

Testimony of Richard Pool
Before the Sub Committee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans
May, 15, 2008

My name is Richard Pool. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before this committee to discuss fishery issues. I also want to express appreciation for the leadership the committee is demonstrating in attempting to find answers to the severe fishery crisis now unfolding in California and the states of Oregon, Washington and Alaska.

I am here today representing my company, Pro-Troll Fishing Products which is a large producer of salmon fishing equipment. I am also representing The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) which is the National Trade Association that represents the sport fishing industry. Pro-Troll is headquartered in Concord California and ASA is headquartered in Alexandria Virginia.

I would like to discuss three subjects:

1. The collapse of the Central Valley salmon stocks as viewed by fishermen and our industry.
2. The economics of the West Coast sport fishing industry and the impact of the salmon closure.
3. The kinds of actions we believe are needed to recover these fish.

The Salmon Collapse

California faces an unprecedented collapse of its Central Valley Chinook salmon runs. We rank this as one of the top ten man-made fishery disasters in the country. The economic consequences of the loss are staggering and reach all the way to Alaska. We believe history will rank this disaster in the same category as the Exxon Valdez, the collapse of the New England Cod Fishery and the collapse of the Atlantic Striped Bass fishery in the 1980's. The steps leading to the collapse have been progressing for years but fishermen, biologists and environmental groups have been unable to impact the policies that could have prevented it. The disaster is now upon us. Unfortunately, now, there are no quick and easy fixes.

I have attached a chart called "The Rise and Fall of the Central Valley Chinook Salmon Returns". It summarizes the factors we see as the major contributors to the collapse. The chart shows the total number of Chinook salmon that returned to the Central valley by year. It starts in 1990 when the returns of the Winter Run

salmon became so low it was listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The Winter Run is one of four separate salmon sub species that return to the Sacramento River to spawn. At the time it was listed, it was virtually extinct. In 1992 only 191 Winter Run spawners returned to the Upper Sacramento River.

Following the listing, The National Marine Fisheries Service supported by the other agencies implemented a highly successful Winter Run Recovery Program. Four major projects costing \$1 billion were implemented in the Sacramento River. The projects not only helped the Winter Run but also dramatically improved the other three runs. Salmon responded as they will when their habitat is right and by 2002 - 780,000 spawners from all four Sacramento runs returned. It appeared we had a major success story.

Unfortunately, after 2002, the delta collapse took over. Increased export pumping and river flow management for exports rather than for fish along with badly polluted delta waters took a heavy toll on salmon. The graph shows the crash starting after 2002 with the final poor ocean conditions of 2005 and 2006 wiping out the balance of the weakened runs. There are two major conclusions to this graph.

1. The rapid rise from 1992 shows that given good habitat conditions, salmon can recovery quickly. If we do the right things, this pattern can be repeated.
2. The crash started well before the problem with ocean conditions in 2005 and 2006.

My second chart shows the decline of other species of fish which reside in the delta. In every instance the decline is dramatic. Unlike salmon, most of these fish do not migrate to the ocean. This is strong evidence that the primary fishery problems are associated with the delta. Over pumping, harmful water movements and pollution have taken their toll.

Fishermen concur that there were several factors that led to the salmon collapse. However, we believe the evidence is overpowering that the excess delta pumping is the leading cause of the decline. Heavy pumping and the associated detrimental water movements cause many other problems with river flows and temperatures that are harmful to salmon. We believe the salmon can be recovered but it will not be easy or inexpensive. The runs are now so low and the collapse is so complete that every run of Central Valley salmon could now be a candidate for Endangered Species listing.

The Economics of California Sportfishing

Fishing is huge in California. There are 2.4 million recreational fishermen in the state. Each year they spend \$2.7 billion in equipment purchases. The full economic impact of the activity is \$4.8 billion. The industry supports 41,000 jobs and pays \$1.6 billion in wages and salaries.

