

**Hatchery Reform Policy (C-3619) and Hatchery Scientific Review Group
(HSRG) – (Briefing/Public Comment)**

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Summary Sheet

Meeting dates: June 15, 2018

Agenda item: Hatchery Reform Policy (C-3619) and Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) – (Briefing/Public Comment)

Presenter(s): Ron Warren, Assistant Director, Fish Program
Eric Kinne, Hatchery Program Manager
Kenneth Warheit, Supervisor, Genetic and Fish Health Laboratories

Background summary:

Department staff will provide the Commission a briefing, as required per policy C-3619, on the progress of implementing hatchery reform. Hatchery reform is the scientific and systematic redesign of hatchery programs to help recover wild salmon and steelhead and support sustainable fisheries. Strategies for hatchery reform have been developed from empirical studies and theoretical models. The Department has made substantial progress in implementing the strategies and securing ESA approval for hatchery programs. As requested in a Blue Sheet, the Commission will also be briefed on the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) broodstock management standards, and the use of the standards within existing agency policies and in federal ESA regulatory decisions.

Staff recommendation:

NA

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

Hatchery reform is an essential contributor to the conservation and recovery of Washington's salmon and steelhead. The Hatchery Reform Policy provides implementation guidance for WDFW staff, with flexibility provided through multiple provisions of the policy. This flexibility has been used by staff to tailor watershed-specific plans.

The number of Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKWs) has declined to the lowest number in more than three decades. Toxins, vessel traffic noise, and lack of prey are believed to be the primary factors contributing to the decline of the SRKWs. A Task Force is developing an action plan for the recovery of SRKWs, and providing additional prey by increasing hatchery production is one strategy that is under consideration.

The flexibility provided by the Hatchery Reform Policy will be important as the Task Force evaluates alternative options for increasing prey for SRKWs.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

NA

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

NA

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Staff will request consideration of three potential Commission actions:

- 1) Recognize the role hatcheries may play in providing prey for SRKWs.
 - 2) Clarify and emphasize the potential to increase hatchery production for programs primarily affecting Stabilizing populations.
 - 3) Provide staff the opportunity to brief the FWC if additional policy guidance is needed.
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Draft motion language:

NA

Post decision communications plan:

NA

Form revised 2-15-18

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

POLICY DECISION

**POLICY TITLE: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Hatchery and Fishery Reform**

POLICY NUMBER: C-3619

Effective Date: November 6, 2009

Supersedes: N/A

See Also:

Approved by: Miranda Wecker, Chair
Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

Purpose

The purpose of this Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife policy is to advance the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead by promoting and guiding the implementation of hatchery reform.

Definition and Intent

Hatchery reform is the scientific and systematic redesign of hatchery programs to help recover wild salmon and steelhead and support sustainable fisheries. The intent of hatchery reform is to improve hatchery effectiveness, ensure compatibility between hatchery production and salmon recovery plans and rebuilding programs, and support sustainable fisheries.

General Policy Statement

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) shall promote the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead and provide fishery-related benefits by establishing clear goals for each state hatchery, conducting scientifically defensible-operations, and using informed decision making to improve management. Furthermore, it is recognized that many state operated hatcheries are subject to provisions under U.S. v. Washington and U.S. v. Oregon and that hatchery reform actions must be done in close coordination with tribal co-managers.

Artificial production programs will be designated as one of the following:

- Conservation Programs. Artificial production programs implemented with a conservation objective shall have a net aggregate benefit for the diversity, spatial structure, productivity, and abundance of the target wild population.
- Harvest Programs. Artificial production programs implemented to enhance harvest opportunities shall provide fishery benefits while allowing watershed-specific goals for the diversity, spatial structure, productivity, and abundance of wild populations to be met.

State commercial and recreational fisheries will need to increasingly focus on the

harvest of abundant hatchery fish. As a general policy, the Department shall implement mark-selective salmon and steelhead fisheries, unless the wild populations substantially affected by the fishery are meeting spawner and broodstock management objectives.

In addition, the Department may consider other management approaches provided they are as or more effective than a mark selective fishery in achieving spawner and broodstock management objectives.

Hatchery reform should be implemented as part of an “all-H” strategy that integrates hatchery, harvest, and habitat actions. Although this policy focuses on hatchery and harvest reform, in no way does it diminish the significance of habitat protection and restoration.

In implementing the policy guidelines the Department shall work with the tribes in a manner that is consistent with U.S. v. Washington and U.S. v. Oregon and other applicable state laws and agreements or federal laws and agreements.

Policy Guidelines

1. Use the principles, standards, and recommendations of the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) to guide the management of hatcheries operated by the Department. In particular, promote the achievement of hatchery goals through adaptive management based on a structured monitoring, evaluation, and research program.
2. The Department will prioritize and implement improved broodstock management (including selective removal of hatchery fish) to reduce the genetic and ecological impacts of hatchery fish and improve the fitness and viability of natural production working toward a goal of achieving the HSRG broodstock standards for 100% of the hatchery programs by 2015.
3. Develop watershed-specific action plans that systematically implement hatchery reform as part of a comprehensive, integrated (All-H) strategy for meeting conservation and harvest goals at the watershed and Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU)/Distinct Population Segment (DPS) levels. Action Plans will include development of stock (watershed) specific population designations and application of HSRG broodstock management standards. In addition, plans will include a time-line for implementation, strategies for funding, estimated costs including updates to cost figures each biennium.
4. Externally mark all Chinook, coho and steelhead artificial production that is intended to be used for harvest except as modified by state-tribal agreements or for conservation or research needs.
5. Secure necessary funding to ensure that Department-operated hatchery facilities comply with environmental regulations for passage facilities, water intake screening, and pollutant control systems.

6. Implement hatchery reform actions on a schedule that meets or exceeds the benchmarks identified in the 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Framework.
7. Provide an annual report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission on progress of implementation.
8. Develop, promote and implement alternative fishing gear to maximize catch of hatchery-origin fish with minimal mortality to native salmon and steelhead.
9. Seek funding from all potential sources to implement hatchery reform and selective fisheries.
10. Define “full implementation” of state-managed mark selective recreational and commercial fisheries and develop an implementation schedule.
11. Work with tribal co-managers to establish network of Wild Salmonid Management Zones (WSMZ)¹ across the state where wild stocks are largely protected from the effects of same species hatchery programs. The Department will have a goal of establishing at least one WSMZ for each species in each major population group (bio-geographical region, strata) in each ESU/DPS. Each stock selected for inclusion in the WSMZ must be sufficiently abundant and productive to be self-sustaining in the future. Fisheries can be conducted in WSMZ if wild stock management objectives are met as well as any necessary federal ESA determinations are received.

¹ Wild Salmonid Management Zone is equal in meaning and application to the term of ‘Wild Stock Gene Bank’ as used and defined in the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan.