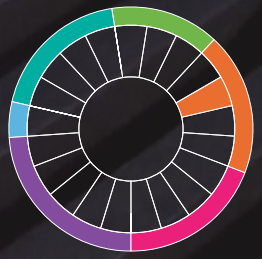
Puget Sound Quality of Life Index

Recovering the Puget Sound ecosystem will reap many benefits—both tangible and intangible—for all of our residents. Whether we are employed in a marine industry, celebrating our cultural traditions, boating, or simply enjoying the scenic views, we receive gifts from Puget Sound that are part of the reason that we want to live here. A healthy Puget Sound includes a thriving natural world, a vibrant economy, and a high quality of life for people.

The Puget Sound Partnership is working on a region-wide Quality of Life Index that will assign a numeric value to these intangible benefits, combining attributes related to aesthetics, culture, recreation, and the economy. Work on defining the specific items to be included in the Quality of Life Index is underway and will seek input from a number of interest groups, as well as be informed by related efforts taking place at the local level. The Quality of Life Index will be presented to the Leadership Council in 2013, and its targets will be identified soon after.

Sound Behavior Index



Many of our common day-to-day behaviors and practices may seem benign on their own, but when multiplied by 4.5 million residents, their cumulative effects can harm Puget Sound. A crucial step in Puget Sound's recovery is fostering beneficial behaviors and reducing harmful ones in order to reverse negative trends influenced by human actions.

The Puget Sound Partnership has recently developed a Sound Behavior Index that is based on a survey that will be conducted every two years among a scientifically selected sample of Puget Sound residents. The survey asks them about specific, measurable, repetitive behaviors that affect water quality and aquatic health. This index also measures social capital—the bonds that bring people together and signify a society's ability to solve complex issues such as environmental problems.

The Sound Behavior Index will distill the region's environmental performance into a single score, which can be tracked across time. By measuring long-term shifts in behaviors and practices across the Puget Sound region, the index gives policy makers a tool to set priorities for regional and local programs. Data for the Index will be available in late 2012.

Photo Credit: Kurt Clark

Recreational Fishing Licenses

Recreational fishing is part of the lifestyle of Puget Sound. For generations, residents of Puget Sound and our many visitors have enjoyed fishing in the Sound and along its numerous rivers and streams. Recreational fishing provides an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and is part of the lifestyle of Puget Sound. Today, because of the decline in some populations of fish, recreational fishing is closely managed to allow recreational fishing without harming individual species or stocks that need protection. Our long term vision, as recovery proceeds, is to restore the ecosystem and health of Puget Sound to ensure sustainable, ongoing recreational fishing.

Photo Credit: WSDOT

Recreational Fishing License Sales

Recreational fishing license sales are being tracked as an indicator of Puget Sound's overall health and the prosperity and quality of life for the people in the region. This indicator was adopted without setting specific 2020 targets because annual goals are set through seperate regulatory processes.

Staff are considering including this parameter in the Quality of Life Index that is under development.

Recreational Fishing and Crabbing Permits for the Puget Sound
1999-2000 Season through 2019-2020 Season

