



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# NOAA Fisheries' West Coast Salmon Recovery Strategy

**U**nder the Endangered Species Act, we are responsible for pulling threatened and endangered salmon back from the brink of extinction and returning them to sustainable levels. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, we must also conserve current healthy populations that today support valuable tribal, commercial, and recreational fisheries. We will never go back to the pristine conditions of the mid-1800s. Instead, we are working to help salmon thrive, alongside people, in today's urban and rural landscapes and seascapes. Robust science and adaptive management inform decisions, address uncertainties, monitor the status of species, and influence the actions we take.

Our comprehensive salmon and steelhead recovery strategy includes:

- **Guarantee water quality and quantity.** At the most fundamental level, salmon need clean, cold water to reliably support their spawning and rearing.
- **Protect and connect healthy habitat.** Manage land and water that supports, or has high potential to support, functioning habitat.
- **Connect fish populations across a diverse landscape.** Ensuring species are spread out in abundance across the landscape increases their resilience in the face of climate change and pressures of human population growth.
- **Return salmon to their original, high-quality habitat.** We must return salmon above dams and other barriers to their original high-elevation habitat with clean cold water that supports their recovery and provides resilience to climate change.
- **Support harvest and tribal treaty obligations.** Conserve healthy habitats for naturally produced salmon and continue production hatcheries that are also managed to protect and promote natural fish diversity.
- **Restore habitat-forming processes.** In collaboration with land owners and water users, allow natural processes to restore and maintain habitat functions. Salmon need estuaries and rivers with clean water, shorelines free of armoring, wetlands that function to store water and provide habitat, and that are not filled for development. Salmon need adequate and timely river flows, riparian buffers, floodplains that give rivers room to move, and headwater streams. Often nature can do this job more quickly and inexpensively than we can, sometimes assisted by beavers, for example.
- **Preserve genetic diversity.** Use conservation hatcheries to kickstart the return of endangered fish to healthy habitat.
- **Manage harvest for conservation.** Provide sustainable fishing of abundant unlisted wild and hatchery stocks while conserving listed populations.
- **Manage predation.** Seals, sea lions, birds, and other fish, including invasive species, for example Northern Pike and Sacramento pikeminnow, prey or compete with threatened and endangered salmon.

**S**almon contribute to our culture, feed our families, and support jobs in the fishing fleet and beyond. They support recreation and give back to our ecosystem by providing nutrients to other animals, forests, rivers, and oceans.



Salmon have been here for millions of years and have been central to the culture and economy of Indigenous people since time immemorial. In the mid to late 1800s, European settlers exploited West Coast salmon in excess, and over-harvest continued into the 1970s. When native salmon runs abruptly declined, hatchery programs replaced the native runs. Meanwhile, industry, agriculture, mining, forestry, and urban

development filled floodplains, dredged and channelized rivers, contaminated water, removed streamside forests, and created passage barriers to habitat that salmon need to spawn and rear. In 1978, there were 3,041 fishing vessels landing salmon. In 2022 there were 79. By the 1990s, over 28 species were listed under the ESA. Together with our partners, we are working to ensure salmon are a vibrant contributor to the West Coast of the future.

### ◆ Washington Coast

Lake Ozette Sockeye (T)

### ◆ Puget Sound

Puget Sound Steelhead (T)  
Puget Sound Chinook Salmon (T)  
Hood Canal Summer-Run Chum (T)

### ◆ Willamette/Lower Columbia

Lower Columbia River Chinook Salmon (T)  
Lower Columbia River Coho Salmon (T)  
Columbia River Chum (T)  
Lower Columbia River Steelhead (T)  
Upper Willamette River Steelhead (T)  
Upper Willamette River Chinook Salmon (T)

### ◆ Interior Columbia Domain

Snake River Spring/Summer-Run Chinook Salmon (T)  
Snake River Fall-Run Chinook Salmon (T)  
Snake River Sockeye Salmon (E)  
Snake River Steelhead (T)  
Upper Columbia River Steelhead (T)  
Upper Columbia River Spring-Run Chinook Salmon (E)  
Middle Columbia River Steelhead (T)

### ◆ Oregon Coast

Oregon Coast Coho (T)

### ◆ Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast

Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast Coho (T)

### ◆ North-Central California Coast

Central California Coast Coho (E)  
California Coastal Chinook Salmon (T)  
Northern California Steelhead (T)  
Central California Coast Steelhead (T)

