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August 4, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Patty O'Toole

SUBJECT: Briefing on the Northwest Fisheries Science Center

BACKGROUND:

Presenter: Scott Hecht, Ph.D. (Fish Ecology Division Director, Northwest Fisheries Science Center)

Summary: Scott will present an overview of the Columbia River basin research conducted by the Northwest Fisheries Science Center. NWFSC is the research arm of NOAA Fisheries.

Relevance: The 2026 Fish and Wildlife Program outlines a variety of research, monitoring, and evaluation needs across Program topics. As one of the research entities in the basin, the work of the NWFSC contributes to the scientific foundation of the Program, helps to address key critical uncertainties regarding ecosystem function and response to restoration actions, and implements Program measures, particularly in the Plume and Nearshore Ocean Strategy and the Habitat Restoration and Protection Strategy.

Background: The Northwest Fisheries Science Center, located in Seattle, WA, is the research arm of NOAA Fisheries. The Science Center is comprised of four divisions- Conservation Biology, Environmental and Fisheries Science, Fish Ecology, and Fishery Resource Analysis and Monitoring. NWFSC scientists work on a range of topics informative to implementation of the Council's Fish and Wildlife Program,

including research, monitoring, and evaluation related to endangered species and habitat restoration, along with direct implementation of the Program's Plume and Nearshore Ocean strategy.

Dr. Scott Hecht serves as the director of the Fish Ecology Division, with staff located in Seattle and Pasco, in Washington, and Point Adams and Newport, in Oregon. As described on the NWFSC website, the division strives "to help resource managers and the public understand ecological links between fish and their Pacific Northwest habitats. We focus on understanding the migratory behavior of fish in the river, estuary, and ocean along with the ecosystem processes that affect growth and survival in these contrasting environments. A major area of interest is the Columbia River estuary, where we study physical, chemical, and biological interactions that affect fish populations." Dr. Hecht will provide an overview of the portfolio of the center's research and priorities related to the Columbia River.

More info:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/about/fish-ecology-division-northwest-fisheries-science-center>