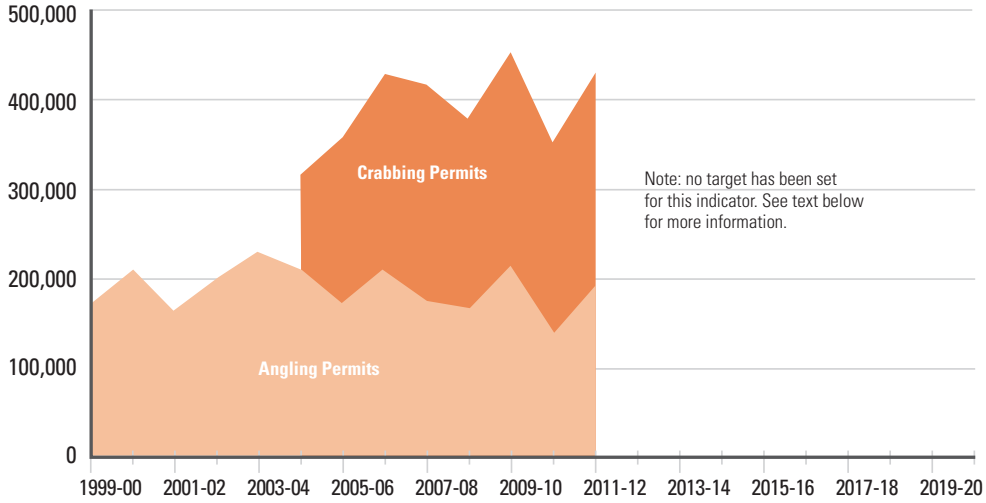


Figure1. Fishing licenses: Number of saltwater or combination license holders that fished or intended to fish in Puget Sound, as estimated by the Dedicated Funds telephone survey conducted after the end of the license year. License years run April 1 through March 31.

Crabbing licenses: Number of shellfish-only license holders that purchased a Puget Sound Crab endorsement. Available since 2004-05, when the Washington State Legislature created the Puget Sound Dungeness crab endorsement, which allows data to be collected.

Source: Catch Record Card Data, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Interactive License Database (WILD) Dedicated Fund Telephone Survey

Commercial Fisheries Harvest

Commercial fishing is a key industry in Puget Sound. Millions of dollars of revenue are generated annually from fish sales. The 17 federally recognized tribes in Puget Sound, along with Washington State, jointly manage the fish and shellfish resources. By treaty, tribal fishers collectively and non-tribal fishers collectively are each entitled to up to one-half of the harvestable amount. Every year, limits are set based upon a complicated set of factors that are used to predict how many fish will be available for harvest, taking into account the status of protected and non-protected stocks. Overall harvest limits are set to ensure that harvests are sustainable and there will be adequate salmon resources into the future. Then this must be divided into commercial, recreational, subsistence, and ceremonial harvest. Our long-term vision, as recovery proceeds, is to restore the ecosystem and health of Puget Sound to ensure sustainable ongoing fishing, including commercial.

