

Science, Service, Stewardship



NOAA's
NATIONAL
MARINE
FISHERIES
SERVICE

Southwest
Region
Protected
Resources
Division

NOAA





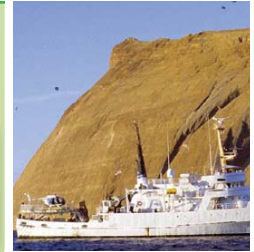
Southwest Region Protected Resources Division

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service, Southwest Region's Protected Resources Division (Division) leads conservation and management programs to protect and recover populations of endangered and threatened species that inhabit marine, estuarine, and freshwater habitats of California.

The Division's most critical and urgent responsibility is to save species from extinction, with an ultimate goal to recover populations to levels where they no longer need special protections. This is a long-term mission that will require the cooperation of many partners. The Division's dedicated staff take these responsibilities very seriously and are committed to working with a broad spectrum of stakeholders to accomplish these goals.

Photo: Liz Petras

Cover Photo: John Icanberry



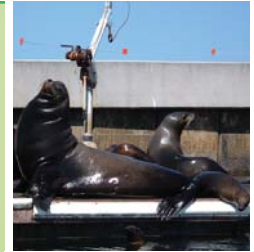
Program Priorities

Under the authorities of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the Division's staff lead a range of activities to protect, conserve, and recover populations of salmon, steelhead, green sturgeon, eulachon, marine mammals, sea turtles, and white and black abalone. Following are some examples of these actions:

- Develop and publish recovery plans that serve as guiding documents on the actions necessary to halt declines and move species towards recovery
- Develop and revise regulations that govern human activities affecting protected species
- Conduct consultations under section 7 of the ESA to ensure that Federal agency activities do not jeopardize listed species or adversely modify or destroy critical habitat



- Issue permits under section 10 of the ESA for research activities, or for projects that result in the incidental take of ESA listed species by non-Federal entities
- Review protected species' status and make determinations for appropriate listings under the ESA
- Develop and distribute public information and educational materials to enhance public understanding of protected species issues
- Provide technical review of proposed projects to reduce, minimize or eliminate potential harm to protected species
- Build partnerships with Federal, State, and local agencies, tribes, watershed groups, and other important stakeholders as a way to stimulate collaborative conservation efforts
- Provide oversight of marine mammal and sea turtle stranding and rehabilitation networks
- Administer a Species of Concern Program, which aims to proactively conserve species before they may need protections of the ESA





Salmon, Steelhead, Green Sturgeon, and Eulachon

Southwest Region's Protected Resources Division works to prevent the extinction of anadromous fish in the wild and ensure the long-term persistence of self-sustaining, harvestable populations across California by addressing factors limiting the species' ability to survive and naturally reproduce in the wild. The major threats to these species include:

Unsustainable Land and Water Use Practices associated with actions such as:

- Water diversions
- Urbanization
- Dam operations
- Road building and maintenance
- Logging
- Agriculture

Habitat Loss and Destruction through mechanisms such as:

- Introduction of migration barriers
- Alteration of stream flow and water temperature
- Alteration of channel morphology and function
- Removal of riparian vegetation
- Unnatural accelerated rates of erosion
- Degradation of water quality
- Alteration of gravel and wood recruitment

Photo: Thomas Dunklin





Marine Mammals

Whales, dolphins, seals, and sea lions are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Some marine mammal species are also listed under the ESA. Approximately 30 species of marine mammals occur off the coast of California.

