

State of California
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Memorandum

Date: April 21, 2020

To: Melissa Miller-Henson
Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director

Subject: **Emergency Fishing Delays in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine Counties**

On April 15, 2020 the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) adopted emergency regulations (*i.e.*, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 8.02) providing the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) the ability to delay, suspend, or restrict sport or recreational fishing for particular species or areas to ensure that anglers, local communities, and government employees are protected from increased risk of transmission of COVID-19. This ability is conditioned on coordination with local government and Tribes, and consultation with the President of the Commission.

After direct conversations with county leadership in the relevant counties early this week, the Department is acting to delay the trout fishing opener scheduled to start on April 25, 2020, in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties. Also after county coordination, in an effort to protect wild trout fisheries and stocked fisheries that remain open in these counties, the Department is reducing bag and possession limits in a few, limited streams. As described below, these changes will expire by May 31, 2020.

The Department has received letters from Inyo, Mono, and Alpine county officials requesting that the Department delay the opening of the trout fishing season scheduled for April 25, 2020 in their counties. As requested, the Department has also had discussions with county leadership. The trout fishing opening date typically draws a high tourism influx to these counties and county officials are concerned that people traveling from throughout the state and beyond to fish in these areas will exacerbate the transmission of COVID-19 and put a strain on their already taxed healthcare systems. Further, non-essential businesses in these counties including lodging, dining, and camping options are closed in compliance with state and local public health officers' orders. Therefore, county officials are requesting that the Department delay the fishing opener until such time as the Department in coordination with county leadership agrees the actions posed by angling no longer pose a significant risk to public health and safety.

In response to these requests, I have consulted with Commission President Eric Sklar and per the authority granted in Section 8.02, the Department is acting to temporarily delay the trout fishing opener in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties effective tomorrow, Wednesday, April 22, 2020. This delay will remain in effect until May 31, 2020, unless the Department ends this delay earlier as authorized in Section 8.02. Attached to this

memorandum is a summary of the changes to the regulations to implement the delay (Attachment 1) and the formal regulation changes (Attachment 2). Both the delay and the few bag and possession limit changes will expire on May 31, 2020, if not sooner.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please contact Roger Bloom, Acting Chief, Fisheries Branch at Roger.Bloom@wildlife.ca.gov.

Attachments:

1. Summary of Changes to Sportfishing Regulations to Implement Season Delay
2. Modifications to Fishing Regulations in California Code of Regulations, Title 14, In Order to Effectuate Temporary Delay to Trout Fishing Opener in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine Counties

ec: Valerie Termini
Chief Deputy Director
Valerie.Termini@wildlife.ca.gov

Stafford Lehr, Deputy Director
Wildlife and Fisheries Division
Stafford.Lehr@wildlife.ca.gov

David Bess, Chief
Law Enforcement Division
David.Bess@wildlife.ca.gov

Roger Bloom, Acting Chief
Fisheries Branch
Wildlife and Fisheries Division
Roger.Bloom@wildlife.ca.gov

Nathan Voegeli
Assistant Chief Counsel
Nathan.Voegeli@wildlife.ca.gov