

Comment Template

Please utilize this template to provide virtual or written testimony for the ODFW commission meeting on Friday, October 15, 2021.

1. Formal salutation
2. Introduce yourself
3. State the problem
4. What's causing the problem
5. How to fix the problem
6. Conclude with "Thank you"

TIP: Make it personal - 390 words is close to the 3-minute time limit folks receive for public testimony - you don't have to use all 3 minutes, get to the point and get your message across.

Formal Salutation: Chair Wahl, Commissioners, and Director Melcher,

Introduce yourself: Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is [insert full legal name], and I live in [input where you reside]. *Give a description on why you are testifying and your connection to the Rogue and South Coast watersheds. Ex. I travel to the Rogue and south coast every year to fish these rivers, spending money on hotels, restaurants, and groceries.*

State the problem: Why are you concerned about winter steelhead in southern Oregon? How does the department's proposed management plan fail to address the management needs for this population?

For example: "Winter steelhead are a unique species facing mounting threats from climate change, fisheries, and habitat loss. The October draft of the Rogue South Coast Conservation Management Plan proposes wild steelhead harvest without adequate population estimates, harvest rates, or overall population mortality. The current draft contains far too much uncertainty and implements excessive risk to wild steelhead in southern Oregon."

How to fix the problem: How can the Commission help? What actions should the management plan contain to ensure that wild winter steelhead populations are managed sustainably? We encourage you to advocate for catch and release of wild steelhead until adult monitoring shows that harvest can be done sustainably.

For example: "I request that the commission direct the department to adopt catch and release regulations until adequate adult monitoring is in place. ODFW staff should implement this basic, fundamental monitoring before allowing the harvest of state game and fish species. Management actions should be dependent on adult population estimates, escapement goals, and expected fisheries mortality of wild winter steelhead."

Thank you: Provide a brief wrap up of your testimony. Consider including a statement of how taking action will contribute to a future of abundant, wild fish.

For example: "Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to the adoption of catch and release regulations for wild winter steelhead for the first five years of the RSP or until ODFW collects the data necessary to make informed, sustainable harvest decisions. This necessary action will help ensure that we have abundant wild steelhead in southern Oregon."

Topics and problems:

- Catch and release for wild steelhead will not eliminate harvest opportunity; harvest of hatchery steelhead will still be available.
- 89% of wild harvest occurs in the Rogue and Chetco River's; both of these rivers have thousands of hatchery fish for harvest opportunities.
- No population estimates for adult steelhead for the middle and lower Rogue, Illinois, Applegate, or any south coast watersheds.
- No current estimate of harvest rate or overall mortality in Rogue or south coast. Idaho observes a 5% catch and release mortality rate and Washington uses an 10% catch and release mortality rate. Oregon does not observe a catch and release mortality rate nor is it included in this plan.
- Proposed monitoring does not commit to obtaining or using adult population estimates or escapement goals for Rogue or south coast.
- No Adult spawning surveys were conducted in the Rogue Basin this year.
- Catch and release will continue to allow opportunities to fish without closing down the sport fishery.
- Percent Hatchery Fish on Spawning Grounds is unknown (pHOS).
- Offsite hatchery releases are being proposed in the plan.