

North of Falcon Policy C-3608

**Public Comment Received on
December Draft of Policy**

1/18/2024

Name	Comment
?	<p>WDFW salmon harvest management clearly exhibits biased toward elite usergroups and the charter fleet at the expense of common angler opportunity, especially in urban areas.</p> <p>Managment paradigmns should make an effort to be more equitable and consider such moves as an annual chinook limit, concurrent salmon seasons rather than staggered seasons, and a focus on greater stewardship of wild coho stocks, especially in the south sound.</p>
Bruce Hazen	<p>Chinook quota should mimic Westport out in front of Ilwaco Area 1. In years past, we've given up Chinook quota for coho. That isn't needed anymore. We never fill our Coho quota, which is excessive anyway, so we should no longer give up quota . We should have every bit as much as Westport beings All those fish are returning into the Columbia for the most part anyway.. our chinook quota should be larger in Area 1!!</p>
Curt Kraemer	<p>See the attached</p> <p>Thanks Curt Kraemer</p> <p><i>See Attachment 1 – letter with comments on include direction on gamefish in North of Falcon policy</i></p>
Dane Woldseth	<p>Hello; Attached is a word document with my comments on the draft policy C-3608.</p> <p>Thank you. Dane Woldseth</p> <p><i>See Attachment 2 – edited draft with suggestions and comments for language on requirements meeting ESA goals and seeking access to unutilized portions of treaty harvest allocation</i></p>
David Dewald	<p>First, thank you for the 2 week October Coho non selective season in MA5 and 6, request the Coho season for MA5 and 6 either start mid September through October or run the entire month of October. Again as it has been for the last 5-6 years the ratio of clipped to non clipped Coho we've experienced in MA6 has been anywhere from 1-8 and as high as 1-12 thus warranting a longer non selective Coho season.</p> <p>With regards to Chinook, request a selective Blackmouth season return to MA6. Would also suggest the entire MA6 area be open to Chinook retention with the exception of south of the eastern tip of Dungeness Spit to North tip of Protection Island and to McCurdy Point.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
Eric Cumley	<p>Hello, although I'm very skeptical my input will even be seen--much less seriously considered--here it is:</p> <p>First, tribal netting schedules for Lake Washington coho and coastal rivers in general. As a salmon fisherman I look forward to fishing Lake WA for coho each September as well as the Snohomish/Skykomish system (when open) and the Skagit for coho as well. Tribal netting strongly reduces sportfishing catch potential in these fisheries; for example, when the kill nets go into Lake WA it's 'game over' for coho sport</p>

	<p>fishermen. As in All Cleaned Out.</p> <p>It actually becomes a game of trying to time my sport fishing trips so they don't coincide with tribal netting. Super fun.</p> <p>Strangely, it is difficult--and in the case of the Skagit, nearly impossible--to find tribal net schedules. Why? Also, are there tribal quotas? How many fish are they allowed to harvest? Where does that harvest go? To many of us in the sportfishing community, it seems there is little transparency to the issue of tribal salmon netting in the Puget Sound region. Many of us feel discouraged and that we are very low on the list of priorities for whom the salmon stocks are managed (not to mention cynical because of the substantial license revenue WDFW extracts from us each year.)</p> <p>Next, tribal or commercial (not sure which) crabbing in Port Susan/Everett area seems obscene. When tribal/commercial crabbing is underway in the Puget Sound/Port Susan in particular there are HUNDREDS of crab pots. Almost as far as the eye can see. How does that leave much of the legal-male resource for sport crabbers? How much of that harvest is sold, and to whom? Again, it seems there is little transparency and it leaves sport crabbers discouraged when mostly what comes up in our pots are females, soft-shells, and 'shorts.' And then \$10 fines if we don't send in our catch records in time. Good grief.</p> <p>If I get an actual reply I'll consider it my Christmas Miracle for 2023. But I'm pretty sure I won't.</p> <p>Sincerely, Eric Cumley 20528 76th Ave SE Snohomish WA 98296</p>
Gary Ostlund	<p>Commissioners...</p> <p>I have 12 boating friends that have a boat because they fish for salmon.... all species in area 9 and 10. Several friends say they will sell their boat if the fishing opportunities don't improve.</p> <p>And, doing the two or three days a week to fish does nothing but force over fishing on those days.</p> <p>As a boater/fisherman in the Port of Edmonds for over 50 years, and watching my moorage cost past \$450 per month, and not being able to use my boat for over half the time..... well, I hope to see the opportunities improve.</p> <p>Please make it happen.</p> <p>Gary Ostlund</p>
George B	<p>The 2023 season was a terrible salmon season for us boaters in Area 11. Not only were we forced to park our boats and fish from shore, when our area was finally open the main run of pinks were already moving up river. I understand that there are so many things in play when it comes to protecting our salmon resource in the Puget Sound, but it is beyond frustrating when you open up the area only on certain days, then we plan our fishing time around those days only for it to close and we can't go fish anymore. Then when you think it will open because it is a pink</p>

	<p>salmon year, it does but you can't use your boat. The prior pink salmon run year (2021), we were allowed to fish from our boats but for some reason in 2023 we were allowed after most of the pink run had already moved up river. Then to add insult to injury the limit was increased lol.</p> <p>I think we need to take a good look at how we make these decisions to have emergency closures. I for one do not know exactly how it is done. Is it a test boat and a count at the dock? Does the math really add up? Or is it just easier to do it that way and say "well time to close it up for a month". I don't know. And I'm not saying it is an easy job that you all have. But it's got to be better because looking at it from an outside point of view it doesn't look very well managed or fair.</p> <p>Also something to think about. Or maybe you already factor this in. But when you close areas and river systems majority of anglers are going to travel to the areas that are open. Fishing is what we do living in the PNW and anglers will travel. Imagine how many more anglers are fishing these open waters and how much pressure we are putting in that system. Does it make sense? Or are we only hurting that system in the long run? Like I said I don't know and I am an outsider looking in.</p> <p>I believe if you ask any recreational fisherman they will tell you they are all for helping conserve and protecting our salmon. It is the inconsistency and the sudden emergency closures that frustrate us.</p> <p>Thank you for listening to a lowly sportsman who loves the Pacific Northwest and all its natural resources. Although this is more of a rant than offering any solution I hope you will take some of this email into consideration. I know you all have a tough job ahead of you and wish you all the best of luck.</p>
gordon wang	<p>Dear Mark Yuasa</p> <p>This is my opinion.</p> <p>Most irresponsible management in a long time. Record number of chinook returning and WDFW closes Chinook salmon retention in Area 10. I went to the dock at Seacrest that weekend and saw over 40 fish caught from the pier in ONE Day! When I wrote Mill Creek about the numbers of fish in the locks this is the response I received. Recycling? You got to be kidding.</p> <p>WDFW is not doing sport fisherman of the State of Washington any justice. The N of Falcon process is a sham. No video just collusion. In fact I doubt there were 4000 chinook caught by all sport fisherman at the time of the closure. The tribe's gill nets don't care about undersized and wild fish.</p> <p>Which tribe's lobbyist is paying off WDFW.</p> <p>I hope the next Governor cleans house.</p> <p>My best, Gordon Wang Seattle</p>

