

chinook salmon. This document serves to notify the public of the availability of the FMEP for review and comment before a final approval or disapproval is made by NMFS.

DATES: Written comments on the draft FMEPs must be received at the appropriate address or fax number (see **ADDRESSES**) no later than 5 p.m. Pacific daylight time on July 31, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and requests for copies of the draft FMEP should be addressed to Richard Turner, Salmon Recovery Division, Propagation, Tributary Fisheries, and Recovery Branch, 525 N.E. Oregon Street, Suite 510, Portland, OR 97232 or faxed to (503) 872-2737. The documents are also available on the Internet at <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/>. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or the Internet.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard Turner, Portland, OR, at phone number (503) 736-4737, or e-mail: rich.turner@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice is relevant to the Middle Columbia River steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and Lower Columbia River chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*) Evolutionarily Significant Units (ESU).

Background

WDFW has submitted to NMFS an FMEP (Mid-Columbia Region) for inland recreational fisheries potentially affecting listed adult and juvenile MCR steelhead and LCR chinook salmon. These include fisheries occurring in the Little White Salmon, White Salmon, Klickitat, Walla Walla, and Yakima Rivers. The objective of the FMEP is to harvest known hatchery-origin steelhead and salmon and other fish species in a manner that does not jeopardize the survival and recovery of the MCR steelhead and the LCR chinook salmon ESUs. All fisheries included in the FMEP will be managed such that the retention of adult steelhead that are not externally marked (i.e., do not have the adipose fin clipped) will be prohibited. Only hatchery-origin steelhead that are adipose-fin clipped may be retained. Tule fall chinook from the LCR chinook salmon ESU will also be harvested in tributary recreational fisheries. Impact levels to listed MCR steelhead and LCR chinook salmon are specified in the FMEP. Population viability analysis and risk assessments in the FMEP indicate the extinction risk for listed steelhead and salmon under the proposed fishery impact levels to be low. A variety of monitoring and evaluation tasks are specified in the FMEP to assess the

abundance of steelhead and salmon, determine fishery effort and catch of steelhead and salmon, and angler compliance. A review of compliance with the provisions of the FMEP will be conducted by WDFW annually and a comprehensive review to evaluate the effectiveness of the FMEP will occur at a minimum every 5 years.

Authority

Under section 4 of the ESA, the Secretary of Commerce is required to adopt such regulations as he deems necessary and advisable for the conservation of species listed as threatened. The ESA salmon and steelhead 4(d) rule specifies categories of activities that contribute to the conservation of listed salmonids and sets out the criteria for such activities. The rule further provides that the prohibitions of paragraph (a) of the rule will not apply to activities associated with fishery harvest provided that those fisheries are managed in accordance with an FMEP that has been approved by NMFS and implemented in accordance with a letter of concurrence from NMFS.

As specified in § 223.203 (b)(4) of the ESA 4(d) rule, NMFS may approve an FMEP if it meets criteria set forth in § 223.203 (b)(4)(i)(A) through (I). Prior to final approval of an FMEP, NMFS must publish notification announcing its availability for public review and comment.

Dated: June 23, 2003.

Phil Williams,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 03-16569 Filed 6-30-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 061803C]

Endangered and Threatened Species; Take of Anadromous Fish

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comment.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the Nez Perce Indian Tribe has submitted a Tribal resource management plan (Tribal Plan) to NMFS pursuant to the limitation on take prohibitions for actions conducted

under Tribal Plans promulgated under the Endangered Species Act. The Tribal Plan specifies the management of recreational, ceremonial, and subsistence fisheries in 2003 in the Imnaha River subbasin in the State of Oregon that potentially affect Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon listed as threatened under the ESA. This document serves to notify the public of the availability for comment of the proposed evaluation of the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) as to whether implementation of the Tribal Plan will appreciably reduce the likelihood of survival and recovery of Snake River salmon and steelhead, and the availability for public comment of a draft environmental assessment on the proposed action.

DATES: Written comments on the Secretary's pending determination and the draft assessment must be received at the appropriate address or fax number (see **ADDRESSES**) no later than 5 p.m. Pacific daylight time on July 16, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and requests for copies of the draft HGMPs should be addressed to Herb Pollard, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 10215 W. Emerald St. Suite 180, Boise, ID 83704. Comments may also be sent via fax to (208) 378-5699. The document is also available on the Internet at <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/>. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or the Internet.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Herb Pollard at phone number: 208/378-5614, or e-mail: herbert.pollard@noaa.gov.

This notice is relevant to the Imnaha River subbasin population of the Snake River Spring/Summer Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and Snake River steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) Evolutionarily Significant Units (ESU).

