

## STAFF SUMMARY FOR OCTOBER 9-10, 2019

**8. ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (WILDLIFE AND INLAND FISHERIES)****Today's Item****Information** **Action** 

This is a standing agenda item to provide FGC with updates on items of interest from previous meetings. For this meeting: Update on stakeholder discussions related to FGC's draft Delta Fisheries Management Policy and existing Striped Bass Policy.

**Summary of Previous/Future Actions**

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| • Delta Fisheries Forum   | May 24, 2017; Sacramento             |
| • WRC vetting of draft policy   | Sep 2018 – May 2019                  |
| • FGC accepted WRC recommendation to schedule                                 | Jun 12-13, 2019; Redding             |
| • Discussion of draft policy and potential adoption                           | Aug 7-8, 2019; Sacramento            |
| • <b>Today's update</b>   | <b>Oct 9-10, 2019; Valley Center</b> |
| • Discussion of revised draft policy and potential changes to existing policy | Dec 11-12, 2019; Sacramento          |

**Background**

This item is an opportunity for staff to provide follow-up information on wildlife and inland fisheries topics previously before FGC.

At its Aug 2019 meeting, FGC received a revised draft Delta Fisheries Management Policy for discussion and potential adoption; see Exhibit 1 for further background. Following extensive public comment at the meeting, FGC accepted a staff recommendation to postpone discussion of the draft policy until the Dec 2019 meeting, in order to continue stakeholder discussions with FGC staff and DFW regarding both the draft policy and existing FGC Striped Bass Policy, and to invite a broader array of participants. FGC requested that staff provide at the Oct 2019 FGC meeting an update on the progress of stakeholder discussions on revising the draft policies.

To facilitate broader stakeholder input, staff scheduled a meeting for Sep 30 in Sacramento and publicized it through the FGC listserv (Exhibit 2); nine representatives participated from various organizations representing fishing and water interests. At today's meeting, staff will report on outcomes of the Sep 30 meeting and progress in developing draft revised policies.

**Significant Public Comments (N/A)****Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

1. [Staff summary from Aug 7-8 2019 FGC meeting, for background purposes only](#)
2. [FGC staff email invitation to stakeholders for Sep 30 Delta Fisheries Management Policy meeting, sent Sep 26, 2019](#)

**Motion/Direction (N/A)**

## STAFF SUMMARY FOR AUGUST 7-8, 2019

## 11. DELTA FISHERIES MANAGEMENT POLICY

## Today's Item

Information Action 

Discuss the potential adoption of a Delta Fisheries Management Policy and compatibility of the FGC Striped Bass Policy.

## Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| • Delta Fisheries Forum                       | May 24, 2017; Sacramento         |
| • WRC discussion                              | Sep 20, 2018; WRC, Sacramento    |
| • WRC discussion                              | Jan 10, 2019; WRC, Ontario       |
| • WRC discussion and recommendation           | May 16, 2019; WRC, Sacramento    |
| • FGC accepted WRC recommendation to schedule | Jun 12-13, 2019; Redding         |
| • <b>Today's discussion</b>                   | <b>Aug 7-8, 2019; Sacramento</b> |

## Background

In Jun 2016, FGC received a regulation change petition (Tracking Number 2016-011) from the Coalition for a Sustainable Delta and others requesting to increase the bag limit and reduce the minimum size limit for striped bass and black bass in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) and rivers tributary to the Delta. The expressed intent of the petition was to reduce predation by non-native bass on fish that are native to the Delta and listed as threatened or endangered under the federal or California endangered species acts, including winter-run and spring-run Chinook salmon, Central Valley steelhead, and delta smelt.

While the regulation change petition was formally withdrawn prior to FGC action, FGC requested that WRC schedule a discussion to explore the issue more comprehensively; the request also included a review of the existing FGC Striped Bass Policy that was adopted in 1996 and focuses on restoring and maintaining striped bass for recreational fishing opportunity (Exhibit 6). FGC staff was directed to hold a half-day forum focused on the State's vision for managing fisheries in the Delta for the benefit of native fish species and sport fisheries, implementation of the State's vision, and soliciting stakeholder input on potential actions FGC could consider related to this topic.

Held in May 2017, the forum was publicized and open to the public. The forum included a state agency panel discussion, an overview of FGC's policies and regulations for sport fisheries in the Delta, and a full group discussion. The discussion included two presentations by representatives for the original petition, consistent with direction provided by FGC. One of the recommendations that emerged from that forum was FGC adoption of a policy for fisheries management in the Delta that would provide science-based guidance to balance native fish needs with sport fishing opportunities in management decisions. The Coalition for a Sustainable Delta offered a proposed draft policy which, together with stakeholder and DFW input, formed the basis for the initial draft policy.

