

WSR 24-11-096
EMERGENCY RULES
DEPARTMENT OF
FISH AND WILDLIFE

[Order 24-72—Filed May 16, 2024, 3:54 p.m., effective May 16, 2024, 3:54 p.m.]

Effective Date of Rule: Immediately upon filing.

Purpose: This emergency rule will allow nontreaty commercial fishing opportunities in the Columbia River while protecting fish listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This rule implements federal court orders governing Washington's relationship with treaty Indian tribes, federal law governing Washington's relationship with Oregon, and Washington fish and wildlife commission policy guidance for Columbia River fisheries.

Citation of Rules Affected by this Order: Repealing WAC 220-358-03000B; and amending WAC 220-358-030.

Statutory Authority for Adoption: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.020, 77.12.045, and 77.12.047.

Under RCW 34.05.350 the agency for good cause finds that immediate adoption, amendment, or repeal of a rule is necessary for the preservation of the public health, safety, or general welfare, and that observing the time requirements of notice and opportunity to comment upon adoption of a permanent rule would be contrary to the public interest.

Reasons for this Finding: The *U.S. v. Oregon* technical advisory committee met most recently on Monday, May 13 to review the upriver spring Chinook return and upgraded the forecast to 122,400 adults at the Columbia River mouth compared to the preseason forecast of 121,000 adults. Given the upriver spring Chinook run size projection, allocation sharing and allowable commercial gear policy guidance, and expected balance due to select area commercial fisheries not fully utilizing the commercial share, a mainstem nontreaty tangle net commercial fishery was adopted at the May 15, 2024, compact hearing. The fishery is consistent with the *U.S. v. Oregon* management agreement and the associated biological opinion. Conforms Washington state rules with Oregon state rules. Regulations are also consistent with compact actions of February 13, and April 4, 2024. The general public welfare is protected with the immediate opening of nontreaty commercial fisheries. This harvest opportunity allows for public access to the resource as well as the maintenance of sustainable fish populations. There is insufficient time to promulgate permanent rules.

Washington and Oregon jointly regulate Columbia River fisheries under the congressionally ratified Columbia River Compact. Four Indian tribes have treaty fishing rights in the Columbia River. The treaties preempt state regulations that fail to allow the tribes an opportunity to take a fair share of the available fish, and the states must manage other fisheries accordingly. *Sohappy v. Smith*, 302 F. Supp. 899 (D. Or. 1969). A court order sets the current parameters. *United States v. Oregon*, Civil No. 68-513-KI (D. Or.), Order Adopting 2018-2027 *United States v. Oregon* Management Agreement (February 26, 2018) (Doc. No. 2607-1). Some salmon and steelhead stocks in the Columbia River are listed as threatened or endangered under ESA. On February 23, 2018, the National Marine Fisheries Service issued a biological opinion under 16 U.S.C. § 1536 that allows for some incidental take of these species in the fisheries as described in the 2018-2027 *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement.

Some Columbia River Basin salmon and steelhead stocks are listed as threatened or endangered under ESA. The Washington and Oregon fish and wildlife commissions have developed policies to guide the implementation of such biological opinions in the states' regulation of nontreaty fisheries.

Columbia River nontreaty fisheries are monitored very closely to ensure compliance with federal court orders, ESA, and commission guidelines. Because conditions change rapidly, the fisheries are managed almost exclusively by emergency rule. Representatives from the Washington (WDFW) and Oregon (ODFW) departments of fish and wildlife convene public hearings and take public testimony when considering proposals for new emergency rules. WDFW and ODFW then adopt regulations reflecting agreements reached.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Comply with Federal Statute: New 1, Amended 0, Repealed 1; Federal Rules or Standards: New 1, Amended 0, Repealed 1; or Recently Enacted State Statutes: New 1, Amended 0, Repealed 1.

Number of Sections Adopted at the Request of a Nongovernmental Entity: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted on the Agency's own Initiative: New 1, Amended 0, Repealed 1.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Clarify, Streamline, or Reform Agency Procedures: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted using Negotiated Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Pilot Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Other Alternative Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Date Adopted: May 16, 2024.

Kelly Susewind
Director

NEW SECTION

WAC 220-358-03000C Columbia River seasons below Bonneville.