Background

The Nez Perce Tribe has submitted to NMFS a Tribal Plan for recreational, ceremonial, and subsistence fisheries in 2003 potentially affecting threatened Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon in the Imnaha River basin. The Tribal Plan includes recreational fisheries specified by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife that take place in the same waters and in the same time frame as the tribal ceremonial and subsistence fisheries. The Nez Perce Tribe and the State of Oregon have co-manager responsibilities for spring chinook salmon within the Imnaha River sub-basin and manage this salmon population under cooperative agreements. The objective of the Tribal Plan is to harvest spring chinook in a

manner that does not appreciably reduce the likelihood of survival and recovery of the ESU. Impact levels to the listed spring chinook populations in the ESU are specified in the Tribal Plan. Analysis of the predicted return of naturally and hatchery-produced spring chinook salmon to the Imnaha River basin in 2003 and the proposed harvest levels indicate that all hatchery brood stock and supplemental spawning and natural spawning escapement needs will be met after the proposed fisheries. A variety of monitoring and evaluation tasks to be conducted by the co-managers is specified in the Tribal Plan to assess the abundance of spring chinook and to determine fishery effort and catch of spring chinook. A comprehensive review of the Tribal Plan to evaluate whether the fisheries and listed spring chinook populations are performing as expected will be done within and at the end of the proposed 2003 season.

As required by the ESA 4(d) rule for Tribal Plans (65 FR 42481, July 10, 2000 [50 CFR 223.209]), the Secretary is seeking public comment on his pending determination as to whether the Tribal Plan for Imnaha River chinook salmon would appreciably reduce the likelihood of survival and recovery of the threatened Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon ESU.

Authority

Under section 4 of the ESA, the Secretary is required to adopt such regulations as he deems necessary and advisable for the conservation of the species listed as threatened. The ESA Tribal 4(d) Rule (65 FR 42481, July 10, 2000 [50 CFR 223.209]) states that the ESA section 9 take prohibitions will not apply to Tribal Plans that will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of survival and recovery for the listed species.

Dated: June 23, 2003.

Phil Williams,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 03-16570 Filed 6-30-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 061803D]

Endangered and Threatened Species; Take of Anadromous Fish

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of Final Determination and Discussion of Underlying Biological Analysis.

SUMMARY: NMFS has evaluated the joint resource management plan (RMP) for harvest of Puget Sound chinook salmon provided by the Puget Sound Treaty Tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) pursuant to the protective regulations promulgated for Puget Sound chinook salmon under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The RMP specifies the management of commercial, recreational and tribal salmon fisheries and steelhead net fisheries that potentially affect listed Puget Sound chinook salmon from May 1, 2003, through April 30, 2004. This document serves to notify the public that NMFS, by delegated authority from the Secretary of Commerce, has determined pursuant to the Tribal Rule and the government-to-government processes therein that implementing and enforcing the RMP will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of survival and recovery of the Puget Sound chinook salmon Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU).

DATES: The final determination on the take limit was made on May 20, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Sustainable Fisheries Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115-0070.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Susan Bishop at: (206) 526-4587, or e-mail: susan.bishop@noaa.gov regarding the RMP.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

This notice is relevant to the Puget Sound chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) ESU.

Electronic Access: The full texts of NMFS' determination and the final Evaluation are available on the Internet at the NMFS, Sustainable Fisheries Division web site at: <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/1sustfsh/limit6/index.html>.

Background

In February of this year, the Puget Sound Treaty Tribes and the WDFW (co-managers) provided a jointly developed RMP that encompasses Washington coastal and Puget Sound salmon fisheries affecting the Puget Sound chinook salmon ESU. The RMP is effective from May 1, 2003, through April 30, 2004. Harvest objectives specified in the RMP account for fisheries-related mortality of Puget Sound chinook throughout its migratory range, from Oregon and Washington to

Southeast Alaska. The RMP also includes implementation, monitoring and evaluation procedures designed to ensure fisheries are consistent with these objectives. On April 2, 2003, at 68 FR 16001, NMFS published a notice of availability for public review and comment in the **Federal Register**, on its evaluation of how the Puget Sound chinook RMP addressed the criteria in Limit 4 of the ESA 4(d) rule (50 CFR 223.203 (b)(4)).

As required by § 223.203 (b)(6) of the ESA 4(d) rule, NMFS must determine pursuant to 50 CFR 223.209 and pursuant to the government-to-government processes therein whether the RMP for Puget Sound chinook would appreciably reduce the likelihood of survival and recovery of the Puget Sound chinook and other affected threatened ESUs. NMFS must take comments on how the RMP addresses the criteria in § 223.203 (b)(4) in making that determination.

Discussion of the Biological Analysis Underlying the Determination

The RMP's approach to establishing management objectives is risk averse and progressive, including: (1) management objectives, based on natural production and natural spawning, have been established for the majority of naturally producing populations which historically had self-sustaining chinook populations and for which data is available these management units represent the entire range of life history types (races) and geographic distribution that comprise the Puget Sound chinook salmon ESU; (2) the RMP derives exploitation rates based on conservative, quantifiable standards directly related to recovery, which take into account scientific uncertainty; (3) in isolating the effect of harvest on survival and recovery, the approach is valuable in ensuring that harvest actions do not impede recovery, regardless of the contribution of the other "Hs" (hatcheries, habitat, hydropower) at the same time, the approach is linked to the other Hs by taking into account current environmental and habitat conditions; and (4) the proposed objectives are generally consistent with NMFS' rebuilding exploitation rates (RER), population standards previously used to assess the likelihood of survival and recovery of the Puget Sound chinook salmon ESU. These standards included an assessment of the long-term effects of exploitation rates at these levels; (5) the RMP includes specific and integrated monitoring programs to maintain and improve population assessment methodologies as well as evaluate the