

Public Forum

**Public correspondence received
as of March 15, 2011**

Amanda Mckenzie

From: ODFW Commission
Sent: Friday, March 04, 2011 10:14 AM
To: Amanda Mckenzie; Bruce McIntosh
Subject: FW: Wild Coho Fishery on the Siuslaw River

For Commission next week. – Teri Kucera

From: Becky Goehring [mailto:bravabecky@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 03, 2011 12:00 PM
To: odfw.commission@state.or.us
Subject: Wild Coho Fishery on the Siuslaw River

Dear Commissioners Rae, Klarquist, Edge, Kerns, Levy, Englund and Webber:

I am writing to express my support for the establishment of a limited wild coho fishery on the Siuslaw River this 2011 season. In the years that I have been fishing for fall chinook on the Siuslaw, I am always dismayed when I see the number of coho that are caught, fought into the boat and finally released, barely hanging on. There are times when I have been out fishing and watch anglers who go out with spinners to target the coho specifically. They "catch and release" the fish but will stay out for most of the day for the sport of the fight.

I also always hear the joke "fillet and release" and I wonder how much of that is truly going on?

It has never made sense to me that one could go fishing, targeting a fish that is on the endangered list, for the sport of catch and release. The damage that does to the coho population must be immense and yet there is no regulation against that practice.

There are those of us who, when fishing for chinook, hook up with a coho. This happened three times when I was in boats on the Siuslaw this fall. Getting the fish in to the side of the boat, removing the hook and then waiting to let the fish recover was our tactic. But I wonder how many of those fish became easy targets for the seals and sea lions that follow the boats.

To me, establishing a wild coho fishery that allows one fish a day, five a year would be beneficial. It would be beneficial to the anglers, who catch coho and now must release them, even if the fish is barely hanging on. It would be beneficial to the economic health of our coastal community as guides, area motels, restaurants and businesses would benefit by the presence of the anglers in our community. Most importantly, it would benefit the coho. If the rule is one fish and you're done fishing, just like the rules on the Siltcoos and Tahkenitch lakes, fewer coho would be caught. I also believe that coho should not be targeted for catch and release fun.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rebecca Goehring
 PO BOX 1141
 Florence, OR 97439
 541-997-9046
 bravabecky@yahoo.com

Amanda Mckenzie

From: ODFW Commission
Sent: Monday, March 07, 2011 8:40 AM
To: Bruce McIntosh; Amanda Mckenzie
Subject: FW: Siuslaw River Coho

For Commission. – Teri Kucera

From: chuck morgan [mailto:chuckmorgan40@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, March 04, 2011 5:00 PM
To: odfw.commission@state.or.us
Subject: Siuslaw River Coho

I understand there is consideration being given to allow native coho to be caught on the Siuslaw River. I have lived here several years and salmon fished every year for the chinook. I have been heartbroken annually by watching dead coho float by having been released by other fishermen. I have tried to be careful when releasing those I had the misfortune to hook. I don't know how successful I was in preserving them.

If fishermen were allowed to keep native coho, they would be finished fishing sooner and hurting a lot less fish. I suggest a daily bag limit of two salmon, chinook or coho, clipped or unclipped, twenty per year.

I believe that would enhance the species and encourage disappointed fishermen to get back into it improving the economy

Respectfully yours----- Chuck Morgan
Walton, Or. 97490
541-935-8355

Amanda Mckenzie

From: ODFW Commission
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2011 10:28 AM
To: Amanda Mckenzie
Subject: FW: Coho/Siuslaw

For Commission this Friday. – Teri Kucera

From: brenda gray [mailto:bgray4@hughes.net]
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2011 7:13 PM
To: odfw.commission@state.or.us
Subject: Fwd: Coho/Siuslaw

----- Forwarded message -----

From: brenda gray <bgray4@hughes.net>
Date: Mar 8, 2011
Subject: Coho/Siuslaw
To: odfw.commission@state.or.us

To whom this may concern:

I am writing in regards to Coho And Chinook salmon seasons. We would like to be able to catch and keep 2 fish whether it is coho or chinook. We feel it would lessen the mortality rate on coho if people could keep there first 2 fish they catch. Also it would bring more revenue back to the fish and game because more people would start fishing again.

Best regards,
Keith Gray
Brenda gray
16426 Richardson Upriver rd
Walton Or 97490
541-935-8343

Amanda Mckenzie

From: ODFW Commission
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2011 10:26 AM
To: Amanda Mckenzie
Subject: FW: Coho fishing on the Siuslaw River

For Commission meeting this Friday. – Teri Kucera

From: Dean & Pat Hendricks [mailto:snowshoe@oregonfast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2011 3:18 PM
To: ODFW Commission
Subject: Coho fishing on the Siuslaw River

To: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
From: Dean and Pat Hendricks, North Country Lures and Flies LLC
Date: 3/8/2011
Re: Wild Coho fishing regulations on the Siuslaw River

Currently, there is no provision for catch and keep wild Coho on the Siuslaw. As a result, significantly high number of wild Coho are caught and subsequently released. This act results in a death sentence for at least 60-80 percent of those fish. The cause of the demise of these Coho is due to several factors. These factors include exhaustion and stress, poor handling and release technique, seal and sea lion predation, and physical damage due to hooks, nets and thrashing during hook removal.

Changes to the current regulations are imperative so that the unnecessary high mortality rate can be significantly decreased. The following is offered to be taken under consideration to further foster the sustainable wild Coho fishery on the Siuslaw River:

There is a very successful wild Coho management plan on the Coquille River. The 2011 regulations state that the bag is one non fin-clipped adult Coho salmon per year in aggregate with other NW and SW Zone water bodies. Additionally, there is a quota in place. See Regs. 2010.

