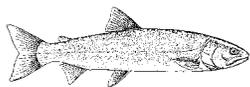


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BULL TROUT

# CHINOOK SALMON HARVEST IN PUGET SOUND

**Wild, native Puget Sound chinook salmon are threatened; hatchery-grown salmon are not.**

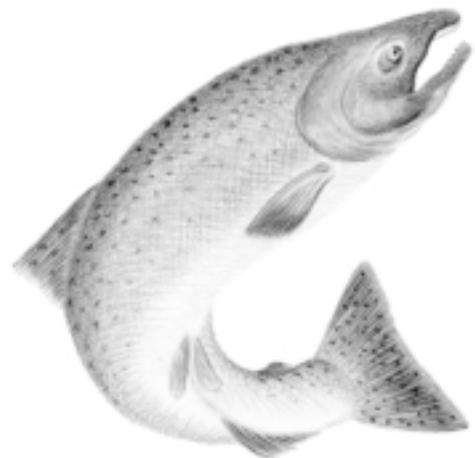
- The recent listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) protects wild, native chinook salmon in Puget Sound as "threatened." Hatchery-grown chinook, with few exceptions, are not considered native and are not protected under the ESA listing.

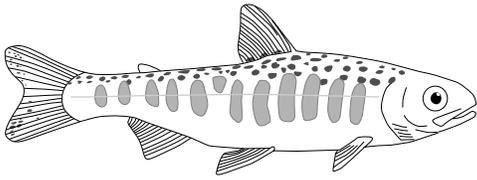
**Salmon fisheries in Puget Sound target hatchery-grown chinook salmon runs whose return rates are above acceptable levels. This is true for commercial, tribal, and recreational fisheries.**

- There is a recreational chinook fishery targeting blackmouth, which are delayed-release hatchery chinook that generally remain in Puget Sound rather than migrating. These fish are released specifically for recreational fisherman.
- There is also a tribal fishery on chinook returning to the Green River that targets the fall chinook salmon run when it meets specific escapement goals. This run is a mixed stock, comprised of hatchery and wild chinook salmon. The Muckleshoot Tribe harvested approximately 2500 chinook returning to the Green River in August, 1999.
- There is one non-tribal commercial fishery on chinook in the Puget Sound occurring in Bellingham Bay targeting hatchery chinook from the Samish River.

**Even though there are no directed fisheries targeting wild, native Puget Sound chinook salmon, some wild chinook are taken incidentally each year through a combination of recreational, tribal, and commercial fishing of other stocks and species of salmon.**

- In recognition of this, the Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) has gradually reduced the harvest rates on commercial fishing over the last 10 to 15 years.
- Even with these reductions, in 1998 the incidental harvest of wild, native Puget Sound chinook salmon was 28% (leaving 72% to return to the rivers).

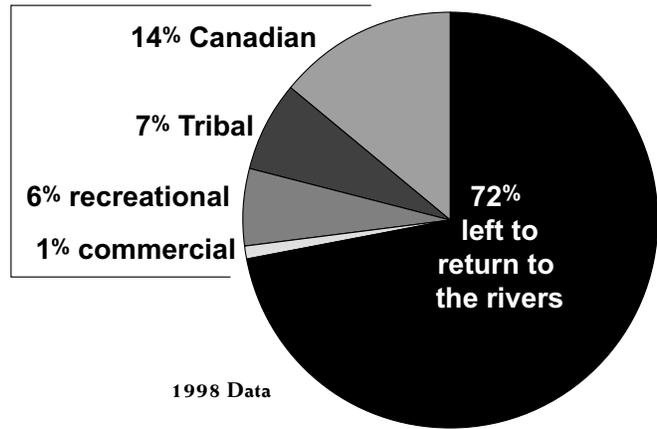




- **The 28% incidental harvest is broken down as follows: 14% Canadian, 7% Tribal, 6% recreational, 1% commercial.**

- Of the 6% taken recreationally, 3% of that was during the blackmouth season.

In 1999, WDFW shortened the blackmouth season to protect wild chinook, so this fishery should only have half the impact on wild, native chinook salmon as in 1998.

