

State of California
Fish and Game Commission

Final Statement of Reasons for Regulatory Action

Amend Section (b)(50) of Section 7.40
Title 14, California Code of Regulations

Re: Central Valley Sport Fishing Regulations 2025

I. Dates of Statements of Reasons:

(a) Initial Statement of Reasons:	October 8, 2024
(b) Amended Initial Statement of Reasons:	March 18, 2025
(c) Pre-Adoption Statement of Reasons:	April 29, 2025
(d) Final Statement of Reasons:	May 19, 2025

II. Dates and Locations of Scheduled Hearings

(a) Notice Hearing:

Date: February 12, 2025	Location: Sacramento
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(b) Discussion Hearing:

Date: April 16, 2025	Location: Sacramento
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(c) Adoption Hearing

Date: May 14, 2025	Location: Teleconference
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III. Update

At its May 14, 2025, meeting, the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) adopted the recommendation of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) of a combination of options 1 and 4, as described in the ISOR, which allows for take and possession of one (1) any size Chinook Salmon up to the daily bag and possession limits (i.e., Option 1) and a closed fishery (i.e., Option 4).

For 2025, the Commission adopted the following Sacramento River fall-run Chinook Salmon (SRFC) fishing regulations 7.40(b):

- Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon in the Body of Water described in: subsection (4)(D) of the American River; subsection (43)(F) of the Feather River; and subsections (80)(C) through (E) of the Sacramento River.
- Selected and adopted from the proposed range of fishing season dates for Chinook Salmon on the American River from: July 16 through October 15 in subsection (4)(B); and July 16 through October 31 in subsection (43)(C).
- Selected and adopted from the proposed range of fishing season dates for Chinook Salmon on the Feather River from: July 16 through September 15 in subsection (43)(D); and July 16 through October 31 in subsection (43)(E).

- Selected and adopted from the proposed range of fishing season dates for Chinook Salmon on the Mokelumne River from: July 16 through September 15 in subsection (66)(A); July 16 through October 15 in subsection (66)(B); and July 16 through October 31 in subsection (66)(D).
- A daily bag and possession limit of one Chinook Salmon of any size in the open Body of Waters of the American, Feather, and Mokelumne rivers.

The Commission also adopted the other proposed changes as described in the ISOR.

Previously, a notice of sufficiently related changes was released on April 23, 2025 regarding additional changes needed to the proposed regulations as it relates to the Feather River, and separating the steelhead and Chinook Salmon seasons.

Correction to Regulatory Language

During review of the final regulatory language that was adopted by the Commission, a non-substantive error was noticed in subsection b(80), Sacramento River. Under the Open Season and Special Restrictions column in subsections (C), (D), and (E) “hatchery trout and hatchery salmon” was mistakenly written instead of “hatchery trout and hatchery steelhead.” This error has been corrected.

IV. Summary of Primary Considerations Raised in Support of or Opposition to the Proposed Actions and Reasons for Rejecting Those Considerations

There have been no additional comments since those that were received and responded to in the April 29, 2025 Pre-adoption Statement of Reasons.

April 16, 2025 – James Stone, Northern California Guides and Sportsmen’s Association (NCGASA) (oral comment).

“The Sacramento Index, the preseason forecast of 165,655 is the lowest that we’ve ever opened a fishery on. In fact, in 2023, we had a higher forecast and in 2024 we had a higher forecast and yet we didn’t open those seasons. Our board of directors has mentioned multiple times in public comment through the Council and the Fish and Game Commission that we were very concerned about missing the minimum conservation objective of 122,000 adults coming home every year to the Sacramento. Last year we had 213,000 estimated with a full closed fishery and only 99,000 came home. It’s apparent that the entire Sacramento River will be closed with 300 miles of river closed and over 48 miles of Delta and Bay areas closed for an opportunity and the only opportunities will be a small fishery in the Feather, American, and Mokelumne fisheries. Many of the guides, anglers and our board have thought that a complete closure of one more year would probably be the right thing to do in order to complete a three year cycle and support all cohorts to completely rebuild. However, our support will lie with the Department’s recommendation and whether they recommend opening a recreation season in the ocean we just ask for an opening in the inland sector as well. So we will fully support the Department’s recommendations for the Sacramento system.”

Response: Support noted.

April 16, 2025 – Charles (oral comment).

“Our real problem is the California sea lion. In the future it’s going to have to be addressed just like it was in Washington. There needs to be some kind of control on this animal that is just destroying the salmon population amongst other things.”