Notwithstanding the provisions of WAC 220-358-030, WAC 220-358-040, and WAC 220-335-050, it is unlawful for a person to take or possess salmon, sturgeon, and shad for commercial purposes from Columbia River Salmon Management and Catch Reporting Areas 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E and Select Areas, except during the times and conditions listed below:

(1) Mainstem Columbia River:

Open_Dates	Open_Days	Open_Time	Open_Duration
May 20	Monday	7:00 am - 7:00 pm	12 hours

(a) **Open Area:** SMCRA 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E (zones 1-5).

(b) **Sanctuaries:** Grays River, Elochoman-B, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-B, Lewis-B, Sandy and Washougal rivers.

(c) **Allowable Possession:** Adipose fin-clipped (hatchery) Chinook salmon, and shad. A maximum of twenty-five (25) adult adipose fin-clipped Chinook may be possessed or sold by each participating vessel. The first twenty-five (25) adult hatchery fish must be retained and no additional drifts may be conducted once the Chinook limit has been retained. Jacks (Chinook less than 24-inches in total length) do not count against the adult landing limit.

(d) **Gear:** Drift nets only. 4 1/4" maximum mesh size (tangle net). Single-wall multi-filament net only. Monofilament tangle nets are not allowed. Mesh size is determined by placing three consecutive meshes under hand tension, and the measurement is taken from the inside of one vertical knot to the inside of the opposite vertical knot of the center mesh. Hand tension means sufficient linear tension to draw opposing knots of meshes into contact. Net length not to exceed 150 fathoms. There are no restrictions on the use of slackers or stringers to slacken the net vertically. There are no restrictions on the hang ratio. The hang ratio is used to horizontally add slack to the net and is determined by the length of the web per length of the corkline.

(e) **Net length** may be increased from 150 to 175 fathoms for nets constructed with a steelhead excluder panel, weedlines, or droppers. An optional use of a steelhead excluder panel of mesh may be hung between the corkline and the 4 1/4" maximum mesh size tangle net. The excluder panel web must be a minimum mesh size of 12" stretched measure when taut under hand tension. Monofilament mesh is allowed for the excluder panel only. The excluder panel must be a minimum of five feet in depth and must not exceed ten feet in depth as measured from the corkline to the upper margin of the tangle net mesh as the net hangs naturally from a taut corkline. Weedlines or droppers (bobber type) may be used in place of the steelhead excluder panel. A weedline-type excluder means the net is suspended below the corkline by lines of no less than five feet in length between the corkline and the upper margin of the tangle net. A dropper-type excluder means the entire net is suspended below the surface of the water by lines of no less than five feet in length extending from individual surface floats to a submersed corkline. The corkline cannot be capable of floating the net in its entirety (including the leadline) independent of the attached floats. Weedlines or droppers must extend a minimum of five feet above the 4 1/4" maximum mesh size tangle net. Tangle nets constructed with a steelhead excluder panel, weedlines, or droppers must have two red corks at each end of the net, as well as the red corks as required under subsection (1)(f)(ii) of this section.

(f) **Miscellaneous Regulations:**

(i) **Soak times** are defined as the time elapsed from when the first of the web is deployed into the water until the web is fully retrieved from the water, must not exceed 45 minutes.

(ii) **Red corks** are required at 25-fathom intervals, and red corks must be in contrast to the corks used in the remainder of the net.

(iii) **Recovery Box:** Each boat will be required to have on board two operable recovery boxes or one box with two chambers. Each chamber of the recovery box(es) must include an operating water pumping system capable of delivering a minimum flow of 16 gallons per minute, not to exceed 20 gallons per minute of freshwater per chamber. Each box and chamber and associated pump shall be operating during any time that the net is being retrieved or picked; pumps must continue to run until the net is fully retrieved and completely on board the vessel. Pumps shall continue to run whenever a fish is in the recovery box. Each chamber of the recovery box must meet the following dimensions as measured from within the box: the inside length measurement must be at or within 39 1/2 inches to 48 inches; the inside width measurements must be at or within 8 to 10 inches; and the inside height measurement must be at or within 14 to 16 inches.

Each chamber of the recovery box must include a water inlet hole between 3/4 inch and 1 inch in diameter, centered horizontally across the door or end wall of the chamber and 1 3/4 inches from the floor of

the chamber. Each chamber of the recovery box must include a water outlet hole that is a least 1 1/2 inches in diameter located on either the same or opposite end as the inlet. The center of the outlet hole must be located a minimum of 12 inches above the floor of the box or chamber.

