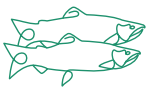




Photo: Eiko Jones - Female Chinook Salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)

Wild Salmon Policy



Fisheries and Oceans Canada | Pacific Region
2018 TO 2022 IMPLEMENTATION
PLAN ADDENDUM



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada

Canada

Wild Salmon Policy (WSP)

2018 to 2022 Implementation Plan Addendum

Context

On June 21, 2019, the renewed *Fisheries Act* received Royal Assent and became law. Informed by extensive consultations with the public, industry, environmental groups and Indigenous peoples, the renewed *Fisheries Act* improves the protection of our fisheries and the aquatic ecosystems that sustain them. It includes amendments focused on reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, restoring fish and fish habitat protection, rebuilding fish stocks, and fish management. Among other things, the Act:

- states that when making a decision, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard (the Minister) shall consider any adverse effects that the decision may have on the rights of the Indigenous peoples of Canada as recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982;
- includes provisions respecting the consideration and protection of Indigenous knowledge, and authorizes the making of agreements with Indigenous governing bodies to further the purpose of the *Fisheries Act*;
- provides comprehensive protection for all fish and fish habitat, allowing for creation of new fisheries management tools to enhance protection of fish and ecosystems;
- allows for the better management of large and small projects impacting fish and fish habitat through a new permitting framework and codes of practice;
- allows for new regulations, including regulations respecting the rebuilding of fish stocks and importation of fish;
- empowers the Minister to make regulations for the purposes of the conservation and protection of marine biodiversity; and
- recognizes that decisions can be guided by principles of sustainability, precaution and ecosystem management.

The WSP Implementation Plan, initially published in 2018, lays out the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) strategy to restore and maintain healthy and diverse salmon populations and habitats. In order to ensure alignment, the Plan contains a commitment to add activities that result from new programming under the renewed *Fisheries Act*. This commitment is captured in Activity 48 as follows:

“Coordinate the addition of activities into the WSP Implementation Plan based on renewed Fisheries Act.”

To meet this commitment, the Department has identified six activities to be added to the WSP Implementation Plan.

Activities

The following activities will be added to the WSP Implementation Plan

| Activity ID | Activity | Lead DFO Sector/Program | Target Completion |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 49 | DFO Pacific Science to provide advice on methodology to estimate Limit Reference Points for salmon Stock Management Units comprised of one or more Conservation Units | Science | 31-Mar-22 |
| 50 | Translate the National Guidance on Rebuilding Plans for application to Pacific salmon in a manner consistent with the WSP | Science | 31-Mar-22 |
| 51 | Coordinate implementation of Fish Stocks provisions for prescribed stocks of Pacific salmon | Fisheries Management | 31-Mar-22 |
| 52 | Study Coho salmon habitat use, productivity and response to land use change in the North Thompson watershed | Science | 31-Mar-22 |
| 53 | Engagement with external partners and stakeholders on Cumulative Effects, Habitat Offsetting and Banking, Prescribed Works and Waters Regulations, <i>Fisheries Act</i> Registry, Codes of Practice and Engagement Framework | FFHPP | 30-Sep-21 |
| 54 | Review and update the WSP Implementation Plan to ensure consistency of definitions with the renewed <i>Fisheries Act</i> | Policy and Economic Analysis Branch | 31-Mar-22 |

The activities highlighted here all have a targeted completion date of March 31, 2022 at the latest. The WSP Implementation Plan reporting is set to conclude at the end of the 2021-22 fiscal year. In an effort to align with the scope of the Plan, the list focuses exclusively on items where work is anticipated to take place within this time frame. This will enable adequate tracking and reporting to be conducted over the remaining duration of the WSP Implementation Plan. There may be additional ongoing activities that are derived from the activities listed above, as well as other long term initiatives, that are beyond the scope of this Plan.

As the current WSP Implementation Plan moves towards completion in 2022, the Department remains focused on salmon. The Minister’s January 2021 supplemental mandate letter highlighted the intent to “bring forward a Pacific Salmon Strategy and deliver on our commitment to conserve and protect wild Pacific salmon and their habitats and ecosystems”. The Department has begun work regionally and nationally on this initiative, and is committed to working with First Nations, provincial and territorial authorities, and key salmon stakeholders to improve our understanding of trends in salmon stocks, protect and conserve salmon habitats and ensure the sustainability of Canada’s salmon populations.

