



Federal Caucus News

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Northwest fish recovery effort on track Declares the National Marine Fisheries Service

PORTLAND, Ore. – Plans and actions taken by key federal agencies to implement an ambitious 10-year fish recovery program are on track, the National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) announced today.

“This represents an important first step forward in the region’s commitment to boost survival of fish listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act,” said Bob Lohn, NMFS regional administrator.

NMFS concludes in its report, “Findings Regarding Adequacy of the FCRPS Action Agencies' 2002 Annual Implementation Plan,” that 173 of 199 plans and actions by key federal agencies to implement hydrosystem, habitat, hatchery, harvest and research and monitoring measures throughout the Northwest are largely on track to meet initial program benchmarks in 2003. (FCRPS refers to Federal Columbia River Power System.)

“We are encouraged by the fact that the Northwest’s fish recovery effort is off to a good start despite the numerous challenges we have experienced during the past two years, including the second worst drought year on record and extended power emergencies” said Steve Wright, administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration.

In December 2000, NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recommended a combination of hydro, habitat, harvest and hatchery measures to be implemented

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over the next 10 years to avoid jeopardizing ESA-listed fish. Besides annual progress monitoring (the findings report), NMFS and USFWS set interim check-in dates of 2003, 2005 and 2008 for comprehensive evaluations of recovery efforts and fish survival.

“We view our findings report not as a report card but more like a teacher’s conference,” added Lohn. “Our role is to support and guide this collaborative effort to achieve success.”

The intent of the findings report is to ensure recovery efforts are staying on track. Specifically, NMFS determines if the vast majority of actions taken in 2001 and proposed for 2002 appear likely to meet benchmarks specified for 2003. The report primarily evaluates recovery actions and plans of the three federal agencies responsible for operating the federal hydro system. They are the Bonneville Power Administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. Other federal agencies participating in fish recovery efforts include the USFWS, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Resource Conservation Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

For a copy of the findings report and other related documents, please refer to the Federal Caucus Web site at www.salmonrecovery.gov.

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