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### **NOAA's Fisheries Service Lists Oregon Coast Coho for Federal Protection**

NOAA's Fisheries Service said today it was listing Oregon coast coho as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act. A federal district court said last October the agency had erred in deciding not to list the stock in 2006 because it took into account certain information provided by the state of Oregon. The court directed NOAA Fisheries to issue a new listing decision by today, without considering the information from Oregon that the court identified as not being the best available scientific information.

Oregon coast Coho have been the subject of debate and litigation almost continuously from the time the agency was first petitioned to list the stock in 1993.

"As the court ordered," said Bob Lohn, head of the agency's Northwest regional office in Seattle, "we have made a new determination based on the information available to us in this limited time. This schedule didn't allow us to develop and consider new information about the condition of the habitat and the benefits the coho are receiving from the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds."

"Had it not been for these limitations," Lohn added, "we may have reached a different conclusion. I continue to believe that there is great value in the Oregon plan. It boosts salmon recovery through funding, protective regulations, and -- most of all -- through the voluntary restoration efforts being undertaken by thousands of Oregon's landowners. I think the plan is making an important difference."

The agency said it would also put into place specific ESA protections, including a so-called 4(d) rule, which prohibits certain activities that harm fish, and the designation of critical habitat. The agency said there would be some impacts to state and local governments and landowners as they adjust their actions to avoid harming the newly listed coho stocks, but these effects are expected to be minor.

State restrictions on harvest and hatchery operations have been in place for some time, NOAA's Fisheries Service said, and no new restrictions are expected.

Lohn said that Oregon has mounted a "sustained and serious" effort to protect this stock, even before the court's ruling, and he hoped that work would continue.

NOAA's Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

