

CALIFORNIA CODES
FISH AND **GAME CODE**
SECTION **6900**-6903.5

6900. This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the Salmon, Steelhead Trout, and Anadromous Fisheries Program Act.

6901. The Legislature, for purposes of this chapter, finds as follows:

(a) According to the department, the natural production of salmon and steelhead trout in California has declined to approximately 1,000,000 adult chinook or king salmon, 100,000 coho or silver salmon, and 150,000 steelhead trout.

(b) The naturally spawning salmon and steelhead trout resources of the state have declined dramatically within the past four decades, primarily as a result of lost stream habitat on many streams in the state.

(c) Much of the loss of salmon and steelhead trout and anadromous fish in the state has occurred in the central valley.

(d) Protection of, and an increase in, the naturally spawning salmon and steelhead trout resources of the state would provide a valuable public resource to the residents, a large statewide economic benefit, and would, in addition, provide employment opportunities not otherwise available to the citizens of this state, particularly in rural areas of present underemployment.

(e) Proper salmon and steelhead trout resource management requires maintaining adequate levels of natural, as compared to hatchery, spawning and rearing.

(f) Reliance upon hatchery production of salmon and steelhead trout in California is at or near the maximum percentage that it should occupy in the mix of natural and artificial hatchery production in the state. Hatchery production may be an appropriate means of protecting and increasing salmon and steelhead in specific situations; however, when both are feasible alternatives, preference shall be given to natural production.

(g) The protection of, and increase in, the naturally spawning salmon and steelhead trout of the state must be accomplished primarily through the improvement of stream habitat.

(h) Funds provided by the Legislature since 1978 to further the protection and increase of the fisheries of the state have been administered by the Department of Fish and **Game** in a successful program of contracts with local government and nonprofit agencies and private groups in ways that have attracted substantial citizen effort.

(i) The department's contract program has demonstrated that California has a large and enthusiastic corps of citizens that are eager to further the restoration of the stream and fishery resources of this state and that are willing to provide significant amounts of time and labor to that purpose.

(j) There is need for a comprehensive salmon, steelhead trout, and anadromous fisheries plan, program, and state government organization to guide the state's efforts to protect and increase the naturally spawning salmon, steelhead trout, and anadromous fishery resources of the state.

6902. The Legislature, for purposes of this chapter, declares as

follows:

(a) It is the policy of the state to significantly increase the natural production of salmon and steelhead trout by the end of this century. The department shall develop a plan and a program that strives to double the current natural production of salmon and steelhead trout resources.

(b) It is the policy of the state to recognize and encourage the participation of the public in privately and publicly funded mitigation, restoration, and enhancement programs in order to protect and increase naturally spawning salmon and steelhead trout resources.

(c) It is the policy of the state that existing natural salmon and steelhead trout habitat shall not be diminished further without offsetting the impacts of the lost habitat.

6903. It is the policy of the state and the department to encourage nonprofit salmon release and return operations subject to this **code** operated by, or on behalf of, licensed commercial salmon fishermen for the purpose of enhancing California's salmon populations and increasing the salmon harvest by commercial and recreational fishermen. The department shall, to the extent that funds and personnel are available, cooperate with fishing organizations in the siting and establishment of those operations to ensure the protection of natural spawning stocks of native salmon. The organizations conducting the operations may receive salmon eggs and juvenile salmon for the purposes of the operation, and, where appropriate, shall have priority to receive salmon eggs and juvenile salmon for those purposes after the needs of habitat mitigation efforts, and state hatcheries are met.

6903.5. The department shall encourage other nonprofit hatcheries and nonprofit artificial propagation operations, operated by, or on behalf of, licensed fishermen, for the purpose of rebuilding or enhancing marine fish populations, including, but not limited to, those for Dungeness crab, sea urchin, and California halibut, consistent with the protection of these species in the wild, in order to provide sustainable marine fish populations for harvest by commercial and recreational fishermen. The department shall, to the extent funds and personnel are available, cooperate with these nonprofit hatcheries and nonprofit artificial propagation operations in determining the feasibility, siting, and establishment of those activities and sharing technical information to ensure the protection of the marine environment.