Additional Details for Activities

Activity 49

DFO Pacific Science to provide advice on methodology to estimate limit reference points (LRP) for salmon Stock Management Units (SMU) comprised of one or more Conservation Units (CU)

There are five species of Pacific salmon, including Chinook, Coho, Sockeye, Chum and Pink salmon. Across the Pacific Region, there are over 8,000 documented spawning populations grouped into 459 CUs that are, in turn, grouped into 69 SMUs. LRPs are a necessary pre-requisite for prescribing stocks under the Fish Stocks provisions (i.e. Sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 of the *Fisheries Act*). This activity includes identifying a method for defining LRPs for SMUs, which consist of an aggregate of CUs exposed to similar fisheries and other life history factors. SMUs are the scale at which the Fish Stocks provisions will be applied to Pacific salmon.

Activity 50

Apply the national Policy Guidelines for Writing Rebuilding Plans per the Fish Stocks provisions and the Precautionary Approach Policy to Pacific salmon in a manner consistent with the Wild Salmon Policy

National guidance on Fish Stocks provisions are being developed from the perspective of one stock-one rebuilding plan. DFO Pacific's Science branch will transfer this guidance to SMUs of Pacific salmon and provide guidance on the scale of planning for harvest, hatcheries and habitat (e.g., watershed, ecosystem, etc.).

Activity 51

Coordinate implementation of Fish Stocks provisions for Pacific salmon

DFO Pacific's Fisheries Management branch will coordinate and develop plans to implement requirements of the Fish Stocks provisions for Pacific salmon stocks that are prescribed in regulations. The activity includes identification of SMUs for prescription under the Fish Stocks provisions and work planning to support regulatory requirements (including rebuilding plans) for prescribed stocks.

Activity 52

North Thompson Coho habitat investigations

Coho salmon in the North Thompson River are part of the Interior Fraser Coho population, which is assessed as threatened by Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). However there remains substantial unknowns regarding their early life history in freshwater. This work includes a series of investigations to identify areas of high habitat use, discern levels of habitat productivity, and examine how habitats are being impacted by land use activities.

Activity 53

Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program (FFHPP) engagements

DFO's FFHPP is seeking input from Indigenous peoples, governments and regulators, the regulated community and conservation groups to modernize and develop new policies, frameworks, instruments and guidance to further implement the fish and fish habitat protection provisions of the modernized *Fisheries Act*. In particular, FFHPP is undertaking engagement on the following:

- **Codes of Practice:** outlines best practices for avoiding harmful impacts to fish and fish habitat. The *Fisheries Act* section 34.2 allows the Minister to establish Standards and Codes of Practice.
- **Habitat Offsetting and Banking:** offsetting is an action a proponent can take to counterbalance negative effects of their project on fish and fish habitat. Offsetting is used only after measures to avoid and mitigate any unresolved effects have been exhausted. Habitat banking allows a proponent to create conservation projects in a particular area to offset anticipated adverse impacts to fish and fish habitat. In an ongoing effort to improve the conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat, DFO is proposing to modernize its offsetting and habitat banking policies.
- **Prescribed Works and Waters Regulation:** The proposed prescribed works and waters regulation would provide an additional tool for DFO to manage potential impacts to fish and fish habitat in Canada. This regulation could establish, or “prescribe”, conditions for certain types of routine projects or projects in certain kinds of minor waterbodies. The *Fisheries Act* subsection 34.4(4) provides the authority for DFO to develop this regulation.
- **Cumulative Effects:** Occurs where the impact of multiple pressures overlap and a system does not have adequate time to recover. In so doing, cumulative effects can create a larger impact than that of any of the individual pressures—which might otherwise be considered negligible. DFO is developing a Policy Framework for the Consideration of Cumulative Effects to provide guidance to staff on interpreting legislative obligations and to provide clarity to partners and stakeholders on how cumulative effects will be considered by the Department in regulatory decision-making. The renewed *Fisheries Act* obligates DFO to consider the cumulative effects of regulatory decisions as they relate to fish and fish habitat.
- **Fisheries Act Registry:** DFO is working towards establishing a full *Fisheries Act* Registry portal to provide more information and tools to better support the Government's goals around transparency, access, and accountability. The renewed *Fisheries Act* includes a commitment to report to Canadians.

Activity 54

Review the WSP Implementation Plan

The Department will review the WSP Implementation Plan to identify any inconsistencies in definitions between the Plan and the *Fisheries Act*. The scope of this activity is limited and will not include a fulsome review of the Plan.