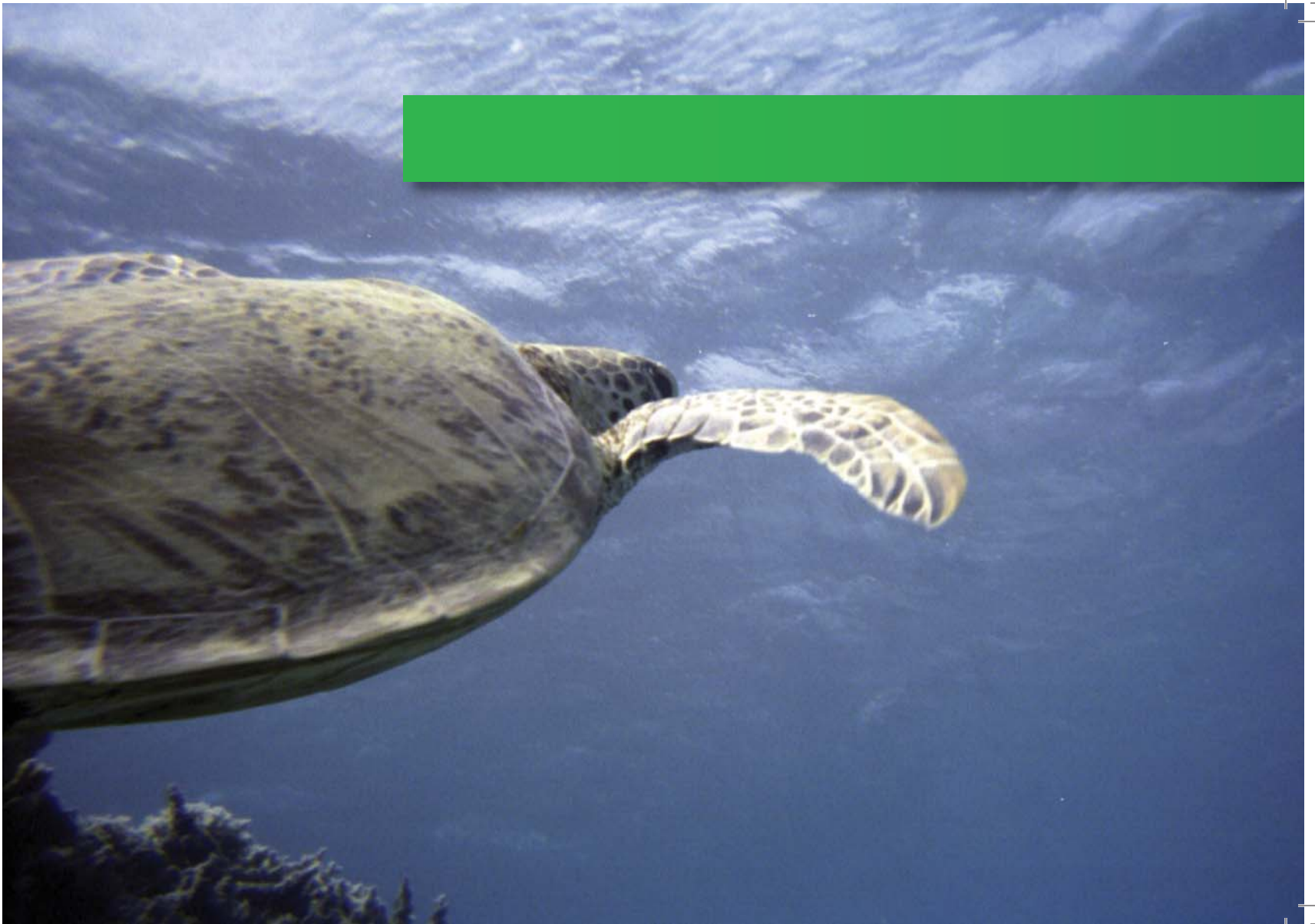
Threats to marine mammals include:

- Bycatch in commercial and recreational fisheries
- Incidental strikes by ocean vessels
- Entanglement in and ingestion of marine debris
- Acoustic overexposure to anthropogenic noise
- Disease

The Division's priorities include working collaboratively with the fishing industry to continue to reduce bycatch, developing methods to minimize vessel strikes of large whales, administering a stranding network to advance our knowledge of disease impacts, partnering with federal and academic institutions to further understand the impacts of anthropogenic noise, and promoting deterrence methods to protect human property and activities from increasing pinniped populations.

