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Fish and Game Commission Policy:

SALMON

It is the policy of the Fish and Game Commission that:

- I. Salmon shall be managed to protect, restore, and maintain the populations and genetic integrity of all identifiable stocks. Naturally spawned salmon shall provide the foundation for the Department's management program.
- II. Salmon populations shall be periodically inventoried by the Department, or its agents, as necessary for management and protection of salmon stocks and their habitat, as outlined in this policy.
- III. Salmon streams shall be inventoried for quantity and quality of habitat, including stream flow conditions. Restoration and acquisition plans shall be developed and implemented to safeguard such critical habitats as estuaries, coastal lagoons, and spawning and rearing areas, and to protect or guarantee future instream flows. Fisheries Restoration grants and other funding may be directed to implement the plans.
- IV. Existing salmon habitat shall not be diminished further without offsetting the impacts of the lost habitat. All available steps shall be taken to prevent loss of habitat, and the Department shall oppose any development or project that will result in irreplaceable loss of fish. Artificial production shall not be considered appropriate mitigation for loss of wild fish or their habitat.
- V. The Department shall strive to improve habitat conditions, alleviate threats, and renegotiate mitigation requirements at appropriate opportunities to eliminate the need for fish rescue operations. Salmon rescue will not be considered as mitigation for proposed water development. Only under the following circumstances shall salmon be rescued:
 - A. When they will be returned to the stream system of origin; and
 - B. When fish can be held until habitat conditions in the place where they were collected improve, or when fish can be immediately released in nearby areas of the same stream and the Department has determined that no adverse impacts would occur to existing salmonid populations; and
 - C. When, in the opinion of the Department, habitat conditions are temporarily inadequate or when conducted pursuant to a permitted in-stream construction or restoration activity.
- VI. Hatchery practices that improve the survival and fitness of the hatchery population shall be employed. Hatchery practices shall be employed to reduce the genetic and ecological risks posed by hatchery juveniles and adults to wild or native populations. Hatchery releases of Chinook salmon in anadromous waters will be externally marked and coded-wire tagged at the current Department standard and all hatchery salmonids shall be coded-wire tagged prior to release.
- VII. New programs that propose to propagate state-or federally-listed salmon shall conform to the Department's guidelines for establishment and operation of recovery hatcheries found in the Recovery Strategy for California Coho Salmon, Appendix H. In coastal streams without Department hatcheries, artificial rearing shall be limited to areas where the Department determines it would be beneficial to supplement natural production to re-establish or enhance the depleted wild population. In the Sacramento, American, Feather, San Joaquin, Klamath and Trinity River systems, hatchery production shall be

used to meet established mitigation goals. At the discretion of the Department, excess eggs from non-listed salmon from the State, Federal, or cooperative hatcheries may be used to provide additional fish for the commercial and sport fisheries. Because of potential adverse impacts, all salmon reared from excess eggs that are intended to be released into estuaries, bays, or the ocean for fisheries enhancement must be marked so that potential impacts and efficacy of the project can be evaluated. Specifically, the projects must provide to the Department, within five years of the adoption of this policy, a written evaluation of their operations that specifically addresses: 1) potential impacts to nearby stream environments; 2) potential impacts to ESA or CESA listed salmonid populations; and 3) efficacy of the project in meeting project goals and objectives. The Department will assess the evaluations and will provide a recommendation to the Commission on whether this section of the policy should be continued.

- VIII. Domesticated or non-native fish species will not be planted, or fisheries based on them will not be developed or maintained, in drainages of salmon waters, where, in the opinion of the Department, they may adversely affect native salmon populations by competing with, preying upon, or hybridizing with them. Exceptions to this policy may be made for stocking drainages that are not part of a salmon restoration or recovery program.
- IX. The best available scientific information will be used by the Department to assess the salmon resource and to develop management strategies and recommendations

(Amended: 06/18/93; 06/18/05; 05/09/08)