California has been second only to Florida in fishing equipment purchases. Salmon and Striped Bass are the top economic generators in the bay, coastal and Central Valley regions of the state. The loss of these fisheries will bite heavily into these economics. Hardest hit will be coastal communities and small river communities that depend on income from salmon, steelhead and striped bass. Lodges, camps, restaurants, tackle shops, marinas, guides and charter operators will all lose substantial income. It is already happening. Scores of businesses have already failed and many others are barely hanging on.

I am aware of six major fishing tackle retailers in Northern California who are already calling it quits. Every major city is being hit from Sacramento to The Bay Area to San Jose and Santa Cruz. I can also speak for my own company. As a major salmon equipment producer we are in serious economic distress. We have been in business for 30 years and have never seen the kinds of sales drops we are currently experiencing.

The Economics of California Boating

Closely paralleling the economics of fishing is the Boating and Marine Industry. There are 894,000 registered boats in California. 70% of boat purchases are for fishing. Sales of boats in 2006 were \$1.2 billion and there are 83 boat manufacturers in the state. Salmon fishing requires a boat. Manufacturers and boat dealers are already reporting dramatic drops in sales. There will be huge economic losses in this sector.

I recently received a report from a sales group representing multiple boat lines in the 13 Western states. Two years ago their sales were \$60 million. In 2008 they expect \$32 to \$34 million. They attribute most of this drop to the salmon closure. Sales of offshore boats and river fishing boats are at a near standstill. One major boat dealer has already closed its doors and many more are teetering on the brink.

The following tables show the combined economics for California, Washington, Oregon and Idaho. The figures show that recreational fishing is a huge economic generator in the West.

West Coast Sport Fishing

	Millions of Fishermen	Billions in Equipment Purchases	Billions Economic Impact	Billions Wages & Salaries	Jobs
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
California	2.4	\$2.7	\$4.8	\$1.6	41,000
Washington	.7	1.0	1.7	.5	15,000
Oregon	.6	.6	1.0	.3	11,000
Idaho	.4	.3	.5	.2	6,000
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total	4.1	\$4.6	\$8.0	\$2.6	73,000

If sport fishing in the U.S. were ranked as a corporation, it would be #47 on the 2007 Fortune 500 list based on sales. That's well ahead of global giants such as Microsoft and Time Warner..

West Coast Marine Industry

	Boat Registrations	Billions Sales 2006	Boat Builders	Employees	Marinas
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
California	894,000	\$1.2	83	8,000	624
Washington	271,000	.6	70		343
Oregon	186,000	.3	35		141
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total	1,351,000	\$2.1	188		1,108

Water4Fish.org Advocacy Website

As California moved into the 21st century it became obvious to fishing leaders that the politics of water had changed radically. The corporate agricultural interests were demanding more and more water and they had the political muscle to get it. No costs were spared in political contributions, high paid lobbyists and teams of lawyers. The state and fishery agencies lost control of their ability to protect and enhance fisheries and the water agencies became more aggressive. Exceptions to laws were found and biological opinions were overruled to allow more water pumping. The largest salmon kill in history took place on the Klamath River in 2002 because of a ruling that took the flows away from salmon and steelhead.

In early 2007 a decision was made. The only way fishermen could fight back and represent themselves was to get organized politically. A website Water4Fish.org was established and petitions were developed asking our political leaders to

change water policies to protect fish. Over 100 major fishing groups and fishing business immediately signed on as sponsors of the campaign. When a fisherman or supporter signs onto the website, his name, address, email and political representatives are captured in a database. He can then send email letters to the governor, his Sacramento legislators and to congress

The campaign has been a success. As of the end of April a total of 56,574 letters and petitions have been generated.

15,532 have gone to the Governor
17,954 have gone to members of the House
16,022 have gone to Senators Feinstein and Boxer
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Supporters from all corners of the state have logged into the database. It is now the largest database of fishermen in the state. At the current rate we will have 100,000 signers by year's end. These fishermen are mad as hell and they have every right to be. Through no fault of their own, their heritage and rights to a public resource has been taken away.