Howard Edward Dorsey	Would love to see a black mouth fishing season again ,please let this happen ,The winter needs a salmon season for sure ,thank you , Howard Dorsey
Howard Edward Dorsey	I had emailed earlier about a winter black mouth Season ,I was talking about areas in the San Juan Islands,and 8-1 8-2, Mainly the San Jauns,thank you , Howard Dorsey
Ilene Le Vee	<p>To whom it may concern:</p> <p>Attached please find my comments on the referenced Draft Policy. The comments are guided by my own management background in developing/writing Washington governmental policy and draft legislation in accordance with Washington State Code Reviser requirements.</p> <p>As with all legislation/state department policy, it is intended that the language be written in the present tense as all actions contained therein take immediate effect upon the enactment date or as indicated. Additionally, if a directive sentence ends with a verb, the following procedural policy/legislative language must begin with a noun, as seen in the initial North of Falcon Draft policy language.</p> <p>Feel free to call on me should you have questions.</p> <p>Ilene Le Vee Olympia, WA</p> <p><i>See Attachment 3 - provided with redline change verb tenses and other grammatical edits throughout policy</i></p>
James W. Tuggle	<p>North of Falcon Team</p> <p>I think that the ocean harvest numbers should be adopted and adjusted so that a larger share of the harvest takes place in the freshwater streams, especially the Chehalis basin streams. This would afford those without the ability to fish the ocean a means to harvest salmon that their taxes have paid for.</p> <p>Jim Tuggle Tumwater, Wa</p>
Jason Incillo	<p>Extend coho season in MA 9 into first two weeks of October.</p> <p>July 1st versus June 1st MA 10 coho opener.</p> <p>July 1st MA 9 coho opener.</p>

Jeff Knots	(Transcribed comment left via phone) Hi, my name is Jeff Knots. I live in Pasco, Washington. Just comment, I like the one fish limit here on the eastern side. In fact, the whole state for the salmon, I dislike the tribal drift netting. I preferred the gill net, not drift net. They wiping out the entire mouths of all the rivers. That's my comment. Thank you.
Jesse Levine	<p>Hi,</p> <p>First off, I'm happy to see conservation as a top priority. Most of my feedback relates to the "General", "Puget Sound", and "In-season" management sections.</p> <p>Consideration 1: in "General" section, consider consumptive use (aligned with co-managers) as a priority. I understand consumptive use is not backed by all interested parties on the state side. However, for many Washingtonians, consumptive use is access to a quality protein that we share with our communities. Anecdotally, salmon I share with family and friends is a great way to get people engaged/aware. I've read the Muckleshoot fisheries page and respect and resonate with their perspective on consumptive use. Having consumptive use as a shared goal could be a good thing.</p> <p>Consideration 2: in "General Section", consider adding specific language on prioritizing bubble fisheries. Bubble fisheries have been a fantastic way to keep fishing open. Given the conservation challenges mixed stock fisheries face, I see value in specifically prioritizing bubble/terminal (or closer to terminal) fisheries.</p> <p>Consideration 3: in "General Section", consider adding specific language on strengthening co-manager and recreational relations. We all want more fish in the future and better/cleaner habitat. I don't understand all the complexities in co-management. However, I see so much value in a future where recreational and tribal relations continues to strengthen and improve. I'm not sure how we get there, but I'd love to see it called out as a priority.</p> <p>Consideration 4: in "Puget Sound" section, consider more specific language on "meaningful recreational fishing opportunities" . For me "meaningful" means maximizing harvest opportunity (obviously after conservation objectives are met). You can break that into two priorities in order: 1) retention of target species, 2) time on the water. The past few seasons in puget sound have seen fisheries closed before harvest quotas are met. Time on the water is great, but not at the expense of the target species.</p> <p>Consideration 5: in "In-Season Management", it is great to see language on "descriptions of potential modifications". Consider adding another bullet point on prioritizing recreational/commercial agency. I believe many anglers want to help with in-season management, but there are not good ways to do so now. For example, last season we saw a reduced bag limit of ocean coho in area 10 as a result of high harvest during the resident coho season. If given a choice, I believe most anglers would choose a reduced bag limit/pause in resident coho to preserve the ocean opportunity.</p> <p>Consideration 6: in "Gear and Fishery Conflicts" consider adding language on prioritizing recreational opportunity without co-manager gear conflicts. My motivation here is exemplified by Lake Washington coho. Lake Washington coho is a great harvest fishery with minimal impact to wild fish. The fishery is open while the co-managers are netting, but this netting causes a sharp decline in the recreational fishery. It would be</p>

	<p>great to prioritize more days without gear conflicts even at the expense of bag limits and number of open days.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to read through my feedback. I appreciate the work WDFW and the Co-Managers do to navigate a complex variety of interests.</p> <p>-Jesse</p>
John Bronson	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please do not open the silly resident Coho fishery in Puget sound or do not let it impact the Chinook and mature Coho fisheries later in the summer and fall. 2. The selective Coho fishery in area 10 had everyone handling too many fish, just retain the first two adult fish. <p>Thanks John Bronson</p>
John Mackiewicz	<p>To: WDFW Subject: North of Falcon Policy Feedback</p> <p>I am a sports fisherman and agree with the goal of securing and protecting our state's salmon runs. After a frustrating 2023 season where my opportunities to fish were impossible to forecast, I see nothing in the proposed policy that gives me any insight into how the fisheries will be managed going forward and the impact on myself and my fellow anglers. Therefore, I suggest this policy be amended with examples of management techniques that give the public insight into what they can expect in the following seasons. In 2023 the season was full of last minute closures and changes that negated my ability to access the resource I have enjoyed over the past 50 years. The WDFW and the state owe its anglers a reasonable, manageable approach that does not let assumptions assumed to be "scientific" negatively detract from or ability to use the resource. I would be happy to discuss further upon request.</p> <p>John Mackiewicz Puyallup WA</p>
Kenneth Dobie	<p>The length of the salmon season on the coast is probably alright seems to work. What doesn t work is which salmon you can catch!</p>
Kurt	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start all summer fisheries in Areas 1-6 all at the same time so that early opened areas don't get 100% of the pressure..no brainer 2. Re-implement winter blackmouth fishing..Open all areas at the same time for 4-day openers every other week so again, not to over-pressure one area. This takes most of the pressure off the fishery & allows some harvest during the winter (a fishery that is sorely missed) 3. Hooking 20 native coho to kill one hatchery (and in turn killing 2-3 wilds if that what the science shows) is idiotic. Kill the first two coho you catch & you are done.very simple & effective! <p>These three items seem the most logical. Thank you</p>

