

Forage Fish, Marine Fish, and Shellfish Rule Simplification Briefing and Decision



Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

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Presentation Outline

- Process
- Timeline and public involvement
- Proposals
 - Forage Fish
 - Marine Fish
 - Shellfish
- Questions
- Public testimony

Process

- Three Year Schedule
 - Year 1 (2017): Simplify sport fishing regulations for freshwater species (steelhead, trout, warmwater fish, sturgeon, shad, and carp). Rules effective July 1, 2018.
 - Year 2 (2018): Simplify sport fishing regulations for salmon fisheries in marine and freshwater. Rules effective July 1, 2019.
 - Year 3 (2019): Simplify sport fishing regulations for forage fish, marine fish, and shellfish in Washington coastal and Puget Sound waters. Rules effective July 1, 2020.

Timeline and Public Involvement

- Jan. - Aug. Staff develop proposals
- June 13 CR -101 (Preproposal) filed
- Sept. 3 CR -102 (Proposal Rulemaking) filed
- Sept. - Oct. 17 Proposal posted to website for public comment
- Sept. 25 Public Meeting, Olympia
- Sept. 26 Public Meeting, Mill Creek
- Oct. 1 Public Meeting, Port Townsend
- Oct. 18-19 Commission briefing and Public Hearing
- Dec. 13-14 Commission decision meeting
- July 1, 2020 Rules take effect

Forage Fish Proposals

Technical/Clerical Change Proposals

- Three technical changes submitted by WDFW staff;
- Changes do not affect, nor alter current fishing regulations;
- Primary purpose is to format and streamline WAC language, remove redundant language, and reorganize chapters to improve structure.



Forage Fish Proposals

Technical/Clerical Change Proposals

- ✓ Consolidate forage fish rules under WAC 220-315 by moving possession limits from WAC 220-310 to WAC 220-315.
- ✓ Include both saltwater and freshwater forage fish limits in WAC 220-315.
- ✓ Simplify language throughout WACs:
 - ✓ Remove redundant language prohibiting eulachon smelt harvest.
 - ✓ Clarify closures for smelt dip net fishing in Puget Sound and freshwater.
 - ✓ Clarify forage fish gear descriptions.
 - ✓ Clarify forage fish species descriptions.

Public Comments received through October 17th

- Public meeting comments: None
 - Number of attendees: Zero
- Written Comments: Commenter suggested a gear change at Titlow Beach Marine preserve.

