

2023 Legislative Priorities



Hatchery routine maintenance under Shoreline Management Act permitting requirements

- Mirrors the current exception in place for WSDOT maintenance and repair
- WDFW will provide notice to DOE and local governments for all projects
- WDFW is considered the agency with expertise in prescribing how in-water work is conducted to protect fish

Recreational fishing licenses required for freshwater smelt, crawfish, and common carp

- Removes the current fishing license exemption for freshwater smelt, carp, and crawfish
- Allows for the regulation and monitoring of harvest of ESA listed smelt, better compliance with rules addressing crawfish retention, and make it easier to enforce overlapping fisheries involving carp and salmon
- Requiring a recreational license to fish for all species provides participants opportunity to understand rules and regulations in a consistent manner, leading to more orderly fisheries
- Fishing rules are provided for free wherever licenses are sold, online, and via smartphone app

Current licensing costs (standard resident aged 16-69 rates)

	Annual Freshwater	1-Day Combo	3-Day Combo
Freshwater Smelt, Carp, & Crawfish	\$29.50	\$11.35	\$19.05

Fish, wildlife, shellfish, and seaweed disease prevention authority for highway signage to voluntary check stations

- Gives the department authority to post signage for disease checkpoints and request voluntary compliance
- Creates a new chapter in RCW 77 to include fish, wildlife, shellfish, and seaweed infectious disease interdiction and control

Capitalizing an account to provide for shoreline restoration revolving funds

- A one-time capitalization of \$4.5 million into a dedicated account
- Low interest and easy repayment Shore-Loans to private property owners for their restoration of healthy shorelines and hard armor removal
- Shoreline armoring, the practice of constructing rigid structures to stabilize shorelines and manage erosion, is the dominant stressor to Puget Sound beaches¹
- Rising sea levels will create coastal squeeze, aggravating shoreline armoring by causing additional critical nearshore habitats to narrow or disappear where shoreline armoring blocks their landward migration

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¹Source: Residential Shoreline Loan Program Feasibility Study, https://www.eopugetsound.org/sites/default/files/features/resources/FINAL_ShoreFriendlyLoanProgram_Report_031921_0.pdf

2023-25 Budget Priorities



Operating Funding Needs

\$31M – Maintenance Level

Funding for cost increases outside of the Department's control, including: equipment maintenance, minimum wage, and attorney general costs.

\$97M – Policy Level, General Fund-State

Restoring Washington's Biodiversity – **\$47.6M**

Critical Infrastructure Maintenance – **\$3.5M**

Fish Passage Maintenance Team – **\$1.5M**

Expand Wildlife Conflict Response – **\$9.9M**

Wildlife Disease Surveillance – **\$644K**

Columbia River ESA Permitting – **\$1.4M**

Hatchery Investment Strategy – **\$5M**

Engaging Volunteers in Conservation – **\$2.3M**

Building a Climate-Resilient WDFW – **\$5.3M**

Building a Carbon-Neutral WDFW – **\$1.8M**

Body Cams and Public Records – **\$1.6M**

Emerging Fishery Implementation – **\$3.1M**

Manage Impacts to State Lands – **\$1.3M**

Geoduck Stock Assessment – **\$1.3M**

Emerging Toxics in Chinook and SRKW – **\$2.4M**

HPA Permitting System Replacement – **\$7.3M**

Legacy Systems Replacement – **\$1.4M**

Capital Funding Needs

The \$270 million capital budget proposed by the department for the 2023-25 biennium is designed to protect that investment and meet the needs of the state's growing human population. This request is driven by several factors: (1) repair and restoration backlog and (2) design and construction.

Wallace River Hatchery – **\$17.2M**

Toutle River Fish Collection Facility Upgrade – **\$17.3M**

Duckabush Estuary Habitat Restoration – **\$41M**

Spokane Hatchery Renovation – **\$38.5M**

Naselle Hatchery Renovation – **\$18.5M**

Kalama Falls Hatchery – **\$10.8M**

Fish and Wildlife Health and Biosecurity Facility – **\$7.8M**

Eells Spring Hatchery Renovation – **\$12.5M**

Region 1 Office – **\$9.7M**

Hoffstadt Hills Habitat Acquisition – **\$14.5M**

Deschutes Watershed Center – **\$12M**

Forest Health Hazard Fuel Reduction – **\$6M**

Minor Works Projects – **\$30M**

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Puget Sound has 400+ miles of shoreline armoring on private residential properties, causing harm to fish and wildlife habitat.

To support waterfront property owners and encourage restoration of healthy shorelines and hard armor removal, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) proposes a one-time capitalization of \$4.5 million into a dedicated account for low interest and easy repayment Shore-Loans. This would be a voluntary loan and the property owner would be held accountable for loan repayment over a defined loan period.

