

State of California  
Fish and Game Commission  
Final Statement of Reasons for Regulatory Action

Amend Subsections (b)(4), (b)(43), (b)(66), and (b)(80) of Section 7.40  
Title 14, California Code of Regulations  
Re: Central Valley Sport Fishing 2026

I. Dates of Statements of Reasons:

- (a) Initial Statement of Reasons: December 20, 2025
- (b) Pre-Adoption Statement of Reasons: April 17, 2026
- (c) Final Statement of Reasons: May 7, 2026

II. Dates and Locations of Scheduled Hearings

(a) Notice Hearing:

Date: February 12, 2026

Location: Sacramento

(b) Discussion Hearing:

Date: April 16, 2026

Location: Sacramento

(c) Adoption Hearing

Date: May 6, 2026

Location: Goleta

III. Update

At its May 6, 2026, meeting, the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) adopted the recommendation of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) of Option 1 from the Initial Statement of Reasons (ISOR) which allows for take and possession of any size Chinook Salmon up to the daily bag and possession limits. The Department recommended a daily bag limit of two fish and a possession limit of four fish for the lower American River, Feather, Mokelumne, and Sacramento rivers. The Commission also adopted the other proposed changes as described in the ISOR.

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

Comment

March 25, 2026 – Tyler Breitbarth (written comment).

The Commenter supports Options 1 and 2 for the Central Valley Sportfishing regulations. They support Option 1 if in-river abundance shows a large abundance of salmon above the escapement needs and Option 2 with a 4 fish limit, but only 1 “over” the 27” proposed size limit if the in-river abundance is a little tighter to the necessary escapement goals. Immature salmon less than 27” do not reproduce naturally in the river, as well as once received in the hatchery’s they are killed immediately unspawned.

Immature salmon do not impact the livelihood of the salmon population for their respective returning years. By opening the fishery under option 2 with such guidelines for size/limit, it would greatly improve angler opportunity while still protecting the bulk majority of spawning salmon needed for offspring production.

Response:

The PFMC has established a recreational harvest target of 35,808 adult Sacramento River fall-run Chinook Salmon in the Sacramento River system for 2026. This has prompted the Department to recommend an open salmon fishery in 2026 with no restrictions. At the April 16, 2026 Commission meeting, the Department recommended Option 1 from the ISOR which allows for take and possession of any size Chinook Salmon up to the daily bag and possession limits. The Department recommended a daily bag limit of two fish and a possession limit of four fish for the lower American River, Feather, Mokelumne, and Sacramento rivers.

Comment

April 16, 2026 – James Stone, President of the Northern California Guides and Sportsmen’s Association (NCGASA) (verbal comment).

The Commenter supports the Department’s recommendations.

Response:

Comments noted and appreciated.

Comment

April 27, 2026 – Kenneth Baccetti, President of the California Striped Bass Association, Isleton Delta Chapter (written comment).

The California Striped Bass Association urges the Commission to approve a full inland river salmon season for all rivers in California.

Response:

Comments noted and appreciated.

Comment

May 6, 2026 – James Stone, President of the Northern California Guides and Sportsmen’s Association (NCGASA) (verbal comment).

The Commenter supports the Department’s recommendations. Is excited to see angling opportunity in the Central Valley.

Response:

Comments noted and appreciated.

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

**SRFC Adult Stocks**

The no change alternative would leave the existing 2025 fishing regulations in place. The **existing** regulations provide limited fishing opportunities for SRFC in the Central Valley. The no change alternative would not allow for an increase in fishing opportunity for SRFC in 2026, even if the 2026 SRFC stock abundance forecast is sufficiently high to allow for additional in-river sport harvest of SRFC. The proposed regulations will allow the state to harmonize its bag limits, possession limits, and harvest season lengths with NMFS' regulations.