Photo: Sarah Wilkin





Sea Turtles

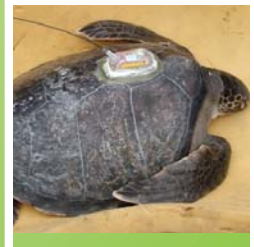
The Division supports conservation activities and research on four species of marine turtles, two of which are more commonly found off the coast of California, including leatherbacks and eastern Pacific green turtles. All four species are listed as either endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

The principal threats to turtles in the marine environment include:

- Vessel strikes
- Bycatch in commercial and artisanal fisheries
- Entanglement and/or ingestion of marine debris

While sea turtles do not nest on the U.S. west coast, these long-ranging animals do face impacts on their nesting beaches throughout the Pacific Ocean, including harvest of eggs and nesting females and habitat degradation. The majority of threats to Pacific sea turtles occur outside the jurisdiction of the United States, so the conservation efforts of the Division include partnering with international and non-governmental organizations to conduct research and develop solutions that reduce the threat of fisheries, monitor and protect nesting beaches, and promote outreach and education to coastal communities.

Photo: Rick Bush





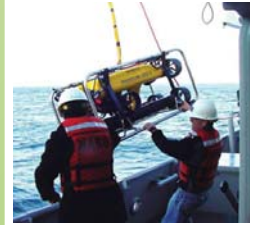
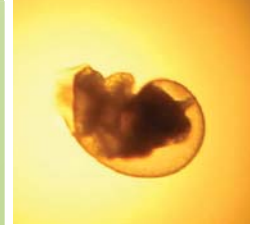
Abalone

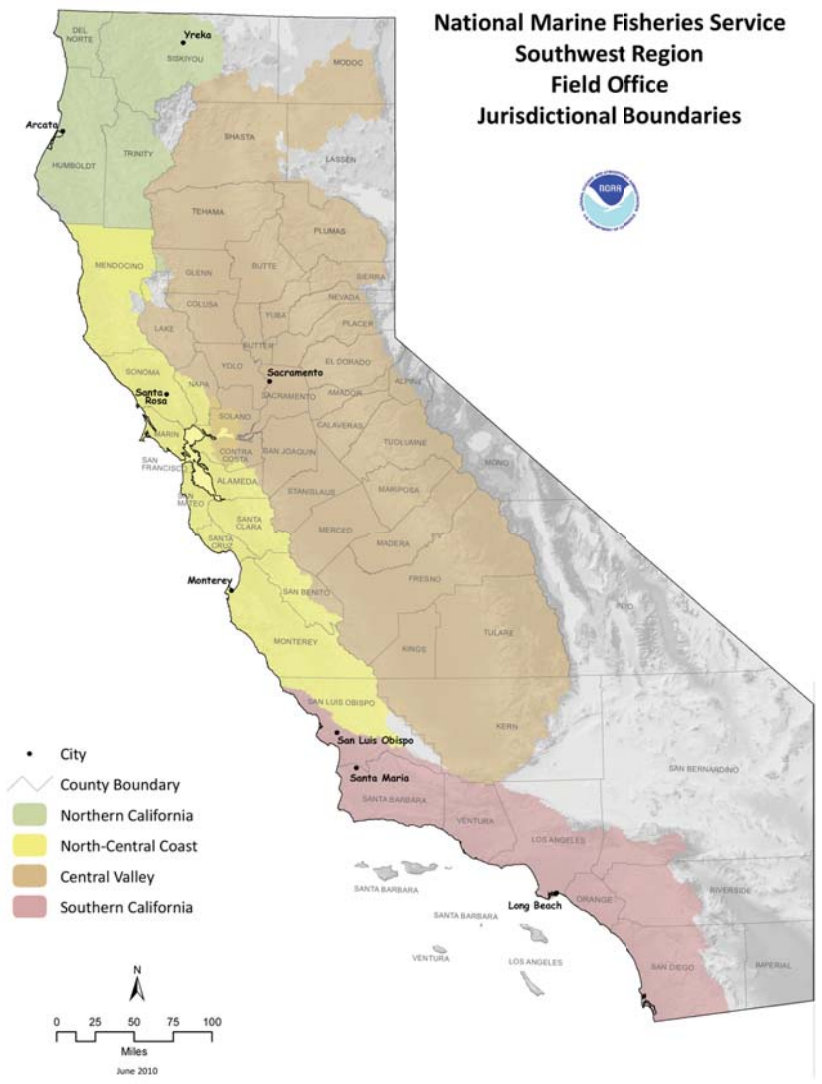
Abalone once supported an important fishery in California, but the impacts of overfishing and disease have prompted the ESA listing of two species of abalone, white and black, as endangered. Three additional species of abalone (pink, green and pinto) are also part of the Species of Concern program which supports proactive conservation and research.