At its Sep 2018, Jan 2019, and May 2019 meetings, WRC discussed the draft policy and in May developed a recommendation that FGC schedule consideration of the draft policy. At its Jun

## STAFF SUMMARY FOR AUGUST 7-8, 2019

2019 meeting, FGC received the draft Delta Fisheries Management Policy advanced from WRC (Exhibit 5). At that meeting and following, stakeholders raised several significant issues with the draft policy. Following considerable public comment regarding the draft policy and current Striped Bass Policy, FGC accepted WRC's recommendation and directed staff to add the draft policy to the Aug 2019 meeting for discussion.

At this time, staff believes that additional discussions between stakeholders and staff of DFW and FGC are warranted to explore how to resolve the identified issues before FGC considers the draft Delta Fisheries Management Policy and any potential changes to the FGC Striped Bass Policy. Postponing discussion would allow dialogue to proceed and give additional stakeholders the chance to participate in ongoing discussions. Staff recommends that FGC consider new draft policies (based on discussions with stakeholders) at its Dec 2019 meeting in Sacramento, which will facilitate participation by stakeholders from in and around the Delta. If approved, FGC staff will provide a progress update at FGC's Oct 2019 meeting.

### Significant Public Comments

1. The American Sportfishing Association and Coastside Fishing Club ask FGC to focus on the root causes of poor Delta health and oppose any effort to reduce long-term recreational fishing opportunities (Exhibit 1).
2. The California Sportfishing League emphasizes the economic importance of striped bass, states that predation from non-native game fish in the Delta is a "red herring", and opposes a repeal of the FGC Striped Bass Policy. The league states that reductions in fishing opportunity run counter to the State's R3 project and ask that discussions be scheduled near the greater Sacramento area (Exhibit 2).
3. The Northern California Guides and Sportsmen's Association states that predation on salmonid species is a minor stressor. The association asks that the item be tabled until Dec to allow for ongoing discussions to ensue, and that any further FGC conversations take place in the vicinity of the potential impacts of the draft Delta Fisheries Management Policy (Exhibit 3).
4. The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation states that striped bass contribute to a healthy Delta ecosystem and that predation is not a significant factor driving Delta fish population abundances. They oppose the repeal of the Striped Bass Policy (Exhibit 4).

### Recommendation

**FGC staff:** Postpone discussion of the draft policy to the Dec 2019 FGC meeting to allow FGC and DFW staff time to work with stakeholders on ways to address the issues that have been raised.

### Exhibits

1. Letter from the American Sportfishing Association and Coastside Fishing Club, received Jul 25, 2019
2. Letter from the California Sportfishing League, received July 25, 2019
3. Letter from the Northern California Guides and Sportsmen's Association, received July 25, 2019

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4. Letter from the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, received July 25, 2019
5. Draft Delta Fisheries Management Policy, revised Aug 1, 2019
6. FGC Striped Bass Policy, adopted Apr 5, 1996

**Motion/Direction**

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ that the Commission postpones discussion of the draft Delta Fisheries Management Policy and Commission's Striped Bass Policy until the December 2019 meeting.

**Cornman, Ari@FGC**

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**From:** California Fish and Game Commission <fgc@fgc.ca.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 26, 2019 1:20 PM  
**To:** Cornman, Ari@FGC  
**Subject:** Corrected: September 30 Delta Fisheries Management Policy meeting



www.fgc.ca.gov

## California Fish and Game Commission

*Thank you to those who noticed an error in our previous message regarding the Delta Fisheries Management Policy meeting. Please see the corrected message below with functioning links.*

The California Fish and Game Commission invites stakeholders to participate in a meeting to discuss a potential new Delta Fisheries Management Policy and the Commission's existing Striped Bass Policy.

**Date:** September 30, 2019  
**Time:** 4:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Natural Resources Building  
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1320  
Jim Kellogg Conference Room  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Webex information for remote participation:

<https://cawildlife.webex.com/cawildlife/j.php?MTID=mf2a4d6e56c9cefa95e71e2727639afe1>  
Meeting Number 967 141 617

Join by phone:

1-877-402-9753 Call-in toll-free number (ATT Audio Conference)  
1-636-651-3141 Call-in number (ATT Audio Conference)  
Access Code 832 431 0

The discussion will help inform revisions to the draft delta policy and the current striped bass policy, which are expected to be considered at the Commission's December 11-12, 2019 meeting. Draft versions of the policies will be available later this week at <http://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=174526&inline>.

Please contact staff at (916) 653-4899 or [fgc@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:fgc@fgc.ca.gov) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

**Ari Cornman**  
**Wildlife Advisor**  
**California Fish and Game Commission**  
*Every Californian should conserve water. Learn how at:*  
[SaveOurWater.com](http://SaveOurWater.com)

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