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November 10, 2015

### MEMORANDUM

**TO: Fish and Wildlife Committee members**

**FROM: Jim Ruff – Manager, Mainstem Passage and River Operations**

**SUBJECT: Proposal for a predator management science review by the ISAB**

### BACKGROUND:

**Presenter:** Jim Ruff

**Summary:** The Council's 2014 Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program calls on the federal action agencies, in cooperation with the Council, state and federal fish and wildlife agencies, tribes, mid-Columbia PUDs, and others, to convene a technical work group to: a) determine the effectiveness of predator management actions; and b) develop a common metric to measure the effects of predation on salmonids, such as salmon adult equivalents, to facilitate comparison and evaluation against other limiting factors. This issue has been discussed at several recent Fish and Wildlife Committee meetings, as well as with the fish and wildlife managers during the recent Regional Coordination Forum. The potential for a future science review of the effectiveness of predator management actions was also discussed at the October 16, 2015, Independent Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB) meeting. Staff recommends deferring formation of a technical work group to address predator management issues until after the ISAB has completed its science review on this topic, which would help inform the technical work group's deliberations and efforts. Staff also recommends that the Council formally request the ISAB to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the various predator management programs and the feasibility of developing a common metric to measure the effects of

predation on salmonids. Note that an ISAB science review of predation will also need to be approved by the ISAB Administrative Oversight Panel, i.e., by NOAA Fisheries and the region's tribes.

**Relevance:** One of the Council's emerging high priorities addresses "preserving program effectiveness by supporting expanded management of predators." (See p. 116 of the Council's 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program.) This priority action was recommended by numerous state, tribal and regional entities during the 2013-14 program amendment process and subsequently adopted by the Council into the program.

**Workplan:** This presentation addresses Council work plan item 2.B, which promotes regional fish and wildlife recovery by prioritizing and implementing 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program actions.

**Background:** During the 2013-14 program amendment process, it was recommended that the revised program should explicitly address the overall effects of predation on native fish. This is also consistent with an earlier ISAB recommendation that identified predation as one of the threats to sustainability. Fish managers and tribes recommended expanding the northern pikeminnow dam angling removal program to other dams on the lower Columbia River. NOAA Fisheries also specifically recommended the program should strive to measure the overall effects of predation on native fishes, particularly salmonids, and express the effects in a common term such as salmon adult equivalents. By developing and agreeing to use a common metric for predation, it would facilitate comparison and evaluation of predation against other limiting factors. Consistent with the 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program, one way to accomplish this task is to convene a regional technical work group to address these issues.

**More Info:** While some support was expressed during the Regional Coordination Forum to form a technical work group to address predator management, others expressed concerns about a shortage of staff resources needed to participate in another technical forum and the amount of time and effort it will take to address the complex issues associated with predator management. Accordingly, staff recommends deferring formation of a technical work group to address predator management issues until after the ISAB has completed a science review on this topic. The ISAB's science review of predation will help inform a future technical work group's deliberations.