CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE SOUTHWEST REGION

JOINT HATCHERY REVIEW COMMITTEE

FINAL REPORT ON ANADROMOUS SALMONID FISH HATCHERIES IN CALIFORNIA

REVIEW DRAFT

June 27, 2001

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between September 1999 and December 2000, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) conducted a joint review of California's anadromous fish hatcheries. A Joint Review Committee (Committee) was established and met in various locations over the course of about a year. The review was initiated primarily in response to the listing of California salmon and steelhead populations under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the need to identify and evaluate the effects of hatchery operations on listed species. The primary goals of the review were to: (1) identify and discuss programs, policies and practices that are likely to arise as important issues in permitting hatchery programs under the ESA; (2) identify opportunities to use hatcheries to help recover listed salmon and steelhead populations; and (3) discuss emerging views on the operation and management of hatcheries for the purpose of recovering depressed natural stocks.

California's anadromous fish hatcheries, constructed to mitigate for the salmon and steelhead production lost as a result of dam construction, provide a substantial fraction of the harvest of California chinook salmon. In supplying fish for commercial and recreational use, California's hatcheries are to be operated in such a way that the populations and genetic integrity of salmon and steelhead stocks are maintained, with management emphasis placed on natural stocks. The twin goals of replacing large amounts of lost production while maintaining the abundance and genetic integrity of the remaining populations are not easily accomplished.

Numerous studies have been published describing the genetic and ecological risks that artificial production may pose for naturally spawning fish populations. However, in assessing the risks to any particular population, it is usually difficult to demonstrate conclusively that adverse effects are actually occurring, and, if they are demonstrated, how serious they are. In assessing the status of stocks proposed for listing under the ESA, NMFS found the effects of artificial propagation to be among the most difficult and controversial to incorporate into risk analyses.

The Committee reviewed information that was available relative to these risks and effects of hatcheries in California, reached conclusions, and made recommendations based upon them. Subcommittees were formed on the following topics: 1) off-site release and straying, and 2) Klamath Trinity issues. These subcommittees presented their results to the full Committee for consideration; their written reports are attached as Appendices I and II, respectively.

Many recommendations are contained in the body of this report. The following are considered of major importance or interest:

1. Feather River Hatchery spring run chinook salmon should be released "in-river" and not trucked to distant down stream sites. The DFG should also explore all alternatives to reestablish a discrete run of spring run in the Feather River.

2. The production of fall run chinook salmon at Feather River and Nimbus Hatcheries should be considered for "in-river" release instead of being trucked downstream.

3. Hatchery "in-river" releases and water management practices (including water exports from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta) should be coordinated so that emigration survival is maximized.

4. A formal process should be identified for the periodic review and assessment (e.g., every 6-9 years or 2-3 brood cycles) of hatchery production levels. It should include consideration of changing ocean or freshwater regimes, new information on hatchery/natural fish interactions, and changes in ESA status of salmonid populations.

5. All agencies should pursue efforts to establish a constant fractional marking program at all hatcheries.

6. All agencies should pursue efforts to develop adequate sampling programs to recover marked fish in the Central Valley. The DFG should establish a process to coordinate and oversee the methodologies for estimating salmon escapements to the Central Valley.

7. Hatchery and Genetics Management Plans should be developed for each hatchery.

Changes made in response to the above recommendations (and others included in the report, including those at individual hatcheries) must be accompanied by evaluation and monitoring programs. The Committee is aware that some of the recommendations contained in this report would require funding that is not yet available.

Finally, it is recognized that implementation of the recommendations in this report cannot solve all future concerns about salmon or steelhead populations or hatchery operations. Hatchery production in California was not the root cause of the decline in salmon and steelhead populations to the point that they require protection under the California Endangered Species Act and the ESA. Minimizing and reversing the effects of habitat blockages, logging and agricultural activities, urbanization and water withdrawals in the river drainages that support California salmon and steelhead, will require continuing attention and effort. During its activities and deliberations, the Committee was cognizant of the biological and societal benefits that California's hatchery system provides. These benefits have to be considered when any changes are proposed to the hatchery system.

I. NEED FOR THE REVIEW

A. Introduction

In September 1999, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) began a joint review of California's anadromous fish hatcheries. A Joint Review Committee (Committee) was established and met in various locations over the course of about a year. The review was initiated primarily in response to the listing of certain California salmon and steelhead populations under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the resulting requirement that the effects of hatchery operations on listed species be evaluated and, if necessary, authorized under the ESA. The review is timely because of the consideration being given to hatcheries in other forums and processes, such as the DFG status review of Central Valley spring chinook, requirements to double natural salmon populations under the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA), NMFS' ESA recovery planning process, the federal Tribal Trust Review of Trinity River Hatchery, and the upcoming relicensing of the Klamath River Project (including the Iron Gate Dam and Hatchery).

