

WSR 25-06-031
EMERGENCY RULES
DEPARTMENT OF
FISH AND WILDLIFE

[Order 25-30—Filed February 25, 2025, 4:58 p.m., effective February 26, 2025]

Effective Date of Rule: February 26, 2025.

Purpose: The purpose of this rule making is to provide for treaty Indian fishing opportunity in the Columbia River while protecting salmon listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This rule making implements federal court orders governing Washington's relationship with treaty Indian tribes and federal law governing Washington's relationship with Oregon.

Citation of Rules Affected by this Order: Repealing WAC 220-359-02000P; and amending WAC 220-359-020.

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

Other Authority: *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). *Northwest Gillnetters Ass'n v. Sandison*, 95 Wn.2d 638, 628 P.2d 800 (1981); Washington fish and wildlife commission policies concerning Columbia River fisheries; 40 Stat. 515 (Columbia River compact).

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: This rule sets treaty commercial sales for nontreaty buyers in the 2025 Columbia River mainstem Zone 6 winter sturgeon setline fisheries above Bonneville Dam. This rule is consistent with actions of the Columbia River compact on January 8, January 16, January 30, February 10, and February 25, 2025. Conforms state rules with tribal rules. The general public welfare is protected with the immediate opening of nontreaty buyers purchasing fish from treaty fisheries. This harvest opportunity allows for the tribal use and public access to the resource as well as the maintenance of sustainable fish populations. There is insufficient time to adopt permanent regulations.

The Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla, and Nez Perce Indian tribes have treaty fishing rights in the Columbia River and inherent sovereign authority to regulate their fisheries. Washington and Oregon also have some authority to regulate fishing by treaty Indians in the Columbia River, authority that the states exercise jointly under the congressionally ratified Columbia River compact. *Sohappy v. Smith*, 302 F. Supp. 899 (D. Or. 1969). The tribes and the states adopt parallel regulations for treaty Indian fisheries under the supervision of the federal courts. 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.

Columbia River fisheries are monitored very closely to ensure consistency with court orders and ESA guidelines. Because conditions change rapidly, the fisheries are managed almost exclusively by emergency rule. As required by court order, the Washington (WDFW) and Oregon (ODFW) departments of fish and wildlife convene public hearings and invite tribal participation when considering proposals for new emergency rules affecting treaty fishing rights. *Sohappy*, 302 F. Supp. at 912. 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: February 25, 2025.

Kelly Susewind
Director

NEW SECTION

WAC 220-359-02000Q Columbia River salmon seasons above Bonneville Dam. Notwithstanding the provisions of WAC 220-359-010, WAC 220-359-020, WAC 220-359-030, and WAC 220-359-090, effective February 26 through March 21, 2025, it is unlawful for a person to take or possess salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, shad, carp, catfish, walleye, bass, or yellow perch taken for commercial purposes in Columbia River Salmon Management and Catch Reporting Areas (SMRCA) 1F, 1G, and 1H. However, those individuals possessing treaty fishing rights under the Yakima, Warm Springs, Umatilla, and Nez Perce treaties may fish for salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, shad, carp, catfish, walleye, bass, or yellow perch under the following provisions:

(1) Open Areas: SMCRA 1F (Bonneville Pool)

(a) Season: 6 AM Wednesday, February 26, 2025, until 6 PM Thursday, February 27, 2025.

(b) Gear: Setline gear only.

(c) Allowable sales: Sturgeon from 38 to 54 inches fork length caught in Bonneville Pool, may be sold or kept for subsistence purposes.

(d) Standard river mouth and dam sanctuary closures remain in place for this gear.

(2) Open Areas: SMCRA 1G (The Dalles Pool)

(a) Season: 6AM Monday, March 3, 2025, until 6 PM Tuesday, March 4, 2025.

(b) Gear: Setline gear only.

(c) Allowable sales: Sturgeon from 43 to 54 inches fork length caught in The Dalles Pool, may be sold or kept for subsistence purposes.

(d) Standard river mouth and dam sanctuary closures remain in place for this gear.

(3) Open Areas: SMCRA 1F, 1G, 1H (Zone 6)

(a) Season: Immediately, until 6 PM Friday, March 21, 2025.

(b) Gear: Hoop nets/bag nets, dip nets, and rod and reel with hook and line.

(c) Allowable sales: Sturgeon from 38 to 54 inches fork length in the Bonneville Pool and from 43 to 54 inches fork length in The Dalles and John Day pools may be kept for subsistence purposes. Sturgeon within the legal-size limits and caught in the platform and hook and line fishery may only be sold if caught during the open period and open Pool of an open setline fishery. Fish landed during the open periods are allowed to be sold after the period concludes.

(d) Standard river mouth and dam sanctuary closures remain in place for this gear.

(4) 24-hour quick reporting is required for Washington wholesale dealers for all areas as provided in WAC 220-352-315, except that all landings from treaty fisheries described above must be reported within 24-hours of completing the fish ticket (not 24-hours after the period concludes).

(5) Fish caught during the open period may be sold after the period concludes.

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, effective February 26, 2025:

WAC 220-359-02000P Columbia River salmon seasons above Bonneville Dam. (25-20)