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Intelligence

NOAA: 'Marine finfish aquaculture has no adverse impact on native species in Puget Sound'

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

NWAA urges decision-makers to 'follow the science'

The National Marine Fisheries Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has issued a **biological opinion** (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mPef6Qw6hSIykZB3T5JrdfqHWSAfEPI3/view>), regarding marine finfish aquaculture in Puget Sound.

According to a press release from the Northwest Aquaculture Alliance (NWAA), the American scientific and regulatory agency found little to no negative impact on native species such as endangered salmon, orcas or their habitats.

"After years of meticulous research and study, the scientists at NOAA have concluded, with full scientific certainty, that net-pen aquaculture in Puget Sound is safe for the environment and safe for the endangered species that live in these waters," said Jim Parsons, president of NWAA and CEO of Jamestown Seafood.



Photo courtesy of the Northwest Aquaculture Alliance.

The NOAA analysis was initiated in October of 2018 to analyze the effects of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) approval of the Washington Department of Ecology's Sediment Management Standards regarding marine finfish rearing facilities. In its analysis, NOAA found that EPA's approval:

(<http://www.choicegroup.in/canning>).

- Is "not likely to jeopardize the continued existence" of Puget Sound (PS) and/or Georgia Basin (GB) species, including chinook salmon, PS steelhead, Hood Canal summer-run chum, PS/GB yelloweye rockfish, or PS/GB bocaccio.
- Is "not likely to result in the destruction or adverse modification of the designated critical habitats for any of the listed species."

In response to this expert opinion, the NWAA is calling on regulators and policymakers to "follow the science" in making key decisions about marine aquaculture in Washington waters.

"This study, along with the recent unanimous Washington Supreme Court decision upholding Cooke Aquaculture Pacific's permit to raise native steelhead in Puget Sound, finally puts to rest one of the biggest myths of all: that fish farming has a negative impact on endangered Chinook salmon and Orcas," said Parsons.

Read **NOAA's biological opinion here**
(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mPef6Qw6hSlykZB3T5JrdfqHWSAfEPI3/view>).

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