When private property owners are interested in solving hard armor failings with healthy shoreline alternatives or asked to consider removal of hard armor from their property, the up-front costs can be challenging. This reduced-cost financing would enable property owners to take pro-active steps, and incentivize people to choose *near term* healthy shoreline and armor alternatives rather than return to hard armor.

A Habitat Enhancement Loan Program [HELP] would provide a public benefit of reducing total [length](#) of shoreline armor, give residential property owners access to financing to implement their solutions with [Shore Friendly](#) best practices, and restore healthy beach habitat and ecological processes that are otherwise prevented with presence of hard armor. Offering low-cost Shore-Loans through HELP would complement the current suite of tools offered and draw more projects to completion.

Results of the feasibility [analysis](#) indicate that HELP would cover six to eight loans per year over 15-year loan periods. We expect demand to increase in the future as climate change and extreme storms impact wave action, high-water events, and drainage challenges. We expect this financing of healthy shoreline solutions to steer shoreline owners towards resiliency for their property and salmon habitat.

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Individuals who need to receive this information in an alternative format, language, or who need reasonable accommodations to participate in WDFW-sponsored public meetings or other activities may contact the Title VI/ADA Compliance Coordinator by phone at 360-902-2349, TTY (711), or email (Title6@dfw.wa.gov). For more information, see <https://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/requests-accommodation>.

Smelt, carp, and crawfish licensing



In 2022, over 16,000 people participated in the five-hour freshwater smelt fishery that was open on the Cowlitz River. The average catch was over the 10-pound daily limit and more than 70% of all persons cited by WDFW Enforcement did not have a fishing license.

Licenses are a gateway to knowing the rules and regulations for fisheries in Washington state. Part of the licensing process requires participants to read the annual fishing pamphlet and abide by the rules when fishing which helps maintain more orderly fisheries

The pamphlet provides educational resources on regulations and identifying species that impact fisheries and user experience. For example, the correct identification of native and non-native crawfish can affect harvest. There is no daily limit on non-native crawfish and they cannot be returned to the water, however, there is a daily limit on native crawfish.

Common carp do not currently require a recreational fishing license. Common carp may be taken when other fishery seasons are open. Enforcement officers have had trouble monitoring illegal salmon and steelhead fishing in certain locations – as the individual claims they were fishing for ‘carp’. Requiring a license will make that person aware of the rules for taking both carp and other fish.

This legislation would remove the current exemption from a fishing license for freshwater smelt, carp, and crawfish, in order to allow for regulation and monitoring of those species. Requiring a fishing license for these species would also further the Department’s goal of education and voluntary compliance with resource protection restrictions.

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Streamlining maintenance at hatcheries



Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) routine hatchery maintenance can be accomplished more quickly, at times of year that avoid negative impacts to fish, and at less expense to taxpayers.

Routine maintenance on existing hatcheries should not trigger permitting under the Shoreline Management Act (SMA).

WDFW at times will place fish traps or weirs into a river to recover returning fish, or remove sediment from existing in-water structures as part of necessary maintenance. Local governments may be hesitant to agree that such sediment removal is “routine” maintenance, and can be reviewed under an exemption of the SMA. This can trigger permitting under local regulations, which often definitionally cover dredging or placement of structures in water. When this happens, the permit is then approved by the local government or the Department of Ecology (DOE).

DOE consults with the local jurisdiction on whether to allow the activity, which typically results in approval. But gaining that approval takes time—potentially impacting hatchery populations—and uses unnecessary resources.

This proposal is similar to a current exception from SMA permitting for Department of Transportation (DOT) maintenance. We have added prior notice requirements for all maintenance projects to DOE and local governments.

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Fish, wildlife, shellfish, and seaweed diseases can spread across the United States. This can occur through natural movement or through transportation of fish, wildlife, shellfish, and seaweed by humans.

Currently, Washington is increasing efforts to prevent one wildlife disease, chronic wasting disease, from establishing in the state. Chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been detected as close as Idaho, but has not yet been confirmed in Washington State. Broadening the Department's authority to notify the public of checkpoints will allow for further biological sampling and monitoring of relevant species.

CWD is a fatal illness found in deer, elk, moose, and caribou. The disease is caused by mutated prions, which can contaminate the environment and be transmitted between animals through their feces, saliva, urine, and other bodily fluids. It can remain viable in soil and in the ground for years, so it is critical to avoid establishment in large areas.

Broader use of disease checkpoints and signage to indicate they are available would also allow Department staff to test for other diseases and monitor expected future climate related increases in frequencies or occurrences of disease.

This legislation creates the authority to sign disease checkpoints and requests voluntary compliance. It would create a new chapter in RCW 77 to include fish, wildlife, shellfish, and seaweed infectious disease interdiction and control.

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