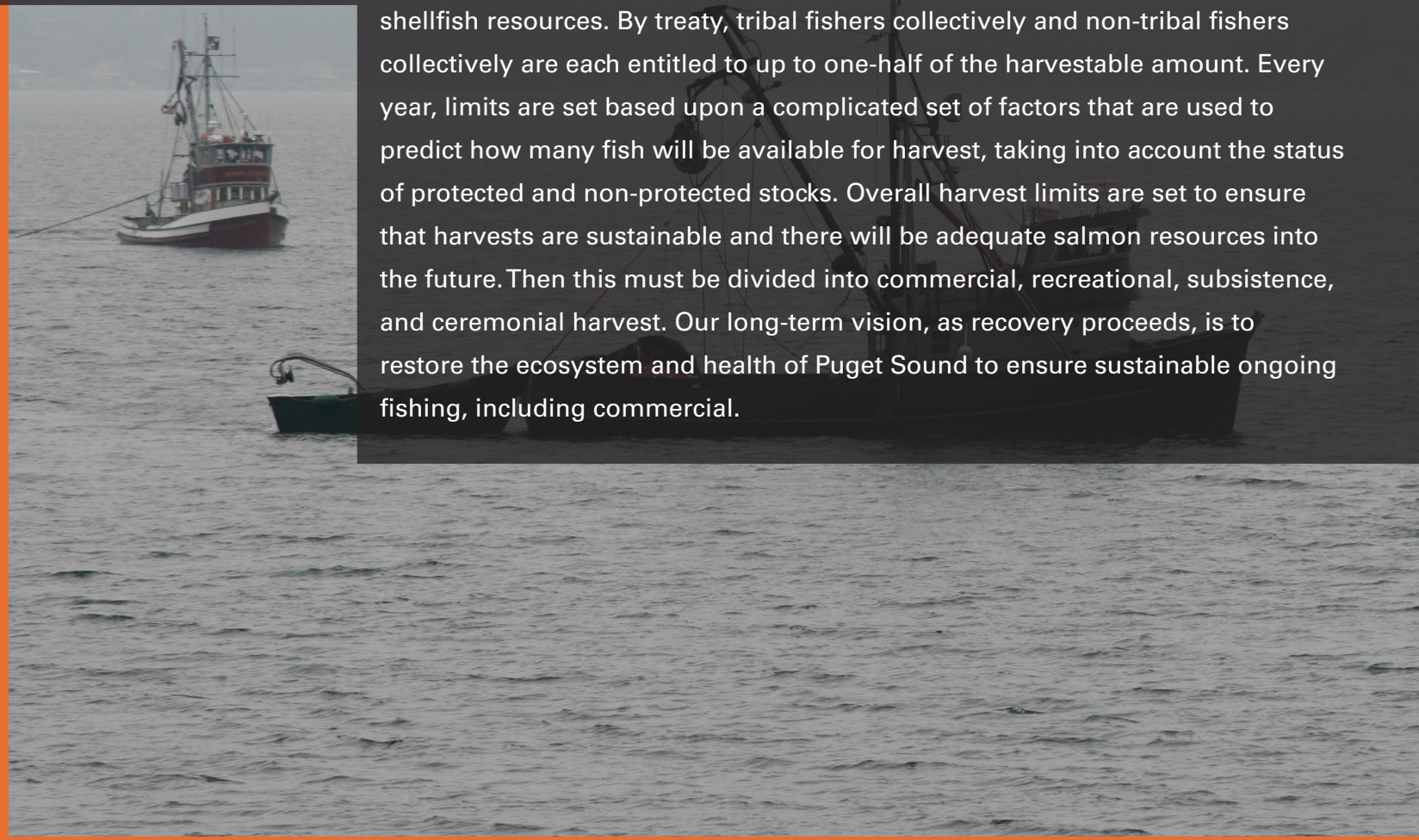


Photo Credit: Canopic@flickr

Commercial Fisheries Harvest

The commercial fisheries harvest indicator was adopted by the Leadership Council without setting a specific 2020 target. Commercial harvests are regulated through a seperate legal process.

Staff are considering including this parameter in the Quality of Life Index, which is under development.

Pounds of All Salmon Caught in Puget Sound Commercial Harvest
In Millions, 2000-2020

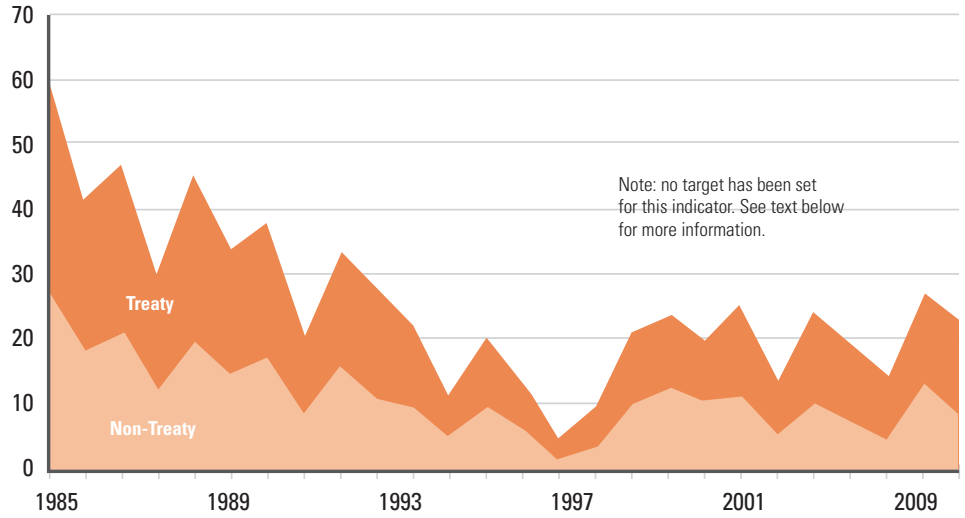


Figure1. The graph shows the pounds (in millions) of all salmon sold in commercial fisheries. Additional commercial benefit accrues from secondary businesses (e.g. restaurant sales) and recreational fisheries as well (not shown here). Note that commercial harvest also does not represent all harvest impacts on a species (e.g. unsold by-catch or gear-related mortalities). The treaty/non-treaty breakout shown here does not reflect allocation balance for a number of reasons.

Source: Historic Catch and Landing System (HCLS) and TOCAS and LIFT systems, jointly maintained by the treaty tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.