	Kurt Kettel Real Estate Broker
Iaklock	We would like to suggest opening all fish hatcheries and have an aggressive management plan to enhance salmon population for everyone, including the Orcas. Less study more fish.
Larry Olson	<p>I would like to see the following changes implemented in 2024 in setting the regulations for 2024/2025. Limit the black mouth(Immature Chinook) season in area 11 point defiance area, so it doesn't impact the (ocean mature) King season in August 1 to September 15. It would enable ocean Chinook Derby (Puget sound anglers) in all of area 11 and area 13 which did not happen in 2023 only in area 13. The Puget sound anglers derby was canceled in area 11 after 30 years. Have two separate quotas black mouth and Ocean kings. I also recommend area 10 Coho season to be June 15 to July 15 or when Coho quota is met. Area 9 and 10 open for ocean Chinook on July 25th opener or until quota is met would be good to.</p> <p>2023 saw some of the best fishing we have had in years and if area 11 had been open for ocean Chinook it would have been a Banner year!!</p> <p>My Christmas and New Years wish is that WDFW 2024/2025 season will be an improvement over 2023 season and that the suggestions for 2024 can be implemented.</p> <p>Sincerely Larry Olson December 23, 2023</p>
Michael F Sear	<p>I have read the draft and support as written: POLICY TITLE: 2024- 20 28 North of Falcon POLICY NUMBER: C-3608 and offer the following for consideration during the 2024/25 season setting negotiations.</p> <p>I offer the following proposal / suggestion as it applies to Puget Sound Marine Area 7 specifically in a body of water from the mouth of Eastsound north to the Orcas Island Glenwood Springs Chinook Hatchery. Being that the Glenwood Springs hatchery water supply an upland natural Spring not a terminal river, It appears it could support a special recreational selective Chinook fishing opportunity in late August and /or September. I propose that Eastsound within limits be opened for non-tribal recreational salmon fishing after the Glenwood Springs hatchery brood stock collected from the shoreline holding pond has reached the planned quota needed to sustain the hatchery operations. An Eastsound special recreational fishery would be very similar to the existing, WDFW managed, Bellingham Bay special recreational fishery . Another benefit of a special Eastsound recreational fishery in this confined / targeted area would in my non-scientific opinion reduce encounters of ESA listed Salmon runs of concern that pass through the San Juan Islands portion of MA-7 in route to their Natal Rivers and/or Hatcheries other than Glenwood Springs. In short, if facts and data support my proposal I do hope the NOF co-managers will consider for discussion during the 2024/25 season setting process.</p> <p>Respectfully. Michael F. Sear Marine Area 7 Friday Harbor. WA</p>
Nello Picinich	See Attachment 4 – CCA letter with comments on in-season management and Pacific Ocean fisheries.

Nick & Michelle Skimas	As a high level plan it seems fine and actionable. It expresses representation by all interested/affected stakeholders. Nick Skimas
Nicolas Eckhardt	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>Below are my suggestions for salmon season setting timeframes.</p> <p>Open the first two weeks of October in MA 9 for coho.</p> <p>Open MA 10 July 1st rather than June 1st for coho. Give them an extra month to grow.</p> <p>Open MA 9 July 1st for coho.</p> <p>Open MA 10 August 1st for Chinook.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Nicolas Eckhardt</p>
Patrick Pattillo	See Attachment 5 - comments on inclusion of reference to Puget Sound Salmon Management Plan, Puget Sound chum and pink fisheries, in-season management, and communications.
Rhonda Ohman	<p>To WFWD and whom it may concern,</p> <p>You are far more aware than me about the salmon problems we face. I'm tired of the finger always being pointed away from the real problems which may be politically motivated. Get over climate change!! Over harvesting by many groups which includes: Sportsmen, Commercial, Native Americans and wildlife (Orcas, seals, sea lions). The decline in forage fish (herring and sand lance) doesn't help. Another problem is bad decisions. Let's talk about the Dungeness river and whoever made the decision to change it's course. Compare last years returns to this year's returns at the hatchery. Talk to Native Americans gill netting in Dungeness Bay like I did. An elderly man who was coming in with his gill nets from fishing all morning and not catching one salmon. He said, "They F___ed Up! The salmon don't want to go up the river." Whoever made the decision to change the course of the river is who he was referring to. I fished the Dungeness many times and never saw a Coho. I'm 71 and have been fishing for probably 60 of those years here in western Washington. I admit I'm not much of a threat to the salmon as past years catch records would prove, but it seems to be getting worse.</p> <p>I hope someone in your department has the courage to address the real problems and do something about it, rather than worrying more about their future advancements than they do about the sorry state our salmon fishing is in.</p> <p>Thank you for giving me the opportunity to voice my opinion.</p> <p>Larry Ohman Port Angeles, Wa</p>

<p>Robert McMains</p>	<p>I would like to see the following changes considered in setting the regulations for the 2024-25 Salmon season. Move the opener for Coho from mid June in Area 10 to July 1st or later to avoid the need to go to a 1 Coho limit later in the season when the mature fish return. Also don't open Chinook fishing in Area 9 and 10 until the last week of July and Area 11 to August 1st so that it is primarily Adult Chinook that we are fishing for, not Blackmouth or impacting sub legal Chinook. I recommend keeping Areas 9 and 10 with the same start date so as to not have to much congestion in either area. As it is now Area 9 has most of the mature fish with a mid July opener and very few in Area 10 at that time. An opener of say July 25th would be a good compromise opener for Areas 9 and 10 and would have a mix of mature fish in each area and spread out the fishermen. There is also an environmental impact to this proposal. People are likely to make fewer trip if they could be harvesting at the most productive times of the season and decrease the impact on sub legals. I am hopefully that you will give this proposal some serious consideration.</p> <p>Bob McMains</p>
<p>Ross Barkhurst</p>	<p>I am writing to continue our attempt to convince WDFW Commission and Department to include ecological sustainability in its planning, policies, community involvement, and actions. Before, during, and after the Willapa Basin Ecosystem Review Team report, we have urged, to no avail, that ecosystems in Willapa Basin be included in planning decisions and actions. They have not. The Shoreline Management Act refers to no net loss of ecological function being allowed. One of the four H's in our previous Willapa Salmon Policy was Habitat. Community Involvement prescribed in the book "Regenerative Development and Design" (ref 1) describes this fairly well, as Essential. To contrary, in Willapa Basin Salmon Management Advisory Group for Willapa Basin, community advisors have been eliminated. No longer are the Four H's discussed. For salmon, we now have only the NOF process. Staff typically out numbers the public in these non face to face meetings. They deal only with how many Salmon to kill, when, where, and by whom. The rest of the story is told where the new, community involvement free, four H free Salmon Policy was approved was in Eastern WA! The same place the WDFW previously supported Japanese Eelgrass declaration as a noxious weed took place. In September, after we were told at a Commission Meeting it it would be discussed and voted on in October, in Olympia, our new Bare Bones Salmon management policy was approved in Yakima. Willapa Basin has degenerated into a highly degraded commercial lake. Our few remaining Widgeon are now living off invertebrates. Never seen before in decades by these normally vegetarian ducks. Green crabs have increased in numbers into this man made vacuum, and are living off juvenile shellfish which have lost Eelgrass of both species as cover. " Degenerative Development and Design, a framework for developing sustainability" describes the solution in detail. We urge that community involvement, including former salmon management community advisors, be returned, adequately staffed and budgeted, to address " all H's". There is no way the NOF process will or can address all four. We will not repeat the evidence already provided over the years and in the WBERT Report. Loss of Eelgrass, failure to meet p HOS, pNOB, egg take, refusal to count waterfowl failures, zero herring spawning mass, to act on Willapa Bay as critical habitat for green sturgeon, and many others will not be re-detailed here. You already have this and much more.</p> <p>Ross P. Barkhurst, South Bend, WA</p> <p>Ref: Regenerative Development and Design, by Pamela Mang, Ben Haggard, and Regensis</p>

