



NOAA NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NOAA Proposes to Extend Southern Range of Central California Coast Coho Salmon as a Result of Updated Scientific Information

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. – NOAA's Fisheries Service has today filed with the *Federal Register* a proposal to extend the southern range of federally protected Central California Coast Coho salmon from San Lorenzo River to Aptos Creek. The new information supporting an expansion of the range was found while reviewing a public petition to reduce the animal's southern boundary.

The current boundary for the evolutionary significant unit (ESU) of Central California Coast Coho salmon extends from Punta Gorda in northern California south to and including the San Lorenzo River near Santa Cruz, Calif. This ESU was listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act on October 31, 1996, and reclassified as an endangered species on June 28, 2005.

On April 2, 2010, NOAA Fisheries Service accepted a petition from a private landowner to review whether coho salmon found in streams south of San Francisco Bay should be taken off the federal list of endangered species. In July, a biological review team was formed by scientists and fishery experts from NOAA, the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Forest Service to analyze the request.

The biological review team concluded that coho south of San Francisco Bay are part of the listed population and that the range should be increased approximately seven miles south to include Soquel and Aptos Creeks. Some of the reasons for including these waterways include the recent observation and genetic material of coho salmon in Soquel Creek, and the similarity of habitat and watershed conditions that support the spawning and rearing of coho salmon in both watersheds.

NOAA's Fisheries Service is requesting public comment for the proposed range extension. Specific information on Soquel and Aptos Creeks would be especially helpful, including: recent or historical knowledge, including photographs, illustrating the presence and run size of coho; information on the current suitability of habitat to support salmon spawning, rearing and migration; biological or other relevant information concerning any current or planned activities that may threaten coho; current efforts being made to protect coho; and potential economic costs or other impacts of designating critical habitat in these streams.

Written comments, data and information relevant to the proposed range extension must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. local time on April 5, 2011 and identified by the RIN 0648-XV30. Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

Electronic submissions: Via the eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov> and follow instructions for submitting comments.

Facsimile (fax): 562-980-4027, Attn: Craig Wingert.

Mail: Submit written comment to the Assistant Regional Administrator, Protected Resources Division, Attention to Craig Wingert, Southwest Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, 501 W. Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA, 90802-4213

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