

**ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT FOR 2017
FALL CHINOOK SALMON CONSERVATION PLAN
ROGUE SPECIES MANAGEMENT UNIT
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
ROGUE WATERSHED DISTRICT**

INTRODUCTION

In January of 2013, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission formally adopted a conservation plan for fall Chinook salmon in the Rogue Species Management Unit (SMU). This plan calls for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to complete annual reports that will include, at least, the following elements: (1) SMU status in relation to the desired status and conservation status statements embedded in the conservation plan, (2) summaries of annual efforts to monitor SMU attributes, (3) implications of any research or evaluation projects completed during the reporting year, (4) any updated assessments of population attributes completed during the reporting year, and (5) presentation of the rationale associated with any changes in management actions made during the reporting year.

This report summarizes the status of the SMU in relation to desired status and conservation status through the 2017 return year, completed management actions, and 2018 preseason forecasts in relation to conservation status and maximum sustained yield (Chetco, Winchuck).

A copy of the conservation plan, and annual progress reports, is available on the ODFW website at:

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/CRP/rogue_fall_chinook_conservation_plan.asp

SUMMARY OF SMU STATUS

Two population strata compose the SMU: (1) the Rogue stratum and (2) the coastal stratum. The two strata are differentiated by life history and genetic differences within the constituent independent populations of naturally produced fall Chinook salmon (NP CHF). Where possible, status criteria were developed for each independent population monitored by ODFW. Populations in the Rogue stratum are monitored as an aggregate by sampling at Huntley Park near the mouth of the Rogue River, except that NP CHF in the Lower Rogue population area are also monitored annually by ODFW.

Monitoring of SMU attributes is designed to produce metrics that are to be used to characterize the current status of the SMU. All monitoring needed to update SMU status was completed by ODFW in 2017, and the results are included in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Comparisons of singular elements of current and **desired** status for naturally produced fall Chinook salmon in the Rogue Species Management Unit. Desired status criteria are described in the conservation plan, and **both metrics cover the most recent ten year period**. Underlined metrics of current status did not meet desired status criteria.

Status Element	Desired Status	Current Status	2017 ⁱ Estimate
ROGUE AGGREGATE POPULATIONS			
Adult Abundance ^a	≥54,400	55,435	90,674
Age Structure ^b	≥10%	7%	11%
Run Timing ^c	≥8%	9%	5%
Run Composition ^d	≤5%	5%	6%
LOWER ROGUE POPULATION			
Adult Abundance ^e	≥3,500	6,545	3,921
Spawner Composition ^f	≤10%	4%	4%
CHETCO POPULATION			
Adult Abundance ^e	≥3,800	4,550	2,775
Age Structure ^h	≥16%	22%	50%
Spawner Composition ^f	≤18%	11%	8%
WINCHUCK POPULATION			
Adult Abundance ^e	≥1,000	1,183	895
Juvenile Abundance ^g	≥125,000	164,224	116,950
Spawner Composition ^f	≤10%	4%	8%
PISTOL POPULATION			
Adult Abundance ^e	≥1,300	1,327	735
Spawner Composition ^f	≤5%	2%	0%
HUNTER POPULATION			
Adult Abundance ^e	≥560	812	241
Spawner Composition ^f	≤5%	2%	0%

^a Number of age 3-6 NP CHF that pass Huntley Park.

^b Relative abundance of age 5+6 fish among NP CHF that pass Huntley Park.

^c Relative abundance of October migrants among NP CHF that pass Huntley Park.

^d Relative abundance of hatchery fish among CHF that pass Huntley Park.

^e Number of NP CHF spawners.

^f Relative abundance of hatchery fish among CHF spawners.

^g Number of juvenile NP CHF produced in areas upstream of the South Fork.

^h Relative abundance of age 5+6 fish among NP CHF spawners.

ⁱ One year estimate

Table 2. Status of the Rogue Fall Chinook Salmon Species Management Unit as compared to conservation criteria. Conservation status criteria are described in the conservation plan and cover, unless otherwise noted, the most recent three year period. Underlined metrics of current status did not meet conservation status criteria.