Teri Wright	<p>Greetings,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity. Comments are attached.</p> <p>Teri Wright</p> <p><i>See Attachment 6 - comment letter submitted from Wild Orca, expressing concerns with lack of progress of recovery of stocks in spite of ESA listings, how other salmon-dependent species are considered, lack of direct address of climate change in policy, and others.</i></p>
Terry King	<p>Make these negotiations open to the public so the public knows there is no under the table secret handshakes etc going on. The sort fishing community has done nothing but lose opportunities for years. As sport fishermen we used to fish twelve months a year and then it went to trying to save spring chinook so the thirty inch maximum length took over and then it changed to closing on April 15 till the end of June opening July 1 and then open for the rest of the year and now it's down to a three day schedule and only so many encounters. Then after the state implements these closures the tribes get to go purse seining those years targeting pinks no sockeye retention but one purse seiner at point Robert's retained twenty three hundred chinook in one day and sold them to an on reservation processor all while the sport fleet sat on the beach. Then to make things worse on the sport fishing ranks to watch these chinook show up at our local hatchery in August and nobody turned on any water in the hatchery so these fish couldn't get in or climb the falls above the hatchery inlet ladder again for lack of water and then to watch the tribe come in with gill nets and catch these chinook to use for crab bait. None of these chinook were spawned. I them see a post from another state run hatchery showing the numbers of surplus coho at that location asked what they did with the surplus fish thinking they would let them go up stream to spawn naturally but no they killed and froze them then donated them to schools to dissect in science classes. Now I'm no scientist but how many eggs could have been fertilized from the three thousand plus extras and why can't they be placed around in different streams to perpetuate the life cycle. Just my thoughts thanks</p> <p>Terry k</p>
Terry Pierce	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I have two suggestions both aimed at avoiding another premature summer Chinook closure in MA11such as took place in 2023. The intent of these suggestions is to limit the number of sub legal Chinook encounters prior to the arrival of the Ocean Summer Chinook run.</p> <p>1) Early Blackmouth fishery: Change the number of days this fishery is open from seven days a week to four days a week, Friday - Monday.</p> <p>2) Delay the summer Chinook opening. Open on August 1st.</p> <p>Regards, Terry Pierce Seattle, Wa.</p>
Thomas McGee	<p>My input regarding North of Falcon policy making is specific to the three triggers that will close and area based on encounters. I think the use of three triggers (Sub Legal Hatchery, Sub Legal Wild and Legal Retention) are just another example of unnecessary levels of management that artificially reduce agreed upon salmon sports fishing opportunities. Area 11 was closed this past year after six days due to the sub legal policies noted above and not for the number of legal chinook caught as was agreed upon through North of Falcon. This left several thousand uncaught chinook left on the table while my boat sat in my garage. Give us a quota of keeper fish and a season that we can plan vacations and outings</p>

	<p>around well in advance of the openers. I've had to cancel trips to the San Juans, modify past trips that were in progress at Sekiu and Neah Bay while having nowhere locally (area 11) due to these policies. Please set stable seasons with realistic quotas that I can plan around.</p> <p>Tom McGee</p>
Tom Renaud	<p>All Commercial fishing for Salmon and sturgeon should be banned in the Columbia river forever. Thanks for the opportunity to share my feelings. I have fished for almost 70 years in the Columbia and tributaries below Bonneville dam. The sports fishermen that fish the lower Columbia do not get a fair share of the fish.</p>
Tony Bakke	<p>Multiple comments asking about first meeting date for North of Falcon in 2024 and asking for phone calls</p>
Warren Hazen	<p>Westport, Washington/area two salmon area in the ocean, receives too high of an allocation of quota and impact of Columbia river Chinook's, stocks and coho stocks. Westport sports, salmon fishery and commercial salmon fishery and tribal fishery. The commission has got to Realize and admit that Westport/area two Ocean gets to fish, Willipa Bay fish, Grays harbor Bay Fish, and North Washington coastal rivers salmon fisheries. Columbia River/Buoy 10 does not get to fish the northern coastal Chinook , coho salmon Ocean fisheries. And the state of Oregon and California/Idaho do not get to fish Willipa Bay, Grays Harbor Bay, northern Washington coast, salmon fisheries. what we're asking the commission to do is to look at the allocations and impacts on salmon and make them divided up Columbia River fisheries of salmon, get their fair share, and so that all the communities from the mouth of the Columbia river to its headwaters and streams that run into it, gets their fair of economic benefits from the Columbia river, salmon stock. but the commissions first obligation is to protect all native salmon and steelhead that come into the Columbia River watershed and all ocean fisheries are all regulated to protect all native salmon and steelhead stocks. That is the main job of Washington Fish And Wildlife and the commission at this time. and the commission has got to stop all the federal agencies from dominating the talks at Cape, falcon, salmon and steelhead Meetings. Washington Fish And Wildlife and the commission has got to take control of the destiny of our salmon and steelhead in the state of Washington quit allowing the federal government and the good old boys and those federal agencies to dominate the talk at Cape falcon. I am the charter boats, guide boats that fish for salmon and steelhead should be charged for their license for salmon and steelhead, sturgeon, potentially because of the amount of impact that they put on the resource. And they should be on their own quota for salmon, steelhead, sturgeon it should be a separate quota from the sports fishery quota.. remember, in the state of Washington charter boats/guide boats are on a limited entry license quota and their license should be a commercial license. They are selling salmon to the public. they are not paying their fair share of cost of the resource of salmon fishing. remember, Cape falcon meetings has been going on for years and it has not fixed the issues that are taking place with salmon and steelhead stocks. and if you really truly are committed to improve salmon and steelhead native stocks, you will eliminate all Gillnet fisheries in the Columbia river and throughout the state of Washington's waters . and what is the commission going to do with predators in the Columbia river watershed and it's streams. I'm talking about sea lions, harbor, seals, fish, eating, birds, and ducks, and fish, eating warm water fish. Redemption. These are all issues that should be addressed in the Cape falcon policy for the state of Washington.</p>
Warren Hazen	<p>Thank you for reading this email that pertains to quotes, impacts in area to in the ocean. And the effects that it has on the Columbia river fisheries and orca food source, and how it affects the communities at the mouth of the Columbia river and up the Columbia river to its headwaters, and all the streams that run into the Columbia river. Washington Fish And Wildlife region six office needs to split the Chinook quota in area two in the ocean to make sure Columbia River Chinook make it home. They need to have an early quota and a late quota and cut their quota by 60% to make sure Columbia river Chinook , make it home. Region six, Washington Fisher wildlife office biologist need to do a better job in area two of the ocean on quotas and impacts out of West Port, Washington. They don't have enough science to support such an extreme quota and impact on Chinook, salmon, and how it affects orcas. I will be bringing this situation up to the governors office and there</p>

	will be a petition coming your way about the whole issue and area two in the ocean on salmon quotes.
Wayne Cline	<p>Good day,</p> <p>I live in the Mount Vernon area so my comments will reflect my experience on the Skagit River first, and Puget Sound in general. I noticed this in the draft: When managing sport fisheries in this region, recreational opportunities will be distributed equitably...</p> <p>My concern is that in river fisheries are the last opportunity for take after all other tribal and non-tribal commercial fisheries, and recreational salt water fishers have had their opportunity for harvest. Not everyone has or can afford a bay boat to try and catch salmon. I'm sure with a little analysis you would discover that most license holders in this area do not own a boat capable of fishing the sound.</p> <p>It appears to me that all of the impacts for the Stillaguamish River are used in the salt water fisheries which forces the closure of the river for most of the year, and specifically at the most opportune time to fish for searun cutthroat, especially on the North Fork that is fly fishing only.</p> <p>To sum up that topic, don't forget about the guys fishing on the banks of our PS rivers.</p> <p>Thanks for your time.</p> <p>Wayne Cline</p>
Wendell Bunch	Commercial fishing has routinely been linked to the decline in numbers and size of commercially fished species, especially salmon. No majority portion of any stock should ever be allotted to the commercial fleet. Their by-catch has got to be reduced or eliminated.

