

California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead Trout

October 29, 2020

Meeting Notes

Note-Taker: Darren Mierau

CAC Members Present: (11)

Members Absent: Mike Orcutt, Vivian Helliwell;

Quorum Established: YES

JCFA Consultant: Tom Weseloh present

CDFW Staff Present: Jonathan Nelson, Kevin Shaffer, and several others; several NMFS staff present;

Public: None heard from.

NEXT MEETING: January 21, 2021 (Virtual Teams Meeting)

MEMBER	ALTERNATE	Representing	Present	Votes
Darren Mierau (Chair)	Redgie Collins	Sports Fisheries	Yes/Yes	YYY
Matt Clifford	Brian Johnson	Sports Fisheries	Yes	Y-Y
Gayland Taylor	John McManus	Sports Fisheries	Yes/Yes	YYY
James Stone	Mike Coopman	Sports Fisheries	Yes	YY-
Mitch Farro, (Vice Chair)		Commercial Fisheries	Yes	YYY
Vivian Helliwell		Commercial Fisheries		
John Koeppen		Commercial Fisheries	Yes	YY-
OPEN		Commercial Fisheries		
Mike Orcutt	Billy Matilton	Native American		
Ted Grantham	Jeanette Howard	Science/Academia	Yes/Yes	Y-Y(Jeanette)
OPEN	Tom Stokely	Public	/Yes	

* Five Members makes a Quorum

AGENDA

Welcome, Introductions, and Establish Quorum

Opening Comments by CAC Members and CDFW

Public Comment

Review Action Items from July 2020 Meeting

CAC Membership and PRC Nominations

- Update on CAC and PRC appointments
- Consider the nomination of Ethan Bell as a public representative on the CACSST

Steelhead Report Card and Restoration Program Update

- Jonathan Nelson/Ryon Kurth - CDFW

Future CAC Meeting Agenda Items

Status of Kingfisher Flat Coho Conservation Hatchery

Commercial Fishing Updates - John Koeppen – CAC Member

LUNCH

Sacramento River Operations Updates

Salmonid Abundance Estimates from 2019-2020 Coastal Rivers and Streams

ACTION ITEMS

- can CDFW recirculate your COVID guidelines for the CAC Members to have.
- Darren and Matt will follow up with Tim Chorey to ask the Director if he can respond to the prior nomination or does the CAC need to re-nominate Jim Robins?
- Ryon and Jon will work with Gayland to set a meeting with the sub-committee to introduce Daniel and discuss next steps for funding projects and program focus and intent.

California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead Trout

- Darren will draft letter nominating Ethan Bell to CACSST, and submit letter to Tom W. for Senator McGuire's consideration;
- Mitch and John draft a letter for regarding the Whiting Fleet for CAC consideration at our next meeting
- Get the word out regarding Go Fund Me site set up for Kingfisher Flat donations to help rebuild facility; https://www.gofundme.com/f/coho-salmon-in-crisis-after-santa-cruz-fire?viewupdates=1&rcid=r01-160382310227-bc254ddb1f524055&utm_medium=email&utm_source=customer&utm_campaign=p_email%2B1137-update-supporters-v5b
- Tom S. will draft a letter for the CAC to sign off on and send to Director Bonham and to Joint Committee; contents of letter will include:
 - supporting state board in their letter response to Reclamation;
 - encourage compliance with Water Code Section 1435 regarding unreasonable impacts to fish and wildlife and not just listed species;
 - encourage Director Bonham to request to State Board to hold hearing on effects of Sacramento temperature operations on Trinity River;

Introductions and Member Updates

CDFW COVID Updates

Kevin Shaffer - Update on COVID; likely the Department will maintain status quo shelter in place activities well into 2021...at least first half; Department hasn't seen major activity slow-downs but is being asked to be strategic, follow guidelines;

Matt Wells: - no bond freeze discussions thus far; Department planning their annual PSNs in 2021; some projects saw slow-downs; processing amendments for some projects;

John Koeppen - is Department planning to continue carcass counts...? Info is critical to run estimates and harvest for next year.

Jon - Yes, the Department will continue all ongoing monitoring until the run is over;

American - Colin Purdy...counts usually continue into January for carcass surveys;

Trinity/Shasta/Scott - Darren...monitoring activities appear to be continuing this season as normal;

No Public Comments.