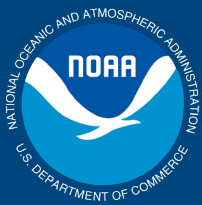
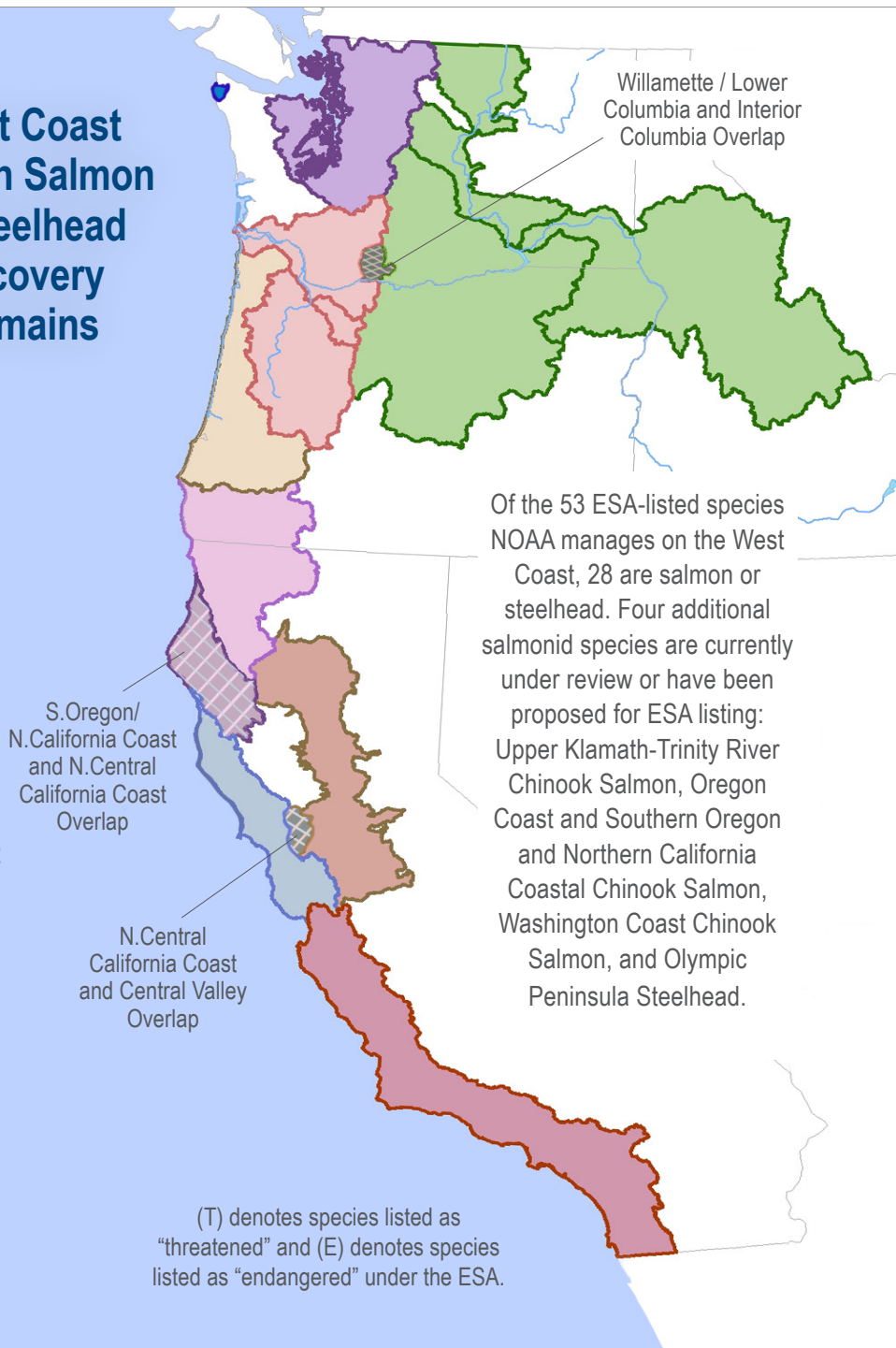
### ◆ California Central Valley

Sacramento River Winter-Run Chinook Salmon (E)  
Central Valley Spring-Run Chinook Salmon (T)  
Central Valley Steelhead (T)

### ◆ South-Central/Southern California Coast

South-Central California Coast Steelhead (T)  
Southern California Steelhead (E)

## West Coast Region Salmon & Steelhead Recovery Domains



For more information visit:  
[Pacific Salmon and Steelhead: ESA Protected Species](#)

