

**TITLE 14. Fish and Game Commission
Notice of Proposed Changes in Regulations**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Fish and Game Commission (Commission), pursuant to the authority vested by sections 200, 202, 205, 215, 220, 240, 315 and 316.5; reference sections 200, 202, 205, 206, 215 and 316.5, Fish and Game Code; proposes to Amend subsections (b)(5), (b)(68), and (b)(156.5) of Section 7.50, Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR), relating to Central Valley Salmon Sport Fishing.

Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

The current sport fishing regulations allow for salmon fishing in the American, Feather and Sacramento rivers. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is proposing new Chinook salmon bag and possession limits in the American, Feather, and Sacramento rivers.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) is responsible for adopting recommendations for the management of recreational and commercial ocean salmon fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (three to 200 miles offshore) off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California. When approved by the Secretary of Commerce, these recommendations are implemented as ocean salmon fishing regulations by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

The PFMC will develop the annual Pacific coast ocean salmon fisheries regulatory options for public review at their March 2015 meeting and develop the final PFMC regulatory recommendations for adoption by the NMFS at their April 2015 meeting. Based on the action taken by the NMFS, the Department will propose specific bag and possession limits for the American, Feather, and Sacramento rivers which will:

- (1) align the inland salmon sport fishing possession limit with the ocean salmon sport fishing possession limit;
- (2) allow for additional harvest of salmon if low instream flow conditions persist due to the existing drought to reduce impacts to spawning habitat; and
- (3) increase or decrease the current salmon bag and possession limits based on the PFMC salmon abundance estimates and recommendations for ocean harvest for the coming season.

Proposed Regulations

At this time, a range [shown in brackets] of bag and possession limits are proposed to continue salmon fishing in the American, Feather and Sacramento rivers. The proposed range of bag and possession limits for Central Valley fall-run Chinook salmon stocks are as follows:

In the American River subsections 7.50(b)(5):

- (A) and (D) a season of July 16 through December 31 with a bag limit of [0-4] Chinook salmon and a possession limit of [0-8] Chinook salmon.
- (B) a season of July 16 through August 15 with a bag limit of [0-4] Chinook salmon and a possession limit of [0-8] Chinook salmon.
- (C) a season of July 16 through October 31 with a bag limit of [0-4] Chinook salmon and a possession limit of [0-8] Chinook salmon.
- (E) a season of July 16 through December 16 with a bag limit of [0-4] Chinook salmon and a possession limit of [0-8] Chinook salmon.

Feather River, subsections 7.50(b)(68)

- (D) a season of July 16 through October 15 with a bag limit of [0-4] Chinook salmon and a possession limit of [0-8] Chinook salmon.
- (E) a season of July 16 through December 16 with a bag limit of [0-4] Chinook salmon and a possession limit of [0-8] Chinook salmon.

Sacramento River below Keswick Dam, subsection 7.50(b)(156.5)

- (C) a season of August 6 through December 16 with a bag limit of [0-4] Chinook salmon and a possession limit of [0-8] Chinook salmon.
- (E) a season of July 16 through December 16 with a bag limit of [0-4] Chinook salmon and a possession limit of [0-8] Chinook salmon.
- (F) a season of July 16 through December 16 with a bag limit of [0-4] Chinook salmon and a possession limit of [0-8] Chinook salmon.

Benefits of the regulations

As set forth in Fish and Game Code section 1700 it is “the policy of the state to encourage the conservation, maintenance, and utilization of the living resources of the ocean and other waters under the jurisdiction and influence of the state for the benefit of all the citizens of the state and to promote the development of local fisheries and distant-water fisheries based in California in harmony with international law respecting fishing and the conservation of the living resources of the oceans and other waters under the jurisdiction and influence of the state. This policy shall include [as applicable to inland fisheries] all of the following objectives:

- (a) The maintenance of sufficient populations of all species of aquatic organisms to insure their continued existence.

- (b) The maintenance of a sufficient resource to support a reasonable sport use, where a species is the object of sport fishing, taking into consideration the necessity of regulating individual sport fishery bag limits to the quantity that is sufficient to provide a satisfying sport.
- (c) The management, on a basis of adequate scientific information promptly promulgated for public scrutiny, of the fisheries under the state's jurisdiction, and the participation in the management of other fisheries in which California fishermen are engaged, with the objective of maximizing the sustained harvest."

Adoption of scientifically-based Central Valley salmon seasons, size limits, and bag and possession limits provides for the maintenance of sufficient populations of salmon to ensure their continued existence. The benefits of the proposed regulations are concurrence with Federal law, sustainable management of the Central Valley salmon resources, and promotion of businesses that rely on Central Valley salmon sport fishing.

Non-monetary benefits to the public

The Commission does not anticipate non-monetary benefits to the protection of public health and safety, worker safety, the prevention of discrimination, the promotion of fairness or social equity and the increase in openness and transparency in business and government.