Agenda Item #1: CAC and PRC Membership and Nominations

PRC Membership

Matt and Darren discussed PRC nominations; Matt has been informed that Kellyx Nelson is stepping away from PRC; we'd like to (re-)nominate Jim Robins to PRC. Tom Weseloh reminded us that Jim was one of five nominees submitted earlier, not selected; Darren and Matt will follow up with Tim Chorey to ask the Director if he can respond to the prior nomination or does the CAC need to re-nominate Jim?

Discussed nomination of Ethan Belle to CAC;

Darren introduced Ethan, who is an aquatic ecologist with Stillwater Sciences in the Morro Bay office; Ethan has BA from UCSB and MA from HSU; working down on Central Coast for many years; well qualified to advise CAC and CA on Central Coast issues;

Mitch proposed motion to nominate Ethan, Gayland seconded, Motion passed unanimously with seven members voting yes.

Darren will draft and submit letter to Tom W. for Senator McGuire's consideration;

California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead Trout

Agenda Item #2: Steelhead Report Card Update

Gayland asking for update on Steelhead Report Card activities;

Jon Nelson - There may be a misunderstanding on what Department is and not doing; obligation in code to manage data that comes from Report Card, and report to Legislature every five years. Department has been doing that. What hasn't been going forward is the granting program ~\$150k/yr not being expended; program staff vacated in 2017 due to funding cuts, not rehired until recently; removed from PSN and halted the granting program in 2017; Department recently hired Daniel Martinez now getting up to speed on data, and report due to Leg next June 2021; Department has been working internally to either develop PSN, or use funds internally (e.g. for creel surveys); if CAC or Steelhead Committee want to move away from Report Card to Stamp, can discuss but for now, Department is committed to current program.

Data collected from anglers is good trend data and good anecdotal data; but not for abundance; Total Annual Steelhead Card budget is around \$300-350k depending on revenue; spending authority; \$150-200k to administer and staff; surplus of around ~\$1.2 mil. in account; money won't go away but to spend, Department has to request spending authority;

Gayland - thinks the Steelhead Card Committee should be more included in activities;

Jon - chair of subcommittee should reach out to Department to meet to discuss;

Tom Weseloh - items in statute can be changed if so desired; we should start with what we want to do, and not necessarily constrained by current Program and statutes;

Kevin - think real hard about the program; CA doesn't have much other resource to enhance the angling experience and monitoring for other effects; there is need for creel; we should be monitoring all our fisheries across the State - salmon, bass, steelhead, etc.; if we're not going to use the information, we shouldn't charge the anglers; wants support from subcommittee on how we best and most strategically support data collection for steelhead angling;

Jon - data not available in real-time so won't affect anglers; angler use data help evaluate harvest rates, hatchery fish harvest of hatchery fish and contact between hatchery and wild; can't make population estimates; hit wrinkle two years ago on how funds are spent, and Dept are approaching a resolution to that issue;

Tom Weseloh- lot of disparate info on what is being collect; NMFS has broad range of opinion; within the Dept there is not agreement on use of Card to collect data; used to be more useful **prior to the data fields/sites were reduced during the "simplification" process before anglers stopped keeping track of data**; do we want to rethink this to make the data collection useful; don't put sideboards on this, can re-write leg but need to determine what we want to do with the Program.

Gayland - can funds be used for education?

Jon - good conversation to be had in subcommittee; external or internal use of those funds for public **education**...several options there.

Jon and Ryon will reach out to schedule meeting with Steelhead Committee;

Program **becomes inoperative July, 1, 2022 and expires in is repealed Jan. 1, 2023.**

Charlotte - NMFS is developing internal perspective on data needs, can report back in subsequent meeting(s);

Agenda Item #3: Commercial Fisheries Update

John Koeppen

General updates on commercial fishing from

California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead Trout

- salmon not migrating like in past years; now moving off shelf and parking, may reflect a change in habit, something going on that managers do not understand.
- Delay in migration ...typically 80% of fish into rivers by mid to late August; not seeing that currently; did not hold once into river; big pulse in the last week
- good recruitment of jacks (holds promise for 2021-2022 salmon seasons)

Covid Effects

- commercial fishermen gave up many days on the water in response to covid guidelines; something to watch as we move forward;

