

Outstanding Needs—Year 1

Prey

While many Year 1 recommendations have made noteworthy progress, the Prey Working Group and Task Force have identified Year 1 recommendations that have not advanced enough or that require additional specificity or components to achieve the goal of increasing Chinook abundance. The Prey Working Group and Task Force propose the following **urgent actions and/or additional funding** needs to advance these recommendations:



- **Fully fund salmon recovery plans.** Work with legislators, stakeholders, and tribes to increase funding to fully implement salmon recovery plans, with a focus on implementing habitat restoration and protection projects that local experts have prioritized in each salmon recovery region and will benefit Chinook and Southern Residents. Ensure funding includes administration and local capacity-building to accelerate projects already underway or with committed resources. Ensure greater collaboration between hatchery and habitat restoration efforts so that habitat is available to recover wild fish and for newly produced hatchery fish (**Urgent Action for Recommendations 1, 2, and 6**).
- **Investigate and address pinniped predation.** Provide funding to WDFW to (1) determine if pinniped predation is a limiting factor for Chinook in Puget Sound and along Washington's outer coast, and (2) more effectively manage pinniped predation in the Columbia River (**Urgent Action for Recommendations 12 and 13**).
- **Increase early marine survival research and monitoring in Puget Sound.** Increase funding to PSP and WDFW for salmon marine survival research and monitoring projects through the Puget Sound Action Agenda, such as Puget Sound Atlantis Modeling, zooplankton monitoring, salmon and forage fish sampling, and pinniped predation work to ensure that results may be integrated into recovery and management plans as appropriate (**Urgent Action for Recommendations 12, 15, 16**).
- **Prevent northern pike expansion into the Columbia River.** Increase funding to DFW for northern pike eradication and containment efforts to prevent predation on salmon in the Columbia River (**Additional Component of Recommendation 14**).
- **Improve water quality.** Encourage Ecology to proceed with language in new rules around increasing the standard for TDG allowances in the Columbia and Snake Rivers that will ensure the durability of the new rule (**Urgent Action for Recommendation 8**).
- **Increase habitat protection.** Revise statutes to shift from a "no net loss" standard to a "net ecological gain" standard to better protect salmon and orcas. Provide adequate funding and support to state natural resource agencies to improve enforcement of the statutes that protect habitat, while funding restoration efforts. Examples of statutes and rules include:
 - RCW 36.70A - Growth Management Act (GMA)
 - RCW 90.58 - Shoreline Management Act (SMA)
 - RCW 77.55 - Construction Projects in State Waters
 - RCW 80.50 - Energy Facilities – Site Locations
 - RCW 76.06 - Forest Practices(**Additional Component of Recommendations 3 and 4**).

Vessels

While many Year 1 recommendations have made noteworthy progress, the Vessels Working Group and Task Force have identified Year 1 recommendations that have not advanced enough or that require additional specificity or components to achieve the goal of decreasing vessel noise and related risks to Southern Residents. The Vessels Working Group and Task Force propose the following **urgent actions and/or additional funding** to advance these recommendations:

- Increase funding and make funding ongoing to WDFW for additional officers and equipment for enforcement (**Urgent Action for Recommendation 20**).
- Create and charter a transboundary forum for waterways management and Southern Resident conservation by working with the appropriate federal partners, tribes, and agencies to integrate and coordinate state, federal, and Canadian actions. Evaluate cumulative impacts of vessel traffic (**Additional Component of Recommendations 24 and 27**).
- Expand the Governor's Maritime Blue scope of work and provide funding to implement recommendations from the Orca Task Force and pursue shipping and other maritime innovations that benefit Southern Residents (**Additional Component of Recommendation 22**).
- Help ensure that the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review of marine facilities is routinely applied to standard and atypical changes in use, ownership, etc. that may lead to increased vessel traffic or unusual vessel traffic dynamics (**Additional Component of Recommendation 27**).
- Provide resources to WDFW to expand boater education and enforcement to central Puget Sound in the fall and extend outreach to promote compliance by vessel operators in newly proposed critical habitat on outer coast of Washington (**Additional Component of Recommendation 19**).
- Encourage the U.S. shipping sector's and recreational vessels' compliance with Canada's interim and potential future (feeding) sanctuary zones like Swiftsure Bank and Pender Island (**Additional Component of Recommendation 22**).
- The Governor's Office and State agencies should coordinate with NOAA and the Navy to reduce noise and disturbance affecting Southern Resident orcas from military exercises and Navy aircraft. In particular, the final rule around training and testing activities conducted in the Northwest Training and Testing Study Area between November 2020 and November 2027 should incorporate enhanced mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate impacts from new or increased exercises involving mid-frequency sonar, explosives and other activities with the potential to adversely affect Southern Resident orca recovery. (**Urgent Action Recommendation 25**).