The Division's primary actions to alleviate threats to and promote the recovery of abalone include:

- Help eliminate illegal take and promote the protection of habitat features important to abalone through ESA regulations, education, and cooperation with law enforcement
- Support and take part in novel research in Southern California to fill in gaps in our understanding of the species' conservation and recovery needs
- Work with stakeholders to develop safe and cost-effective methods for rebuilding abalone populations in California

Photo: John Butler



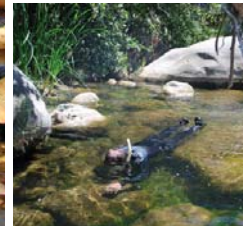
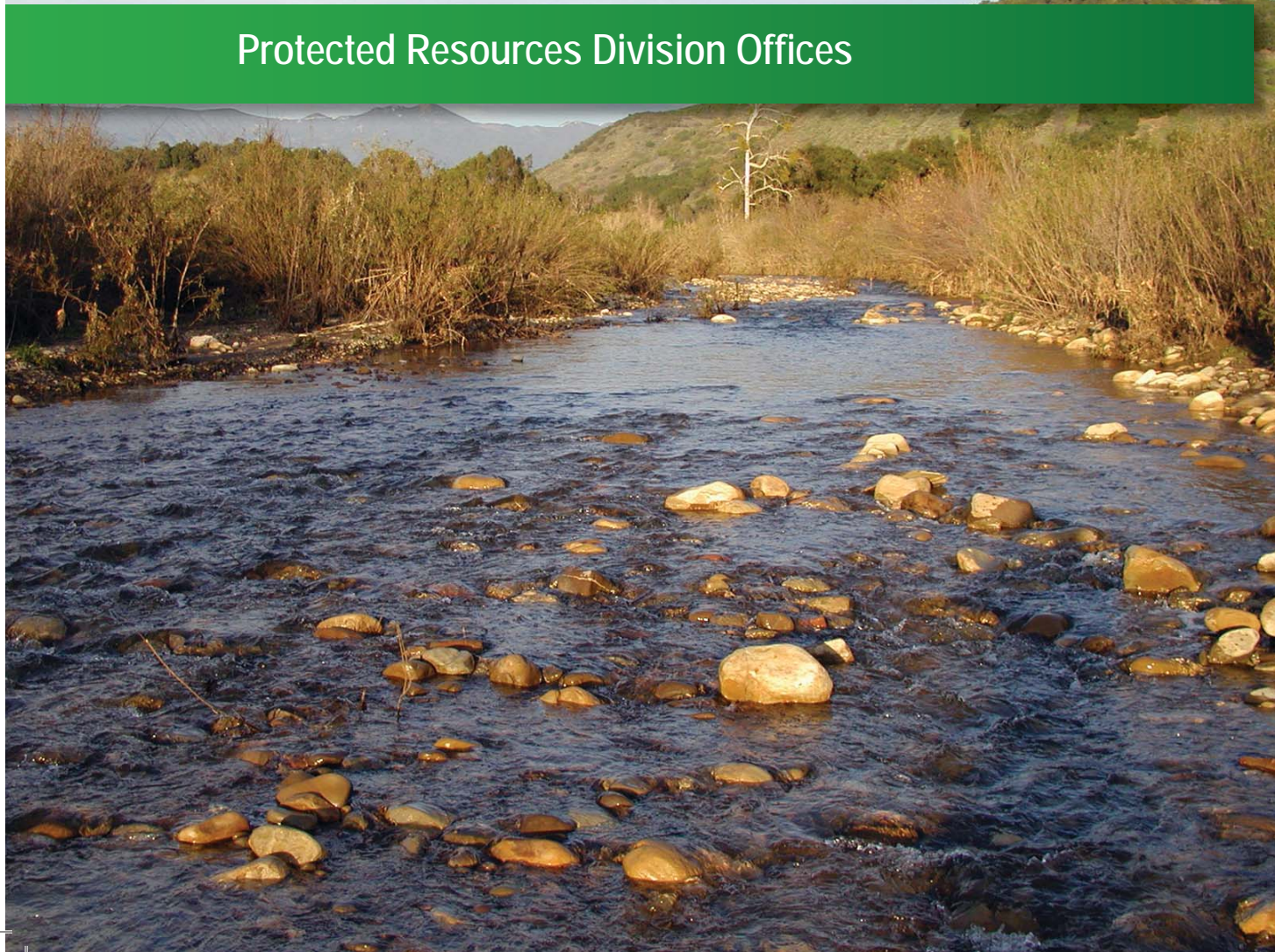


