



## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

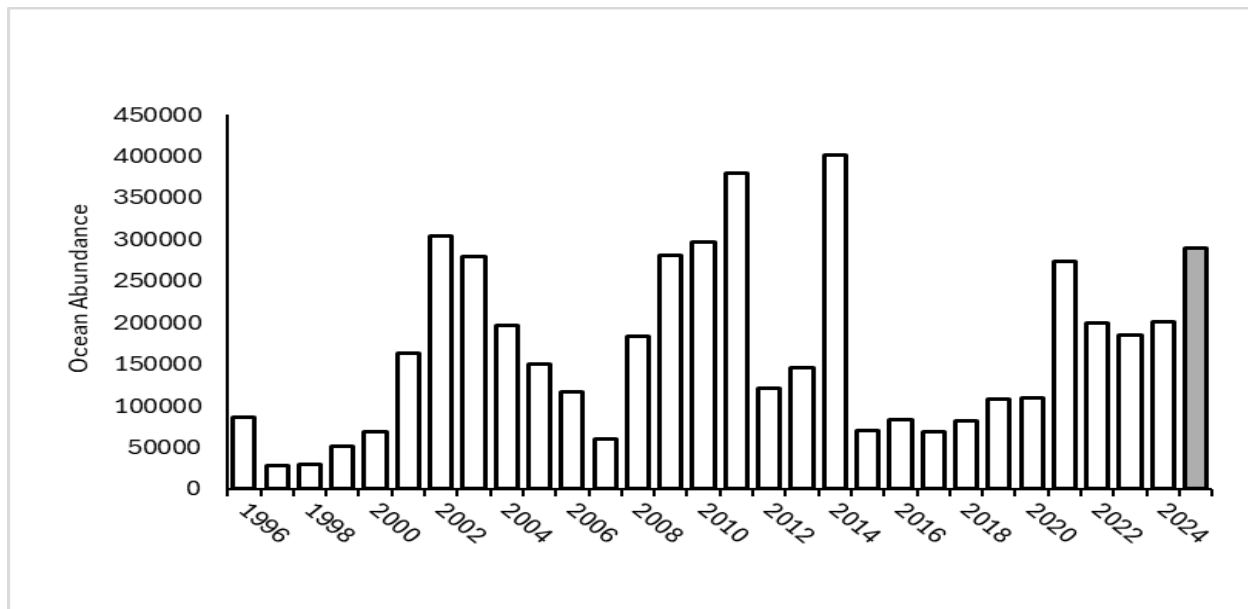
### BACKGROUND

The Commission is being asked to approve bag limits and seasons for wild coho fisheries in Oregon coastal streams.

Since 2009, the Department has been able to provide limited harvest opportunities for wild coho in selected coastal streams in some years, depending on the performance of the runs. These fisheries have proven to be successful and popular, while meeting conservation and recovery needs for the wild coho populations. These fisheries are managed under a process established by the Pacific Fishery Management Council to ensure they do not impact the recovery of Oregon Coastal Natural (OCN) coho. Fisheries must also be approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Preseason ocean abundances of OCN coho were low from 1996 to 2000, averaging 52,800 adults (Figure 1). The annual average ocean abundance for the next decade increased to 201,000 adults, and beginning in 2009, the Department implemented wild coho fisheries in select coastal rivers. However, from 2015 through 2018, wild coho abundances averaged 76,000 adults, and no open fishing seasons occurred from 2015-2020. Recently, OCN coho have responded to slightly more favorable conditions with much improved returns (Figure 1) allowing some harvest opportunity.

**Figure 1. Pre-fishery ocean abundance of OCN coho salmon by year (2025 forecasted).**



The 2024 ocean abundance was 200,000 fish and the 2025 forecasted abundance is 289,000, the highest forecast since the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing in 1998.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

The Department did not conduct any 2025 public meetings, but the proposed regulations have been made available to the public via the ODFW website under Fall coastal salmon management prior to the August Commission meeting. The proposed regulations are similar to those implemented during the last two years and the Department had substantial public involvement at that time including a webinar, public opinion survey, and individual meetings, prior to implementation of those rules. The public has the opportunity to review the supporting annual staff report. The public will have opportunity to provide comment prior to and during the August Commission meeting via the ODFW website under rulemaking ([https://www.dfw.state.or.us/OARs/rulemaking\\_permanent.html](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/OARs/rulemaking_permanent.html)), providing written testimony to the Commission, and/or testifying in person during the Commission meeting. District Fish Biologists along the Oregon Coast may have had informal discussions with members of the public prior to the Commission meeting.

## **ISSUE: 2025 Regulations for Wild Coho Salmon in Oregon Coastal Streams**

## **ANALYSIS**

### Regulatory framework

In addition to Commission approval, fisheries are subject to annual review and approval from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), because OCN coho remains listed under the federal ESA. The NMFS reviews annual ODFW reports on prior year's wild coho fisheries and proposed fisheries for the current year. This process typically occurs in June-July, and at the time of this writing has not been completed for the 2025 wild coho season; thus, implementation of these fisheries would also be contingent upon NMFS' approval.