What Fishermen Need from NOAA

Fishermen look to NOAA and the other fishery agencies for the policies and leadership needed to protect and enhance the fisheries. In the Central Valley salmon recovery of the 1990's, NOAA led the way. We highly commend the agency for its leadership at that time. An excellent recovery plan was developed, the proper permit requirements were put in place and the right projects were implemented. The payoff to the fishery and to the economies of California and the other West Coast states was huge.

The failures of NOAA since that time have been well documented by the collapse of the salmon fishery and the court decisions. Fishermen now look to NOAA to reverse these disasters and once again lead a recovery. We need strong NOAA directives in the Central Valley and we also need them on the Klamath River, the Columbia River and The Snake River where the runs have also collapsed. We need:

1. New biological opinions based on solid science, the full extent of the law and the current conditions of the fisheries. They should include rigid and enforceable permit requirements that will rebuild the stocks and avoid technicalities that would allow other interests to avoid compliance.

2. The biological opinions should not be shortcut. They need to be complete, well reviewed and comprehensive. They must stand up in court. If more time is needed to accomplish this, it should be granted.

3. The preponderance of science should dictate the actions. Weak maybes of secondary causes should not be a basis for no action. We believe that NOAA and the other fishery agencies are the proper place for fisheries management rather than the courts.

4. A strong recovery plan is needed for each watershed that not only focuses on endangered species but on all the runs that have collapsed. NOAA has the responsibility and obligation to protect all marine species.

We are deeply concerned about the NOAA resource capabilities to do this job particularly in the Southwest Region. The rapid and complete collapse of the Central Valley salmon and the complex nature of the problem have placed a huge burden on this region. We strongly support increased staffing and funding for this region. We look to congress to help see that the resources needed are made available to the Southwest office.

We are also concerned about the pending biological opinion for the Klamath River. We remain optimistic that the four dams currently blocking the migration paths will be removed but it may take 10 to 15 years for this to take place. In the meantime the endangered fish of the river must be protected from disease and lethal water conditions. We urge a strong opinion from NOAA that will ensure these fish have adequate water flows and habitat to survive under normal and drought conditions.

Proposed Recovery Actions

We believe that if a number of immediate steps are taken, a salmon fishing season is potentially possible again by 2010. Some of the steps are short range and some are longer. Substantial funding will be needed. We urge the committee to support these steps and others that will emerge as further studies are made. The steps are:

Take Emergency Recovery Steps to allow a salmon fishing season in 2010

There are so few fish currently in the ocean that no meaningful salmon fishing can occur in 2008 or likely in 2009. If several emergency steps are taken to get 2008 smolts to the ocean, it may be possible to have a season on two-year old fish in 2010.

Emergency Trucking of All Hatchery Salmon around the Delta starting in 2008 & 2009

This project could save the 2010 season. With the losses occurring in the delta, if hatchery fish are trucked around the delta to the bay and then held in adapting pens, survival rates can be improved by 5 to 1. This was recently proposed to The Calif. Dept. of Fish and Game and the agency agreed. The trucking of all state hatchery fish was started the week of April 7th. A parallel plan for the Federal Coleman hatchery fish is underway.

Reduce Delta Pumping and Increase Pulse Flows for All Outbound Smolt Migrations. Start in 2008 & 2009

Pumping schedules need radical changes. Currently, adjustments are sometimes made for endangered fish but other runs like the large fall run, which has been the backbone of the salmon fishery, suffer from poor flows and water conditions. Water managers have access to very good real time information as to when endangered and other fish are in the delta in large numbers and thus can and should be ordered to reduce or stop the pumping until the fish can move by. Secondly: The pumps are so powerful that they reverse the natural stream flows of the delta which are needed by juvenile salmon to get from the river to the sea. Current practice includes releasing small amounts of pulse flow water to help flush these young salmon safely out to sea but these pulses are too small to get the job done. They need to be longer in duration.

Close The Delta Cross Channel Gates During All Downstream Migrations. Start in 2008 & 2009

The cross channel is a man-made channel dug into the delta to facilitate the flow of water directly to the pumps. Young salmon are very susceptible to being pulled off course into the cross channel which usually results in their death. Closing the cross channel gates has been a major help to endangered species to keep them from being sucked out of the Sacramento River into the central delta to perish in sterile waters with no protective habitat. Closing the gates during all smolt migrations will have an immediate highly beneficial result in getting more fish to the ocean.

