

DRAFT
Fish Harvest Management

Description

Harvesting fish within and outside the estuary contributes to the decline in populations of fish that reside in or migrate through the estuary. Management of fish harvest consists of actions to control the effects of commercial and recreational catch on wild populations of important fish such as chinook salmon through improved regulations and improved enforcement of existing regulations.

This category includes the following actions:

- improve regulation of commercial take,
- improve regulation of recreational take, and
- improve enforcement of harvest regulations.

Purpose

Ocean harvest of salmon in commercial and sport fisheries has contributed to the decline of various runs of salmon including the winter-run chinook salmon presently designated as endangered. The goal of harvest management is to ensure that harvest levels for each fish population are sustainable. Limits on harvest can potentially reduce stresses on wild stocks of salmon and steelhead in the Bay-Delta watershed. Controlling harvest along the coast can potentially reduce the harvest rate on wild stocks and thus contribute to their protection and recovery. Mixed stock fisheries, such as those occurring along the coast, may require protection to the extent needed by the most limited stock.

Constraints

Limiting fishery harvest rates may cause economic stress on some industries such as commercial fishers and those businesses that depend directly or indirectly on fisheries and the recreation and tourism associated with fisheries. Changes in harvest management may require wholesale shifts in fishery efforts, marketing, and new investment to take advantage of available harvestable stocks. Limitations on sport fisheries along the coast would have significant economic effects on coastal communities. Businesses depending on river fisheries may also face economic effects.

Linkage to Other CALFED Action Categories

Harvest management will require coordination with fish hatchery management. For example, if hatchery fish can be marked and regulations changed to restrict catches to marked fish, wild salmon populations would benefit. Harvest management actions can be implemented with upstream anadromous fish habitat restoration and acquisition of long-term water supplies for fish and wildlife to improve the survival of native stocks of anadromous fish in upstream areas.