Status Element	Conservation Criterion	Comparative Status	2017 Estimate
ROGUE AGGREGATE POPULATIONS			
Adult Abundance ^a	<20,400 ⁱ	58,976	90,674
Age Structure ^b	<3%	8%	11%
Run Composition ^c	<5%	10%	5%
Run Composition ^d	>10%	6%	6%
LOWER ROGUE POPULATION			
Adult Abundance ^e	<1,500	4,681	3,921
Spawner Composition ^f	>15%	4%	4%
CHETCO POPULATION			
Adult Abundance ^e	<1,440 ⁱ	3,681	2,775
Age Structure ^h	<5%	33%	50%
Spawner Composition ^f	>20%	6%	8%
WINCHUCK POPULATION			
Adult Abundance ^e	<300 ⁱ	1,190	895
Juvenile Abundance ^g	<50,000 ^j	217,634	116,950
Spawner Composition ^f	>15%	4%	8%
PISTOL POPULATION			
Adult Abundance ^e	<540	1066	735
Spawner Composition ^f	>10%	3%	0%
HUNTER POPULATION			
Adult Abundance ^e	<300	981	241
Spawner Composition ^f	>10%	3%	0%

^a Number of age 3-6 NP CHF that pass Huntley Park.

^b Relative abundance of age 5+6 fish among NP CHF that pass Huntley Park.

^c Relative abundance of October migrants among NP CHF that pass Huntley Park.

^d Relative abundance of hatchery fish among CHF that pass Huntley Park.

^e Number of NP CHF spawners.

^f Relative abundance of hatchery fish among CHF spawners.

^g Number of juvenile NP CHF produced upstream of the South Fork.

^h Relative abundance of age 5+6 fish among NP CHF spawners.

ⁱ Criteria are based on a running two year average.

^j Criterion covers every year.

COMPLETED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS - ROGUE STRATUM

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted Rogue Alternative 4, outlined in the conservation plan, as the preferred suite of management strategies to be employed by ODFW. Some of the relevant actions, completed by ODFW during 2017, are briefly discussed below. A tabulated progress summary related to management actions described in the conservation plan is included in Table 7.

Management Strategy 4.1

Many of the actions within Management Strategy 4.1 relate to seasonal operations of Lost Creek and Applegate reservoirs by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). ODFW worked cooperatively with the USACE to identify and implement reservoir release strategies designed to enhance naturally-produced fall Chinook (actions 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.4, 4.1.5, 4.1.6, 4.1.7, 4.1.9). A weekly conference call, implemented in 2013 to facilitate communication, was continued in 2017. ODFW participated in the USACE annual winter management coordination meeting.

Applegate River flows were managed to maximize fall Chinook distribution and spawning success in 2017. Fish were observed spawning from the dam downstream to the mouth and no flow or temperature issues were encountered. Additionally, thousands of Chinook fry were observed in the Applegate during ODFW steelhead and Pacific lamprey spawning ground surveys.

Average flow at the USGS Agness gage was 2,725 cfs August 10 – September 10 (action 4.1.7). Flow exceeded ODFW recommendations during the fall Chinook migration due to higher than normal water yield in the upper Rogue Basin. Disease-related mortality of adult fall Chinook in 2017 was estimated at 0%. Mortality estimates are derived from flow-based models. Additional management actions would be triggered if disease-related losses were forecast to reach 40% (action 4.1.8).

The minimum flow needed to protect juvenile fish rearing in the mainstem in summer is 1,000 cfs as measured at the USGS Grants Pass gage. The flow in 2017 exceeded this level, averaging 3,474 cfs at Grants Pass July 1 – August 10 (action 4.1.9). The lowest average daily flow during the period was 2,890 on August 10.

ODFW participated in a variety of habitat protection activities (action 4.1.14), including review of water right applications, removal/fill applications, R/F emergency authorizations, Conditional Use permits, and compliance monitoring of municipal and county riparian ordinances.

Fielder and Wimer dams on mainstem Evans Creek were removed in 2015 (action 4.1.16). ODFW conducted spawning surveys in 2017 to monitor fall Chinook distribution in Evans Creek to help evaluate fish response to dam removal (Table 3). No fall Chinook were observed in areas far upstream of the dams during the 2017 surveys due to lower stream flow in Evans Creek compared to observed streamflow in 2016.

Table 3. Peak adult fall Chinook counts on Evans Creek survey reached, 2017.

