

**PREDATION WHITE PAPER
RESPONSE TO COMMENTS
March 2000**

This document describes the NMFS response to review comments on the draft white paper titled "Predation on Salmonids Relative to the Federal Columbia River Power System." Formal reviews were received from Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority, and Fish Passage Center. Comments or analyses from the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and U.S. Geological Survey were included in some of the fishery agency review comments.

Most sets of comments from reviewers were either identical or very similar. Comments received were divided into three categories for response: comments that were speculative in nature or addressed policy issues, comments that addressed minor aspects of the white paper or editorial format, and technical comments of a scientific nature.

I. Response to policy comments

The purpose of the white papers was to summarize the scientific data available on the Federal Columbia River Power System as it is configured today. The data are available from a variety of sources and NMFS relied most heavily on publications and contract reports as sources of information. The white papers do not address the possible effects on salmonids that might accrue from major changes to the present configuration of the hydropower system (e.g., drawdown or dam removal). We made no attempt to address policy issues as they pertain to the effects of predation on the survival or recovery of salmonids. Other forums such as the Plan for Analyzing and Testing Hypotheses (PATH) and the Cumulative Risk Initiative (CRI) may address these issues. It is recognized that many of the impacts of dams identified in the white papers would decrease with removal of dams.

II. Response to editorial and minor comments

Comments on content, discrepancies, and editorial suggestions were much appreciated. Changes to the text were made as needed.

III. Response to technical comments

Many changes were made in response to specific, well substantiated technical comments. Almost all of these involved corrections to references cited and study results reported, or the addition of information from recently published, significant references.