Response: Comment noted.

V. Description of Reasonable Alternatives to Regulatory Action

(a) Alternatives to Regulation Change

No alternatives were identified by or brought to the attention of Commission staff that would have the same desired regulatory effect.

(b) No Change Alternative

The no change alternative would leave the existing 2024 Chinook Salmon fishing closure in place. The no change alternative would not allow for an open fishing season in 2025 even if the 2025 SRFC stock abundance forecast is sufficiently high to allow in-river sport harvest of SRFC. The adopted regulations will allow the state to harmonize its bag limits, possession limits, and harvest season lengths with NMFS' regulations.

(c) Consideration of Alternatives

In view of information currently possessed, no alternative considered would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the regulation is proposed, would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the adopted regulation, or would be more cost effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.

VI. Impact of Regulatory Action

The potential for significant statewide adverse economic impacts that might result from the proposed regulatory action has been assessed, and the following determinations relative to the required statutory categories have been made:

(a) Significant Statewide Adverse Economic Impact Directly Affecting Businesses, Including the Ability of California Businesses to Compete with Businesses in Other States

The proposed action will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states. The proposed changes are necessary for the continued preservation of the resource, while providing inland sport fishing opportunities and thus, the prevention of adverse economic impacts.

(b) Impact on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State, the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses, or the Expansion of Businesses in California; Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents, Worker Safety, and the State's Environment

The Commission does not anticipate significant adverse economic impacts but acknowledges the potential for short-term negative impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs within the state. The Commission anticipates no adverse impacts on the creation of new business, the elimination of existing businesses or the expansion of businesses in California. The management of an ongoing Chinook salmon sport fishery with annual variations in the bag and possession limits and/or the implementation of a size limit is not anticipated to significantly impact the volume of business activity.

The loss of up to 23 jobs with Option 2, 46 jobs for Option 3, and 115 jobs for Option 4 is not expected to eliminate businesses because projected reduction in fishing days is expected to be partially offset by opportunities to fish for grilse Chinook salmon and other species for Option 2 and 3 and continued opportunities for other non-salmonid species for Option 4.

The Commission anticipates benefits to the health and welfare of California residents. Providing opportunities for a Chinook salmon sport fishery encourages consumption of a nutritious food. The Commission anticipates benefits to the environment by the sustainable management of Chinook salmon resources in the Central Valley.

The Commission does not anticipate any benefits to worker safety.

Other benefits of the proposed regulations are concurrence with federal fishery management goals and promotion of businesses that rely on Central Valley sport fishing.

(c) Cost Impacts on a Representative Private Person or Business

The Commission is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative private person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action.

(d) Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State: None.

(e) Nondiscretionary Costs/Savings to Local Agencies: None.

(f) Programs Mandated on Local Agencies or School Districts: None.

(g) Costs Imposed on Any Local Agency or School District that is Required to be Reimbursed Under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4, Government Code: None.

(h) Effect on Housing Costs: None.

Updated Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

Unless otherwise specified, all section references in this document are to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.

Current regulations in subsections (b)(4), (b)(43), (b)(66), and (b)(80) of Section 7.40 prescribe the 2024 seasons and daily bag and possession limits for Sacramento River fall-run Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*; SRFC) sport fishing in the American, Feather, Mokelumne, and Sacramento rivers, respectively. Collectively, these four rivers constitute the “Central Valley fishery” for SRFC for purposes of this document. In considering the current 2024 regulations the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) accepted the Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (Department) recommendation for the most conservative option that prohibited fishing for Chinook salmon in the Central Valley. Each year, the Department recommends new Chinook salmon bag and possession limits for consideration by the Commission to align the fishing limits with up-to-date management goals, as set forth below.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) is responsible for adopting recommendations for the management of recreational and commercial ocean salmon fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (three to 200 miles offshore) off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California. When approved by the Secretary of Commerce, these recommendations are implemented as ocean salmon fishing regulations by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

The PFMC will develop the annual Pacific coast ocean salmon fisheries regulatory options for public review at its March 2025 meeting and will adopt its final regulatory recommendations at its April 2025 meeting based on the PFMC salmon abundance estimates and recommendations for ocean harvest for the coming season. Based on the April 2025 recommendation by PFMC, the Department will recommend specific seasons and bag and possession limit regulations to the Commission at its April 16, 2025, meeting. The Commission will then consider adoption of the Central Valley sport fishing regulations at its May 14, 2025, meeting.