Install State of the Art Fish Salvage at the Delta Pumps

Fish of all species that bypass the louvers at the state and federal pumps are captured and held in tanks. Periodically the tanks are emptied into trucks and are hauled and dumped in the North delta. Survival could be dramatically improved with better handling and the use of adapting pens at the dumping sites. The small

fish are currently dumped in a highly stressed and weakened condition. Predator fish and birds kill a high percentage. Many of these fish are endangered species. The minor costs of doing this job right are insignificant in terms of the potential benefits to survival.

Develop a Longer Term Comprehensive Salmon Recovery Plan

Longer term plans are needed. There are hundreds of projects that can repair habitat, open new habitat, improve survival, improve water quality and allow better up and down stream migration. The fishery groups have a list and so do the fishery agencies. State and federal leadership is needed to see that these projects are set in priority, funded and implemented. One example is the retirement of the Red Bluff diversion dam with screened pumping installed as a replacement. Another is the removal of barriers blocking access to 32 miles of spawning grounds on Battle Creek on the upper Sacramento River. Early estimates indicate that up to a billion dollars will be required to implement the critical projects.

Require Full Mitigation for all Direct and Indirect losses at the state and federal pumps

This action is long overdue. There is no question that the state and federal water projects have been destroying millions of game and non-game species annually for fifty years. When viewed from a cumulative perspective, this impact is a major factor in the decline of the Central Valley fisheries. There has been very little successful mitigation for the losses they created. The state provided some mitigation but only for direct losses of salmon, steelhead and striped bass. The federal pumps mitigated for direct losses for a few years but then withdrew from their written agreement with California Department of Fish and Game. Neither the state nor the federal pumps have ever mitigated for indirect losses. Indirect losses are fish that perish because they are pulled out of their normal migration paths and perish before they get to the pumping plants. Many biologists believe that indirect losses far exceed the direct losses. Mitigation funding used properly for habitat and water flow improvements, could go a long way towards the recovery of many species as was originally intended by the Central Valley Project Improvement Act. The California Assembly has a bill in process, AB1806, which would require mitigation for direct and indirect fishery losses caused by the operation of the by the state and federal Water Projects. The bill has passed the Water Parks and Wildlife Committee and is now at the Appropriations Committee for consideration. This action needs federal support and a possible parallel federal bill.

Remove 4 Klamath River Dams

The Klamath River remains a salmon disaster. The fishery agencies, and virtually every fishery and tribal group agree that the best fishery solution and economic solution is the removal of four dams on the river. Continued state and federal leadership is needed to bring this about. In the meantime firm biological opinions are needed to see that the endangered fish in the river can survive until the dams are gone.

Install State of the Art Screening at the Delta Pumps

Hundreds of thousands of fish currently perish at the state and federal pumps. Some are salvaged and subsequently die and others are pulled through the louvers and perish in the canals. These pumps are crucial to future California water deliveries with or without a peripheral canal. The final answer is to separate the fish from the water with modern screens and solve the problem once and for all. Fish screens do this all over the world. The current louvers are archaic in terms of the current state of the art. They should be replaced with state of the art screens like those successfully operating at the GCID and Contra Costa water diversions.

The Rise and Fall Of the Central Valley Chinook Salmon Returns

Total of all Central Valley Runs - DFG Data

700

600

500

400

300

200

(Thousands)

100

(000)

1990 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 2000 01 02 03 04 05 06 07

WFF 03/23/2008

1990 - The Winter Run Salmon is Listed under The Endangered Species Act. The National Marine Fishery Service begins the Recovery Process requiring \$1 billion in river improvements. All salmon runs benefit and the restoration process accelerates.

1993 - The Red Bluff Dam gates are opened allowing two way migration.

