



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
West Coast Region
650 Capitol Mall Suite 5-100
Sacramento, California 95814

May 9, 2018

Refer to NMFS No: F/WCR-2018-9134

Mr. Joseph Stohr, Director
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, Washington 98501

Honorable Lorraine Loomis, Chair
Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
6730 Martin Way East
Olympia, Washington 98516

Dear Chair Loomis and Director Stohr:

This letter transmits the biological opinion issued under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) essential fish habitat (EFH) consultation prepared by NOAA Fisheries on the co-managers' fishery plan for Puget Sound salmon and steelhead fisheries, including U.S. Fraser Panel fisheries occurring from May 8, 2018 through April 30, 2019. This biological opinion evaluates the impacts of the fisheries on the Puget Sound Chinook Salmon Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU), the Puget Sound Steelhead Distinct Population Segment (DPS), the Southern Resident killer whale DPS and the two Puget Sound/Georgia Basin rockfish DPS's listed under the ESA. Other listed species occurring in the action area are either covered under existing, long-term ESA opinions or 4(d) determinations, or NMFS anticipates the proposed actions are not likely to affect the species. The opinion expires April 30, 2019.

NOAA Fisheries concluded in the biological opinion that the fisheries, if conducted consistent with the terms of the incidental take statement, are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the listed species that are subject of the opinion, or to destroy or to adversely modify critical habitat. Our conclusion for Puget Sound Chinook salmon is predicated in part on the co-managers' use of an inseason update and broodstock management to assure meeting an escapement of 1,200 natural-origin spawning Chinook in the Green River. This action is included as one of several terms and conditions in the Incidental Take Statement of the biological opinion (section 2.9.2.1). The Incidental Take Statement includes non-discretionary terms and conditions that must be applied to the proposed fisheries to provide an exemption from the prohibited acts outlined in section 9 of the ESA. The biological opinion also includes discretionary Conservation Recommendations that are intended to help comply with the affirmative conservation responsibilities of section 7(a)(1) of the ESA. NMFS also concluded that the programs would adversely affect EFH for groundfish and provided several Conservation Recommendations that would avoid or minimize those adverse effects.

As prescribed by ESA section 7 regulations, consultation on the programs administered by the BIA involving these Puget Sound salmon and steelhead fisheries must be re-initiated if:

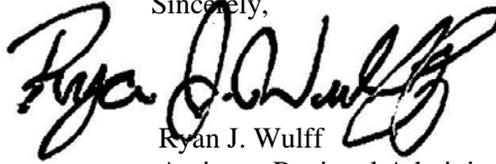
- (1) the amount or extent of taking specified in the Incidental Take Statement is exceeded for any of the actions identified in the biological opinion;



- (2) new information reveals effects of these actions that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not previously considered;
- (3) any of the identified actions are subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect to the listed species that was not considered in the biological opinion; or
- (4) a new species is listed or critical habitat designated that may be affected by the identified actions.

Please let Susan Bishop (206.526.4587, susan.bishop@noaa.gov) know if you have any questions. I look forward to our continued collaboration.

Sincerely,



Ryan J. Wulff
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Sustainable Fisheries

cc: Ron Warren, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
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