January 7, 2024

Regarding comments on WDFW commission policy C-3608 Revision.

Commission Chair Baker and Commissioners –

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on potential revisions of WDFW Commission Policy C-3608.

In recent years one of the outcomes of the North of Falcon (NOF) process has been decisions effecting game fish seasons in freshwater areas. Traditionally game fish seasons have been set in a dual public process outside of the NOF (salmon season) format. This has resulted in game fish seasons being made with limited input from those anglers that target game fish that are either non-salmon or causal salmon anglers. To address this expanded role of game fish seasons in NOF I offer the following tweaks to expiring current policy.

Edit the first bullet statement under the second paragraph of the policy to read –

“Salmon and **game fish** will be managed **for** recovery and to assure sustainability ...”

Under Fishery Management General edit the first bullet statement to read

“on a statewide basis, fishing opportunities will be provided when they can be directed at healthy wild and hatchery **gamefish and salmon** stocks.”

Under Puget Sound I suggest that a sixth bullet be added which would read

“**For recreational fisheries use what may be limiting ESA or wild stock impacts to promote diverse opportunities for salmon and gamefish stocks in both freshwater and marine waters.**”

As always thanks you for your time and what you do for the resource.

Curt Kraemer

Marysville, Wa

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY DECISION

POLICY TITLE: 2024-2028 North of Falcon

POLICY NUMBER: C-3608

Supersedes: C-3608, 2019-2023

Effective Date: January xx, 2024

Termination Date: December 31, 2028

See Also: C-3621 C-3001
C-3622 C-3630

Approved by: _____ Chair

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, January xx, 2024

North of Falcon Policy

This Policy will guide Department staff in considering conservation, allocation, in-season management, and monitoring issues associated with the annual salmon fishery planning process known as "North of Falcon." When considering management issues, Department staff will ensure that decisions are made consistent with: the Department's statutory authority; *U.S. v. Washington*; *U.S. v. Oregon*; the Endangered Species Act; the Puget Sound Chinook Harvest Management Plan; the Pacific Salmon Treaty; the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan; pertinent state/tribal agreements; and the applicable Fish and Wildlife Commission policies.

The Department will implement this Policy consistent with the following 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

General

- On a statewide basis, fishing opportunities will be provided when they can be directed at healthy wild and hatchery stocks.
- Selective fishing methods and gears that maximize fishing opportunity and minimize impacts on depressed stocks will be utilized to the fullest extent possible taking into consideration legal constraints on implementation and budgetary limits associated with required sampling, monitoring and enforcement programs.
- When assessed from a statewide perspective, fishing directed at chinook, coho, pink, sockeye, or chum salmon will not be exclusively reserved for either sport or commercial users.
- When managing sport fisheries, meaningful recreational fishing opportunities will be distributed equitably across fishing areas and reflect the diverse interests of fishers, including retention and catch and release fisheries.

The Department will seek non-treaty fishing access to unutilized portions of treaty harvest allocations through the implementation of pre-season agreements, taking into consideration changes in abundance, fishery conflicts, and factors that may influence attainment of spawning escapement objectives.

Commented [DW1]: I propose that the "or exceed" language from this bullet point be removed. Inclusion of this language communicates a lack of confidence in the exploitation rate structures set in the Puget Sound Chinook Management Plan. Presumably those rates set appropriate goals and therefore it is appropriate to manage fisheries to meet those goals

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Commented [DW2]: I do not support the removal of this language from the policy and would include it. This language allows for greater flexibility in drafting fisheries for both co-managers.

Puget Sound

- The Puget Sound harvest management objectives for chinook and coho stocks, in priority order, are to: (1) provide meaningful recreational fishing opportunities; and (2) identify and provide opportunities for commercial harvest. When managing sport fisheries in this region, recreational opportunities will be distributed equitably across fishing areas, considering factors such as: the uniqueness of each area; the availability of opportunities for various species in each area throughout the season; the desire to provide high levels of total recreational opportunity; and the biological impacts.
- Puget Sound-origin sockeye will be prioritized for recreational fishing opportunity
- For fisheries directed at Fraser River-origin chum, pink, and sockeye stocks, the majority of harvest will be provided to the commercial fisheries.
- For fisheries directed at harvestable Puget Sound-origin chum and pink stocks, provide meaningful opportunities to both commercial and recreational fisheries. In most years, the majority of non-treaty chum harvest will be by commercial fisheries, and the majority of non-treaty pink harvest will be by recreational fisheries.

Grays Harbor

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

Willapa Bay

- Willapa Bay will be managed consistent with the Commission's Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy (POL C-3622), including any modifications made to the policy, and any guidance or clarifications adopted by the Commission following notice and opportunity for review and comment.

Columbia River

- The Fish and Wildlife Commission's policy on Columbia River Salmon Management (POL C3630), including any modifications made to the policy, and any guidance or clarifications adopted by the Commission following notice and opportunity for review and comment, shall guide pre-season and in-season planning of Columbia River salmon fisheries. Columbia River harvest management regimes shall be developed in cooperation with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife representatives.

Pacific Ocean

- Pacific Ocean harvest shall be managed consistent with the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan and the National Standard Guidelines that provide for fair and equitable allocation of fishing privileges among various fishers.

In-Season Management

- When in-season management actions are taken, they will be implemented in a manner that is consistent with pre-season conservation and harvest management objectives, and the fishery intent developed through the North of Falcon process. In-season management modifications to recreational fisheries will consider the intent to provide predictable and stable seasons.
- Prior to use, in-season updates of stock abundance affecting Puget Sound fisheries will be evaluated for technical merit and potential to improve achievement of conservation and allocation objectives.
 - When possible, in-season updates should be documented within the co-manager's annual List of Agreed Fisheries or as part of regional comanager memoranda of understanding.
 - Descriptions of potential modifications to fisheries that are contingent on in-season updates 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

- Enforcement strategies will be developed and staffing will be provided to promote compliance with state regulations.
- WDFW Enforcement will seek to establish and maintain effective coordination with Tribal enforcement to enhance the sharing of information.

Gear and Fishery Conflicts

- Recreational and commercial fisheries shall be structured to minimize gear and other fishery conflicts. Unanticipated fishery interaction issues identified in-season, including conflicts with fisheries directed at other species, shall be resolved by involving the appropriate sport and commercial representatives in a dispute resolution process managed by Department staff.

