

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON CENTRAL VALLEY ENDANGERED
SPECIES ACT BIOLOGICAL OPINION AND SACRAMENTO RIVER FALL CHINOOK
STOCK COLLAPSE

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) believes the Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives expressed in the Biological Opinion provides a major step towards protection of Central Valley salmon and restoration of their habitat. The SAS recommends National Marine Fisheries Service consider including fall run Chinook in the fish passage projects proposed for Shasta, Nimbus, and Folsom dams. This could lead to reestablishing naturally spawning populations in those basins that could contribute to the hatchery genetics management plan (HGMP) objective of increasing the genetic diversity of fall run Chinook salmon. While the primary objective of the HGMP is to provide a more stable food source for Southern Resident Killer Whales, the increased resilience and productivity of the fall Chinook stock would also benefit another component of the ecosystem, Council area fisheries, and help prevent stock collapses like those seen in 2008-2009.

The SAS is also encourages the complete removal of Red Bluff Diversion Dam (RBDD), in addition to the proposed lifting of gates. The RBDD represents a significant migration obstruction to all salmon stocks as well as green sturgeon, and provides a refuge for predators like pike minnows that are known to cause significant mortality to downstream migrants.

The SAS also endorses the recommendations in the Habitat Committee Report (Agenda Item G.3.c, Supplemental HC Report) relating to compliance with statutory requirements for the Bureau of Reclamation to respond to the Essential Fish Habitat conservation recommendations.

PFMC
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