

**2006-07 Winter and Summer Steelhead Management Recommendations
for Tributaries to Hood Canal**

Joint Report Prepared by:

**Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Point No Point Treaty Council
Skokomish Tribe**

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1.1 Management Periods

The management periods indicated in this report define the time interval during which regulatory actions are directed to meeting conservation and allocation needs of steelhead stocks while taking into account catches (actual or expected) of steelhead made outside of the management periods. Since many runs extend over lengthy periods of time and only a small portion of the population of each run is available at the extremes of its run timing, it is impractical to exercise directed management for non selective fisheries on these portions of runs while continuing harvests of other species or stocks. Effort should be spread throughout the management periods to achieve escapement and catch from all segments of the run.

Winter Steelhead

<u>Area</u>	<u>Management Period</u>
Area 9A	December 3 through March 31
Hood Canal Rivers	December 10 through April 14

Management periods for winter steelhead were established by reviewing historical information on the timing of recreational catches. The end of the management period was adjusted to match the beginning of the spring chinook management period.

Summer Steelhead

<u>Area</u>	<u>Management Period</u>
Dosewallips River	June 3 through September 15
Duckabush River	June 3 through September 15
Skokomish River	June 3 through August 25

Summer-run steelhead management periods for the Dosewallips River, Duckabush River, and the Skokomish River were established on the basis of historical harvest patterns by recreational fisheries to include approximately the central 80 percent of the run distribution. Catch accounting periods for all fisheries in Hood Canal rivers and streams are November 1 - April 30 for winter run steelhead and May 1 - October 31 for summer run steelhead.

1.2 Harvest and Escapement

Treaty net fisheries have generally been targeted at earlier returning, often hatchery reared, winter run steelhead recruits which are expected to return primarily from December through February.

Recreational fisheries in Hood Canal streams have generally been targeted at hatchery reared steelhead. The recreational fishing season is open from June 1 through October 31 for gamefish, and some steelhead are reported caught. If hatchery reared winter run steelhead are expected to return, the recreational winter steelhead season is open from November 1 through the last day of February.

No escapement goals have been agreed to between WDFW and the Tribes for any natural stocks of winter or summer steelhead in the Hood Canal area. Wild steelhead spawner escapement has been monitored in some Hood Canal streams (Table 1).

1.3 Management Recommendations

Given the lack of accurate information regarding the abundance of steelhead runs, it is generally recommended that all parties maintain the recent years' fisheries regime, with no major modifications. Prior to implementing any significant changes, the parties should reach agreement on its potential effect to the resource and their fisheries.

Winter steelhead

The status of individual wild winter steelhead stocks in Hood Canal is either depressed or unknown (SaSI 2002; data updated through 2006, pers. comm., T. H. Johnson, WDFW). There is some uncertainty regarding the run timing of naturally reared stocks returning to tributaries of Hood Canal. Consequently, fisheries should be targeted at hatchery-reared returns, which are expected to return primarily during December and January.

Early-timed winter run hatchery reared steelhead smolts were released into the Skokomish River in 2005 and hatchery reared steelhead adults are expected to return to the Skokomish River during the 2006-07 season. No other Hood Canal streams were stocked with hatchery reared steelhead and no hatchery reared steelhead adults are expected to return during 2006-07.

In accordance with prior agreements, the mixed stock harvest to be taken by treaty fishermen in Area 9A shall be limited to the period from December 1 through January 31.

Commercial net fishery openings shall be announced by emergency regulations based on in-season management considerations concerning the status of the steelhead stocks. In the Skokomish River, treaty subsistence fisheries for winter steelhead will close on or before March 15. Skokomish tribal fishers must register in the Skokomish Tribe's fisheries office prior to fishing and all steelhead caught must be made available to Skokomish fisheries staff for sampling purposes. In all other Hood Canal rivers (i.e., Dosewallips, Duckabush, and Hamma Hamma rivers), hook and line commercial and subsistence fisheries will close to treaty fisheries for winter steelhead on or before

March 15.

In order to minimize recreational fishery impacts to wild winter steelhead, recreational fisheries for winter steelhead will close on the last day of February in the Skokomish River. All other Hood Canal rivers will be closed to recreational harvest for winter steelhead. In order to protect wild winter steelhead, wild steelhead release regulations have been in effect in the Skokomish River since 1987 and in all other Hood Canal tributaries, when open during the winter steelhead season, since the 1994-95 season. In addition, wild steelhead release regulations have been in effect since 1993 in all marine areas.

Summer steelhead

The status of wild summer steelhead stocks in Hood Canal is unknown (SaSI 2002; data updated through 2006, pers. comm., T. H. Johnson, WDFW).

No hatchery reared summer run steelhead smolts have been released in Hood Canal streams since 1981.

Tribes of the Point No Point Treaty Area intend to exercise their opportunity to harvest the majority of their share of summer steelhead during the winter steelhead management period, therefore no treaty fisheries directed at summer steelhead should occur in Hood Canal streams.

The recreational fishing season will open from June 1 through October 31 for gamefish. Wild steelhead release regulations have been in effect for recreational fisheries in all freshwater areas since 1992 and in all marine areas since 1993 to protect wild summer steelhead.

1.5 Spawner Surveys

Steelhead spawner escapement should be monitored in Hood Canal streams. Wild steelhead spawner surveys and escapement estimates have been made by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife on the Dewatto, Tahuya, Union, Skokomish, Hamma Hamma, Duckabush, Dosewallips and Little Quilcene rivers (Tables 1). These surveys should be continued. It is noted that past spawner surveys have not included periods prior to March 1, in most seasons.

Table 1. Spawner escapement estimates for winter steelhead in Hood Canal streams, 1977-2006.

Year	Winter steelhead spawner escapement							
	Quilcene	Dosewallips	Duckabush	Hamma	Skokomish	Union	Tahuya	Dewatto
1976-7								
1977-8								
1978-9								
1979-80								
1980-1							94	12
1981-2					822		86	34
1982-3					659		44	22
1983-4					777		172	86
1984-5					968		185	102
1985-6					866		142	32
1986-7					546		119	3
1987-8					742		102	23
1988-9					1444		142	22
1989-90					370		164	no est.
1990-1					729		122	no est.
1991-2					172		73	no est.
1992-3					no est. a/		75	40
1993-4					473		77	18
1994-5		79		13	398		78	22
1995-6		55		8	no est. a/		92	39
1996-7		60	19	35	no est. a/		144	11
1997-8		49	6	18	373	45	126	28
1998-9	29	99	29	21	311	65	340	15
1999-2000	15	78	36	19	261	50	191	23
2000-1	8	89	13	3	286	73	133	19
2001-2	30	52	16	260	156	49	97	30
2002-3	16	96	8	133	132	50	53	18
2003-4	36	no est. a/	29	214	233	58	168	39
2004-5	3	no est. a/	10	123	no est. a/	23	91	23
2005-6	76	no est. a/	21	73	200	86	183	53

a/ no escapement estimate was made because of high flows and/or poor visibility, although surveys were made

Source: WDFW SaSI, updated 7-06, T.H. Johnson, WDFW