

Staff Summary for August 12-13, 2026

9C. Department Marine Region**Today's Item****Information** ☒**Action** ☐

Receive updates on items of note since the previous Commission meeting.

- I. Update on actions taken by the Department director to close the recreational razor clam fishery due to public health hazard from domoic acid in waters of Del Norte County. (Pursuant to California Fish and Game Code Section 5523)

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background**

Today, the Department's Marine Region is expected to provide verbal updates and highlight items of note since the last Commission meeting including the recent action taken by the Department director to close the recreational razor clam fishery in Del Norte County due to a public health hazard from domoic acid pursuant to California Fish and Game Code Section 5523. A Department Marine Region news provides a link to the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) notice, issued in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), recommending closure of the razor clam fishery due to domoic acid concentrations exceeding the federal action limit. The release also includes background information on domoic acid accumulation in fish, the health risks to humans, and an update on the recreational razor clam fishery closure in Humboldt County, which remains in effect because of continued elevated domoic acid levels (Exhibit 1).

Additionally, in a recent news release, the Department announced that it is seeking data and public comments on a petition to list the southern resident killer whale under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Exhibit 2). At its June 17–18, 2026 meeting, the Commission determined that the petition may warrant action under Section 2074.2 of the California Fish and Game Code, referred it to the Department, and designated the whales as a candidate species for listing as endangered.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)**Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

1. Department news release: "[Del Norte County Razor Clam Fishery Closes Due to Public Health Hazard; Monterey Bay Anchovy and Sardine Restrictions Lifted as Health Concern Alleviated](#)," dated July 31, 2026
2. Department news release: "[CDFW Seeks Information Related to Southern Resident Killer Whale](#)," dated July 16, 2026

Motion (N/A)



CDFW NEWS

July 31, 2026

Del Norte County Razor Clam Fishery Closes Due to Public Health Hazard; Monterey Bay Anchovy and Sardine Restrictions Lifted as Health Concern Alleviated



Highlighting the dynamic nature of California's ocean ecosystem, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Acting Director Valerie Termini [closed the recreational razor clam fishery in Del Norte County \(PDF\)\(external link\)](#) today following a [recommendation from state health agencies \(PDF\)\(external link\)](#) that consumption of razor clams in the area poses a significant human health threat for domoic acid exposure.

At the same time, Termini [lifted the commercial fishing restrictions on northern anchovy and Pacific sardine \(PDF\)\(external link\)](#) in Monterey Bay when taken for human consumption. This action comes after [state health agencies recommended \(PDF\)\(external link\)](#) that northern anchovy and Pacific sardine no longer pose a human health risk if consumed.

Razor clam [sampling from Crescent Beach in Del Norte County in mid-July \(PDF\)\(external link\)](#) found clams exceeding the current domoic acid federal action level. In Monterey Bay, however, [samples in July show concentrations of domoic acid \(PDF\)\(external link\)](#) in northern anchovy and Pacific sardine have fallen below the federal action level that prohibit commercial distribution of seafood products for human consumption.

Domoic acid is a potent neurotoxin that under certain conditions is produced by Pseudo-nitzschia, a naturally occurring, single-celled marine alga. Domoic acid can accumulate in fish without the organism itself becoming ill. At low levels, domoic acid exposure can cause nausea, diarrhea and dizziness in humans. At higher levels, it can cause persistent short-term memory loss, seizures and can in some cases be fatal.

The recreational razor clam fishery in Humboldt County remains closed due to elevated levels of domoic acid. The closure, which [began in May 2024](#), remains in effect until state health agencies determine razor clams no longer pose a health risk.

CDFW will continue to work with the California Department of Public Health and Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment to collect, monitor and analyze razor clams to determine when the recreational razor clam fishery can be reopened safely in these areas.

Information will be updated on CDFW's [fishery information and health advisories\(external link\)](#)

To get the latest information on current fishing season closures related to domoic acid, call CDFW's Domoic Acid Fishery Information Line at (831) 649-2883.

For the latest consumption warnings, call the California Department of Public Health's Biotxin Information Line at (510) 412-4643 or toll-free at (800) 553-4133.

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CDFW NEWS

July 16, 2026

CDFW Seeks Information Related to Southern Resident Killer Whale



The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is seeking data and public comments on a petition to list the southern resident killer whale under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA).

The southern resident killer whale (*Orcinus orca*) is a distinct population segment of killer whale found along the Pacific Coast between southeast Alaska and Point Sur, Calif. Southern resident killer whales primarily eat fish -- mostly Chinook salmon -- unlike their more common mammal-eating cousins the transient (also called Bigg's) killer whale.

There are three pods, or social groups, of southern resident killer whale – the J, K, and L pods. While all three pods spend most of their time in the Salish Sea of northern Washington and southern British Columbia, the K and L pods have also been documented within California waters, primarily during winter months. Key threats to southern resident killer whales include malnutrition due to reduced prey abundance, vessel noise and disturbance, exposure to chemical contaminants, and the combined effects of these stressors.

On Nov. 25, 2025, the Orca Conservancy submitted a petition to the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) to list southern resident killer whale as an endangered species under CESA. The Commission published findings of its decision to make the species a candidate for listing as an endangered species on July 10, 2026, and as such, the southern resident killer whale now receives the same legal protection afforded to an endangered or threatened species (Fish and Game Code sections 2074.2 and 2085)..

As of July 10, 2026, CDFW has 12 months to conduct a status review that will inform the Commission’s final decision on whether to list the southern resident killer whale as threatened or endangered under CESA. As part of the status review process, CDFW is soliciting information regarding the species’ ecology, genetics, life history, distribution, abundance, habitat, the degree and immediacy of threats to its reproduction or survival, the adequacy of existing management, and recommendations for management of the species.

CDFW respectfully requests that data and comments be submitted before Sept. 10, 2026, to allow sufficient time to evaluate this information during the status review period. Submit comments and general information on the petitioned action to CDFW’s Marine Region by email at MarineCESA@wildlife.ca.gov and include “Southern Resident Killer Whale” in the subject line. Comments may also be submitted by mail to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Marine Region, Attn: Dylan Stompe, P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090. Please note that any information you submit (including your contact information) will become part of the public record and may be disclosed in response to a Public Records Act request.

CDFW will produce a peer-reviewed report based upon the best scientific information available, which will include a recommendation as to whether the petitioned action to list the southern resident killer whale as endangered under CESA is warranted (Fish and Game Code section 2074.6). The report will be made publicly available on [CDFW’s website](#) for at least 30 days before the Commission considers acting on the petition. Please note, the Commission -- which is a legally separate entity from CDFW -- is charged with making the final determination on whether to list a species as endangered or threatened under CESA (Fish and Game Code section 2075.5). CDFW serves in a scientific advisory role to the Commission during this process. See the [California Fish and Game Commission page\(external link\)](#) for details on submitting comments to the Commission and receiving email alerts for upcoming Commission meetings.

The [listing petition, CDFW’s petition evaluation report, and updates on the listing process\(external link\)](#) are available on the Commission’s website.

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