The Division has approximately 125 staff located in four major offices (and several satellite locations) throughout the state. The map below depicts the area of responsibility covered by each of the offices and the following pages provide office specific information.



Photo: Rick Bush

Protected Resources Division Offices





Northern California Office

The Northern California Office oversees conservation and recovery programs for salmon, steelhead, green sturgeon, and eulachon from the Oregon Border south to the Humboldt-Mendocino County line, including the counties of Del Norte, Siskiyou, Trinity and Humboldt. Located in Arcata, with satellite offices in Yreka and Klamath Falls, Oregon, the Northern California Office leads the Division's efforts to restore public and trust resources in the Klamath Basin ecosystem while building sustainable communities.

Conservation and recovery activities:

- Partnerships with industrial timber companies including nearly 1 million acres of land covered by 50-year conservation plans
- Partnerships with in-stream gravel mining companies that provide for both restoration benefits and less harmful extraction practices
- Lead efforts to improve hatchery practices consistent with conservation principles
- Tribal partnerships for salmon conservation & trust responsibilities
- Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement & Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement
- Leading development of Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast Coho Salmon Recovery Plan
- Partner with California in the prioritization & review of Pacific Coastal Salmonid Restoration Fund grants

Photo: Thomas Dunklin





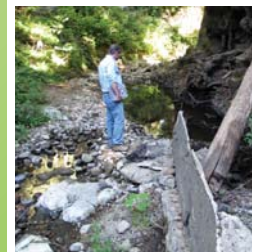
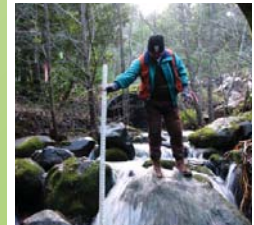
North-Central Coast Office

The North-Central Coast Office is located in Santa Rosa. The office has responsibility for salmon, steelhead, and green sturgeon conservation and recovery in the geographic region of coastal California from the Mendocino-Humboldt county line south to the Monterey-San Luis Obispo county line and includes San Francisco Bay.

