

The situation is not pretty... and
neither is this presentation.

Status of Shasta River Coho

- 28 adult coho – 2008 “functionally extinct”
- 9 adult coho – 2009 “functionally extinct”
- 148 adult coho- predicted for this cohort*

***based on the presumption that ocean conditions are average and 3% of out-migrant yearlings return as adults.**

Locally Driven Effort to Respond

- Shasta Scott Recovery Team (SSRT) Meeting (March 2010)
- Shasta River Coho Working Group (April 2010).
- Shasta River Coho 2010 Emergency Action Plan (June 2010)
- DFG dissolves SSRT (July 2010)

Locally Driven Process Including the Following Groups:

- CA Department of Fish and Game
- Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District
 - Watercourse Engineering
 - NOAA-NMFS
 - The Nature Conservancy
 - UC Davis
 - CA Dept. of Water Resources
 - CalTrout
 - North Coast RWQCB
- Local ranchers and irrigation districts
 - USFWS
 - McBain & Trush
 - Siskiyou County
 - AquaTerra Consulting

Shasta River Emergency Action Plan

- Factors evaluated: fish barriers, temperature and flow impediments, fencing, population intervention strategies.
- Ranks and prioritizes actions that can be realistically implemented in time to improve survivability of this remaining 2010 cohort.
- In summary the emergency action plan is an **adaptive management** approach to responding to the last remaining coho.

Adaptive Management

“Essential to the progress of adaptive management will be input from the local resource managers in government and industry, communities, and landowners who make decisions about land use and management, protecting and managing natural resources and who will be responsible for implementing the majority of the recovery actions for coho salmon.” *CA Coho Recovery Strategy* (pg. 12.4)

Adaptive Management Plans are only successful if:

- They are implemented... which requires broad based support, commitment of staff time, and funding.

Identified Short-falls in Implementation of Emergency Plan and Overall Recovery Efforts

- *Recovery Strategy* does not acknowledge the possibility that coho populations could continue on a decline despite the great habitat improvements project implemented.
- **THE NEED:** A contingency plan (included in the *Recovery Strategy*) which provides clear guidelines on the steps that should be taken to adaptively manage for declining coho numbers.
- These guidelines should identify the minimum populations numbers needed before intervention methods are implemented (rescue rearing, broodstock programs etc...).

Short-falls (cont). Reporting

- The *Recovery Strategy* (pg 12.3) specifically mentions that DFG report annually to the DFG Commission on “status and progress of implementation of the Recovery Strategy”.
- There is no requirement to report on whether recovery efforts are successful.
- Reporting on whether recovery actions are successful is an essential part of creating an effective adaptive management plan.

Identified Short-falls (cont.)

- A better method of predicting and identifying declining coho trends coupled with a plan on how to respond to changes in these trends effectively.
 - If in the Shasta, with some of the best fish count data available, we couldn't spring to action to prevent extirpation of the species, then how will other watersheds state-wide avoid the same shortfall?

Count them until they're gone...

- Current trend in the Shasta is to “count them until they're gone”. Recovery in the Shasta may be too late but it may not be too late for other watersheds if we can admit... the current process is broken and needs to be fixed.

This is what the State Coho Recovery Team can do.

Ending on a good note...

- The Shasta River is not habitat limited... it's fish limited and with immediate action by this Team, there's a chance we can do something to preserve the remaining wild coho in the Shasta River Watershed.

For copies of the Shasta River Coho Emergency Action Plan:

acampbell@tnc.org

(530) 926-3281