

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE RECOMMENDATIONS ON ADDITIONAL
WINTER-RUN PROTECTIONS IN 2015 OCEAN FISHERIES

The CDFW recommendations below are designed to offer conservation benefit to the winter-run stock as a whole. In addition they are intended to minimize catch and release mortality for age-2 winter-run (brood year 2014) which are confirmed to have suffered catastrophic effects from the California drought. Mortality associated with this brood is estimated to be near 95 percent prior to emigration into the ocean. Available data suggests that these fish are susceptible to being contacted and released in ocean fisheries in the late summer and early fall. Several data sources also suggest that winter-run are largely concentrated south of Pigeon Point in the late summer, and even more so south of Point Sur.

The Winter-Run Harvest Model does not easily identify these high-risk times and areas, due to the resolution of the current management area framework in which it operates. Additionally, its input data relative to winter-run contacts is limited exclusively to coded-wire tags recovered from catch in ocean fisheries.

Monterey Management Area (Pigeon Pt. to U.S./Mexico Border)

1. For the area from Pt. Sur to the U.S./Mexico Border (Monterey South)

Close sport and commercial fisheries south of Pt. Sur as follows:

- A. Sport – close part of July, and all of August and September (open April 4 –July 19).
- B. Commercial – close all of August and September.

GSI studies suggest extremely high WR contact rates in August and September in this region. This is the southern extent of the salmon fishery, where catch rates are low and data are sparse – however, available information on the catch composition from GSI and CWT analyses suggest high contributions of winter run to the catch in this area during this time.

2. For the area from Pigeon Pt. to Pt. Sur (Monterey North)

Close sport and commercial fisheries in Monterey (Pigeon Pt. to Pt. Sur) as follows:

- A. Sport – close part of September and early October (open April 4-September 7)
- B. Commercial – close half of August (16- 31) and September

The rationale for this recommendation is identical to that of recommendation one.

San Francisco Management Area (Pt Arena to Pigeon Pt):

1. Close sport fisheries in San Francisco in November (open April 4-October 31).

This would mean a loss of 8 open days (consultation standard requires closure Nov 8th). CWT analysis suggests relatively high rates of winter-run contribution to catch during this time and area. Sport catch and effort is low in November, but winter-run harvest rates increase considerably in the sport fishery between October and November (from 8 to 43 winter run per 10,000 fish landed).

These three actions are in addition to the reduced age-3 winter-run impact rate cap CDFW has already recommended (17.9 percent). The proposed closures are designed to maximize protection to the winter-run stock where the available data suggest that risks of interactions are high compared to expected catch of target stocks.

CDFW would like to acknowledge and thank its California SAS members and other California industry participants in the Council process for recognizing the severity of the California drought situation. Their efforts to identify high risk times and areas where winter-run contacts are most likely, and to take steps beyond those required by today's ESA consultation standard to minimize these risks is commendable.