Survey	Peak Count (Live + Dead)	Date	Survey Length (miles)	Chinook/mile
West Evans, RM 8-9	0	Oct-Nov	0.9	0
Evans, RM 15.5-16.5	0	Oct-Nov	1.0	
Evans, RM 22-22.5	0	Oct-Nov	0.5	0
West Evans, RM 0.6-1.2	0	Oct-Nov	0.5	0
West Evans, RM 9-10	0	Oct-Nov	0.9	

Management Strategy 4.2

ODFW’s Aquatic Invasive Species program deployed two watercraft inspection crews in the Rogue Watershed District in 2017 (action 4.2.1). Crews based in Central Point and Gold Beach conducted boat inspections, primarily on the I-5, Hwy 97, and Hwy 101 corridors, from late spring through early fall.

Management Strategy 4.3

The minimum flow needed to protect juvenile fish rearing in the mainstem in summer is 1,000 cfs as measured at the Grants Pass gage. The flow in 2017 exceeded this level, averaging 3,474 cfs at Grants Pass July 1 – August 10. Lower water temperatures in downstream areas, as a result of the increased flow, result in fewer predation losses because of decreases in pikeminnow metabolic rates (action 4.3.2), using storage that is not needed to protect adult spring Chinook and adult fall Chinook.

Management Strategy 4.4

Zone regulations were employed in 2017 because fall Chinook escapement was forecasted to exceed escapement goals related to conservation criteria (action 4.4.1).

Management Strategy 4.5

ODFW did not complete any work specific to Management Strategy 4.5 in 2017.

COMPLETED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS - COASTAL STRATUM

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted Coastal Alternative 6, outlined in the conservation plan, as the preferred suite of management strategies to be employed by ODFW. Some of the relevant actions, completed by ODFW during 2017, are briefly discussed below. A tabulated progress summary related to management actions described in the conservation plan is included in Table 8.

Management Strategy 6.1

ODFW participated in a variety of habitat protection activities (actions 6.1.2, 6.1.8), including review of water right applications, removal/fill applications, R/F emergency authorizations, General Authorizations for recreational placer mining, Conditional Use permits, and compliance monitoring of municipal and county riparian ordinances.

Management Strategy 6.2

ODFW's Aquatic Invasive Species program deployed two watercraft inspection crews in the Rogue Watershed District in 2017 (action 6.2.1). Crews based in Central Point and Gold Beach conducted boat inspections, primarily on the I-5, Hwy 97, and Hwy 101 corridors, from late spring through early fall.

Management Strategy 6.3

Zone regulations were employed in 2017 because fall Chinook escapement was forecasted to exceed escapement goals related to conservation criteria (action 6.3.1). Zone regulations include gear restrictions (bobber rule) on the Chetco and Winchuck rivers between September 1 and November 3. Permanent adoption of the bobber rule on the Chetco and Winchuck rivers in 2017 was aimed at reducing snagging activity during low flow conditions, while still providing early season harvest opportunity (action 6.3.8).

Regulations for the Chetco ocean terminal area fishery in 2017 were restricted as compared to recent years. Based on both the Chetco and Winchuck preseason forecasts falling to near S_{MSY} the harvest guideline was reduced to 600 Chinook (action 6.3.5). The recreational fishery was reduced to 5 days to balance harvest between the recreational and commercial fisheries (action 6.3.8). The recreational season was open October 7-9 and 14-15, harvest was estimated at 506 Chinook. The commercial season was scheduled for the earlier of October 9-13 and 16-31 or a quota of 300 Chinook. The commercial fishery was open 9 days. Harvest was 329 Chinook.

Management Strategy 6.4

A release group of 26,015 smolts was acclimated at Ferry Creek reservoir (Chetco) in October 2017 and subsequently released into the Chetco River at Snug Harbor (action 6.4.3). The purpose of the acclimation project is to determine whether 1) returning adult Chinook acclimated at Ferry Creek contribute to the river fishery at a higher rate than non-acclimated Chinook; 2) acclimated Chinook are recovered from natural spawning areas at a lower rate than non-acclimated Chinook.

A release group of 86,972 Chetco fall Chinook smolts were released October, 2017 at Social Security (RM 4) on the Chetco River (action 6.4.4).

Management Strategy 6.5

No action.