1996 - The Shasta Dam Temperature Curtain is completed allowing cold water flows

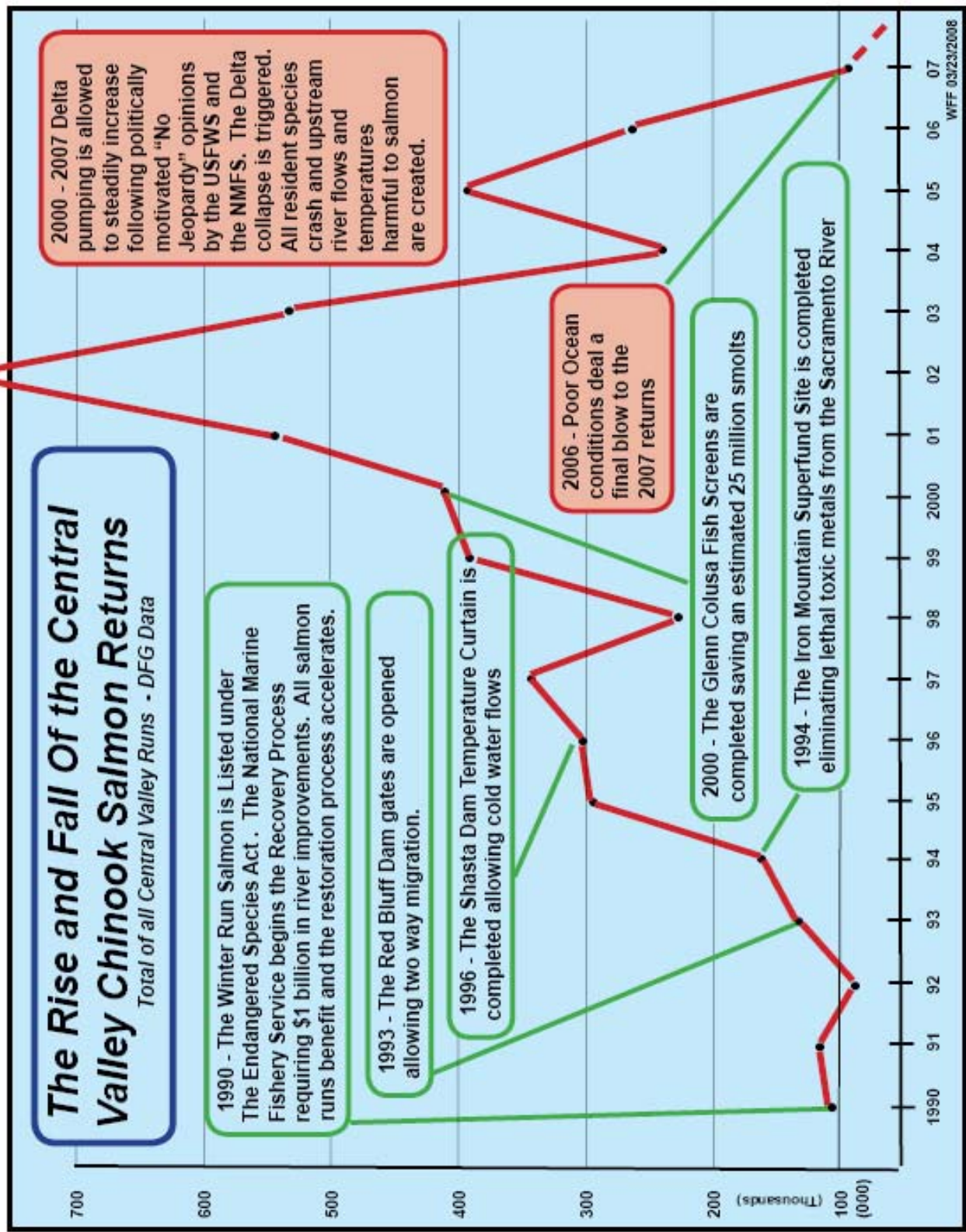
2000 - The Glenn Colusa Fish Screens are completed saving an estimated 25 million smolts

1994 - The Iron Mountain Superfund Site is completed eliminating lethal toxic metals from the Sacramento River