Questions



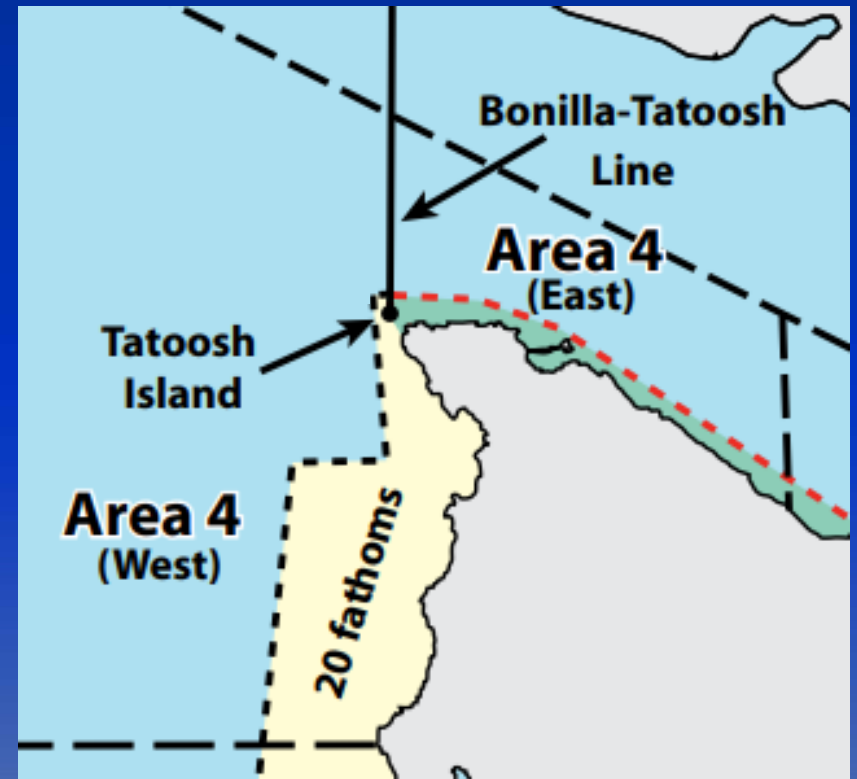
Marine Finfish Proposals



Marine Finfish Proposals

1. Changes to bottomfish regulations in Marine Area 4B (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line)

- Proposal aligns recreational bottomfish regulations in Marine Area 4 (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line, also known as Marine Area 4B), with regulations in Marine Area 4A (west of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line).



Marine Finfish Proposals

1. Changes to bottomfish regulations in Marine Area 4B (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), cont.

- Changes to WAC 220-314-020, possession limits for bottomfish, include:
 - ✓ Reduce aggregate daily bottomfish limit from 10 to 9
 - ✓ Increase daily rockfish sublimit from 6 to 7
 - ✓ Rockfish sublimit would add yellowtail and widow rockfish to current allowance for black and blue/deacon rockfish
 - ✓ Allow 12 surfperch per day

Marine Finfish Proposals

1. Changes to bottomfish regulations in Marine Area 4B (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), cont.

- Changes to WAC 220-314-030 would allow anglers to retain yellowtail and widow rockfish seaward of a line approximating 20 fathoms on days open to recreational salmon fishing in July and August.

Marine Finfish Proposals

1. Changes to bottomfish regulations in Marine Area 4B (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), cont.

- Changes to WAC 220-314-040 would open lingcod fishery from the second Saturday in March through the second Saturday in October in Marine Area 4B, to match the season in Area 4A.
- Removes minimum size limit for lingcod and cabezon in Area 4B to match Area 4A.
- Also clarifies that Area 12 (Hood Canal) is closed to lingcod fishing year-round.

Marine Finfish Proposals

1. Changes to bottomfish regulations in Marine Area 4B (east of the Bonilla-Tatoosh line), cont.

- Throughout these WACs, additional technical changes have been made to refer to management areas as Marine Area rather than Catch Record Card Area, and replace blue rockfish with blue/deacon rockfish.

Marine Finfish Proposals

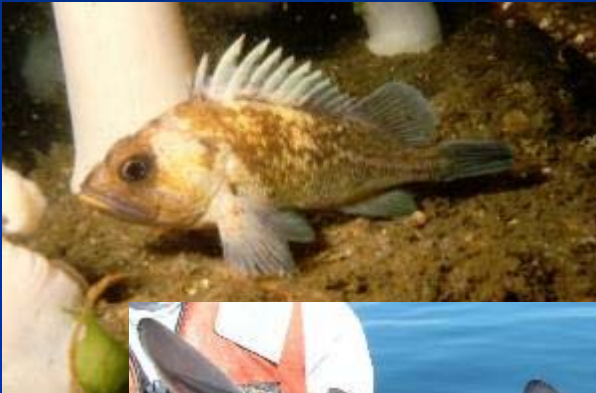
Technical/Clerical Change Proposals

- Three technical changes submitted by WDFW staff;
- Changes do not affect, nor alter current regulations;
- Primary purpose is to format and streamline WAC language, remove redundant language, and reorganize chapters to improve structure.

Public Comments received through October 17th

- Public meeting comments: None
 - Number of attendees: Zero
- Written Comments: 2
- 1 (Opposed) A commenter was concerned about the rule language and possible unintended consequences.
- 1 (General) Commenter would like to see the halibut season changed to 3 to 4 consecutive days.

Questions



Shellfish Proposals



Shellfish Proposals

1. Daily limits for green urchins, purple urchins, red urchins, pink scallops, spiny scallops, and sea cucumbers.

- Current management of urchins uses two different daily limits (18 each for red urchins and purple urchins and 36 for green urchins). This proposal reduces the daily limit of green sea urchins from 36 to 18 to align with other species.
- Reduces the daily limit of sea cucumbers from 25 to 18, for simplicity and consistency.
- Proposed daily limits are consistent with conservation objectives.