The no change alternative would not allow for the decoupling **of** the Chinook Salmon season date ranges from **that those** of other sport fish in the regulatory text. As well as provide harvest opportunity on the non-native Brown Trout in the upper most reaches of the Sacramento River.

(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 adopted** 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 adopted** 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 adopted 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 **from the adoption of an open Chinook Salmon season** ~~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 reduction of up to 24 jobs from the historical baseline with Option 2, 47 jobs for Option 3, and 119 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 salmonid (steelhead/ Rainbow trout) and non-salmonid species for Option 4. Additionally, The options selected by the Commission~~ represents a net gain in angler days from the 2025 season and could potentially result in gains of up to 55-174 jobs based on the selected option (~~see Table 1 below~~).

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 adopted** 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 adopted** 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 2025 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. 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 2026 meeting and will adopt its final regulatory recommendations at its April 2026 meeting based on the PFMC salmon abundance estimates and recommendations for ocean harvest for the coming season. Based on the April 2026 recommendation by PFMC, the Department will recommend specific seasons and bag and possession limit regulations to the Commission at its April 16, 2026, meeting. The Commission will then consider adoption of the Central Valley sport fishing regulations at its May 6, 2026, meeting.

### Proposed Regulations

#### Chinook Salmon Bag and Possession Limits

The Department recognizes the uncertainty of SRFC in-river harvest projections. Therefore, for the 2026 Central Valley fishery, the Department is presenting four regulatory options for the Commission’s consideration to tailor 2026 Central Valley fishery management to target 2026 in-river fisheries harvest projections. The Commission may adopt these options for each river section independently, or in combination to meet PFMC SRFC management objectives.

- American River, subsections 7.40(b)(4)(B), (C) and (D).
- Feather River, subsection 7.40(b)(43)(D), (E), and (F).
- 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 2026 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.

### **Separate Chinook Salmon Seasons from other Sport Fish Species Seasons**

Under existing regulations, the open fishing seasons for Chinook Salmon in the Central Valley are presented in the same row in the regulatory text table as other sport fish species including steelhead trout, Striped Bass, and **American** Shad. The Department's recent change of the Chinook Salmon fishing seasons from a static, uniform date range to a range of dates does not apply to other sportfish species. The existing fishing seasons for other sportfish species will remain unchanged. Therefore, it is necessary to uncouple the fishing seasons for these distinct fisheries throughout the regulatory text. The separated seasons are indicated in the Proposed Regulatory Language by having Chinook Salmon in a separate row in the table from the other sport fish species including hatchery steelhead and hatchery trout. This change does not alter the season for non-Chinook Salmon sport fish opportunities but rather combines and consolidates the season into one row in the table.

## **Brown Trout Harvest Opportunity in Sections of the Sacramento River**

Non-native Brown Trout have occasionally been caught in the steelhead trout fishery on the Sacramento River, particularly in the reaches below Keswick Dam. Brown Trout are highly piscivorous and are known to prey upon juvenile Chinook Salmon, Coho Salmon and steelhead trout in locations where their presence overlaps, which can suppress native species recovery. The Department is proposing to allow the harvest of Brown Trout in the Sacramento River. This proposed change will reduce predation on juvenile salmon and steelhead and align these regulations with existing regulations for Brown Trout in anadromous waters. The proposed regulations add take for Brown Trout to Section 7.40, subsections (b)(80)(B)(1) and (2) and (C) with a bag limit of 5 fish per day and 10 fish in possession. A harvest of 5 Brown Trout is appropriate given the recent catch and observations reported to the Department.

### **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 6, 2026 meeting, the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) adopted the recommendation of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) of Option 1 from the Initial Statement of Reasons (ISOR) which allows for take and possession of any size Chinook Salmon up to the daily bag and possession limits. The Department recommended a daily bag limit of two fish and a possession limit of four fish for the lower American River, Feather, Mokelumne, and Sacramento rivers. The Commission also adopted the other proposed changes as described in the ISOR.**