

Species Biodiversity and Food Web (SBFW)

The initial Puget Sound Partnership discussion paper of the Species, Biodiversity and Food Web topic provides a good overview of the threats and stresses to species in the Puget Sound Watershed and a brief introduction to the strategies, management tools, and criteria for the evaluation of this topic. However, we feel the paper is incomplete, contradictory in places and confusing, especially as it relates to the proposed ecosystem management strategy often offered as a possible panacea to species diversity concerns.

Talking Points:

1. Can ecosystem management be conducted in the vacuum of no habitat?
 - a. The Partnership explicitly states the Species Biodiversity issue does not address habitat, yet in many instances throughout the paper ecosystem management is presented as the best approach forward. Ecosystem management implies habitat no?
2. The paper jumps from touting individual species recovery plans (page 12), to warning against species recovery plans for multi-species (page 12), to fully promoting ecosystem based management that does not even mention species (page 14). Is the partnership going to promote individual species recovery plans, a broad based ecosystem management approach or multi-species recovery?
3. More details are needed from the Partnership to adequately explain the ecosystem management-where has it been successful, what is the basic approach and most importantly how does the Partnership foresee the development and implementation of an ecosystem wide approach?
4. Current HCP's and other recovery plans need to be critically evaluated by an independent science panel for their effectiveness before used as a model for a Puget Sound ecosystem management plan. The PSP white paper touts several plans including the Bald Eagle and Brown Pelican. Why were these efforts successful? Why have others failed?
5. There are inconsistencies in the paper related to forage fish populations and their actual status. The paper both implies a decline (page 1) and a stable populations (page 8). There should be special attention paid to the Cherry Point herring stock which used to comprise half the State's spawning biomass of 15000 tons and now only constitutes 2000 tons.
6. Regardless of the contradiction there are many species that need updated population health status reports.
7. We need to proactively address recovery plans from the perspective of 'listed' as well as non-listed species of concern.
8. We cannot wait until all the baseline data is in for critical species populations. We need to start acting now on a comprehensive Sound wide recovery plan and maintain individual action already in the works.
9. We have to avoid inconsistent actions, like those of NOAA in regards to Orca management concurred with the Army Corps decision to dump contaminated dredge spoils into the Sound as not being seen as contradictory to the recovery efforts of the Whale. Fortunately this decision was overturned by the Port of Seattle's Commission and celebrated by the Partnership.
10. The Partnership needs to get involved with local governments and land use decision-makers as their decisions impact at risk species. Ensuring the support of local governments is critical to create support for an ecosystem management plan and to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.
11. Invasive species