



Fact Sheet About Responding to County and Tribal Requests on Recreational Fishing During Public Health Emergency - April 11, 2020

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) confirms the following facts:

- Neither CDFW nor the Fish and Game Commission has proposed a statewide closure of recreational fishing. Neither intends to do so.
- The [proposal](#) is based on formal requests from local counties to consider restrictions to address health and safety concerns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Given the dynamic nature of this public health emergency, CDFW and the Commission simply seek a faster, streamlined ability to be responsive to local counties and Tribes.
- The proposal is specific and narrowly tailored. For a short time (only until May 31, 2020), CDFW would have an improved ability with limited authority from the Commission to respond to local counties and Tribes. This emergency regulation would expire far sooner than emergency regulations are typically effective (which is 180 days).
- The CDFW Director could only act in consultation with the Commission President, and only after considering public health and safety guidance from local and Tribal governments.
- After all those criteria, CDFW could *temporarily* suspend, restrict or delay sport (recreational) fishing. That's it. Temporarily.
- If CDFW used this limited ability, it is required to report back to the Commission and the public in the Commission's April and May 2020 meetings.
- This proposal is based on specific requests from counties concerned about the April 25, 2020 trout season opener, which is an annual event that typically draws many thousands of people to Inyo, Mono and other counties in the Eastern Sierra. This situation raises a legitimate concern at the local level regarding potential transmission of COVID-19 from outside areas, especially considering the limited health infrastructure in the small towns hosting these openers. Please see letters from [Alpine](#), [Inyo](#) and [Mono](#) counties.
- If the Commission approves the emergency regulation for this limited effort, the CDFW Director has been clear that the focus is on being responsive to these three counties.

- It would be irresponsible for the CDFW and Commission to NOT be responsive to local needs in this public health emergency, where we must do all we can as Californians to help each other make it through this emergency together.
- CDFW has taken NO steps to limit any current hunting seasons nor would this regulation allow that.
- CDFW would act to reopen any suspended or delayed fishing seasons promptly, based on the same commitment to local, county and Tribal public health and safety input.
- Similar emergency ability during droughts has been in place since 2015 that also allows CDFW, in consultation with the Commission, to close fisheries based on environmental and fish population-based criteria. Since then, CDFW has only invoked one closure (Merced River) as the use of that authority is taken very seriously and only used as a last resort.
- The angling community has risen together before to do the right thing. We know that we can count on them now too.