



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
West Coast Region
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, California 90802-4213

April 22, 2015

Dear Stakeholder:

Today, NOAA Fisheries announced in the Federal Register its 90-day finding on a petition to delist the Snake River fall-run Chinook salmon Evolutionarily Significant Unit (Snake River fall Chinook) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Our finding is that the petition presented substantial scientific information indicating that the petitioned action may be warranted and we are initiating a process to review the species' status.

Snake River fall Chinook was listed under the ESA in 1992. Since that time, NOAA Fisheries has conducted two status reviews, one in 2005 and one in 2011. In both reviews, we concluded that Snake River fall Chinook should maintain its threatened status under the ESA. Our positive 90-day finding on this petition initiates a new process to collect updated information on the status of Snake River fall Chinook.

The positive 90-day finding does not mean that Snake River fall Chinook will be delisted from the ESA. It simply means that the petitioners presented substantial scientific information that additional review of the species' status is warranted. Over the next 9 months, we will collect and review updated scientific and commercial information to inform a decision as to whether delisting Snake River fall Chinook is warranted. To ensure our review is comprehensive and informed by the most up-to-date information, we are soliciting scientific and commercial information pertaining to the status of Snake River fall Chinook. You may submit information to NOAA Fisheries through June 22, 2015, following instructions in the Federal Register Notice.

We are engaged in two other parallel processes related to the status of Snake River fall Chinook. In addition to our status review under this petition, we initiated our formal 5-year status reviews, as required by the ESA on February 6, 2015, (80 FR 6695). Thirty-one other marine species are also being analyzed under that 5-year review process. The status review initiated today by the petition will be similar in scope to the status review being conducted as part of the 5-year review. Specifically, we will determine whether Snake River fall Chinook should be delisted, reclassified from threatened to endangered, or retain its threatened classification. Our 12-month petition finding (which is due in approximately 9 months) will also address specific arguments and assertions put forth by the petitioner. We are also in the process of developing a recovery plan for Snake River fall Chinook. The information used to inform the development of the recovery plan will also be used to inform our status review under the petition and the 5-year review.

For further information, please contact Elizabeth Gaar, Senior Policy Advisor for the Protected Resources Division at (503) 230-5434.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Yates".

Chris Yates
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Protected Resources

cc: Administrative File: 151412WCR2015PR00040

