

WDFW loses 9 percent of yearly chinook production in hatchery disaster

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

Washington's campaign to rear more salmon for orcas suffered a setback Dec. 14 as 6.2 million chinook fry suffocated at a Fish and Wildlife hatchery in Pierce County.

The losses amounted to about 9 percent of the 68 million chinook raised annually at Fish and Wildlife hatcheries. The department's hatchery division manager, Eric Kinne, called the loss devastating and one that won't be easy to make up.

Increasing hatchery production is part of Gov. Jay Inslee's proposed \$1.1 billion orca-rescue plan. The plan was based on recommendations from the Southern Resident Orca Task Force. Inslee also embraced a recommendation to look at removing four dams on the Lower Snake River to increase fish runs.

The dams are part of a river system that allows wheat farmers to barge grain to export terminals on the Columbia River. Other elements of the orca recovery plan could affect land regulations and water rights.

The chinook fry at Minter Creek Hatchery in Gig Harbor died during an early evening windstorm that knocked out electricity to pumps that constantly flow water through about 900 small trays. Each tray held about 6,800 fry, Kinne said.



WDFW

Workers harvest chinook salmon. Millions of salmon fry were lost after a power outage shut down pumps at the Minter Creek Hatchery, one of 83 operated by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Hatchery workers were unable to start a backup diesel generator to keep the water flowing. "It was a mad scramble," Kinne said.

After a half hour, deprived of oxygen in freshwater, the fish began to die, Kinne said. Fish and Wildlife has not said why the generator did not start. "We're still investigating the root cause," Kinne said.

The mishap killed 4.2 million Deschutes fall chinook fry, 1.5 million Minter Creek fall chinook fry and 507,000 White River spring chinook fry. Fish and Wildlife had planned to end the production of White River spring chinook fry, but decided to rear more this year in an early effort to increase prey for orcas.

The chinook were sched-

uled to be released in May or June. Out of the 6.2 million fry, about 14,700 could have been expected to return after three to five years in the ocean to be harvested or to spawn.

Fish eggs at the hatchery, including roughly 4.2 million chum salmon and 2 million coho salmon, survived the power outage.

The losses were higher than the 2.4 million chinook fry that died when mud, gravel and trees flooded a Kalama River hatchery in southwest Washington during a storm in 2015.

The Washington Farm Bureau, which is represented on the orca recovery task force, said it supported increased hatchery production. It abstained, however, from endorsing the slate of

recommendations sent to Inslee, primarily because of the recommendation to study removing the four dams.

The dams generate enough electricity to power a city the size of Seattle, according to the Bonneville Power Administration. The dams have long been criticized by environmental groups as impediments to fish.

The dams were built between 1962 and 1975 and have fish passages. According to NOAA Fisheries, the number of wild spring and summer chinook returning to the river has declined since the dams were built, but increased hatchery production has more than offset any loss of prey base for orcas caused by the dams.

There is no evidence orcas distinguish between wild and hatchery fish, according to NOAA Fisheries, which concluded in 2014 that removing the dams was not necessary to recover orcas.

Inslee said he wants a task force to study whether the hydroelectricity could be replaced with wind and solar power, and whether the barges could be replaced with trucks and trains. The Army Corps of Engineers operates the federal dams. Inslee said a state task force could contribute to a court-ordered environmental review of the dams. Inslee has proposed spending \$750,000 on the task force.

Trump wraps farm bill for Christmas

By **CAROL RYAN DUMAS**
Capital Press



President **Donald Trump**

Perdue said Trump's signature is a Christmas present to American agriculture.

"Farmers take financial risks every year as a matter of doing business, so having a farm bill in place gives them peace of mind to make their decisions for the future," he said.

The signing of a new farm bill by President Trump on Nov. 20 delivers just what farmers and ranchers were wishing for this Christmas season.

Farm groups were quick to register their appreciation and relief in press statements thanking Trump, his administration and Congress for securing a bill before the clock ran out on 2018.

The American Farm Bureau Federation said enactment means risk-management tools, foreign market development and environmental stewardship programs continue to be available — and on terms that reflect a much tougher economy than when the last farm bill became law.

"The farm bill helps to ensure the food security and economic security of our nation. Directly or indirectly, it benefits everyone in towns large and small," Zippy Duvall, AFBF president, said.

National Farmers Union said the leaders and staff of House and Senate agriculture committees delivered on much-needed improvements to the previous farm bill and continued support for programs that aid family farm sustainability and emerging markets.

"Farmers Union members are relieved to have the support of the farm bill heading into an uncertain future for American agriculture," Roger Johnson, NFU president, said.

"We're entering a sixth year of devastatingly low farm prices, leading to substantial financial stress for farm families and forcing many out of business," he said.

USDA Secretary Sonny

The National Association of Wheat Growers said the signing marked a historic event for all of U.S. agriculture.

"The 2018 Farm Bill provides farmers with the certainty and stability they need to continue producing a safe and nutritious food supply while using fewer resources and maintaining healthy soil for crops," Jimmie Musick, NAWG president, said.

National Corn Growers Association said farmers will be able to look forward to a new year with the certainty of a new farm bill.

"Between depressed commodity prices, record-low farm incomes and tariffs and trade uncertainty, today's signing is very welcome news," NCGA stated.

The American Soybean Association said it's a success to have the legislation signed before the end of the year.

"We appreciate the level of assurance the bill provides and will now be able to better focus on working with the administration and Congress on other issues affecting the competitiveness and profitability of U.S. beans," Davie Stephens, ASA president, said.

Irrigation transfer bill passes U.S. House

By **DAN WHEAT**
Capital Press

U.S. House, 358-1, Dec. 19.

