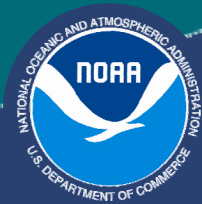


Northwest Salmon & Steelhead Recovery Planning & Implementation



Puget Sound Recovery Domain

Listed Species:

Puget Sound Chinook Salmon

Puget Sound Chinook ESU Recovery Plan Summary

Puget Sound Chinook salmon are an iconic symbol of the Pacific Northwest. However, with their listing as *threatened* under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1999, came the reality that this species was not only in jeopardy of extinction, but the region was at risk of losing a cultural emblem. The information that follows is a status report of recovery plan development and implementation for this species.

The ESA requires the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to develop a recovery plan that if implemented will bring Puget Sound Chinook to a viable condition. There are 22 extant populations within the Puget Sound Chinook salmon Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU). Based on historical estimates, it is believed that 15 Chinook populations within the ESU are now extinct. The listing of Puget Sound Chinook prompted local partnerships, in particular the *Shared Strategy for Puget Sound*, to take action to preserve and restore Puget Sound Chinook to healthy levels. The collaborative efforts of this partnership resulted in a plan that is based on both local and regional participation, including active participation by stakeholders. The plan is designed to strike appropriate balance between the needs of economic prosperity and regional growth, and a healthy environment that sustains abundant, diverse, and productive natural-origin Chinook salmon populations.

The long-term goal of the recovery plan is to achieve self-sustaining levels of Puget Sound Chinook. The Puget Sound Technical Recovery Team (TRT), scientists appointed by NMFS, reviewed the local watershed chapters and provided guidance on priority recovery actions for each local area. The TRT concluded that Puget Sound Chinook will have a negligible risk of extinction if: 1) All watersheds improve from current conditions, resulting in improving status for the fish; 2) At least two to four Chinook populations in each of five bio-geographical regions of Puget Sound attain a low risk status over the long-term; and 3) At least one or more populations from major diversity groups historically present in each of the five Puget Sound regions attain a low risk status.

This plan focuses on the needs of both fish and people. It encompasses fourteen local watershed planning areas across Puget Sound with a tailored approach for recovery based on local characteristics and conditions. Although this plan focuses on Chinook recovery, it is done with the whole ecosystem in mind, including the biological processes that create a healthy place for the salmon. Following technical review by the TRT, NMFS released the plan for public review and comment. NMFS prepared a federal Supplement to the plan and approved it in January of 2007. It did so with the understanding that this plan is based on years of scientific observation, testing of hypotheses, multiple lines of evidence, monitoring and adaptive management. The policy and technical elements in this plan incorporate current scientific knowledge about how to recover salmon.



Puget Sound Chinook Salmon

In 2008, the Shared Strategy transferred responsibility for salmon recovery plan implementation to a new state agency, the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP). NMFS expanded the TRT to include scientists with expertise in salmon recovery plan implementation. This new scientific body is called the Recovery Implementation Technical Team. (RITT). NMFS is working closely with the RITT, PSP leadership, local groups, tribal, state and federal partners to implement the Puget Sound Chinook Recovery Plan.

For More Information

For more information please contact NOAA Fisheries' Puget Sound Recovery Coordinator at:

Elizabeth Babcock 206-526-4505,
Elizabeth.Babcock@noaa.gov