

NMFS Report (Southwest Region)  
Update on Salmon ESA Biological Opinions and Recovery Plans  
April 2009

**Opinion on the Operations Criteria and Plan (OCAP) for the Central Valley Project and State Water Project in the Central Valley, California**

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**Timeframe:** The Opinion is due June 2, per an extension by the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit court in February.

**NMFS lead staff:** Protected Resources Division (PRD), Sacramento

**Updates:**

- At the next Council meeting, in June, NMFS-PRD will provide an overview of the Opinion to the Council (and can be available to meet with the Habitat Committee, SAS, and STT).
- NMFS released a draft Opinion in December 2008 and since then has been communicating with the water agencies and other stakeholders about the draft. However, the Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives (RPAs) currently under development are confidential at this time, and can only be discussed between NMFS and the action agency, Bureau of Reclamation.
- NMFS is aware that there is currently a lot of anxiety among the public about this Opinion. The Council mentioned there are “rumors” circulating regarding the impacts of water operations and what might be “misinformation”, but because the Opinion is in the final stages of drafting and is still confidential, NMFS feels it is most appropriate to present the final and accurate information once it becomes available to the public in June.

**Reinitiation of the Sacramento R. Winter Chinook Opinion**

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**Timeframe:** The Opinion from 2004 expires April 30, 2010. NMFS aims to have the new Opinion completed by January 2010, in time for the 2010 preseason planning process beginning in February.

**NMFS lead staff:** Sustainable Fisheries Division, Long Beach, will coordinate preparation of the Biological Assessment (with involvement from the SWFSC-Santa Cruz and consulting with PRD). Protected Resources Division, Long Beach, will write the Biological Opinion.

**Updates:**

- NMFS is just beginning the reinitiation process and can provide an update on the plan at the June 2009 Council meeting. Initially, NMFS will be looking for what new information exists on the stock, any new ways of assessing the information, and develop a plan for proceeding.
  - If there is new information, NMFS will analyze the effectiveness of the current consultation standards. (E.g., we will try to assess recent harvest impact rates using coded wire tag data.)

- During the initial assessment stage, NMFS will also review the other two Opinions on the ocean salmon fishery and its affect on listed salmon south of Cape Falcon:
  - Oregon Coast Coho, Southern OR/Northern CA (SONCC) Coho, and Central CA Coast (CCC) Coho (April 1999)
  - Central Valley spring Chinook and CA Coastal Chinook (April 2000)
- If reinitiation of those opinions is also warranted, NMFS may reinitiate consultation on all three or proceed *only* with the Sacramento River Winter Chinook Opinion at this time, for expediency, and do the other two after.

### **ESA Recovery Plan Schedule for ESA-Listed Salmon and Steelhead ESUs**

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- Attachment lists upcoming recovery plans and their comment periods. NMFS would like to know if the Council prefers to comment during the co-manager draft stage or wait until the public review draft stage. If commenting on the co-manager draft, the Protected Resources Divisions has asked that the drafts remain internal and not posted on a public website.

# NMFS Southwest Region ESA Recovery Plan Schedule for ESA-Listed Salmon and Steelhead ESUs

April 1, 2009

*All dates below are targets and are subject to change.*

<b>Recovery Plan</b>	<b>Internal Review Draft</b>	<b>Co-Manager Draft</b>	<b>CIE Peer Review Draft</b>	<b>Public Review Draft</b>	<b>Final Document</b>
<b>1. Central Valley Multi-Species Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Valley Spring Chinook</li> <li>• Central Valley steelhead</li> <li>• Sacramento River Winter Chinook</li> </ul>	Complete	Complete	Complete	6/1/09	11/1/09
<b>2. CCC Coho Plan</b>	Complete	Complete	Complete	4/3/09	9/30/09
<b>3. Central Coast Multi-Species Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern California steelhead</li> <li>• California Coastal Chinook</li> <li>• Central California Coast steelhead</li> </ul>	Complete	6/22/09	9/30/09	9/30/09	3/30/10
<b>4. South-Central Steelhead Plan</b>	5/18/09	7/7/09	7/7/09	9/30/09	3/8/10
<b>5. Southern CA Steelhead Plan</b>	Complete	Complete	5/18/09	5/18/09	10/21/09
<b>6. SONCC Coho Plan</b>	Complete	4/14/09	5/1/09	9/11/09	03/12/10