The fisher must demonstrate to WDFW and ODFW employees, fish and wildlife enforcement officers, or other peace officers, upon request, that the pumping system is delivering the proper volume of fresh river water into each chamber.

All sturgeon, non-adipose fin-clipped salmon, and steelhead must be released immediately to the river with care and with the least possible injury to the fish, or placed into an operating recovery box.

Any non-legal salmonid that is bleeding or lethargic must be placed in the recovery box prior to being released. All fish placed in recovery boxes must be released to the river prior to landing or docking.

(iv) **Observer program:** As a condition of fishing, owners or operators of commercial fishing vessels must cooperate with department observers or observers collecting data for the department, when notified by the observer of his or her intent to board the commercial vessel for observation and sampling during the fishery. In addition, cooperation with department personal prior to a fishing period is expected.

(v) **Live Capture workshop:** Only licensed Columbia River commercial fishers that have completed the required state-sponsored workshop concerning live-capture commercial fishing techniques may participate in this fishery. At least one fisher on each boat must have live-capture certification.

(2) Select Areas:

(a) Tongue Point and South Channel areas:

Open Dates	Open Days	Open Time	Open Duration
Immediately - Jun 14	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu (nights)	7:00 pm - 7:00 am	17 nights
Jun 17 - Jul 19	Mon, Wed, Thu (nights)	7:00 pm - 7:00 am	15 nights

(i) **Open Area definitions:** Immediately, through June 14, 2024:

(A) **Tongue Point:** Waters of the Columbia River bounded by a line from the end of the southern-most pier (#1) at the Tongue Point Job Corps facility projecting in a straight line through flashing red USCG light "6" to the shore of Mott Island, a line from a regulatory marker at the southeast end of Mott Island northeasterly to a regulatory marker on the northwest shore of Lois Island, and a line from a regulatory marker located on the Oregon shore approximately 300 yards northwest of the railroad bridge crossing the John Day River projecting easterly to a regulatory marker on the southwest shore of Lois Island. If the marker on the Oregon shore is not in place, the upper boundary is defined by a line projecting easterly from a point (46°10'57.7"N latitude 123°44'35.3"W longitude) on the Oregon shore approximately 300 yards northwest of the railroad bridge crossing the John Day River to a regulatory marker on the southwest shore of Lois Island.

(B) **South Channel:** Defined as waters of the Columbia River bounded by a line from a regulatory marker on the Oregon shore at John Day Point projecting northeasterly to a regulatory marker on the southwest shore of Lois Island, and a line from a regulatory marker on Settler Point projecting northwesterly to the flashing red USCG light "10" then projecting westerly to the eastern tip of Burnside Island.

(ii) **Open Area definitions:** June 17 through July 19, 2024:

(A) **Tongue Point:** Area as described in OAR 635-042-0170 (1)(a) and WAC 220-301-010 (11)(c). If the marker on the eastern shore of Tongue Point is not in place, the downstream boundary is defined by a line projecting from a point (46°12'31.1"N latitude 123°45'34.0"W longitude) on the eastern shore of Tongue Point to the flashing green USCG light "3" on the rock jetty at the northwest tip of Mott Island.

(B) **South Channel:** Defined as waters of the Columbia River bounded by a line from a regulatory marker on the Oregon shore at John Day Point projecting northeasterly to a regulatory marker on the southwest shore of Lois Island, and a line from a regulatory marker on Settler Point projecting northwesterly to the flashing red USCG light "10" then projecting westerly to the eastern tip of Burnside Island.

(iii) **Gear:** Gillnets:

(A) Immediately, through July 19, 2024: 9 3/4-inch maximum mesh size.

(B) The maximum net length is 1,500 feet (250 fathoms).

(C) In the Tongue Point Area, the lead line weight may not exceed two pounds per any one fathom.

(D) In the South Channel Area, there is no lead line weight limit and attachment of additional weight and anchors directly to the lead line is permitted.

(b) **Blind Slough and Knappa Slough areas:**

Open Dates	Open Days	Open Time	Open Duration
Immediately - Jun 14	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu (nights)	7:00 pm - 7:00 am	17 nights
Jun 17 - Jul 19	Mon, Wed, Thu (nights)	7:00 pm - 7:00 am	15 nights

(i) **Open Area definitions:** Immediately through July 19, 2024:

(A) **Blind Slough:** Area is defined as waters of Blind Slough and Gnat Creek from a north-south line represented by regulatory markers at the mouth of Blind Slough upstream to a regulatory marker in Gnat Creek located approximately 0.5 miles southeasterly (upstream) of the Barendse Road Bridge.

