
SENATE BILL 6241

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Senators Braun, Boehnke, Dozier, Hasegawa, Wagoner, and Wellman

Read first time 01/20/26. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources.

1 AN ACT Relating to enhancing steelhead populations with wild
2 broodstock conservation programs; adding a new section to chapter
3 77.105 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that steelhead trout
6 are one of the anadromous fish populations in Washington state that
7 are struggling from weak returns, habitat reduction, and predator
8 pressure. The legislature further finds that salmon and steelhead
9 hatchery production and capacity are being reduced. The legislature
10 further finds that on the other side of the Columbia river, steelhead
11 fisheries in Oregon are stabilizing and ocean returns are increasing
12 in part due to wild broodstock conservation programs. Therefore, the
13 legislature finds that the department of fish and wildlife shall
14 pursue similar programs in Washington to stabilize steelhead
15 populations, implement the goals set forth in chapter 77.110 RCW, and
16 manage steelhead trout in a way to encourage and increase recovery of
17 the steelhead population.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 77.105
19 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) In every WRIA as defined in RCW 90.82.020 with a native
2 steelhead population, the department must implement a steelhead wild
3 broodstock conservation program in which volunteers deliver live
4 broodstock to a hatchery or rearing facility. The department then
5 shall rear the wild fish for release at the appropriate time.

6 (2) The wild broodstock conservation program shall derive
7 broodstock from the wild population in each WRIA. The program shall
8 identify effective population size targets and other strategies to
9 reduce risk of inbreeding depression, genetic drift, and
10 domestication for broodstocks.

11 (3) The department shall conduct rule making to develop hatchery
12 management plans that utilize wild broodstock to sustain wild
13 populations in each WRIA that contains a native population of
14 steelhead trout. The department shall implement rules to:

15 (a) Establish fish health requirements;

16 (b) Require wild broodstock for the conservation program;

17 (c) Establish effective population size targets;

18 (d) Identify strategies to reduce risk of inbreeding depression,
19 genetic drift, and domestication;

20 (e) Establish methods to minimize stress and maximize survival of
21 fish to spawning; and

22 (f) Establish policies for disposition of kelts to encourage
23 iteroparity, spawning protocols, incubation protocols, rearing
24 protocols, release protocols, and predator control.

25 (4) The wild broodstock conservation program must have clear
26 management objectives, including species conservation, watershed
27 health, and fisheries supply.

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