Conservation and recovery activities:

- Russian River management
- Minimizing impacts of resource extraction
- San Francisco Bay dredging and development project reviews
- Development and implementation of the California Coast Coho, Central Coast multispecies and North American Green Sturgeon Recovery Plans
- Coordination with California Board of Forestry
- Frost protection and other flow-related issues

Photo: John McKeon





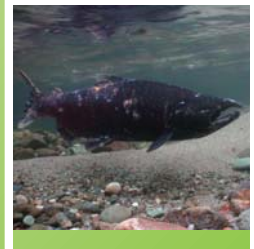
Central Valley Office

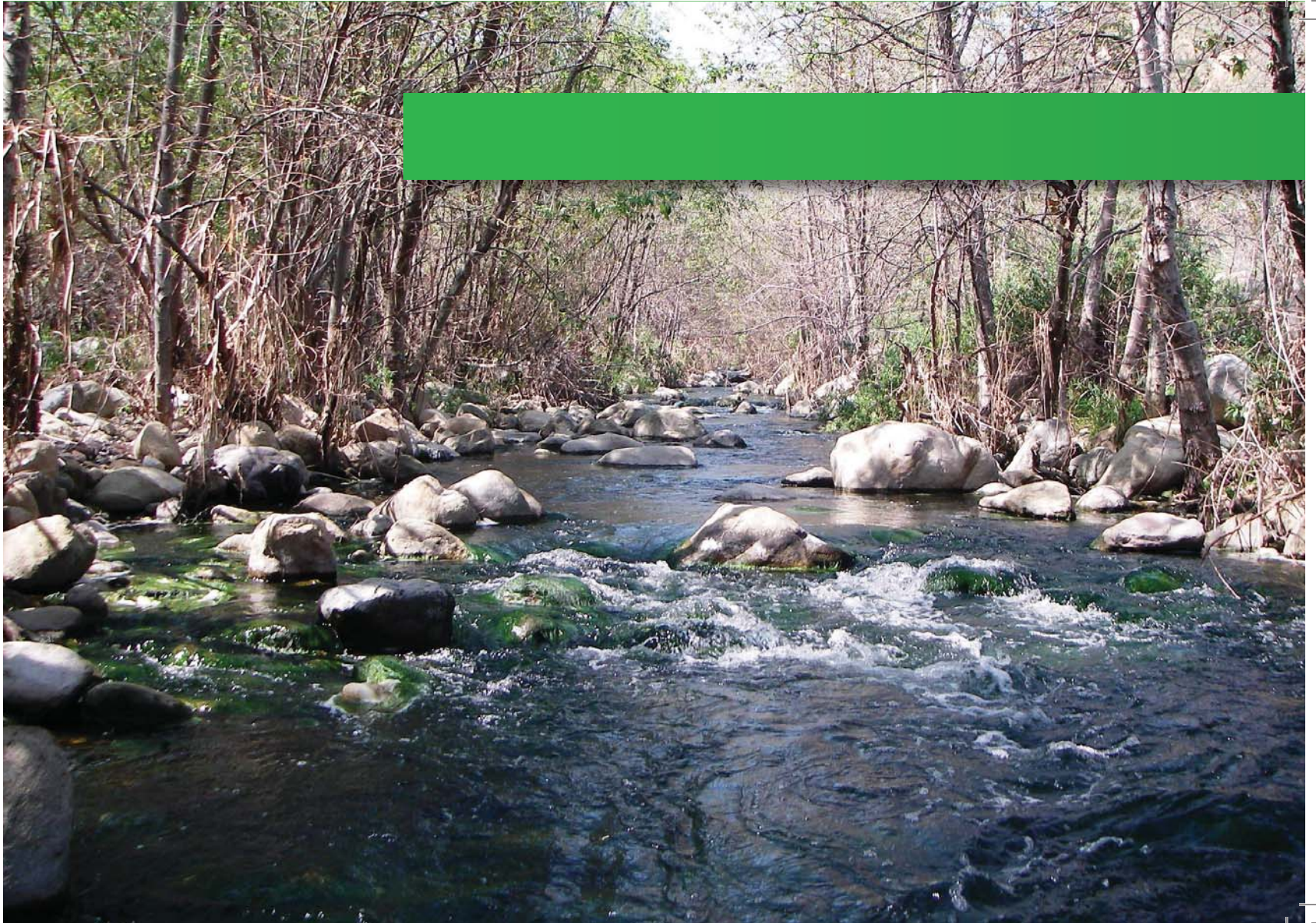
The Central Valley Office is located in Sacramento. The office has responsibility for salmon, steelhead, and green sturgeon conservation and recovery in the geographic region from the San Francisco Bay east including waters of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its tributaries to their headwaters in the Sierras.