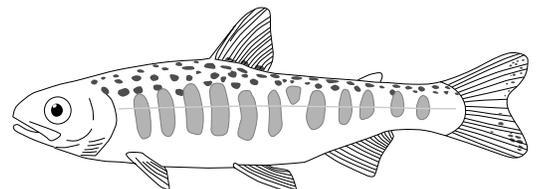


## **The State and Tribes are not planning to close all salmon fisheries.**

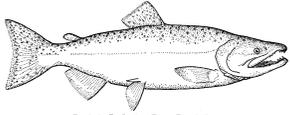
- Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) and the Treaty Tribes jointly co-manage salmon fisheries in Puget Sound. The State and tribes share information and communicate on decisions, but each have opportunities to open, restrict, or close fisheries in Puget Sound.
- Harvest rates have already been significantly reduced over the past 10 to 15 years.
- The "Locke-Anderson Agreement" signed last year closed fishing in northern Puget Sound and the Georgia Strait waters to protect chinook and coho stocks of concern.
- Non-tribal coho salmon fishing and some non-tribal pink salmon fishing will most likely be closed this year as a result of low chinook returns, according to WDFW.
- The decline in salmon populations comes from a number of causes, including harvest, impacts from hatcheries, hydropower and other dams, and destruction and modification of habitat by logging, agriculture, urban development, and other human activities. Harvest alone did not cause the problem; therefore, simply stopping all harvest will not fix the problem. We need to make sure that healthy habitat is available in rivers and streams for the salmon to spawn and grow in, and that the water is cool and clean enough for the salmon to reach their spawning grounds. Many different factors have contributed to salmon declines, and we need to address them equitably to restore salmon.

## **Tribal fisheries are entitled to 50% of harvestable fish. This means that they get 50% of a harvestable run and non-treaty fisherman get the other 50% (after escapement rates are set).**

- Fisheries must be managed in such a way that the weakest stock in the system is protected, as stated in the Puget Sound Management Plan (which came from the Boldt Decision). Therefore, when determining how many fish to take, the Tribes and the state first use computer modeling to see if a stock of fish is harvestable. They determine where the fish are, how many are there, and what impacts this catch will have on other, weaker stocks. If a stock is harvestable, then the numbers are set and it is decided how to share tribally, inter-tribally, and non-tribally. This prevents fishing of threatened stocks like wild, native chinook.



**ENDANGERED  
SPECIES  
ACT**



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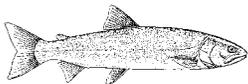
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**BULL TROUT**

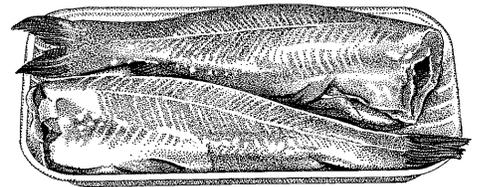


King County, WA

- This 50% is based on the stock of salmon in each watershed system. For example, if 10,000 fish will be returning to the Green River system, it is first decided how many of these fish are needed to sustain healthy runs (escape-ment rate). If 5,000 are needed for escapement, that means that there are 5,000 fish available to be caught. If 2,500 are caught on the coast, 1,250 may be caught by tribes like the Quinault and 1,250 may be taken by non-tribal fisheries. Of the 2,500 that make it into Puget Sound, 1,250 may be taken by tribes and 1,250 by non-tribal fisheries.
- Now that the chinook is listed as threatened under the ESA, tribal fisheries will be directed to harvestable stocks while trying to protect the weaker ones, such as chinook. This may mean reducing fisheries on some stocks of fish or closing fisheries on certain runs that are causing incidental harvest of wild, native chinook.
- Note that tribes still only receive half of the fish harvest, even though the har-vest is declining. Tribal societies get fewer fish these days even though salmon decline is caused in part by non-tribal habitat impacts from urban development, agriculture, forestry and other activities.

**Most of the chinook salmon you see in local grocery stores come from other areas.**

- A very small percentage of chinook in local stores are from the Puget Sound, and these fish are almost entirely hatchery fish. The chinook in local markets mostly come from Alaska, British Columbia, and the Columbia River. Unlike wild Puget Sound chinook, Alaskan and other populations that are harvested commercially are not protected under the Endangered Species Act. Some of the salmon you see also come from foreign hatchery operations found in countries such as Argentina and Chile.
- There are also a number of net pen operations, growing mostly Atlantic salmon, found throughout Puget Sound.



**Salmon harvest issues are complex; for more information, we encourage you to call the following contacts:**

- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife: Bruce Sanford (360) 902-2706
- Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission: (360) 438-1181
- Tri-County Salmon Information Center: 1-877-SALMON-9 or [www.salmoninfo.org](http://www.salmoninfo.org)