Linkages to Renewed Fisheries Act and Existing WSP Implementation Plan Themes

The activities have strong linkages to the fish stock and fish and fish habitat provisions of the renewed *Fisheries Act*, which include:

- measures to maintain fish stocks (Section 6.1)
- measures to develop rebuilding plans for fish stocks (Section 6.2)
- prescribing the list of major stocks (in regulation) to which Sections 6.1 and 6.2 apply (Section 6.3)
- establishing codes of practice for the conservation and protection of fish or fish habitat (Section 34.2)
- prohibition against causing death of fish by means other than fishing (Section 34.4)
- prohibition against harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat (Section 35)

In addition, the activities are connected to the themes that are outlined in the WSP Implementation Plan. Activity 49, which relates to developing methodology to define LRPs, is linked to the Assessment theme which emphasizes the need for developing metrics and indicators to monitor and assess salmon status. Activity 52 is similarly linked to the Assessment theme as its related to habitat investigations. Activities 49 to 53 can all be linked to the Maintaining and Rebuilding Stocks theme as these activities are all part of the Department's efforts to develop rebuilding plans and protect fish habitat. Activity 54 is linked to the Accountability theme, which among other things, commits the Department to update the WSP Implementation Plan as necessary based on the renewed *Fisheries Act*.

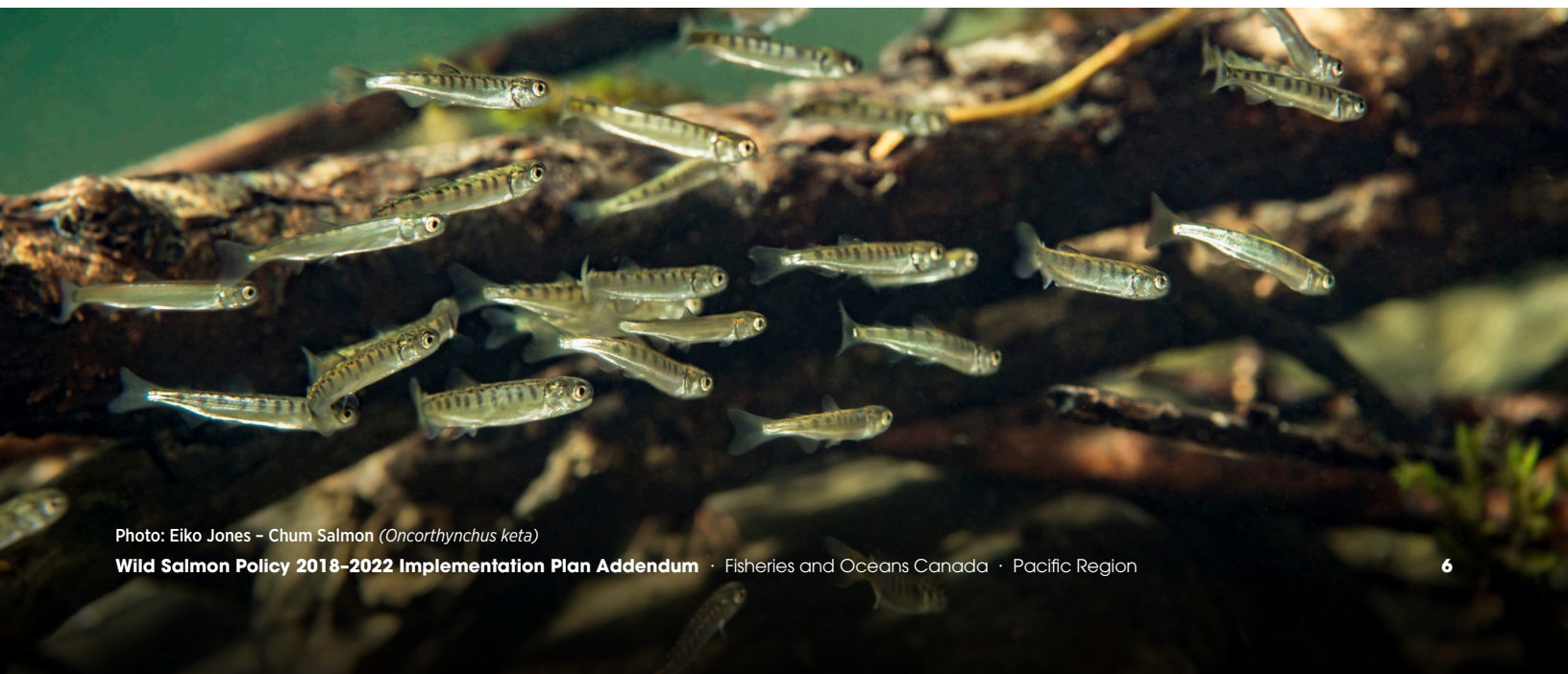


Photo: Eiko Jones – Chum Salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*)