

Southern Resident Killer Whale Executive Order Final Immediate Action Report July 31, 2018

Executive Order Task
Identify the highest priority areas and watersheds for Southern Resident prey in order to focus or adjust, as needed, restoration, protection, incentives, hatcheries, harvest levels, and passage policies and programs.

Completion Date	<u>July 31, 2018</u>		
Lead Agency	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)		
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Supporting Agencies, if applicable	Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) Puget Sound Partnership (PSP)		

Outcomes/Progress Narrative
<p>WDFW and NOAA have developed criteria in order to determine Chinook stocks that are likely to be most beneficial to Southern Residents. These criteria take into account the best available information on whale diet at different times and places, fisheries data about chinook stocks that overlap with whale distribution, and prioritizing stocks that if boosted may aid the Southern Residents at a critical time of year.</p> <p>The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) held a workshop June 12-13 2018, where the focus was to bring together a small group of agency, tribal, academic, non-profit and other scientists and managers to provide feedback and validation on the priorities criteria. The review of initial priorities included evaluation of the considerations used to identify priorities (i.e., percent of diet, overlap in distributions, seasonal importance, growth potential of stock, etc.) and modeled the outputs of which stocks would rise to be priorities based on criteria selected. NOAA and WDFW have further refined the criteria based upon input from the workshop. The model, list of priority stocks and some frequently asked questions can be found on the NOAA webpage at: http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/protected_species/marine_mammals/killer_whale/Killer_whale_priority_chinook_salmon_q_a.html</p> <p>The model will continue to be updated as we gather additional data and increase our knowledge of where Chinook salmon overlap with the whales, what Chinook runs are important to the whales' diet, and where and when the whales are food limited.</p>

If there are comments or questions on the model, methods or other comments they can be best directed to Teresa Mongillo at NOAA (teresa.mongillo@noaa.gov).

The list of Southern Resident Killer Whale priority Chinook stocks that has resulted from this analysis is a first step to targeting recovery actions to benefit the whales. Now that the list has been produced, the next step is to apply other considerations to decide how to and which tools are most appropriate to benefit Chinook and SRKW (around Habitat, Hatcheries, Harvest, Hydro and Predation). This list does not indicate that the same tool should be applied across all of these stocks/areas. Many additional considerations are important to determining future actions such as:

- Recovery potential or stock contribution (categorize potential contribution by size of recovery potential or by absolute abundance)
- Ecosystem context- vulnerability to other predators
- Feasibility- ESA coverage for short-term actions, \$
- Minimize effects on listed ESA salmon
- Which type of actions will increase abundance the most (which H) for each stock?
- Benefit to fishing opportunities
- Opportunities for tribal collaboration/treaty trust
- Include both Puget Sound, Columbia R. and other focus areas
- Cumulative/comprehensive-portfolio of priority stocks/actions that consider diversity of run timing and distribution and historical perspective

In late June, WDFW and GSRO introduced the outcomes of the prioritization work to the SRKW Prey Working Group to evaluate the criteria and/or priorities developed by NOAA/WDFW and at the NFWF workshop in order to build in regional specifics to potential actions forwarded to the Task Force. The Working Group helped to refine the actions and provide a variety of considerations such as social, economic or policy criteria that may further prioritize the individual actions for various areas/stocks identified.

During the summer of 2018, the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office and each of the seven regional salmon recovery organizations are convening conversations around how best to move the needle on Chinook recovery, including how Southern Resident recovery efforts connect to their work. These recovery groups' goal is identify ways to accelerate habitat protection and restoration to produce more Chinook for orcas and to help speed recovery of the Chinook themselves.

To assist with communication and public awareness, WDFW has led the development of a simple online storymap to better visually display killer whale distribution and diet throughout the year as well as the watersheds that are associated with the priority SRKW stocks. A link to the storymap can be found on the Governor's website.

As more information becomes available and the Task Force discussions mature, the storymap may evolve as a place to access this information. The idea is that this storymap may in the longer term of the Task Force work, assist with the visual representation of SRKW priority actions, and can also aid in telling the story around Chinook recovery priorities.