



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife
South Willamette Watershed District Office
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October 28, 2020

Barry Thom
Regional Administrator, West Coast Region
National Marine Fisheries Service
1201 Northeast Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97232

Dear Mr. Thom:

The following information comprises the 2020 annual report to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, documenting compliance with the terms and conditions of our 2018 Authorization for the lethal removal of predatory California sea lions (CSLs) in the vicinity of Willamette Falls (Oregon City, Oregon) under §120 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The current Authorization was granted to the State of Oregon by NMFS on November 14, 2018, for a 5-year period effective November 14, 2018 until November 14, 2023.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, anticipated management work in spring 2020 was not conducted due to governor's orders and transmission risk for staff in handling animals. This decision was made by managing partners for both Bonneville Dam and Willamette Falls. Consequently, there are no management actions to report. We did, however complete a full season of monitoring for which the results are reported in the attached Willamette Falls Monitoring Report.

Adherence to relevant Terms and Conditions are listed below.

Terms and Conditions

No. 1

N/A

No. 2

Based on trained observer data, the State of Oregon requested in writing the addition of seven new CSLs to the Appendix of individuals meeting the criteria for removal at this location.

No. 3

N/A

No. 4

The State of Oregon consulted with our Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) prior to attempting fieldwork during the 2020 field season in order to review protocols for capture, holding, and euthanasia of individually identifiable predatory CSLs.

No. 5

N/A

No. 6

N/A

No. 7

N/A

No. 8

The State of Oregon continued implementation of a multi-year monitoring plan to evaluate 1) the impacts of CSL predation on UWR spring-run Chinook salmon and UWR winter steelhead; and 2) the effectiveness of permanent removal of individually identifiable predator CSLs as a method to reduce adult salmonid mortality. The State has or will perform by the end of the authorization period, the following actions:

- a) Monitored and reported specific CSLs observed, including when animals were removed and residence time at Willamette Falls;
- b) Monitored and reported the number of prey observed and estimated to have been taken;
- c) Monitored, evaluated, and reported on expedience (number of days animal present before removal) of removal;
- d) Monitored and reported key population parameters for UWR spring-run Chinook salmon and UWR winter steelhead populations so that changes in population status can be detected;
- e) Ensured that monitoring efforts included other pinnipeds that occurred in the vicinity of Willamette Falls;
- f) Will update the population viability analysis for UWR spring-run Chinook salmon and UWR winter steelhead after 5 years of implementation (after December 2023) to determine, to the extent possible, any changes in the estimated extinction risk to the salmonid stocks in question.

No. 9

This letter describing our compliance with the terms and conditions of the 2018 Authorization and the attached report on monitoring activities conducted in 2020 represents our annual

monitoring reports to NMFS. As of August 14, 2020, The State of Oregon is under new authorization to conduct similar management activities at Willamette Falls and an extended geographic area under a new set of requirements. The newest authorization also includes Steller sea lions within the geographic area of management (SEE: “NMFS MMPA Section 120(f) Permit Authorizing the Intentional taking on the Waters of the Columbia River and its Tributaries of California Sea Lion and Steller Sea Lions”, 14 August 2020).

No 10

The State of Oregon reviewed observation data from Willamette Falls to determine of additional individually-identifiable CSLs qualified as predatory (Condition 1) and requested in writing that NMFS add these seven newly qualifying CSLs to the approved removal list (see Term and Condition No. 3 above).

No. 11

We understand that the authorization may be modified, suspended, or revoked by NMFS at any time given 72 hours' notice to the State.

No. 12

We understand that this authorization is valid until November 14, 2023, at which time it may be extended by NMFS for an additional period to be determined by NMFS.

We thank you for your assistance and support of our work to monitor and reduce sea lion predation on threatened and endangered salmonids at Willamette Falls and elsewhere in the Columbia River Basin. Please let us know if we can provide further information related to our annual reporting obligations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sheanna M Steingass', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sheanna M Steingass, PhD

Supporting documents:

WILLAMETTE FALLS PINNIPED MONITORING PROJECT 2020