater species fishing rules should cover the most common situation with “Special Rules” handling the exceptions. The following describe the guiding principles when developing fishing rules. The department will promulgate fishing rules that:

- are biologically based.
- separate rules for streams and lakes.
- ensure the majority of native trout have spawned at least once prior to attaining harvestable size.
- consider impacts to resident native trout.
- consider impacts to migratory life histories of native trout.
- consider impacts to anadromous salmonids.
- consider impacts to native species of concern.
- consistent with conservation objectives provide a diversity of sustainable recreational fishing opportunity.

### Adaptive Management

Department staff will use adaptive management to inform regulatory decision-making and management of resident native trout. This process will be informed by science-based recommendations and technical information from available data on population status and the recreational effort and harvest of resident native trout to determine if population conservation and management objectives are being achieved. If objectives are not being achieved, Department staff should consider if fishing rules should be altered, and re-evaluated until objectives are achieved.

## Delegation of Authority

The Commission delegates the authority to the Director to set fishing rules for recreational fisheries for resident native trout in the inland freshwaters of the state.

This guidance establishes principles for the Director and department staff to apply when managing the fisheries for resident native trout. The Commission fully expects that the Director and department staff will continue to communicate with the public and the Commission, to consider new information, evaluate alternate means for carrying out policy objectives.

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