Incidental Mortalities

- The Department will manage fisheries to minimize mortalities on non-target species (e.g. rockfish, sea birds, etc.). Management regimes will include strategies to limit seabird mortalities consistent with the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Communications

- The Department shall strive to make ongoing improvements for effective public involvement during the North of Falcon planning process and annual salmon fishery implementation, incorporating the following intents:
 - North of Falcon participants will be included as observers during appropriate state/tribal discussions of fishery issues.
 - All decisions made during the North of Falcon process will be recorded in writing.
 - A variety of tools will be used to effectively communicate with the public, to receive input on pre-season planning or in-season fishery issues, and to make available the record of decisions. Such tools will include: recreational and commercial advisory groups; public workshops to address key issues; the WDFW North of Falcon Web site; and in-season virtual meetings.
 - The Department will increase transparency by consulting with stakeholders throughout the pre-season planning process and prior to making major decisions with the co-managers.

Reporting

- The Department will make available and easily accessible online post-season salmon fishery reports produced to meet Endangered Species Act, co-manager, Pacific Salmon Commission, Pacific Fishery Management Council, and other reporting requirements when they are completed.
- The Department will produce and make easily accessible online summaries of pre-season and post-season Fishery Regulation Assessment Model results for Chinook and coho fisheries when model results are available. These summaries should include FRAM estimates of pre-season and post-season escapement of hatchery- and natural-origin adults, and of fishery impacts in state and tribal fisheries by fishery and by management unit. The summaries should also include comparisons of exploitation rates and escapement for each management unit to conservation objectives.

Commented [DW3]: I support the inclusion of this new language. I would add language requiring WDFW to summarize post-season outcomes at the next year's NOF initial meeting.

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 provide proper protection to SRKW from reduction to prey availability or from fishery vessel traffic, consistent with the Endangered Species Act.
- The Fish and Wildlife Commission's policy on Lower Columbia Sturgeon Management (POL-C3001) shall guide pre-season and in-season planning of Columbia River and coastal sturgeon fisheries and related incidental impacts.

Delegation of Authority

The Fish and Wildlife Commission delegates the authority to the Director to make harvest agreements with Northwest treaty tribes and other governmental agencies, and adopt permanent and emergency regulations resulting from the agreements made during the annual North of Falcon process. Further, the Department has the authority to 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, comanager agreements or Columbia River Compact agreements, to achieve Washington management objectives, or to comply with Endangered Species Act requirements.

North of Falcon Policy

This Policy ~~will~~ **directs** Department staff ~~in~~ **to** ~~considering~~ conservation, allocation, in-season management, and monitoring issues associated with the annual salmon fishery planning process known as "North of Falcon."

When considering management issues, Department staff ~~will~~ **shall** ensure ~~that~~ decisions are ~~made~~ consistent with: the Department's statutory authority; U.S. v. Washington; U.S. v. Oregon; the Endangered Species Act; the Puget Sound Chinook Harvest Management Plan; the Pacific Salmon Treaty; the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan; pertinent state/tribal agreements; and the applicable Fish and Wildlife Commission policies. ~~The Department will~~ implementation **of** this Policy ~~consistent with the following principles~~ **ensures**:

- Salmon and ~~s~~Steelhead ~~will be~~ **are** managed ~~to~~ **for** recovery and ~~to assure~~ sustainability in a ways that is **are** 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 **commercial/recreational fisheries'** ~~the~~ long-term well-being ~~of the commercial and recreational fisheries.~~

Fishery Management

General

- On a statewide basis, fishing opportunities ~~will be~~ **are** provided when ~~they can be~~ directed at healthy wild and hatchery stocks.
- Selective fishing methods and gears that maximize fishing opportunity and minimize impacts on depressed stocks ~~will be~~ **are** utilized to the fullest extent possible taking into consideration legal constraints on implementation and budgetary limits associated with required sampling, monitoring and enforcement programs.
- When assessed from a statewide perspective, fishing directed at ~~e~~Chinook, ~~e~~Coho, ~~p~~Pink, ~~s~~Sockeye, or ~~e~~Chum salmon ~~will not be~~ **are not** exclusively reserved for either sport or commercial users.
- When managing sport fisheries, meaningful recreational fishing opportunities ~~will be~~ **are** distributed equitably across fishing areas and reflect **fishers'** ~~the~~ diverse interests ~~of fishers,~~ including retention and catch/~~and~~-release fisheries.

Puget Sound

- The **priority order** Puget Sound harvest management objectives for ~~€~~Chinook and ~~€~~Coho stocks **are intended to**, ~~in priority order, are to~~:

(1) provide meaningful recreational fishing opportunities; and

(2) identify/~~and~~ provide opportunities for commercial harvest. When managing sport fisheries in this region **WDFW distributes**, recreational opportunities ~~will be distributed~~ equitably across fishing areas, considering factors such as **area** the uniqueness of each area; the **opportunity** availability of ~~opportunities~~ for various species in each area throughout the season; ~~the~~ desire to provide high levels of total recreational opportunity; and ~~the~~ biological impacts.

- Puget Sound-origin ~~s~~ sockeye ~~will be~~ **are** prioritized for recreational fishing opportunity.
- For fisheries directed at Fraser River-origin ~~e~~um, ~~p~~ink, and ~~s~~ sockeye stocks **are prioritized for**, ~~the~~ majority of harvest ~~will be provided to the~~ commercial fisheries.
- For fisheries directed at harvestable Puget Sound-origin **havestable** ~~€~~Chum and ~~p~~ink stocks, ~~provide~~ meaningful opportunities to both commercial and recreational fisheries. In most years, **commercial fisheries have** the majority of non-treaty ~~€~~Chum harvest ~~will be by commercial fisheries~~, and **recreational fisheries have** the majority of non-treaty ~~p~~ink harvest ~~will be by recreational fisheries~~.

Grays Harbor

- Grays Harbor ~~will be~~ **is** managed consistent with the Commission's Grays Harbor Policy (POL C3621), including any modifications made to the policy, and any guidance or clarifications adopted by the Commission following notice and opportunity for review and comment.

Willapa Bay

- Willapa Bay ~~will be~~ **is** managed consistent with the Commission's Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy (POL C-3622), including any modifications made to the policy, and any guidance or clarifications adopted by the Commission following notice and opportunity for review and comment.

Columbia River

- The Fish and Wildlife Commission's policy on Columbia River Salmon Management (POL C3630), including any modifications made to the policy, and any guidance or clarifications adopted by the Commission following notice and opportunity for review and comment, ~~shall~~ guide pre-season and in-season planning of Columbia River salmon fisheries. Columbia River harvest management regimes ~~shall be~~ **are** developed in cooperation with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife representatives.

Pacific Ocean

- Pacific Ocean harvest shall be is managed consistent with the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan and the National Standard Guidelines that provide for fair and equitable allocation of fishing privileges among various fishers.



Coastal Conservation Association

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January 16, 2024

SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment again on the Commission’s North of Falcon Policy (C-3608). CCA Washington joined an October 26, 2023 [coalition letter](#) to the Commission providing recommendations for policy changes. CCA Washington and its coalition partners provided a [redline of proposed changes](#) to the policy.

REPORTING LANGUAGE

We support the “reporting” section that was included in the [December policy draft](#) provided by WDFW staff. This proposed addition was responsive to the feedback provided by our coalition, and we look forward to receiving this critical information on a regular basis.