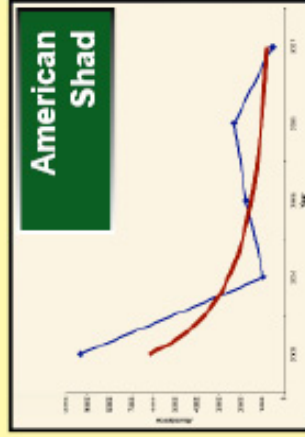
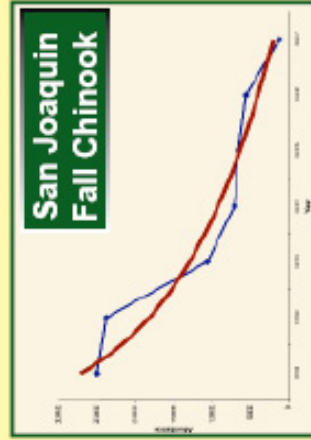
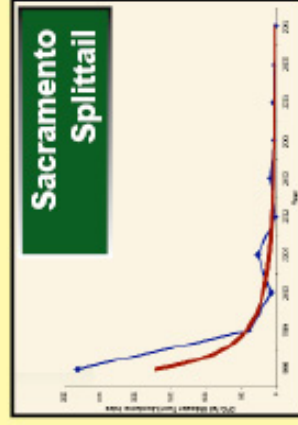
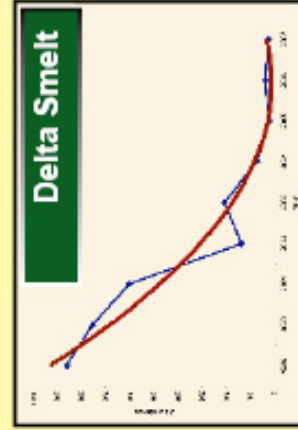
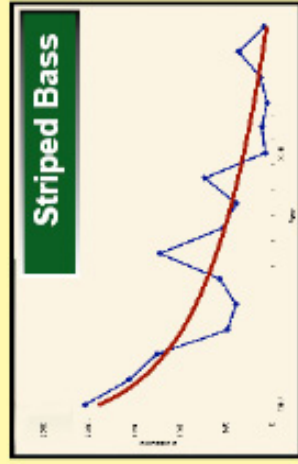
2006 - Poor Ocean conditions deal a final blow to the 2007 returns

2000 - 2007 Delta pumping is allowed to steadily increase following politically motivated "No Jeopardy" opinions by the USFWS and the NMFS. The Delta collapse is triggered. All resident species crash and upstream river flows and temperatures harmful to salmon are created.

780



Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Fish Species



All Species of Small Fish in the Delta have crashed during the period of Increased Pumping



*Targeting California's
Water Management*



Water4Fish.org Website

- ***A Grassroots Political Action Program***
- ***The Only Recourse for Fishermen is to Organize***
- ***Letters are Sent to Political Leaders***
- ***Results – To date 56,574 letters and petitions have been sent to legislators***

15,532 have gone to the Governor

17,954 have gone to members of the House

***16,022 have gone to Senator Feinstein and
Senator Boxer***

17,573 have gone to the California Assembly

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The Economics of Sportfishing in California

Fishing

<i>Fishermen</i>	<i>2.4 million</i>
<i>Annual Equipment Expenditures</i>	<i>\$2.7 billion</i>
<i>Full Economic Impact</i>	<i>\$4.8 billion</i>
<i>Wages and Salaries</i>	<i>\$1.6 billion</i>
<i>Jobs</i>	<i>41,000</i>

California has traditionally been second only to Florida in the purchase of fishing equipment

Boating and Marine

<i>Boat Registrations</i>	<i>894,000</i>
<i>Boats used for Fishing 70%</i>	<i>625,000</i>
<i>Boat and Marine Sales 2006</i>	<i>\$1.2 billion</i>
<i>Full Economic Impact</i>	<i>\$16.5 billion</i>
<i>Boat Builders in Calif.</i>	<i>83</i>
<i>Marinas in Calif.</i>	<i>624</i>
<i>Jobs related to Marine Industry</i>	<i>300,000</i>

California has the second highest number of registered boats in the nation