OTHER

Rogue Spawning Surveys

Spawning ground surveys were conducted in select reaches within the upper Rogue, middle Rogue, Applegate, and Illinois population areas in 2017 (Table 6).

Table 6. Peak adult fall Chinook counts on survey reaches within the Rogue Aggregate population areas.

Survey	Peak Count (Live + Dead)	Date	Survey Length (miles)	Chinook/mile
Bear Creek ¹	25	10/13/17	1.0	25
NF Little Butte ¹			1.5	0
SF Little Butte ¹			1.0	5
Taylor Creek ²	0		0.5	0
Applegate RM 7.4-0	686	11/30/17	7.4	93
Applegate RM 14.5-7.4	1,302	11/2/17	7.1	183
Applegate RM 25.5-14.5	821	10/31/17	11.0	75
W Fk Illinois	35	11/07/17	0.25	140
E Fk Illinois	32	11/17/17	0.8	40
Sucker Creek ³	1	11/07/17	0.5	2
Elk Creek ³	12	11/14/17	1.0	12

¹ Upper Rogue Population Area

² Middle Rogue Population Area

³ Illinois Population Area

Table 7. Summary of progress related to management actions described in the fall Chinook salmon Conservation Plan, as related to the **Rogue Stratum** of the SMU. The “X” symbol means that ODFW completed work on an action that requires annual attention. The “Y” symbol means that ODFW completed the action and that no further work is needed. The “Z” symbol means that ODFW completed work on an allied topic that complemented the action item included in the conservation plan. The “--” symbol means that no ODFW work was completed on the action item during the year.

Action Item	Year of completion for action item									
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 4.1										
4.1.1	X	X	X	X	X					
4.1.2	X	X	X	X	X					
4.1.3	Y									
4.1.4	X	X	X	X	X					
4.1.5	X	X	X	X	X					
4.1.6	X	X	X	X	X					
4.1.7	X	X	X	X	X					
4.1.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
4.1.9	X	X	X	X	X					
4.1.10	--	--	--	--	--					
4.1.11	--	--	--	--	--					
4.1.12	--	--	--	--	--					
4.1.13	--	--	--	--	--					
4.1.14	X	X	X	X	X					
4.1.15	X	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
4.1.16	X	X	X	X	X					
4.1.17	X	X	X	X	X					
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 4.2										
4.2.1	X	X	X	X	X					
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 4.3										
4.3.1	--	--	--	--	--					
4.3.2	X	X	X	X	X					
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 4.4										
4.4.1	X	X	X	X	X					
4.4.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
4.4.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
4.4.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 4.5										
4.5.1	X	X	X	X	X					
4.5.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
4.5.3	Y									
4.5.4	X	X	X	X	X					

Table 8. Summary of progress related to management actions described in the fall Chinook salmon Conservation Plan, as related to the **Coastal Stratum** of the SMU. The “X” symbol means that ODFW completed work on an action that requires annual attention. The “Y” symbol means that ODFW completed the action and that no further work is needed. The “Z” symbol means that ODFW completed work on an allied topic that complemented the action item included in the conservation plan. The “--” symbol means that no ODFW work was completed on the action item during the year.

Action Item	Year of completion for action item									
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 6.1										
6.1.1	--	--	--	--	--					
6.1.2	X	X	X	X	X					
6.1.3	--	--	--	--	--					
6.1.4	--	--	--	--	--					
6.1.5	--	--	--	--	--					
6.1.6	--	--	--	--	--					
6.1.7	--	--	--	--	--					
6.1.8	X	X	X	X	X					
6.1.9	--	--	--	--	--					
6.1.10	X	X	X	X	X					
6.1.11	--	--	--	--	--					
6.1.12	--	--	--	--	--					
6.1.13	--	--	--	--	--					
6.1.14	--	--	--	--	--					
6.1.15	--	--	--	--	--					
6.1.16	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
6.1.17	--	--	--	--	--					
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 6.2										
6.2.1	X	X	X	X	X					
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 6.3										
6.3.1	X	X	X	X	X					
6.3.2	n/a	X	n/a	n/a	n/a					
6.3.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
6.3.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
6.3.5	X	X	X	X	X					
6.3.6	n/a	X	n/a	n/a	n/a					
6.3.7	n/a	X	n/a	n/a	n/a					
6.3.8	--	Y								
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 6.4										
6.4.1	X	X	X	X	X					
6.4.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a					
6.4.3	X	X	X	X	X					
6.4.4	X	X	X	X	X					
6.4.5	Y									
6.4.6	X	X	X	X	X					
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 6.5										
6.5.1	--	--	X	X	X					

