



### Harvest Management

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The salmon co-managers, which include federally recognized Tribes and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), determine how many fish can be harvested each year, as well as where and when that harvest will occur. Under the U.S. v. Washington court case, half of the harvestable amount of fish goes to the treaty Indian tribes, and the other half goes to the state of Washington. Fishery managers are trying a variety of methods to conserve fish stocks, such as:

- Shortening fishing seasons or altering when the seasons occur.
- Buying back commercial fishing licenses.
- Prohibiting all sport and commercial fishing of salmon runs in particular jeopardy.
- Clipping the adipose fins of many hatchery stocks, making it easier for fishers to distinguish between wild and hatchery salmon in their catch.
- Developing new kinds of fishing gear that don't injure fish, such as tangle nets and barbless hooks, in order to return wild salmon to the water uninjured.
- Requiring commercial fishers using purse seines (a kind of net that encircles fish) to sort their catch and release wild chinook.
- Monitoring fish runs to make sure that actual runs match forecasts. If they don't, fishing is stopped.
- Improving enforcement of state fishing rules.
- A 1999 re-negotiation of the 1985 Pacific Salmon Treaty between the U.S. and Canada has set new limits on the amount of fish that each country can harvest from the other's salmon runs.

All fisheries in Washington, both tribal and non-tribal, are operating under National Marine Fisheries Service permits that are issued in compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

#### Harvest in WRIA 1

In WRIA 1, fishing is permitted for healthy wild stocks such as pink and chum salmon and for hatchery origin stocks such as fall chinook or coho salmon. Since spring (early) chinook stocks have been declining for many years, chinook harvest has been limited to a very restricted ceremonial and subsistence fishery by the local tribes in the lower Nooksack River, which is timed to minimize the potential of catching ESA-listed chinook.

Harvest contributes to the decline of WRIA 1 salmon runs in three main ways:

- Salmon are caught outside of Whatcom County waters. For instance, over the last decade, Canadian fishers have accounted for more than half of all harvest impacts on the two Nooksack native early chinook salmon stocks.
- U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries incidentally harvest a limited number of Nooksack chinook.
- Illegal and/or unreported fisheries occur in both marine and fresh waters.