Amendment 13 of the PFMC's Fishery Management Plan provides harvest control rules for OCN coho salmon. It also forms the basis of the ESA fisheries consultation standard for OCN coho. The NMFS authorizes ESA impacts for freshwater fisheries that, when combined with ocean fisheries, will not exceed those allowed under Amendment 13. For annual ocean fisheries, this limit is based upon the weakest of the three OCN population sub-aggregates, specifically, the North, North-Central, and the South-Central sub-aggregate.

Amendment 13 includes an OCN harvest matrix that compares parental escapement (i.e., parents of fish returning this year) and predicted marine survival to determine an allowable harvest level. Parental Escapement levels in 2022 were in the "High" category (Table 1) and Marine Survival was in the "Medium" category.

**Table 1. Amendment 13 OCN harvest matrix. Bolded values represent 2025 criteria.**

	Marine Survival Index (model-predicted <sup>1</sup> )			
	Extremely Low <2%	Low 2% – 4.5%	Medium >4.5% – 8%	High >8%
Parental Escapement (y – 3)				
High (>75%)	≤8%	≤15%	<b>≤30%</b>	≤45%
Medium (>50 – ≤75%)	≤8%	≤15%	≤20%	≤38
Low (>19 – ≤50%)	≤8%	≤15%	≤15%	≤25%
Very Low (>4/mi – ≤19%)	≤8%	≤11%	≤11%	≤11%
Critical (≤4 spawners/mi)		0 – 8%		

<sup>1</sup> Model incorporates biologic and oceanographic factors to predict marine survival of adult coho.

### Estimation of harvest

To estimate the harvest for proposed fisheries, ODFW staff utilize observed harvest rates from recent fisheries, and incorporate adjustments to account for differences in bag limits and open season dates. These adjusted harvest rates are applied to projected population abundances to project expected catch. These calculations are needed to ensure fishery impacts will remain below the population-specific ESA limits.

### Proposed season/bag limits

All basins proposed for wild coho fishing opportunities in 2025 are the same as in 2024 except for the Umpqua Basin, which is proposed to be closed this year. The Umpqua Basin had a very low coho return in 2022 (the parents of adults returning this year), particularly in the South Umpqua population where no adult coho were observed during ODFW spawning ground surveys. Juvenile coho abundance in the Umpqua Basin the following summer was the lowest observed since the late 1990s. As a result, ODFW is expecting a low return of adults in 2025, especially in the South Umpqua.

Staff recommend that the 2025 harvest fisheries for wild coho salmon be implemented in the basins with associated bag limits as shown in Table 2. Projected harvest, total projected exploitation rate for all fisheries (marine and freshwater), and projected post-fishery spawning escapement are shown in Table 3. Current rules limit the coastwide seasonal bag limit for adult coho to no more than five fish across all open areas in the NW and SW Zones.

**Table 2. Proposed 2025 wild coho salmon seasons and bag limits.**

Sub-Aggregate	Basin	Dates open	Bag Limit (per day/season)
North	Nehalem	9/10-10/26 (We, Sa, & Su only)	1 / 3
	Tillamook	9/10-10/26 (We, Sa, & Su only)	1 / 3
	Nestucca	9/10-10/26 (We, Sa, & Su only)	1 / 3
North-Central	Siletz	9/13-11/14	1 / 3
	Yaquina	9/13-10/10	1 / 3
	Beaver Creek	11/1-11/30	1 / 3
	Alsea	9/13-10/12; 10/25-11/7	1 / 3
	Siuslaw	9/13-10/14	1 / 3
South-Central	Coos	9/13-10/10	1 / 3
	Coquille	9/13-10/15	1 / 3
	Floras	11/1-11/30	1 / 3

**Table 3. Projected 2025 freshwater harvest, exploitation rates (total for marine and freshwater fisheries), and spawning escapement for populations with proposed wild coho fisheries.**

Population	Estimated Harvest	Total Estimated ER (allowable)	Estimated Spawning Escapement
Nehalem	3,700	25.9% (30%)	26,200
Tillamook	1,700	23.5% (30%)	16,100
Nestucca	450	19.2% (30%)	9,900
Siletz	2,400	27.7% (30%)	14,600
Yaquina	1,900	26.4% (30%)	13,100
Beaver Creek	140	20.2% (30%)	2,400
Alsea	2,500	25.9% (30%)	17,800
Siuslaw	4,800	26.5% (30%)	32,100
Coos	3,900	28.5% (30%)	21,500
Coquille	1,800	23.4% (30%)	17,700
Floras	30	17.4% (30%)	1,200

## OPTIONS

1. Adopt proposed modifications to angling regulations in the NW and SW zones as proposed in Attachment 3.
2. Modify staff proposals.
3. No action.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. Option 1: Adopt proposed modifications to angling regulations in the NW and SW zones as proposed in Attachment 3.

### DRAFT MOTION:

**Issue 1:** I move to adopt the staff recommendations for the 2025 wild coho salmon seasons in Oregon Coastal streams as proposed by staff in Attachment 3.

**Effective Date:** *Upon filing*