
DWR release responding to the 2009 Biological Opinion, June 4, 2009



News for Immediate Release

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DWR Responds to New Biological Opinion to Protect Salmon

SACRAMENTO -- The Department of Water Resources (DWR) today responded to the new biological opinion by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) intended to protect salmon and several other species.

"Today's Biological Opinion on salmon reaffirms the need for a comprehensive solution to the water and environmental conflicts in the Delta," said DWR Director Lester A. Snow. "The new Opinion, which could reduce Delta export on average by about 300,000 to 500,000 acre feet, further chips away at our ability to provide a reliable water supply for California. A multi-species approach, as envisioned in the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, is the best approach to achieve habitat and species conservation and a reliable water supply."

NMFS (NOAA Fisheries) calculates that its biological opinion that addresses salmon, steelhead and green sturgeon will reduce by 5 to 7 percent combined the amount of water state and federal projects will be able to deliver from the Delta to the San Francisco Bay Area, San Joaquin Valley, Central Coast and Southern California. DWR's initial estimates show the average year impacts closer to 10 percent. That is in addition to current pumping restrictions imposed by biological opinions to protect Delta smelt and other species.

DWR will continue to work with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NMFS, California Fish and Game and others on the BDCP steering committee to develop a collaborative habitat conservation plan under the Endangered Species Act and the California Natural Community Conservation Planning Act, with the goal of creating a long-term strategy for Delta sustainability that complies with state and federal environmental laws.

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The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

Contact the [DWR Public Affairs Office](#) for more information about DWR's water activities.