Shellfish Proposals

1. Daily limits for green urchins, purple urchins, red urchins, pink scallops, spiny scallops, and sea cucumbers, cont.

- For pink scallops and spiny scallops, the WDFW is proposing a quantity-based, in lieu of a weight-based, daily limit. Quantity-based limits are easier for harvesters to comply with in the field. The proposed limits are consistent with conservation objectives.
- ✓ A total of 40 scallops aligns with existing daily limits for clams, for simplicity.

Shellfish Proposals

2. Define size limits for pink scallops, spiny scallops, and urchins

- Size limits for pink scallops, spiny scallops, green urchins, purple urchins, and red urchins are currently undefined for recreational fisheries. Proposed size limits will preserve reproductive opportunity prior to harvest.

Proposed size limits:

- ✓ minimum 2 inches (pink scallops, spiny scallops),
- ✓ minimum 2 ¼ inches (green urchins, purple urchins), and
- ✓ minimum 3 ¼ inches, maximum 5 inches (red urchins).

Shellfish Proposals

3. Define closure areas for recreational sea cucumber and urchin fisheries

- This proposal would make it unlawful to fish for sea cucumbers and sea urchins in 8 conservation closure areas throughout Puget Sound.
- These closure areas serve as reference areas supporting monitoring of population status and as a measure to conserve spawning stock distributed throughout Puget Sound; this also aligns with co-management of urchins and sea cucumbers in Puget Sound.

Shellfish Proposals

4. Eliminate requirement to retain eastern softshell clams

- Removes requirement to retain any eastern softshell clams encountered, but retained clams still count toward daily limit.
- The current rule requires that eastern softshell clams be retained when encountered as bycatch. This species is a non-native, non-invasive species not commonly targeted by harvesters. There is no conservation need for this rule.

Shellfish Proposals

5. Clarify lawful gear for intertidal harvest of geoduck

- Harvest of intertidal geoduck is commonly conducted with the assistance of a tube or cylinder to temporarily prevent clam-digging holes from caving in.
- This rule seeks to clarify that this is a lawful gear type, to define the gear as non-mechanical, and to define a maximum permissible diameter for tubes or cylinders as 24”.

Shellfish Proposals

6. Define a caliper measurement

- The term “caliper” is referenced in WAC 220-330, but is undefined.
- Clarifies regulations by defining a caliper measurement as:
 - “...a linear measurement when both points of a movable caliper are touching the shell of the shellfish. A fixed caliper gauge is the linear distance between points of the caliper gauge or the diameter of a circular gauge.”



Shellfish Proposals

7. Define lawful pot escapement component fibers

- Currently, WAC 220-330-020 describes lawful pot escapement component fibers to include “...100 percent cotton or other natural fiber twine...”
- This proposal clarifies “other” acceptable fiber types as hemp, jute, or sisal (in addition to 100% cotton) twine.
- These fiber types exhibit degradation time similar to 100% cotton twine, sufficient to allow for expedient de-activation of derelict pot gear (Redekopp et al. 2006).



Shellfish Proposals

Technical/Clerical Change Proposals

- Fifteen technical changes submitted by WDFW staff;
- Changes do not affect, nor alter current fishing regulations;
- Primary purpose is to format and streamline WAC language, remove redundant language, reorganize chapters to improve structure.

Public Comments received through October 17th

- Public meeting comments: None
 - Number of attendees: Zero
- Written Comments: 2
- 1 (Support): Consideration should be given to allow a bonus retention of the eastern softshell clam similar to Atlantic salmon or other unwanted species
- 2 (Oppose): Commenter would like to see one definition for possession limit for shellfish and finfish and clarification on softshell crab and relic shell rules.

Recommendations

- Staff recommend Commission adoption of Forage fish, marine fish, and shellfish sport fishing rule simplification proposals, as presented (with modifications).
- Modifications from October 2019 shellfish proposals:
 1. Modify originally-proposed language in WAC 220-330-150 (Exemption for shellfish harvest on private tidelands).
 - Further improves clarity, consistency with RCW
 2. Oyster and clam seasons WACs (22-330-110, -140) have been withdrawn due to timing conflict with annual season-setting.
 - Clerical proposals from October 2019 will be included, unchanged as part of season-setting process.

Questions



Commission Decision