PRE-SEASON FORECASTS

ODFW fishery managers will utilize pre-season forecasts to determine if (1) NP CHF populations might reach conservation criteria and (2) to determine the number of NP CHF that can be harvested in the late-season terminal fishery that operates off the mouths of the Chetco and Winchuck rivers. The efficacy of any annual forecast will, by default, be questionable because of substantial uncertainty in (1) the stock size estimates before the onset of any fishing in spring, (2) the forecasted harvest rates of CHF in the ocean fisheries that operate in federally managed waters, and (3) the forecasted harvest rates in the recreational freshwater fisheries. However, management criteria for each population are based on spawner escapements over multiple (2 or 3) years, which helps buffer the uncertainty associated with the pre-season forecasts.

Preseason Forecasts in Relation to Conservation Criteria

Harvest opportunities in the recreational freshwater fisheries will be constrained to some degree if the pre-season forecasts indicate that NP CHF populations will drop into conservation status. As described in the conservation plan, this situation can be expected in 6-23% of the years, depending on the population in question. Based on the pre-season forecasts for 2018, no additional constraints appear warranted for any of the freshwater recreational fisheries (Table 9).

Table 9. Forecasted 2018 spawning escapement of age 3-6 NP CHF in relation to conservation status criteria that cover multiple years. For each population, the forecasted number of spawners includes the 2018 forecast and estimated spawner numbers in the previous year or previous two years.

Population (s)	Conservation criterion	Forecasted number of spawners	Conservation shortfall
Rogue Aggregate	20,400 ^{ab}	130,529 ^{ab}	0
Lower Rogue	1,500 ^c	5,149 ^b	0
Chetco	1,440 ^b	2,492 ^b	0
Winchuck	300 ^b	667 ^b	0
Pistol	540 ^c	481 ^c	0
Hunter	300 ^c	234 ^c	66

^a Criterion covers passage at Huntley Park instead of spawning escapement.

^b Covers 2017 (estimated spawners) and 2018 (forecasted spawners).

^c Covers 2016 and 2017 (estimated spawners) and 2018 (forecasted spawners).

Preseason Forecasts in Relation to Management of the Chetco Terminal Fishery

The conservation plan outlines that harvest opportunities in the late-season, near-shore, Chetco terminal fishery will be based on the number of estimated spawners needed for maximum sustained yield (Smsy) in population areas proximal to the Chetco River (Action 6.3.5 in Management Strategy 6.3 for the Coastal Stratum). ODFW completed an assessment of the efficacy of pre-season forecasting needs associated with this fishery and because the Smsy estimates pertain to *average* conditions, ODFW concluded that harvest opportunities in the Chetco terminal fishery should be based on a three year arithmetic mean. ODFW also concluded that management of the Chetco terminal fishery should only be based on the Chetco and Winchuck populations, because the other populations in the SMU contribute to the fishery at very low rates; as described in the conservation plan.

Harvest opportunities in the late-season, near-shore Chetco terminal fishery will be constrained to some degree if the pre-season forecasts indicate that NP CHF populations will drop below individual Smsy needs estimated for the Chetco and Winchuck populations of NP CHF. ODFW estimates that this situation can be expected in 40% of the years. Estimated spawner numbers in 2016 and 2017 were above Smsy. The pre-season forecast for spawner numbers in 2018 will provide an opportunity to harvest NP CHF based on the 3 year average (Table 10), a conservative harvest guideline is warranted for the 2018 terminal fishery.

Table 10. Forecasted 2018 spawning escapement of age 3-6 NP CHF in relation to Smsy estimates for the Chetco and Winchuck populations. For each population, the forecasted number of spawners includes the 2018 forecast and estimated spawner numbers in 2016 and 2017.

Population	S _{msy}	Forecasted number of spawners	Difference
Chetco	2,740	3,285 ^a	545
Winchuck	560	1,016 ^a	456

^aCovers 2016 and 2017 (estimated spawners) and 2018 (forecasted spawners).