IN-SEASON MANAGEMENT

We respectfully ask that you include the recommendations provided by Mr. Pat Pattillo on January 10, 2024. While we appreciate the language proposed by WDFW recognizing “the intent to provide predictable and stable seasons ([in blue](#)), this language does not address our primary concern regarding the need to ensure all in-season updates and fishery controls are developed through a public process and disclosed in the co-manager’s annual List of Agreed Fisheries. Please see these proposed changes below ([in red](#)):

- When in-season management actions are taken, they will be implemented in a manner that is consistent with pre-season conservation and harvest management objectives, and the fishery intent developed through the North of Falcon process. [In-season management modifications to recreational fisheries will consider the intent to provide predictable and stable seasons.](#)

- Prior to use, in-season updates of stock abundance affecting Puget Sound fisheries will be evaluated for technical merit and potential to improve achievement of conservation and allocation objectives.
 - ~~When possible,~~ in-season updates and fishery controls should be developed through the public North of Falcon process prior to making major decisions with the co-managers, and should be documented within the co-manager’s annual List of Agreed Fisheries or as part of regional comanager memoranda of understanding.
 - Descriptions of potential modifications to fisheries that are contingent on in-season updates should be included in the List of Agreed Fisheries.

PACIFIC OCEAN FISHERIES

The Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) process does not value the important role selective fisheries play in harvesting hatchery reared salmon within limited harvest-related impacts to wild and ESA-listed salmon stocks. Instead, PFMC often prioritizes mixed-stock, non-selective ocean fisheries since representatives of these fisheries have often influenced or served on PFMC.

PFMC’s allocation of lower Columbia River fall (Tule) Chinook impacts in 2023 provides a case in point. PFMC increased the allocation of harvest impacts to non-selective ocean fisheries while reducing the impacts allocated to Columbia River fisheries, including the Buoy 10 recreational fishery that went completely mark-selective in 2023 to reduce Tule impacts. We do not believe this is a “fair and equitable” sharing of the conservation burden.

2022 vs 2023 Pre-Season Prioritization of Tule Impacts

	2022	2023	Change
WA Coast (rec and commercial)*	0.3%	0.4%	33.3%
NOF Recreational	3.0%	4.0%	33.3%
NOF Non-Treaty Troll (commercial)	4.1%	5.4%	31.7%
BC (rec and commercial)	13.0%	14.0%	7.7%
NOF Treaty Troll (commercial)	2.2%	2.2%	0.0%
Columbia River (rec and commercial)	9.8%	9.4%	-4.1%
SE Alaska ⁽¹⁾ (rec and commercial)	2.9%	2.2%	-24.1%
SOF Recreational ⁽²⁾	0.6%	0.2%	-66.7%
SOF Troll ⁽²⁾ (commercial)	2.1%	0.2%	-90.5%
Total Allowable Tule Impacts:	38.0%	38.0%	

* WA Coast is primarily comprised of impacts associated with fisheries in Willapa Bay, Grays Harbor and Puget Sound.

(1) Alaska commercial troll fishery decreased per Court Order to protect Killer Whales.

(2) Most salmon fisheries closed on the California/Oregon coast to protect Sacramento River and Klamath River Chinook.

Similar concerns also exist about the impact of mixed stock, non-selective ocean fisheries on Puget Sound stocks. For example, in 2020, the members of the Puget Sound Sport Fishery Advisory Group [wrote PFMC](#) urging them to consider alternatives that reduce impacts on constraining Puget Sound stocks. Despite significant reductions to Puget Sound sport fisheries they noted that *“the ability to meet conservation and fishery management objectives for salmon stocks originating in Puget Sound often depends on the conduct of fisheries beyond the direct jurisdiction and control of WDFW and the co-managing Puget Sound Tribes.”*

Below are changes proposed by WDFW staff (in blue) and an additional proposed bullet (in red) that we believe is needed to better align Pacific Ocean fisheries with inland water fisheries and policies for Puget Sound, the Columbia River, Willapa Bay, and Grays Harbor.

- Pacific Ocean harvest shall be managed consistent with the Pacific Fishery Management Council's [Framework Salmon Management Plan Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan](#) and the National Standards [Guidelines](#) that provide for fair and equitable allocation of fishing privileges among various fishers.
- **In general, the Department shall seek to prioritize selective fisheries that can effectively harvest hatchery salmon to help meet conservation objectives for ESA-listed and weak wild salmon stocks, including escapement goals and hatchery broodstock needs.**

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Commission's proposed revisions to the North of Falcon Policy.

Sincerely,



Nello Picinich, Executive Director
CCA Washington

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission North of Falcon Policy (C-3608)

Public Comments and Recommendations

December January 11, 2024

Patrick Pattillo

Chair Baker, Fish and Wildlife Commissioners,

I wish to provide updated comments on the Commission's draft North of Falcon Policy.

First, thanks to Department staff, specifically to Kyle Adicks, for reviewing and considering comments and suggestions made previously made by representatives of the sport fishing community for improving the effectiveness of Policy C-3608.

My updated comments follow:

- 1) I previously requested the Commission specifically recognize the Puget Sound Salmon Management Plan (PSSMP), developed jointly by the Puget Sound Tribes and the Department of Fisheries. Unchanged by the co-managers after nearly 40-years, this Plan has retained its value and applicability, as is well-described in the most recent 2022 co-managers' Puget Sound Chinook Harvest Management Plan:

The Puget Sound Salmon Management Plan (PSSMP) remains the guiding framework for jointly agreed management objectives, allocation of harvest, information exchange among the co-managers, and processes for negotiating annual harvest regimes. ...

its enduring principle is to "promote the stability and vitality of treaty and non-treaty fisheries of Puget Sound... and improve the technical basis for ...management."

It defined management units..., and regions of origin, as the basis for harvest objectives and allocation...

Please reconsider including acknowledgement in the Policy of the important role of the PSSMP.

- 2) I previously requested modification to the Policy's address of the **Puget Sound** section of **Fishery Management** – to combine the chum and pink salmon fishery guidance. The staff draft did modify that element with the statement to **"provide meaningful opportunities to both commercial and recreational fisheries."** However, and upon further reflection concerning the primary intention of this guidance, I recommend continuation of the intention of the

previous Policy – “**while minimizing gear and other fishery conflicts.**” With that guidance to adopt fisheries that will provide meaningful opportunity and avoid conflicts, I believe it is unnecessary to include the statement- “**the majority of non-treaty chum harvest will be by commercial fisheries, and the majority of non-treaty pink harvest will be by recreational fisheries.**”

- 3) No change was made to the Commission’s guidance for **In-Season Management**, despite this topic being one of the top concerns of the sport fishing community due to the major increase in use of emergency in-season management found necessary by the Department in recent years leading to instability of sport salmon fisheries, especially mark-selective chinook fisheries. If no change will be made, the sport community seeks discussion with the Commission and the Department to ensure we understand the intent of this Policy element. A specific example of the need for this Policy element is the very recent application of new, in-season controls for Puget Sound mark-selective chinook recreational fisheries that have resulted in a dramatic increase in emergency closures. The Department had no discussion with either the advisory group or the public generally about the technical basis, the justification, or necessity for these controls. Sport fishing interests discovered these new controls after the co-managers’ decision had been made and after the close of the public North of Falcon process, documented in a table within the co-managers’ annual List of Agreed Fisheries, leaving no time for public discussion or consultation. Is this an example of inconsistency with the Commission’s Policy? The in-season controls were documented in the List of Agreed Fisheries. But the public was not consulted and most sport fishery participants were unaware of the existence of the controls that ultimately shut down those fisheries by emergency. This was not an in-season update of stock abundance, but certainly was intended to improve achievement of conservation and allocation objectives, and therefore should have been evaluated for technical merit with public discussion. Further consideration of this Policy element appears to be warranted. A suggested modification of the element follows:

~~When possible, i~~n-season updates and fishery controls should be developed through the public North of Falcon process prior to making major decisions with the co-managers, and should be documented within

the co-manager's annual List of Agreed Fisheries or as part of regional comanager memoranda of understanding.