Proposed Regulations

(from Amended ISOR): Feather River Fishing Boundaries

Proposed Changes:

For the 2025 SRFC sport fishing season in the Central Valley, the Department is proposing to split the boundary for Feather River subsection 7.40(43)(E) into two subsections (E and F). The purpose of this change is to provide the Department with the ability to be more protective of salmon migrating to the upper Sacramento River during fishing closures and still provide angling opportunity for SRFC in the lower Feather River when feasible. This would be similar to the lowest section of the American River [7.40(4)(D)]. SRFC returning to the upper Sacramento River and tributaries are known to temporarily hold in the lower sections of the American and Feather rivers before continuing their spawning migration to the upper portions of the basin. Coded wire tag data show that, in some years, SRFC produced at Coleman National Fish Hatchery in the upper Sacramento River are contacted in the Feather River

(Palmer-Zwahlen et al. 2019a,b; Palmer-Zwahlen and Kormos 2020; Letvin et al. 2020; Letvin et al. 2021).

Currently, subsection 7.40(43)(E) spans approximately 40 miles from Live Oak Boat Ramp downstream to the confluence of the Sacramento River. If the Department determined a salmon fishery could occur on the Feather River but remain closed on the Sacramento River, the Department would want to minimize potential catch of salmon passing by the mouth or temporarily holding in the lowest sections of the Feather River. To be protective, the Department would recommend closing subsection (E) to salmon fishing. The Department proposes creating a new subsection (F) starting at the Hwy 99 Bridge to the confluence of the Sacramento River. This is an approximately nine-mile section and the bridge is the first prominent feature that anglers can easily identify as a boundary. It also provides enough distance to be protective of salmon temporally holding in the lower section of the Feather River as they make their migration to the upper Sacramento River and tributaries. Subsection (E) would remain from Live Oak Boat Ramp and end at the Hwy 99 bridge. This section would be approximately 31 miles of river.

The fishing seasons, bag and possession limits, and gear restrictions for the new subsections (E) and (F) would be the same as subsection (E) in the current regulations. The salmon season date range would be July 16 through Dec 16. Fishing for steelhead and other fish species would remain open in these sections during salmon season closures.

Amend Subsection 7.40(b)(43)(E)

The proposed regulation change would move the existing lower fishing boundary for subsection (E) upstream to the Highway 99 bridge. In addition, the language in subsection (E) that defines the lower fishing boundary at the mouth of the Feather River will be removed and placed in new subsection (F). This change is needed because the new lower fishing boundary for subsection (E) is upstream from the mouth of the Feather River.

Add Subsection 7.40(b)(43)(F)

The fishing boundary for subsection (F) would start at the Highway 99 bridge and extend downstream to the mouth of the Feather River. The language that defines the lower boundary at the mouth of the Feather River that is currently in subsection (E), will be placed in subsection (F). This change is needed because the lower fishing boundary for subsection (F) ends at the mouth of the Feather River.

Chinook Salmon Bag and Possession Limits

The Department recognizes the uncertainty of SRFC in-river harvest projections. Therefore, for the 2025 Central Valley fishery, the Department is presenting four regulatory options for the Commission's consideration to tailor 2025 Central Valley fishery management to target 2025 in-river fisheries harvest projections. The Commission may adopt these options for each river section independently, or in combination to meet PPMC SRFC management objectives.

- American River, subsections 7.40(b)(4)(B), (C) and (D).
- Feather River, subsection 7.40(b)(43)(D) and (E).

- Mokelumne River, subsection 7.40(b)(66)(A), (B) and (D).
- Sacramento River below Keswick Dam, subsection 7.40(b)(80)(C), (D) and (E).

The following options are provided for Commission consideration:

Option 1 – Any Size Chinook Salmon Fishery

This option is the Department's preferred option if the 2025 SRFC stock abundance forecast is sufficiently high to avoid the need to constrain in-river SRFC harvest.

Bag limit of [0-4] Chinook salmon.

Possession limit - [0-12] Chinook salmon.

Option 2 – Limited Adult and Grilse Salmon Fishery

Bag limit of [0-4] Chinook salmon of which no more than [0-4] fish over 27 inches total length may be retained.

Possession limit - [0-12] Chinook salmon of which no more than [0–12] fish may be over 27 inches total length.

Option 3 – Grilse Salmon Fishery Only

Bag limit of [0-4] Chinook salmon less than or equal to 27 inches total length.