Consistency with State or Federal Regulations

Section 20, Article IV, of the State Constitution specifies that the Legislature may delegate to the Fish and Game Commission such powers relating to the protection and propagation of fish and game as the Legislature sees fit. The Legislature has delegated to the Commission the power to regulate recreational fishing in waters of the state (Fish & Game Code, §§ 200, 202, 205). The Commission has reviewed its own regulations and finds that the proposed regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing state regulations. The Commission has searched the California Code of Regulations and finds no other state agency regulations pertaining to recreational fishing seasons, bag and possession limits. Further, the Commission has determined that the proposed regulations are neither incompatible nor inconsistent with existing federal regulations.

NOTICE IS GIVEN that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, relevant to this action at a hearing to be held in the Resources Building Auditorium, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, California, on Thursday, February 12, 2015, at 8:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, relevant to this action at a hearing to be at the Flamingo Conference Resort & Spa

2777 Fourth Street, Santa Rosa, California, on Wednesday, April 8, 2015, at 8:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard. It is requested, but not required, that written comments be submitted on or before April 2, 2014 at the address given below, or by fax at (916) 653-5040, or by e-mail to FGC@fgc.ca.gov. Written comments mailed, faxed or e-mailed to the Commission office, must be received before 5:00 p.m. on April 2, 2015. All comments must be received no later than April 9, 2015 at the hearing in Santa Rosa. If you would like copies of any modifications to this proposal, please include your name and mailing address.

The regulations as proposed in ~~strikeout~~-underline format, as well as an initial statement of reasons, including environmental considerations and all information upon which the proposal is based (rulemaking file), are on file and available for public review from the agency representative, Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director, Fish and Game Commission, 1416 Ninth Street, Box 944209, Sacramento, California 94244-2090, phone (916) 653-4899. Please direct requests for the above mentioned documents and inquiries concerning the regulatory process to Sonke Mastrup or Jon Snellstrom at the preceding address or phone number. **Karen Mitchell, Fisheries Branch, phone 916-445-0826, has been designated to respond to questions on the substance of the proposed regulations.** Copies of the Initial Statement of Reasons, including the regulatory language, may be obtained from the address above. Notice of the proposed action shall be posted on the Fish and Game Commission website at <http://www.fgc.ca.gov>.

Availability of Modified Text

If the regulations adopted by the Commission differ from but are sufficiently related to the action proposed, they will be available to the public for at least 15 days prior to the date of adoption. Circumstances beyond the control of the Commission (e.g., timing of Federal regulation adoption, timing of resource data collection, timelines do not allow, etc.) or changes made to be responsive to public recommendation and comments during the regulatory process may preclude full compliance with the 15-day comment period, and the Commission will exercise its powers under Section 202 of the Fish and Game Code. Regulations adopted pursuant to this section are not subject to the time periods for adoption, amendment or repeal of regulations prescribed in Sections 11343.4, 11346.4 and 11346.8 of the Government Code. Any person interested may obtain a copy of said regulations prior to the date of adoption by contacting the agency representative named herein.

If the regulatory proposal is adopted, the final statement of reasons may be obtained from the address above when it has been received from the agency program staff.

VI. Impact of Regulatory Action:

The potential for significant statewide adverse economic impacts that might result from the proposed regulatory action has been assessed, and the following initial determinations relative to the required statutory categories have been made:

(a) Significant Statewide Adverse Economic Impact Directly Affecting Businesses, Including the Ability of California Businesses to Compete with Businesses in Other States:

The proposed action will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states. The proposed changes are necessary for the continued preservation of the resource and therefore the prevention of adverse economic impacts.

(b) Impact on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State, the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses, or the Expansion of Businesses in California; Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents, Worker Safety, and the State's Environment:

The Commission does not anticipate any impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs, the creation of new business, the elimination of existing businesses or the expansion of businesses in California. The minor variations in the bag and possession limits as may be established in the regulations are, by themselves, unlikely to impact business.

The Commission anticipates benefits to the health and welfare of California residents. Providing opportunities for a salmon sport fishery encourages consumption of a nutritious food. The Commission anticipates benefits to the environment by the sustainable management of California's salmon resources.

The Commission does not anticipate any non-monetary benefits to worker safety.

(c) Cost Impacts on a Representative Private Person or Business:

The agency is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative private person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action.

(d) Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State:

None.

(e) Nondiscretionary Costs/Savings to Local Agencies:

None.

(f) Programs Mandated on Local Agencies or School Districts:

None.

(g) Costs Imposed on Any Local Agency or School District that is Required to be Reimbursed Under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4, Government Code:

None.

(h) Effect on Housing Costs:

None.

Effect on Small Business

It has been determined that the adoption of these regulations may affect small business. The Commission has drafted the regulations in Plain English pursuant to Government Code sections 11342.580 and 11346.2(a)(1).

Consideration of Alternatives

The Commission must determine that no reasonable alternative considered by the Commission, or that has otherwise been identified and brought to the attention of the Commission, would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed, would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed action, or would be more cost-effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.

FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

Sonke Mastrup
Executive Director

Dated: December 9, 2014