

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Statement of Policy Regarding Fish Broodstock

Purpose

This statement provides general policy guidance regarding U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) use and management of fish broodstocks to secure, produce, allocate, and distribute fish gametes and fry necessary to fulfill the Service's responsibilities and role relative to fishery resources.

Scope

This statement provides national guidance concerning the management of all fish broodstocks controlled by the Service and all Service activities associated with the collection of gametes or fry from free-ranging stocks. The provisions of the policy apply to all entities of the Service involved in such activities.

Background

The concept of a National Broodstock Program (Program) originated in 1970 at the National Fish Hatchery Division Conference. The primary concern was ensuring the availability of adequate numbers of trout eggs to fulfill fish production needs of the National Fish Hatchery System (System) while meeting the requirements of the Service's Fish Disease Control Policy. The original objective of the Program was to provide the System and the Service's fishery research activity with disease-free trout eggs by developing and maintaining a variety of disease-free trout broodstocks at Service hatcheries.

In recent years, the Service has substantially redefined its responsibilities and role in regard to fishery resources. This, plus the need to clarify respective responsibility and accountability for broodstock matters, necessitated the development of policy guidelines for the Program.

Policy

In fulfilling its fishery resource stewardship responsibilities the Service will:

- Carry out broodstock activities ^{1/} in a manner that will preserve or optimize the genetic integrity of the stocks involved.
- Strive to provide and/or utilize gametes and fry of the species and strain that best meet the biological requirements of the specific resource management programs.
- Secure gametes and fry necessary for fish production and fish research activities in the most cost-effective manner consistent with sound biological principles and the requirements of the Service Fish Health Policy.
- Conduct activities (i.e., egg and fry production) at a level that will reasonably ensure the fulfillment of Service needs without resulting in a shortage nor an undue surplus of gametes, fertilized eggs, or fry.

^{1/} In the context of this statement "broodstock activities" is defined as all activities related to securing gametes or fry from free-ranging stocks, maintaining and managing captive brood fish, purchasing gametes or fry, or any other means of securing eggs or fry for management use.

- Provide gametes, fertilized eggs, or fry to non-Service entities only when 1) they clearly support Service programs or requirements, or 2) provision of eggs by the Service cannot be perceived as competing with private sector fish egg producers.
- Develop and maintain a uniform system of allocation priorities and procedures to ensure the most effective utilization of Service broodstocks on a national basis.
- Encourage research and development to further the understanding of fish genetics and the culture and management of broodstocks.

Strategies

In carrying out broodstock activities necessary to meet fish production, research, or other management needs, the Service may:

- Develop and maintain a catalog of characteristics and management information for each available fish strain in the System.
- Maintain captive broodstocks as necessary and operate broodstock hatcheries accordingly.
- Conduct activities to secure gametes or fry from free-ranging fish stocks or other sources.
- Enter into trades, exchanges, or agreements with State or other Federal agencies, or foreign governments to obtain fish or eggs of the desired strain.
- Purchase or procure eggs or fry from private sources.

National Broodstock Program Overview

The Program provides the administrative framework for determining Service broodstock requirements and priorities for egg allocation/distribution within the System and to cooperating non-Service entities.

The basic planning for broodstock and egg production is carried out at the field and regional level. Fish production necessary to meet Service responsibilities is projected annually for the upcoming fiscal year and two outyears. Based on these projected production needs, egg requirements are compiled at the Regional level. As appropriate, egg needs will be submitted to and compiled nationally at the Washington level. Egg and fry allocation/distribution decisions are made by the Director or the Regional Director depending on the species. The allocation/distribution decisions are used by the managers of the broodstock hatcheries to plan the egg and fry production program for the upcoming fiscal year and the outyears. The hatchery managers are responsible for the health and distribution of the eggs and fry after allocation decisions are made.



DIRECTOR

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DATE