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NOAA:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Science Panel Report: THE EFFECTS OF SALMON FISHERIES ON SOUTHERN RESIDENT KILLER WHALES.

I agree with all of the Science Panel's conclusions and recommendations. Further research should be conducted to ascertain which Chinook salmon stocks are contributing to the SRKW, particularly during the summer-fall period in Salish Sea and concentrate conservation initiatives toward those stocks.

The Science Panel points out that hatchery Chinook stocks, upon which the recreational fishery depends, are probably not major contributors to SRKW prey due to the younger age at maturation and smaller size at adult return. I would encourage the continuation and expansion of research into hatchery rearing and release strategies that delay age at maturation and percent production of jack or "mini-jack" returns of hatchery Chinook salmon. I refer you to recent work from the Cle Elum hatchery by Don Larsen, Brian Beckman and Walt Dickhoff with NOAA Fisheries and others:

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/hatchery/docs/Larsen.pdf>

Recreational, commercial and SRKW would all benefit from an increase in larger individual returning adult Chinook salmon.

Sincerely,

Jeff June

-- Jeffrey A. June
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