PFMC Council received request in Sept to allow Whiting Fleet to move into CA Waters, denied ~20 years ago., lots of opposition to it; CAC should be aware, could have significant impact on Klamath Stock

Whiting Fleet Issue

Mitch suggests we write a letter to Director Bonham and Joint Committee, Gayland suggested a motion, James seconded; motion passed unanimously with five members present voting yes; Darren tabled that motion to suggest that Mitch and John draft a letter for consideration at our next meeting; the Committee agrees, and this topic will be on the agenda at next meeting;

James - appears there has been a good KT commercial/rec fishery this year; on Sac, one of the poorest years fishing since closure, well below average for this year 42,900 escapement, however, fish coming in later in recent years, since 2013; not a good season on Sac.

Kingfisher Flat Broodstock Program update re fire;

Ben Harris

Facility lost half its outside production facility; indoor incubation and operations were spared rebuilding 5 x 15-20 ft incubation tanks; water source; bridge access needs to be rebuilt and now hitting snags;

Half of 70,000 broodstock lost; other two years survived and after fire, were transferred to Warm Springs Hatchery; yoy transferred to St Cruz.

lost half the outdoor tanks so still have ~35,000 yoy.

spawning will take place at WSH this year;

Go Fund Me site set up for donations to help rebuild facility;

Agenda Item #4 Sacramento River Operations Update

Tom Stokely and Diane Riddle (SWRCB) to discuss Sacramento River temperature management; Background information in documents submitted by Stokely.

CESA Settlement

Temperature Management Planning Protocol; SWRCB wrote letters to Reclamation suggesting they develop this; SWRCB received response Sept 30th; Reclamation only committing to do what's required under Biological Opinion, but hasn't agreed to evaluation on operational assumptions; Order 90-05 pertains only to temperature device; difference in opinion on Order; State Board will likely issue response in next few months;

SWRCB is improving their technical understanding of Reclamation operations; planning to continue this; Board agreed to retain modeling expertise to review modeling from Reclamation; new resources not available during drought; temp planning issues are complex;

Mentioning Public Trust issues that Board will evaluate;

Still in middle of issues and considering response to Reclamation;

California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead Trout

Tom S. reframing that State has asked Reclamation to deliver less water to contractors; State-Fed showdown, potential litigation looming regarding BiOp

Tom S. requesting CAC send letter to Director recommending he support the Board actions; Darren agrees we will agendize and consider letter

Tom S. - approved TUCPs require no significant impacts to Fish or Wildlife (not just listed species);

Diane - Water Code Section 1435 "No Unreasonable Effect on Fish and Wildlife";

TUCP intent was to relax delta water quality standards to enable retention of more water in storage in Shasta to allow better water temperature management;

Gayland - will this issue change if there's a new administration?

Diane - maybe but these issues take time to trickle up in response to changes;

A Letter maybe more urgent given the State Board's pending response to Reclamation;

Gayland offered a motion; Mitch Seconded. Five members present voted yes.

Tom S. will draft a letter for the CAC to sign off on and send to Director Bonham and to Joint Committee; contents of letter will include:

- supporting state board in their letter response to Reclamation;
- encourage compliance with Water Code Section 1435 regarding unreasonable impacts to fish and wildlife and not just listed species;
- encourage Director Bonham to request to State Board to hold hearing on effects of Sacramento temperature operations on Trinity River;

CAC Next Meeting Dates

January 21, 2021 Virtual Meeting

Agenda Items

- Letter regarding Whiting Fleet
- Letter and Update regarding State Board response to Reclamation on Sacramento River operations;
- PRC update
- ** Supplementation

California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead Trout

Anecdotal Information on 2019-20 Adult Abundance

Table 1. Estimated total number of redds and 95% Confidence Intervals (+/- 95% CI), by species in the Mill Creek sub-basin of Smith River, Del Norte County, CA for survey years 2011-2019. Note: steelhead spawning season is incompletely surveyed and therefore estimates presented represent only the first portion of the total steelhead redd deposition.