(B) **Knappa Slough:** Area is defined as waters of Knappa Slough, Calendar Slough, and Big Creek Slough bounded to the north (upstream) by a line projecting from a regulatory marker on the eastern shore of Karlson Island to the northernmost regulatory marker at the mouth of Blind Slough and bounded to the west (downstream) by a line projecting southerly from a regulatory marker on the southwestern tip of Karlson Island through regulatory markers on the western tips of Minaker Island to a marker on the Oregon shore.

The waters of Knappa Slough within a 100-foot radius of the railroad bridge crossing Big Creek are closed.

(ii) **Gear:** Gillnets:

(A) Immediately through Jul 19, 2024: 9 3/4-inch maximum mesh size.

(B) The maximum net length is 600 feet (100 fathoms).

(C) There is no lead line weight limit and attachment of additional weight or anchors directly to the lead line is permitted.

(iii) **Miscellaneous:** Permanent transportation rules in effect.

(c) **Deep River area:**

Open Dates	Open Days	Open Time	Open Duration
Immediately - Jun 14	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu (nights)	7:00 pm - 9:00 am	17 nights

(i) **Open Area:** From the mouth of Deep River defined as a line from USCG navigation marker #16 southwest to a marker on the Washington shore, upstream to the Highway 4 Bridge.

(ii) **Gear:** Gillnets:

(A) Immediately through June 14, 2024: 9 3/4-inch maximum mesh size.

(B) The maximum net length is 600 feet (100 fathoms).

(C) There is no lead line weight limit and attachment of additional weight or anchors directly to the lead line is permitted.

(D) Nets may not fully cross navigation channel. It is unlawful to operate in any river, stream, or channel any net longer than three-fourths the width of the stream (WAC 220-354-010(1)). It shall be unlawful in any area to use, operate, or carry aboard a commercial fishing vessel a licensed net or combination of nets, whether fishing singly or separately, in excess of the maximum lawful size or length prescribed for a single net in that area, except as otherwise provided by department rule (WAC 220-353-060(1)).

(iii) **Miscellaneous:**

(A) Transportation or possession of fish outside the fishing area (except to the sampling station) is unlawful until WDFW staff has biologically sampled individual catches. After sampling, fishers will be issued a transportation permit by WDFW staff.

(B) Immediately through June 14, 2024: fishers are required to call 360-798-8098 to confirm the place and time of sampling.

(d) **Allowable Sales:** Salmon (except Chum) and shad. Retention and sales of non-adipose fin-clipped Chinook from ongoing Select Area commercial fisheries is prohibited from 7:00 am Monday May 20 through 12:00 pm (noon) Tuesday May 21, 2024.

(e) **24-hour quick reporting** is in effect for Washington buyers (WAC 220-352-315). Permanent transportation rules in effect. Oregon buyers are required to submit fish receiving tickets electronically pursuant to OAR 635-006-0210. Unique catch reporting codes have been established for Blind Slough and Knappa Slough to facilitate separation of landings and sampling for winter/spring fisheries. Blind Slough and Knappa Slough have unique catch reporting codes to facilitate separation of landings and sampling for winter/spring fisheries.

(f) **Multi-Net Rule:** Nets not specifically authorized for use in these areas may be onboard a vessel if properly stored. A properly stored net is defined as a net on a drum that is fully covered by a tarp (canvas or plastic) and bound with a minimum of ten revolutions of rope with a diameter of 3/8 (0.375) inches or greater (WAC 220-358-030(2)).

(g) **Lighted Buoys:** Nets that are fished at any time between official sunset and official sunrise must have lighted buoys on both ends of the net unless the net is attached to the boat. If the net is attached to the boat, then one lighted buoy on the opposite end of the net from the boat is required.

Reviser's note: The typographical error in the above section occurred in the copy filed by the agency and appears in the Register pursuant to the requirements of RCW 34.08.040.

REPEALER

The following section of the Washington Administrative Code is repealed:

WAC 220-358-03000B Columbia River seasons below
Bonneville. (24-50)