

California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
and the
California Fish and Game Commission

JOINT POLICY STATEMENT ON PACIFIC SALMON
AND ANADROMOUS TROUT

The Fish and Game Commission (Commission) and the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) find that the four species of Pacific salmon and anadromous trout found in California streams, including chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), and coastal cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii*) are vitally important ecological and economic resources in California.

The Commission and the Board also find that there is considerable scientific, commercial, and public concern over the decline of chinook salmon, coho salmon, steelhead trout, and coastal cutthroat trout in California. The goal of the Commission and the Board is to recover harvestable salmon and steelhead populations, restore watersheds, and so contribute to building healthy communities. Several actions have been taken by the State and the federal government to provide legal protective status for many Pacific salmon and anadromous trout. Under the California Endangered Species Act, the Commission listed Sacramento River winter-run chinook as endangered in September 1989, coho salmon south of San Francisco Bay as endangered in December 1995, Sacramento River spring-run chinook salmon as threatened in February 1999, and coho salmon north of San Francisco Bay as a candidate species in April 2001.

Under the Federal Endangered Species Act, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) listed coho salmon in the Central California coast as threatened in December 1996, coho salmon in the Southern Oregon/Northern California coasts as threatened in June 1997, Sacramento River winter-run chinook salmon as threatened in August 1989 and endangered in January 1994, Central Valley spring-run chinook as threatened in November 1999, California Coastal chinook salmon as threatened in November 1999, Southern California steelhead trout as endangered in October 1997, South-Central

California Coast steelhead trout as threatened in October 1997, Central California Coast steelhead trout as threatened in October 1997, Central Valley California steelhead trout as threatened in May 1998, and Northern California steelhead trout as threatened in August 2000.

I. Therefore, the Commission and Board adopt the following joint policy for the Department of Fish and Game and the Department of Forestry and Fire:

- A. The departments shall be guided by the understanding that it is the desire of the State of California to: 1) recover Pacific salmon and anadromous trout populations to viable self-sustaining levels; 2) maintain wild populations where they exist; 3) restore populations where feasible; 4) sustain the human uses that depend on them; and 5) ultimately allow for delisting.
- B. The departments shall actively cooperate with each other and with other state and federal agencies, private landowners, academic institutions and the public to craft comprehensive multi-species recovery strategies and plans for coastal and Central Valley Pacific salmon and anadromous trout populations and their habitats in coordination with the NMFS and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service;
- C. The departments shall develop a coast-wide watershed assessment program and seek funding to implement such a program consistent with the goals and objectives of the assessment program. One goal of this program shall be a GIS database for managing and analyzing population and habitat data. Information collected as part of this program for resource management purposes shall be made available to the public. This program should result in a scientifically sound monitoring program for determining fish population and habitat status and trends;
- D. Existing salmon habitat shall not be diminished or have its recovery impeded by land use activities without offsetting the impacts caused by these activities. All feasible steps shall be taken to protect habitat and facilitate habitat recovery. The Board and Commission shall oppose any project which will result in the irreplaceable loss of fish, the net loss of fish habitat and/or impede the recovery of populations and habitat. Artificial production shall not be considered as appropriate mitigation for loss of wild fish or their habitat;
- E. In accordance with the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and Fish and Game Code Sections 2050 *et seq.*, the departments shall take appropriate action

to prevent or mitigate any project that will result in the unauthorized take of Sacramento River winter-run chinook, Sacramento River spring-run chinook, coho salmon south of San Francisco Bay, coho salmon north of San Francisco Bay or any other Pacific salmon or anadromous trout species that subsequently becomes a candidate or listed under the CESA.

II. In addition, the Commission specifically charges the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) with the following:

- A. DFG shall continue to implement the Salmonid Restoration Grant program (SB 271) and other assigned programs consistent with the availability of annual funding, and the Commission acknowledges that SB 271 cannot guarantee instream flows or "safeguard" habitat from additional damages to watershed processes stemming from past land use practices. SB 271 funding can help to restore past damages and start to plan for watershed-scale restoration activities.
- B. DFG should continue to use its Watershed Academy for education and outreach. The Watershed Academy should be available statewide to any interested persons provided that there is adequate funding;
- C. DFG shall continue to review timber harvesting plans based on authorized annual appropriation of funds and, when appropriate, recommend 1) measures which will prevent or mitigate adverse impacts upon salmon and steelhead habitat and 2) measures that will facilitate recovery of populations and habitat;
- D. DFG shall continue to provide an active liaison to the Board and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) based on authorized annual appropriations of funds on issues related to timber harvest practices and fire protection on habitats occupied by Pacific salmon and anadromous trout;
- E. In the event of disagreement over implementation of this policy with CDF, the DFG shall inform the Commission of the disagreement;
- F. Annually, DFG will include a statement in the Director's report to the Commission addressing the status of implementation of this policy and of Pacific salmon and anadromous trout resources.

III. The Board directs Board staff and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) as follows:

- A. Administer CDF programs consistent with this policy statement;

- B. Provide support to the Watershed Academy, consistent with the extent that it is directed at programs and activities that are funded, permitted, or carried out by CDF.
- C. Evaluate the desirability of preparing supportable listing packages for designating any of the Pacific salmon and anadromous trout individually or as a group as a sensitive species under Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Sections 919.12, 939.12, and 959.12, in addition to developing protection measures in other rule sections.
- D. Prepare and submit to the Board proposed rules packages consistent with multi-species recovery strategies for protecting Pacific salmon and anadromous trout populations and habitat during timber operations;
- E. Until Pacific salmon and anadromous trout multi-species recovery strategies are developed for California, provide particular attention to potential impacts to Pacific salmon and anadromous trout in the THP review process and seek input from the DFG where THPs are submitted for areas containing Pacific salmon and anadromous trout habitats;
- F. Consider Pacific salmon and anadromous trout habitat in the context of 1) overall aquatic ecosystem assessment and management in the pilot watershed projects of the Klamath Province, and 2) where the information has been developed, consistent with the direction derived from the North Coast Watershed Assessment Program;
- G. In the event of disagreement over implementation of this policy with DFG, the CDF shall inform the Board of the disagreement; and
- H. Annually, CDF will report to the Board regarding the status of implementation of this policy and of the Pacific salmon and anadromous trout resources.

Approved:

State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection: August 9, 2001
State Fish and Game Commission: August 23, 2001