We, at North Country Lures, talk with a significant number of fishers. Most individuals recognize that there is a serious problem with the mortality rate of the wild Coho. These folks do NOT want to be part of the problem, but would rather be part of a sustainable solution.

Additionally, the economies of the Central and Southern Oregon Coast are highly dependent on the revenue generated by fishing. Our area is a destination for huge numbers of people who fish, eat, shop at local places of business up and down the Central and South Oregon Coast. ODFW would generate more revenue from both the sales of state and out-of-state fishing licenses.

In summary, the slaughter of wild Coho needs to cease. People WILL fish; therefore, there needs to be a realistic solution which benefits the Coho and still maintains the fishery. That solution is already in place on the Coquille River. Use that model and refine it to meet the needs of the Siuslaw River fishery.

Sincerely,
Dean and Pat Hendricks
North Country Lures and Flies LLC
2242 Willow Loop East
Florence, Oregon 97439
541-997-7080
www.nclaf.com
northcountryluresandflies@yahoo.com

Bridgeport Market
And Wine Shop
75 Harbor St. 100
Florence, OR 97439

To: ODFW
Re: Coho fishing – Siuslaw River

As a convenience store/bait and tackle store owner at the Florence boat ramp for the Siuslaw River, I have the opportunity to observe the fishing activities as they occur on the river as well as hear the comments of the fishermen as they come in the store. It is my observation that there are a relatively large number of fishermen who target the Coho, most of whom catch and release. ODFW statistics claim about an 18% mortality rate among these fish caught and released in a controlled environment. This does not take into account the rough handling, netting, boating, picture taking, bringing into the rocks, etc. that occurs with many catches. It also does not take into account the hundreds of "hungry" seals that follow the Coho up the river and are just waiting for an exhausted or wounded fish to make an easy meal. I have had numerous reports of seals taking the fish right from the fisherman's hands. From what I have observed and heard from the fishermen, I would estimate the mortality rate is 50% or more. I have heard of fishermen who have caught Coho numbering in the teens in a single day. The catch and release program now in place does little to protect the Coho and encourages unscrupulous fishermen to harass and kill these fish day after day.

There are ways to protect these fish, most of which will increase revenues to the state:

1. Allow the taking of one Coho (first one caught) per day with a total of 20 Coho per year. This would increase license sales as well as the local economy.
2. Aggressively protect the Coho by ticketing those who target Coho and charge them with harassing a protected game fish.
3. Close the river to fishing from the Florence boat ramp down river to the Coast Guard Station from September 1 through October 1 and aggressively cite offenders. Most of the Fall Chinook are caught well up river from the boat ramp and most Coho are caught from the boat ramp down river.

The Coho run in the Siuslaw River is becoming quite healthy and could more easily support a fishing season than the catch and release program that is now in place.

Jay Cable
Bridgeport Market

From: ODFW Commission
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2011 1:21 PM
To: Amanda Mckenzie
Subject: FW: Florence meeting

Attachments: coho speech.doc

From: Ron Caputo [mailto:roncaputo@charter.net]
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2011 9:35 AM
To: ODFW Commission
Subject: Florence meeting

Hi,

Here is a copy of the speech we were going to give during the public comments at the ODFW meeting in Florence.

Good Morning

My name is Mike Frankhouser. I am the current vice-president of the Florence Salmon Trout Enhancement Program (S.T.E.P.). I am here representing our 102 members, the greater Florence community, and the fishermen of Oregon. I am here today to ask the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to work with NOAA to open a limited wild Coho fishery in the Siuslaw Bay and River.

In the last few years we have seen a huge return of wild Coho to our area. We have a great Chinook fishery in the Siuslaw. Unfortunately, more Coho are being caught than Chinook causing a high mortality rate to the released Coho. Not only are these fish hooked while fishing for Chinook but, some fishermen target them even though they know they must release them.

In the 1800's there were canneries up and down this river. Salmon was shipped to San Francisco and around the horn to the east coast of the United States. The giant runs of Coho were soon depleted and the economy was left to rely on its timber harvest. As years went by, the fish returned and a great sport fishery was established in this area. Marinas were built up and down the river so sport fishermen could harvest these beautiful wild Silver Salmon as they were called then. Farming, logging, over fishing, ocean conditions and various other reasons have been given but once again the great runs of Coho declined causing many of the marinas to close as fishing came to a halt and the fish were declared endangered.

Now that our forests are locked up and most logging has stopped, the Florence area relies primarily on tourism to support its economy. A limited wild Coho fishery would draw many fishermen and their families to the area and still protect the fishery as it does in the Siltcoos and Tahkenitch lake systems. The motels would be full. The shops and restaurants would be busy again, and marinas will reopen.

Last year more than 24,000 Coho returned to their native streams in our basin. The Florence Step program, the Siuslaw Watershed Council, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, timberland managers, and farmers have all worked hard to restore fish habitat in our rivers and streams. All of our hard work has paid off with very robust Coho runs. Now is the time to be rewarded for our hard work by opening limited Coho fishing on the Siuslaw River.

The Florence STEP group's mission is "to restore fish populations to their historic levels". We have done our job but we won't let our guard down. We will continue to improve habitat and protect the runs of wild Coho on the Siuslaw and in the lakes. Now that the runs have improved, we hope you the ODFW Commissioners can help us open this fishery for the fishermen and women of Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.