

RCW 77.95.290 Chinook and coho salmon—External marking of hatchery-produced fish—Program. The department shall mark appropriate coho salmon that are released from department operated hatcheries and rearing ponds in such a manner that the fish are externally recognizable as hatchery origin salmon by fishers for the purpose of maximized catch while sustaining wild and hatchery reproduction.

The department shall mark all appropriate chinook salmon targeted for contribution to the Washington catch that are released from department operated hatcheries and rearing ponds in such a manner that the fish are externally recognizable as hatchery origin salmon by fishers.

The goal of the marking program is: (1) The annual marking by June 30, 1997, of all appropriate hatchery origin coho salmon produced by the department with marking to begin with the 1994 Puget Sound coho brood; and (2) the annual marking by June 30, 1999, of all appropriate hatchery origin chinook salmon produced by the department with marking to begin with the 1998 chinook brood. The department may experiment with different methods for marking hatchery salmon with the primary objective of maximum survival of hatchery marked fish, maximum contribution to fisheries, and minimum cost consistent with the other goals.

The department shall coordinate with other entities that are producing hatchery chinook and coho salmon for release into public waters to enable the broadest application of the marking program to all hatchery produced chinook and coho salmon. The department shall work with the treaty Indian tribes in order to reach mutual agreement on the implementation of the mass marking program. The ultimate goal of the program is the coast-wide marking of appropriate hatchery origin chinook and coho salmon, and the protection of all wild chinook and coho salmon, where appropriate. [1999 c 372 § 15; 1998 c 250 § 2; 1995 c 372 § 2. Formerly RCW 75.08.510.]

Findings—Intent—1998 c 250: "The legislature finds that mass marking of hatchery-raised salmon is an effective tool for implementing selective salmon fisheries in this state. Mass marking of coho salmon is currently underway and holds great promise for maintaining both recreational and commercial fishing opportunities while protecting wild stocks. In view of the anticipated listing of Puget Sound chinook salmon as endangered under the federal endangered species act, the legislature finds that it is essential to expeditiously proceed with implementing a mass marking program for chinook salmon in Puget Sound and elsewhere in the state.

Through a cooperative effort by state and federal agencies and private enterprise, appropriate technologies have been developed for marking chinook salmon. It is the intent of the legislature to use these newly developed tools to implement chinook salmon mass marking beginning in April 1999." [1998 c 250 § 1.]