Year	Coho		Chinook		Steelhead
	Estimate	+/- 95% CI	Estimate	+/- 95% CI	
2011-2012	482	19	1177	3	21
2012-2013	227	10	717	66	10
2013-2014	260	6	110	2	6
2014-2015	149	10	467	12	13
2015-2016	186	13	470	35	20
2016-2017	91	8	474	20	6
2017-2018	109	4	288	2	8
2018-2019	105	10	278	3	29
2019-2020	108	6	301	10	25

River System	2019-20 Adult run size indicator
Rogue R	ODFW Huntley Park seine count, lowest ever adult estimate
Chetco R	ODFW spawning survey, lowest ever index of abundance
Smith R	CDFW Mill Cr coho redd surveys, 4 consecutive years poor returns
Klamath	Unable to reach sport harvest quota, low redd count, spring salmon dives
Trinity	USFWS lowest ever # redd observations
Redwood	Prairie Cr lowest ever coho estimate from redd surveys, sonar count
Mad R	sonar count (pending review)
Humboldt Bay	Freshwater Cr 2nd lowest coho estimate from redd surveys (draft) lowest ever coho estimate, now below depensatory threshold; low sonar
SF Eel	#
mainstem Eel	sonar count less depressed than SF
Mattole	redd counts pending?
Mendo Coast	redd counts pending?
Russian	lowest ever Chinook estimate
Lagunitas	2nd lowest coho estimate from redd surveys

California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead Trout

Jon Nelson detailed update on the Steelhead Report Card program.

The annual authority fluctuates but is generally between 300-350k and ~175-200K goes to staffing which includes .5 PY for a permanent staff to manage the program, 4-6 months for a seasonal employee for data entry/program support and .25 PY for admin staff support. We are still trying to figure out if we can use the funds available for projects (~100-200K depending on actual revenue) over multiple years or if it must be allocated and spent within the same fiscal year. All unspent funds are moved into the reserve. In order to access the reserve funds, a one-time authority increase could be approved but it would require a justification for a specific need/project and amount. We are confirming, but there is probably about 1.2M currently in the reserve.

Regarding re-staffing, when Farhat left the position in Nov 2017, the Dept was going through budget reduction drills and a number of positions were lost, including the PY responsible for managing the SH Report Card program. We were unable to establish a new permanent position until last year, which was over 2 years without a dedicated staff. In the interim, we continued to fund a seasonal position to continue annual report card data entry but we did not have staff capacity to develop or proceed with the granting program, which is one of the reasons it was removed from the PSN. We filled the position in Jan 2019 and have primarily been focused on the data management and developing the leg report that is due next June. We had also been working on potential creel surveys to evaluate specific waters and data needs for steelhead angling. In May 2020, our staff promoted into another program and we had to hold on refilling for several months due to the unknown status of the 20/21 budget. In Aug, we were approved to re-fill and have recently hired. It will take some time for our new staff to get up to speed on the program and for now their primary responsibility will be drafting the 5-year Leg Report summarizing the angler data.

Unfortunately, the program is having trouble moving forward with respect to funding projects, and one of the primary issues is figuring out how to allocate the funds. However, that is only part of the Dept's responsibility to the program. We still have to enter, analyze and manage the angler data and develop the Leg report. In addition, there were several on ongoing grants that we have managed over the past 2 years. We also get data requests that we have to respond, so that is a continued responsibility. All of these things are happening behind the scene, so the program is still functioning to maintain the obligations to the anglers and the Leg. We are not ready to put out a PSN but want to meet with the committee to discuss project types and focus watersheds that could benefit both steelhead management and angler opportunity. Currently the Dept thinks there is the most value in funding focused creel surveys and research on waters such as the Mad, Russian, South Central Coast Streams to help provide data on catch rates, harvest and release #s, gear types, etc, that will directly inform management decisions around HGMP/FMEPs and evaluate current regulations and protections. This is data that the Report Card does not provide and could support a future shift away from angler provided data to robust scientific surveys that actually inform management.

Ryon and I will work with Gayland to set a meeting with the sub-committee to introduce Daniel and discuss next steps for funding projects and program focus and intent.

Jon

Jonathan Nelson
Environmental Program Manager I
Anadromous Fishes Conservation and Management Program
Fisheries Branch

California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead Trout

CA Department of Fish and Wildlife
1010 Riverside Parkway
West Sacramento, CA 95605
(O) 916-376-1641
jonathan.nelson@wildlife.ca.gov