Conservation and recovery activities:

- Management of State and Federal water projects
- Levee maintenance and construction
- San Joaquin River Restoration Program
- Bay Delta Conservation Plan
- Central Valley Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Plan
- Central Valley hatcheries
- Permitting research activities that promote the recovery of ESA listed species
- Salmon reintroductions to historic habitat
- FERC license reviews and consultations

Photo: Ralph and Lisa Cutler





Southern California Office

The Southern California office is located in Long Beach. The office has responsibility for the conservation and recovery of steelhead in the geographic region from San Luis Obispo County south to the Mexican border. The office also oversees marine mammal, sea turtle, abalone, and species of concern programs throughout the State of California.

Conservation and recovery activities:

- South Central and Southern California steelhead recovery plans
- Section 6 Cooperative Agreement with the State of California
- Abalone recovery plan development and implementation
- Ship strike and entanglement reduction for large whales
- Sea turtle habitat and status evaluations
- ESA consultations on commercial fisheries and Southern California water projects

The Division has recently partnered with NOAA Fisheries Service Southwest Fisheries Science Center to conduct research on a foraging subpopulation of green turtles in Long Beach, California – an area that may serve as the northernmost extent of their typical range on the U.S. West coast.

Photo: Rick Bush





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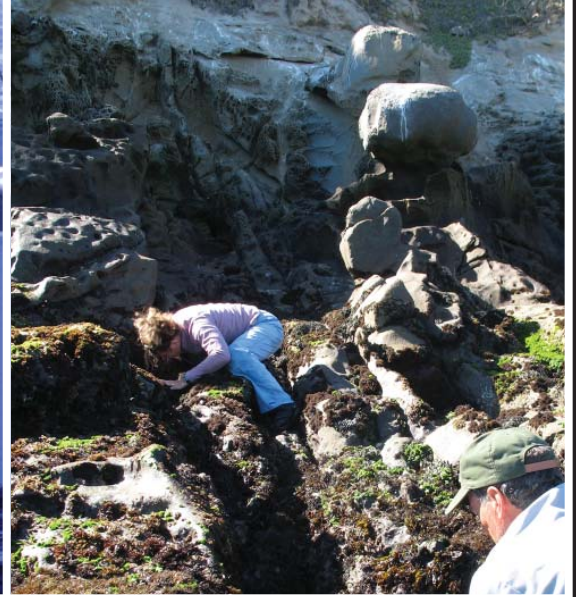
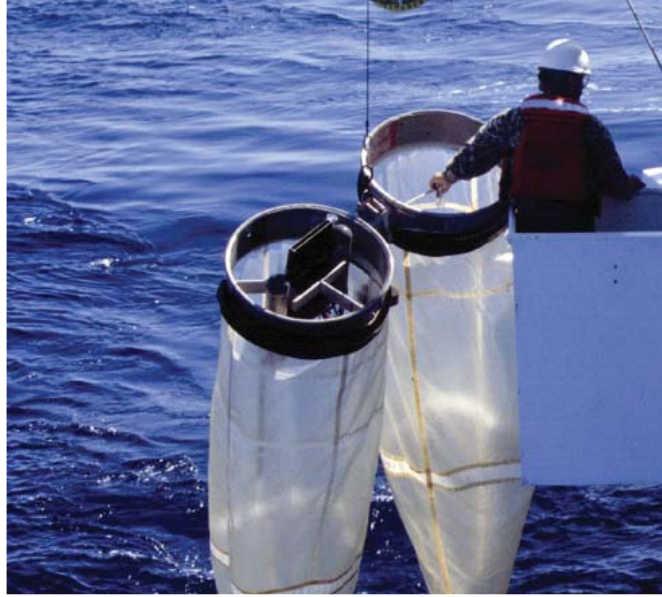
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Photo: Tracy McReynolds









April 2011

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