



California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2014 Drought Response

For
Water Education Foundation Briefing
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Governor's January and April Drought Emergency Proclamations

- Directed CDFW to monitor and assess impacts of drought on threatened, endangered, and species of special concern.
 - Coastal Streams (Coho and Steelhead)
 - American River
 - Russian River
 - monitoring greater than 130 different areas in watersheds throughout the state.

Proclamation

- Directed CDFW to work with the Fish and Game Commission to determine if fishing closures were necessary to protect those same fish
 - In February the FGC took action to close portions of the American and the Russian Rivers until April 30
 - Extended low flow closures on North Coast and Central Coast streams.
 - And the Department under its own authority closed several streams.

Proclamation

- Department to monitor winter-run Chinook salmon and species of smelt in Delta.
- Through the Drought Operations Plan (DOP) for April 1, 2014 through November 15, 2014 submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board includes six monitoring actions in addition to possible rescue, relocation, and captive rearing are identified.
- The DOP also identifies enhanced monitoring activities in the Delta for smelts, final plan in preparation.

Proclamation

- Implement projects that respond to drought conditions through habitat restoration and water infrastructure projects on CDFW lands.
 - Department has developed contingency plans for reduced water supply on Wildlife Areas.
 - Worked with Partners on scheduling water deliveries.
 - Working to implement two restoration projects in the Delta currently in 2014-15 budget.

Proclamation

- Work with other state and federal agencies and landowners in priority watersheds to protect sensitive species employing voluntary agreements.
- DFW/NMFS Voluntary Drought Initiative Agreements with water right holders.
 - Shasta and Scott Rivers (Coho)
 - Mill, Antelope, and Deer Creeks (Spring-run Chinook and Steelhead)
 - Russian River (Coho and Steelhead)

Wildlife

Reduction in Central Valley wetland habitat for migratory birds.

- Reduced CVP water allocations
 - Delayed delivery in the fall
- Water Right curtailments
- Suspension of rice decomposition water

Hatcheries

- Trucked 30 million fall-run Chinook salmon smolts produced at the 5 Central Valley hatcheries (@ 30 million) downstream to acclimation pens in the Delta to improve their chances of survival after coordinating with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA- National Marine Fisheries Service and consulting with fishing advocacy groups.
- Stave off a fishery disaster in 2016 when these fish would appear in the commercial and recreational salmon fisheries.

Hatcheries

- The Department had to evacuate approximately 2 months early the Merced River Hatchery due to poor water quality and high mortality of juvenile fall run Chinook salmon (1.7M fish). They were trucked to Jersey Point.
- The Department has evacuated all of the steelhead at Nimbus Fish Hatchery due to anticipated poor water quality as a result of low water levels in Folsom Reservoir.

Fish Rescue

- The Department has lead or assisted in more than 50 rescues in 20 different watersheds of anadromous and other listed fish throughout the state.
- Planning on bringing Federally endangered Southern California steelhead trout into captivity.
- Working collaboratively with Tribal, Local, and Federal partners in planning rescue strategies for coho salmon in the Scott River watershed.

Fish Protection and Water Supply

- Real Time Drought Operations Team
 - Work with DWR, Reclamation, SWRCB, NMFS and FWS to manage available supplies to protect at risk fish, water quality, and maximize water supply.
 - Allow operational flexibility within the state and federal endangered species authorizations for the SWP and CVP.

Fishery Focus

- Protecting Cold Water Pool in Lake Shasta.
- Delta Cross Channel Gates, avoiding entrainment of out-migrating salmon into the Central Delta, intensified monitoring.
- Avoiding entrainment of Delta and Longfin smelt at the Project facilities, increased monitoring of Delta smelt.