Note the suggestion to strike the conditional "When possible." Discussion of the in-season controls was clearly possible, but made quite difficult or challenging with evolution of the North of Falcon process into two separate processes – a public process, and a co-management process that excludes public participation.

- 4) No modifications were recommended with the draft Policy for the **Communications** element. The Commission's *current* North of Falcon Policy guidance was crafted to address this challenge:

The Department will increase transparency by consulting with stakeholders throughout the pre-season planning process and prior to making major decisions with the co-managers.

Given the limit on time and Department staff resources during the pre-season North of Falcon process period, it seems that the only option for *increasing transparency* is to engage the public beyond the pre-season process. That is the reason for recommending a new element to the Policy directing the Department:

Engage with the Puget Sound Sport Fishing Advisory Group to identify realistic and measurable Puget Sound recreational salmon fishery management objectives

We understand the Department is planning to conduct a Townhall public meeting in January to address management of the Puget Sound sport fisheries. We applaud and support this effort.

- 5) The draft Policy has introduced a new section, or element, for **Reporting**. This is a welcome modification and the sport fishing community looks forward to having these reports and summaries made available and easily accessible.

I look forward to any additional opportunities to work with the Commission and the Department to improve effectiveness of this policy and to promote the stability and vitality of Puget Sound sport salmon fisheries. Thank you.



January 15, 2024

Fish and Wildlife Commission

Delivered electronically to: northoffalconfwcpolicy2024-28@publicinput.com

Re: North of Falcon Policy

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the North of Falcon Policy (NOF). [Wild Orca](#) is a non-profit based on San Juan Island. Our mission is to translate science into action to save Southern Resident killer whales (SRKW) from extinction. Our Science & Research Director, Dr. Deborah Giles, has been studying the SRKWs her entire career, and is recognized as a leading authority on their recovery, both in Washington state and internationally.

We are grateful the NOF policy is being revised; however, we are very concerned about the suggested revisions from WDFW staff. Per the summary sheet sent to the Commissioners in October 2023, staff identified the following as needing revision:

Eliminate bullet instructing Department to seek non-treaty fishing access to unutilized portions of treaty harvest allocations. Make other minor housekeeping changes.

In the climate crisis we are in, this does not make sense. Warming ocean temperatures, loss of riparian habitat, human population growth, rising temperatures, etc., and the impacts these changes wreak upon salmon cannot possibly be reflected accurately in a policy that has not been revised to reflect these challenges, nor can they be adequately addressed if not seriously acknowledged and identified.

Under header North of Falcon policy, we are concerned with the following:

WDFW works to preserve, protect, and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.

Sadly, it is not evident that these objectives have been achieved.

Under the header Fishery Management, General, we have the following concerns:

The first paragraph's statement, " *will ensure that decisions are made consistent with: the Department's statutory authority; U.S. v. Washington; U.S. v. Oregon; the Endangered Species Act; the Puget Sound Chinook Harvest Management Plan; the Pacific Salmon Treaty; the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan; pertinent state/tribal agreements; and the applicable Fish and Wildlife Commission policies.*"

If this is happening consistently, then why are multiple salmon stocks on the ESA list and why are they still declining after decades of being on the list?

You state that WDFW will follow 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.

Again, if this is true, then why are multiple salmon stocks on the ESA list and why are they still declining after decades of being on the list?

Also, this statement:

Selective fishing methods and gears that maximize fishing opportunity and minimize impacts on *depressed* stocks will be utilized to the fullest extent possible taking into consideration legal constraints on implementation and budgetary limits associated with required sampling, monitoring and enforcement programs.

Why is non-tribal fishing currently still allowed, especially in the crisis we currently find ourselves? A more prudent approach would be to stop non-tribal fishing of wild fish immediately and to severely limit hatchery fishing. Hatcheries are costly and have played a role in limiting wild salmon stocks from recovering. If wild fish were truly managed properly, there would be no need for hatcheries. This should be a goal of WDFW.

We also take issue with this statement,

When assessed from a statewide perspective, fishing directed at chinook, coho, pink, sockeye, or chum salmon will not be *exclusively reserved for either sport or commercial users*.

WDFW is not considering all other species that depend on salmon, especially the [Southern Residents](#).

Under the header: Puget Sound:

While our primary concern is that fishing for endangered and threatened salmon stocks is allowed, we are also concerned that only human fishers are considered. More specifically, there is no mention of marine mammals, birds, beavers, or other non-human fishers. Also, according to the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, none of the salmon that live within the Puget Sound are doing well. They are listed under the categories of: In Crisis and Not Keeping Pace. At what point is WDFW willing to be truly innovative in saving species?

Regarding Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay: In addition to the above concerns (they apply to the entire policy), we are concerned that a proposed biomass facility is being planned for Hoquiam. Is WDFW aware of this? Has WDFW contacted Olympic Region Clean Air Agency (ORCAA) and expressed concerns? If permitted and built, it will have major impacts on the Southern Resident killer whales, and their primary prey, Chinook salmon. Shipping pellets to Japan and other Asian countries will increase ship traffic within the orcas' critical habitat, thus impairing their foraging ability and putting them at risk for vessel strikes.

Under Monitoring and Sampling:

A mention of how fishing impacts the health of other species that also consume salmon, especially the SRKWs should be included. Comparing the status of the salmon with the whales is very much needed since WDFW is also tasked with recovering the Southern Residents. Closer monitoring might be what is missing – currently the growth of this population is stagnant despite recent births.

The section on **Other Species** needs to be moved up directly under **Incidental Mortalities** since these are related. SRKWs are in a constant state of poor nutrition resulting from not enough prey. This is clearly demonstrated by measuring [the hormones of the whales](#). Therefore, any death of an endangered orca needs to be considered incidental since WDFW does not ensure enough prey are available for the whales. Also under **Other Species**, we cannot suggest strongly enough the need for WDFW scientists and staff to work with independent, unbiased marine mammal researchers in the PNW and Salish Sea. Despite being on the ESA and Washington's list of endangered species, these orcas are not thriving and their numbers are not growing. Specifically, the current population of just 75 individual whales is down from a total 88 animals

when the population was listed as endangered in 2005. Expertise and knowledge from other researchers are clearly needed.

As mentioned in previous sections, nowhere is the threat of climate change discussed thoroughly within the NOF policy. This omission needs to be rectified before this policy is approved.

Thank you for your work and time in reviewing the NOF policy and all the comments submitted.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah A. Giles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah A. Giles, PhD
Science and Research Director, Wild Orca

Teri Wright

Teri Wright
Legislation & Policy Organizer, Consultant
Wild Orca