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April 1, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Kris Homel

SUBJECT: Briefing on cycles of productivity in the Ocean

BACKGROUND:

Presenter: Brian Burke, Ph.D. (Supervisory Research Fishery Biologist, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Northwest Fisheries Science Center)

Summary: Brian will present research findings and outlooks associated with Chinook and Steelhead returns to the Columbia River based on indicators of ocean conditions.

Relevance: The monitoring efforts associated with Brian's presentation have been consistently supported by the Council and were also highlighted as critical in both the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program and the 2020 addendum. These efforts are implemented through Project #1998-014-00, *Ocean Survival of Salmonids*. This information is relevant to our high-level indicators and strategy performance indicators by providing a preview of what is expected for adult returns in the current year and an overview of the ocean ecological indicators. This work addresses several measures in the Fish and Wildlife Program.

Workplan: Fish and Wildlife Division work plan 2025; Program planning & Coordination.

Background: The Council's research and monitoring efforts related to the marine environment for anadromous fish began in 1998 in response to the 1996 amendment to the

Northwest Power Act, which calls on the Council to consider ocean conditions when making project funding recommendations.

The Council's Fish and Wildlife Program recognizes the ocean environment as an integral component of the Columbia River ecosystem. Measures in the Program support monitoring the ocean conditions and in-river restoration actions to determine those actions of greatest benefit, to separate the effects of ocean-related mortality from that caused in the freshwater part of the life cycle, and to assess salmonid survival and evaluate restoration potential given variable ocean conditions.

To date, full support for this baseline information has not been provided by Bonneville Power Administration as recommended by the Council as part of the Mainstem and Program Support Project review on August 14, 2019 (please see *Project-Specific Recommendations (page 13)*).

More info: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/science-data/ocean-conditions-indicators-trends>