



Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Oregon Coast Hatchery Programs

Frequently Asked Questions

What is NOAA Fisheries releasing?

NOAA Fisheries is releasing a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that assesses the impacts of various alternatives for operating salmon, steelhead, and trout hatcheries along the Oregon Coast. The DEIS takes a “big picture” look at how the hatchery programs affect the Oregon Coast region. The public has an opportunity to review the DEIS and provide comments to NOAA Fisheries during the 60-day public comment period, which closes on Tuesday, October 26, 2016.

How is this related to the Endangered Species Act and National Environmental Policy Act?

The operation of hatcheries along the Oregon Coast affects Oregon Coast coho salmon, which are listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. NOAA Fisheries has worked with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife over many years to develop Hatchery and Genetics Management Plans (HGMPs) for these hatcheries that protect Oregon Coast coho, consistent with the Endangered Species Act. The National Environmental Policy Act, meanwhile, requires that NOAA Fisheries assess the effects of approving the HGMPs, and consider other alternatives, which is the purpose of the DEIS.

What are Hatchery and Genetics Management Plans?

Hatchery and Genetics Management Plans describe how a hatchery facility and program will be operated and managed to provide for the conservation and recovery of ESA-listed species such as Oregon Coast coho. HGMPs outline all details of hatchery programs, including the number of hatchery fish being released, the locations of release, and the hatchery facilities being used to collect adults, spawn broodstock, and rear juveniles. There are HGMPs for coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and trout along the Oregon Coast.

What does this draft Environmental Impact Statement evaluate?

In this DEIS, NOAA Fisheries evaluated the effects of a series of different alternatives for operating fish hatcheries along the Oregon Coast, including:

- Continuation of current operations, without the new HGMPs
- Operation according to the new HGMPs developed by ODFW and reviewed by NOAA Fisheries
- A 50 percent reduction in hatchery fish production
- Elimination of all hatchery production along the Oregon Coast

The DEIS discloses potential effects, both positive and negative, from operation of hatcheries along the Oregon Coast under the different alternatives. For example, the DEIS describes:

- How the operation of the hatcheries affects water quantity and quality in adjacent streams and rivers
- How releases of hatchery fish affect wild salmon and steelhead and their habitats
- The economic benefits of having hatchery fish available for recreational and commercial fisheries along the Oregon Coast

How do you define a hatchery facility, hatchery program, and a Hatchery and Genetics Management Plan?

Hatchery facilities are defined as the buildings, raceways, and physical structures required for the production of hatchery fish (for example, Rock Creek Hatchery). *Hatchery programs* are programs for a specific group of fish (for example, the spring Chinook program at Rock Creek Hatchery). A hatchery facility may support one or more hatchery programs (for example, Rock Creek Hatchery raises spring Chinook, summer steelhead, and winter steelhead). A *Hatchery and Genetics Management Plan*, or *HGMP*, is a written document that describes how a hatchery program for a particular species is implemented consistent with the recovery of listed species.

How do the Hatchery and Genetics Management Plans relate to recovery of Oregon Coast coho salmon?

NOAA Fisheries' responsibility on the Oregon Coast is to recover coho salmon to a point where these fish no longer need Federal protection under the ESA. NOAA Fisheries has developed a proposed recovery plan that provides a roadmap of actions for the recovery of Oregon Coast coho salmon, including specific actions to reduce the impacts of hatcheries on the listed species. ODFW has worked with NOAA Fisheries to develop HGMPs that are consistent with recovery goals. Oregon Coast coho recovery plan documents are available at:

http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/protected_species/salmon_steelhead/recovery_planning_and_implementation/oregon_coast/oregon_coast_recovery_plan.html

Where can I access the draft Environmental Impact Statement and other related information on this project?

The DEIS, Oregon Coast HGMPs, and other relevant information for the project can be found on the NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region website at:

http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/hatcheries/orcoast/orcoast_deis_comment.html

How can I submit comments to NOAA Fisheries on this draft Environmental Impact Statement?

The public may submit comments on the DEIS anytime during the 60-day comment period ending Tuesday, October 25, 2016. Electronic or written comments on the DEIS may be submitted by mail, fax, or e-mail to:

NMFS, Oregon Coast Hatchery DEIS
2900 NW Stewart Parkway
Roseburg, Oregon 97471
Fax: (541) 957-3386
Email: OregonCoastHatcheryEIS.wcr@noaa.gov

When will NOAA Fisheries make a decision on whether or not to approve the Oregon Coast HGMPs?

NOAA Fisheries anticipates making a decision on the Oregon Coast HGMPs by the spring of 2017. This decision package will include: (1) an ESA determination, and (2) a final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD), as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).