Contaminants

While many Year 1 contaminants recommendations have made noteworthy progress, the Contaminants Working Group and Task Force also identified Year 1 recommendations that have not advanced enough or that require additional specificity or components to achieve the goal of reducing exposure to contaminants. The Contaminants Working Group and Task Force propose the following **urgent actions and/or funding** needs to advance these recommendations:

- Toxics control funding provided through the state's Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) should be maintained for preventing and cleaning up toxics (**Additional Component of Recommendation 31**).
- Additional funding should be provided for Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) staff to support contaminants recommendations and funding to support local source control inspectors (**Recommendation 30, 31 and 32**). Funding should also be provided for incentives to reduce stormwater threats (**Urgent Action Recommendation 31**).
- Increase funding to specific accounts that support infrastructure improvements, including the Water-pollution control state revolving fund, Stormwater Financial Assistance Program, Public Works Trust Fund, and increase the caps on utility fees to help fund improved wastewater treatment, stormwater, and other contaminant sources (**Additional Component of Recommendation 31**).
- Prioritize stormwater management and cleanup based on evidence of toxic impacts limiting salmon population productivity. (**Urgent Action Recommendation 31**).
- Ecology should update aquatic life water quality standards focused on pollutants most harmful to Southern Resident orcas and their prey (**Additional Component of Recommendation 32**).
- Weave monitoring into each recommendation and dedicate funding to Ecology, PSP, and WDFW to provide data on effectiveness (**Additional Component of Recommendation 33**).



Ensure funding, information and accountability mechanisms are in place to support effective implementation

- **Transition one-time investments in orcas and salmon from 2019 into ongoing investments.** Much of the increases in funding that WDFW received as part of the Southern Resident orca package was one-time funding. To most benefit orcas, this funding should be ongoing and sustainable (**Additional Component of Recommendation 34**).
- Provide funding to PSP, WDFW, GSRO and Ecology to evaluate effectiveness of Task Force recommendations through monitoring and adaptive management while leveraging existing efforts (**Urgent Action Recommendations 35**).

New Potential Recommendations—Year 2

Life After the Task Force

Recommendation YR2-G: Authorize and provide funding for an entity or entities to recover and advocate for the SRKW by implementing Task Force recommendations and creating new recommendations as needed.

Climate

EMISSIONS REDUCTION

Recommendation YR2-H: Take aggressive, comprehensive, and sustained action to reduce human-caused greenhouse gas emissions, with the goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

Recommendation YR2-I: Increase Washington's ability to understand, reduce, remediate, and adapt to the consequences of ocean acidification.

PREY

Recommendation YR2-J: Mitigate the impact of a changing climate by accelerating and increasing action to increase the resiliency and vitality of salmon populations and the ecosystems on which they depend.

VESSELS

Recommendation YR2-K: Provide leadership to reduce emissions and noise from vessels to benefit Southern Resident orcas.

CONTAMINANTS

Recommendation YR2-L: Identify and mitigate increased threats to southern residents from contaminants due to climate change and ocean acidification. Prioritize actions that proactively reduce exposure where the increased impacts are expected to be most severe.

Population Growth

Recommendation YR2-M: Adopt and implement policies, incentives, and regulations to minimize the impact of growth on critical habitat and sensitive ecosystems; enable and channel population growth in ways that results in net ecological gain.¹

Recommendation YR2-A: Minimize potential collision risks posed by (and underwater noise from) the growing number and spatial distribution of fast-ferries and water taxis serving commuters in central Puget Sound.

¹ Placeholder language pending further Population Growth Sub Group deliberations.

Working Group – Contaminants

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation YR2-C: Explore setting minimum standards for local stormwater funding to ensure that all programs have resources necessary to protect water quality.

Recommendation YR2-B: Protect against regulatory rollbacks at the federal and state level.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS - NUTRIENTS

Recommendation YR2-D: Develop a NPDES permit framework for wastewater treatment in Puget Sound

Recommendation YR2-E: Better align existing nonpoint programs with nutrient reduction activities and explore new ways to achieve the necessary nonpoint source nutrient reductions.

Recommendation YR2-F: Collect high-quality, nutrient data in watersheds to fill key knowledge gaps of baseline conditions.

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