



Oregon Forage Fish Management Plan

Frequently Asked Questions:

Protect forage fish by preventing new forage fish fisheries while allowing existing fishing activity

What is the goal of the Oregon Forage Fish Management Plan?

The Oregon Forage Fish Management Plan is designed to protect forage fish species in Oregon's waters that are important prey for sustaining our fisheries and the ecosystem on which fisheries rely. The Plan, once adopted, will prevent new unmanaged forage fish fisheries from developing while allowing existing fishery activity to continue.

What species does this Plan protect?

The Plan will protect a specific list of forage fish species that are not already part of a managed fishery and will minimize impacts to current fishing practices. Forage fish species that are already in management plans (e.g., sardine, anchovy, and herring) will not be part of this plan.

- Mesopelagic fishes, including lanternfish (Myctophidae), deep-sea smelts (Bathylagidae), barracudina (Paralepididae), and bristlemouths (Gonostomatidae)
- Pacific sand lance (*Ammodytes hexapterus*)
- Pacific saury (*Cololabis saira*)
- Silversides (family Atherinopsidae)
- Osmerid smelts
- Pelagic squids except market squid (*Doryteuthis opalescens*) and Humboldt squid (*Dosidicus gigas*) (pelagic squid families: Cranchiidae, Gonatidae, Histioteuthidae, Octopoteuthidae, Ommastrephidae, Onychoteuthidae, and Thysanoteuthidae)

Why does Oregon need a plan?

As of May 4, 2016, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) implemented forage fish regulations based on recommendations from the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC). The federal forage fish plan and regulations do not apply to fishing that occurs only in state waters (from 0-3 miles offshore of Oregon). While largely consistent with the federal strategy, the Oregon Forage Fish Management Plan describes our unique management approach in Oregon waters. For more information on the PFMC process: <http://www.pcouncil.org/ecosystem-based-management/amendment1/>

What fisheries will the Oregon Forage Fish Management Plan involve?

All commercial fisheries for which vessels land fish (or shellfish) from state or federal waters of the Pacific Ocean (0-200 miles) into Oregon. The federal regulations also apply to at-sea sectors that fish in Oregon waters but land into other states.

How will fishermen be affected?

The Oregon Forage Fish Management Plan will allow current fishing activity and practices to continue. For both federal and proposed state regulations, directed fishing on forage fish is prohibited. Directed fishing will be enforced based on exceeding the species aggregate landings amounts, which are evaluated on a per trip basis (vessel landings by trip must be less than 10 metric tons) and on an annual basis (vessel landings by year must be less than 30 metric tons).

Based on an analysis of the landings history of the entire West Coast fleet from 2002-2014, these limits are expected to allow almost all current landings activity. There are separate limits for the whiting at-sea processing sector. NOAA has published a helpful compliance guide, which is attached and can be found on the web here:

http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/fishery_management/ecosystem/secg_ceba1.pdf

Will I still be allowed to discard these species at sea?

Yes. Although ODFW recommends avoidance of these species, we recognize that this isn't always possible. In the case of accidental bycatch, discarding at sea is still permitted under the Oregon Forage Fish Management Plan and any discard at sea will not count toward the vessel's trip landings or annual landings.

What will the consequences be for going over a limit?

If you land an overage of Oregon Forage Fish Management Plan species, you will be subject to a fine (ticket) and any proceeds from sale of an overage will be surrendered to the state. While a fine is a consequence to be carefully avoided, a ticket for a landings overage will not shut down the vessel or the fishery.

How will processors be affected by the Oregon Forage Fish Management Plan?

Processors will be responsible for reporting landed catch on fish tickets, just like with any other commercial fishery landing. There are no restrictions on sale of forage fish landed within the limits. Most of the Oregon Forage Fish Management Plan species are currently landed at extremely low levels – but we do see some of them. Several species (or species groups) that are in the Plan are already required to be sorted at processing facilities, which will allow tracking of these species (or species groups) individually. In addition, ODFW is proposing changes to the sorting requirements that will allow better tracking of overall landings. The changes will require:

1. Sorting of Humboldt squid (*Dosidicus gigas*), and
2. Weighing the remaining catch and reporting the aggregated weight on a fish ticket (by vessel trip); this is currently exempt from fish ticket requirements.

How will the new sorting and reporting requirements help Oregon?

These new requirements will improve our ability to track trends in forage fish, and reduce confusion in landings trends. Specifically, the Humboldt squid, a large squid that is occasionally very abundant, is currently aggregated with some forage fish species in the landings system. The new sorting requirement will prevent any confusion between Humboldt squid landings and a big increase in forage fish species landings.

When will this plan go into effect?

The federal regulations (which apply to fishing from 3-200 miles offshore) went into effect May 4, 2016. The Oregon regulations are in development and will be proposed for adoption by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission during their September 2016 meeting, with regulations effective January 1, 2017. In preparation, ODFW is accepting public input on these management changes, including an open public comment period on the Oregon Forage Fish Management Plan through July 13.

How can I learn more?

Contact Caren Braby, Marine Resources Program Manager, or Cyreis Schmitt, Fisheries Policy Analyst, at (541) 867-4741.