H.R. 6652, introduced by Rep. Dan Newhouse, R-Wash., in August passed out of the House Natural Resources Committee Nov. 15. It must pass the Senate before the end of the year to

make it through this Congress.

The bill is in keeping with a December 2017 agreement between the district and bureau. It transfers title of a portion of lands and irrigation canals from Chandler Pump Station, 11.2 miles east of

Prosser, and running 40 miles east. The district has already paid the bureau nearly \$4.6 million on a lease-loan over 65 years for the system, pays its maintenance and is liable for it, district officials have said.

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Look for the Show Guide January 4th in Capital Press

Wednesday, Jan. 16		
Cascade Hall — McKenzie Room		
9:30-10:15 a.m.	Current Trends in Agriculture	Carl Sampson Managing Editor, Capital Press
10:30-11:30 a.m.	Wage, Hour & Civil Rights Laws	Kristin Bremer Moore Partner, Tonkon Torp LLP
1:15-2:15 p.m.	Energy Trust of Oregon's Efficiency Upgrades Incentives	Ulrike Mengelberg, Cascade Energy, Inc. & Doug Oppedal, Evergreen Consulting
2:30-3:30 p.m.	Interest Rates: Outlook & Impacts on Rural America Brought to you by Harvest Capital Company.	Robert Owens, Director of Fixed Income Strategy, Farmer Mac
Cascade Hall — Santiam Room		
9:45-10:45 a.m.	Agriculture Weather Forecast	Phillip Volker, Founder, ERF Company
11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Conscious Decisions Mean Safer Work	Chelsea Imdieke, Safety Consultant, SAIF Corporation
1:30-2:30 p.m.	Oregon Hazelnut Trends & Opportunities	Patrick Gabrish, VP Sales & Marketing, Hazelnut Growers of Oregon
2:45-3:45 p.m.	Getting New Employees On Board For Safety	Eric Lloyd, Safety Consultant, Risk Management Resources
Cascade Hall — Willamette Room		
9:30-10:30 a.m.	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Garnet Cooke & Khadija Mostafa, Oregon OHSA
10:30-11:00 a.m.	Heat Stress & the Pesticide Applicator	Garnet Cooke & Khadija Mostafa, Oregon OHSA
11:15-12:00 p.m.	Pesticide Safety Gone Awry	Garnet Cooke & Khadija Mostafa, Oregon OHSA
1:00-2:00 p.m.	The REVISED Worker Protection Standard	Garnet Cooke & Khadija Mostafa, Oregon OHSA
2:00-2:30 p.m.	Navigating Oregon's Application Exclusion Zone*	Garnet Cooke & Khadija Mostafa, Oregon OHSA
2:30-3:15 p.m.	Preventing Pesticide Spills	Garnet Cooke & Khadija Mostafa, Oregon OHSA
3:30-4:15 p.m.	Pesticide Storage	Garnet Cooke & Khadija Mostafa, Oregon OHSA
4:15-4:45 p.m.	Pesticide Shorts	Garnet Cooke & Khadija Mostafa, Oregon OHSA

Thursday, Jan. 17		
Cascade Hall — McKenzie Room		
9:15-10:00 a.m.	Interest Rates: Outlook & Impacts on Rural America. Brought to you by Harvest Capital Company.	Robert Owens, Director of Fixed Income Strategy, Farmer Mac
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Oregon AgLink Board of Directors Meeting	Open to Oregon AgLink Members Only, Please
12:30-1:00 p.m.	Oregon AgLink Lunch	Open to Oregon AgLink Members Only, Please
1:00-1:30 p.m.	Oregon AgLink Membership Meeting	Open to Oregon AgLink Members Only, Please
1:30-2:45 p.m.	Farms of the Future: Practical Tech for Oregon Ag	Chad Higgins, Assistant Professor, Oregon State University
3:45-4:45 p.m.	Chemical Safety in Agriculture	Chelsea Imdieke, Safety Consultant, SAIF Corporation
Cascade Hall — Santiam Room		
9:15-10:15 a.m.	Managing Water Rights Assets	Peter D. Mohr, Jordan Ramis PC
10:30-11:30 a.m.	Labor Issues for Agricultural Employers	Roberta Gruber, Program Director, Oregon Farm Bureau's FEELDS Program
1:00-2:30 p.m.	Estate Planning	Maria Schmidtkofer, Counsel, Schwabe Williamson & Wyatt
2:45-4:15 p.m.	New Year, New Opportunities: A SWOT Analysis of Pacific Northwest Agriculture. Brought to you by Harvest Capital Company.	Ryan Kuhns, Economist, Farmer Mac
4:30-5:30 p.m.	Organizing Your Finances Brought to you by Harvest Capital Company.	Royce Ann Simmons, Executive VP Harvest Capital Company Farmer Mac
Cascade Hall — Willamette Room		
9:30-10:15 a.m.	The REVISED Worker Protection Standard	Garnet Cooke & Khadija Mostafa, Oregon OHSA
10:15-11:00 a.m.	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Garnet Cooke & Khadija Mostafa, Oregon OHSA
11:00-11:45 a.m.	Pesticide Safety Gone Awry	Garnet Cooke & Khadija Mostafa, Oregon OHSA
1:15-2:15 p.m.	Driving Safety On & Off The Farm	Eric Lloyd, Safety Consultant, Risk Management Resources
2:30-3:30 p.m.	AeroVironment's Quantix AG Drone, An Out-of-the-Box Review	Jim McKay, Caltex Ag
3:45-4:45 p.m.	Energy Trust of Oregon's Efficiency Upgrades Incentives	Ulrike Mengelberg, Cascade Energy, Inc. & Doug Oppedal, Evergreen Consulting

**Seminars/Speakers schedule subject to change.