Possession limit - [0-12] Chinook salmon less than or equal to 27 inches total length.

Option 4 – No Salmon Fishing in all Central Valley Rivers, Streams, and Tributaries

No take or possession of Chinook salmon.

Chinook Salmon Fishing Seasons

The current open fishing seasons for SRFC in the Central Valley are specific to each river and river section and have start and end dates that encompass the migration periods for salmon to upstream spawning habitat in the American, Feather, Sacramento, and Mokelumne rivers. To provide angling opportunity while minimizing the risk of overharvest due to uncertainty of SRFC in-river harvest projections, the Department is presenting a range of dates within that historic range that spans the open fishing season specific to each river section. This will provide the Commission with the flexibility to start the season later or end the season earlier, per section of river or across the valley.

(from Amended ISOR): Separate the Steelhead and Chinook Salmon Fishing Seasons

Under existing regulations, the open fishing seasons for Chinook Salmon in the Central Valley also apply to hatchery trout and hatchery steelhead. The Department's proposal to change the Chinook Salmon fishing seasons from a static, uniform date range to a range of dates does not apply to hatchery trout and hatchery steelhead. The existing fishing seasons for hatchery trout and hatchery steelhead will remain unchanged. Therefore, it is necessary to uncouple the fishing seasons for the two fisheries throughout the regulatory text. The separated steelhead and Chinook Salmon seasons are indicated in the Amended Proposed Regulatory Language

as follows:

Subsections 7.40 (b)(4)(B), (C), (D); (b)(43)(D), (E); (b)(66)(A), (B), (D); (b)(80)(C), (D), (E).

Benefits of the Proposed Regulations

The Commission anticipates benefits to the environment in the sustainable management of Central Valley Chinook salmon resources. Other benefits of the proposed regulations are consistency with federal fishery management goals, and health and welfare of California residents.

Consistency and Compatibility with Existing Regulations

Article IV, Section 20 of the State Constitution specifies that the Legislature may delegate to the Commission such powers relating to the protection and propagation of fish and game as the Legislature sees fit. The Legislature has delegated to the Commission the power to regulate sport fishing in waters of the state (Fish and Game Code sections 200, 205, 315 and 316.5). The Commission has reviewed its own regulations and finds that the proposed regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing state regulations. The Commission has searched the California Code of Regulations and finds no other state agency regulations pertaining to Chinook salmon sport fishing seasons, bag, and possession limits for Central Valley sport fishing.

Update

At its May 14, 2025, meeting Fish and Game Commission (Commission) adopted the recommendation of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) of a combination of options 1 and 4, as described in the ISOR, which allows for take and possession of one (1) any size Chinook Salmon up to the daily bag and possession limits (i.e., Option 1) and a closed fishery (i.e., Option 4).

For 2025, the Commission adopted the following Sacramento River fall-run Chinook Salmon (SRFC) fishing regulations 7.40(b):

- **Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon in the Body of Water described in: subsection (4)(D) of the American River; subsection (43)(F) of the Feather River; and subsections (80)(C) through (E) of the Sacramento River.**
- **Selected and adopted from the proposed range of fishing season dates for Chinook Salmon on the American River from: July 16 through October 15 in subsection (4)(B); and July 16 through October 31 in subsection (4)(C).**
- **Selected and adopted from the proposed range of fishing season dates for Chinook Salmon on the Feather River from: July 16 through September 15 in subsection (43)(D); and July 16 through October 31 in subsection (43)(E).**
- **Selected and adopted from the proposed range of fishing season dates for Chinook Salmon on the Mokelumne River from: July 16 through September 15 in subsection (66)(A); July 16 through October 15 in subsection (66)(B); and**

July 16 through October 31 in subsection (66)(D).

- **A daily bag and possession limit of one Chinook Salmon of any size in the open Body of Waters of the American, Feather, and Mokelumne rivers.**

Previously, a notice of sufficiently related changes was released on April 23, 2025 regarding additional changes needed to the proposed regulations as it relates to the Feather River, and separating the steelhead and Chinook Salmon seasons.

The Commission also adopted the other proposed changes as described in the Amended ISOR.

The Commission submitted the regulations to the Office of Administrative Law respectfully requesting an effective date of July 15, 2025. A July 15, 2025 effective date would reduce public confusion and enforceability difficulties by re-opening some Chinook salmon fishing opportunities in the Central Valley on the normal July 15 fishing season start date. Without the newly adopted regulations in place, the Central Valley would remain closed to Chinook salmon fishing.