Over the past century, hatcheries have been built to compensate for the loss of spawning and rearing habitat of anadromous salmonids. Construction of barrier dams began on most of California's important chinook salmon spawning streams in the late 19th century and continued through the 1960s. In some years, the production from state and federal hatcheries provide over half of the harvest and escapement of California chinook salmon[1], and the offspring of hatchery origin adults, spawning in natural spawning areas, may contribute a significant portion of the remaining fish. It is likely that salmon exist in some areas of the State due entirely to the presence and operations of hatcheries in those areas. In the Central Valley, only 5-18 percent of the historic spawning habitat is still accessible to fall-run fish, and the percentage available for spring-run chinook and steelhead is even lower (CDFG 1993, Yoshiyama et al. 1996). In the Klamath Trinity system, less that half of the historic salmon and steelhead spawning and rearing habitat is still available to spawning fish, and in all areas where dams have been build, the remaining habitat is marginally productive for naturally spawning fish.

Failure to resolve the basic problems responsible for the decline of salmon and steelhead has frequently left artificial propagation as the only available means of providing harvest opportunity and lessening the impacts of the wide fluctuations in survival rate of naturally spawning fish. Other potential benefits from hatchery programs include preserving genetic resources (e.g., through a captive breeding program), recovering depressed stocks (by increasing survival through critical life history stages), and by providing fish for reintroductions where native runs have been extirpated.

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1. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that the average contribution rate of Coleman fall chinook to the ocean harvest south of Point Arena was 20% for the years 1990 through 1998 (USFWS 2001). Coleman accounts for almost 1/3 of the salmon released from California hatcheries. If contribution rates for other hatcheries are similar, this would suggest an overall hatchery contribution approaching 60%.

For the years 1995 through 2000, the DFG Ocean Salmon Project reported that 2.1%, 4.4%, 5.1%, 6.6%, 7.7%, and 2.9% of the sampled ocean catch were marked (M. Palmer-Zwahlen DFG personal communication 2001). For these years the marking rates for all hatchery produced salmon have not exceeded 10%, suggesting hatchery contribution rates between 20% and 77%.

As some west coast salmon populations have declined to alarming levels in the past 20 years, the role of hatcheries in managing the resource has increasingly been questioned. In response, biologists and hatchery managers have sometimes felt their hatchery operations were becoming scapegoats for any and all failures to successfully manage salmon and steelhead.

Numerous studies have been published describing the effects of hatchery-produced fish on naturally spawning fish populations (e.g. Hindar et al. 1991; Waples 1991; NFHRP 1994; ISG 1996; NRC 1996; Brannon et al. 1999; Waples 1999). Although the potential genetic and ecological risks of artificial production are matters of concern, it is often difficult, in any particular case, to demonstrate conclusively that adverse effects are actually occurring, and if so, how serious they are. Advocates of hatchery programs are reluctant to support changes in programs solely on the basis of potential risk, particularly when proposed changes conflict with the mitigation goals for which the hatcheries were originally constructed or would result in fewer fish being produced and, therefore, available for harvest. Hatchery critics assert that it is too dangerous to wait for conclusive studies proving harm to natural populations when listed species are involved.

The Committee recognized that hatchery production in California is not the root problem that brought salmon and steelhead populations to the point where they require protection under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and the ESA – and that these root problems require continuing attention and effort. However, it was deemed appropriate to review the State's hatchery program and to assess its risks to natural salmonid populations; in doing so, the Committee strived to maintain an objective view of the biological and societal benefits the hatchery system does provide.

B. Goals of the Review

In the course of the hatchery review, many topics related to California's hatchery programs were discussed. While the review was motivated by the requirement to evaluate and authorize some hatchery activities under the ESA, the review is not considered part of the formal ESA permitting process. The primary goals of the review were to: (1) identify and discuss programs, policies, and practices that are likely to arise as important issues in permitting hatchery programs under Section 7, 10, or 4(d) of the ESA; (2) identify opportunities for integrating hatcheries into the process of recovering listed salmon and steelhead populations; and (3) discuss emerging views on the operation and management of hatcheries for the purpose of recovering depressed natural stocks.

C. Listed Salmonids and Artificial Propagation

Most west coast salmon and steelhead populations have been declining for decades. Since 1990, NMFS has listed 26 distinct population segments of west coast salmon and steelhead as threatened or endangered species under the ESA. Ten of these listed populations are in California. The California Fish and Game Commission has listed three populations of California salmon under the CESA (coho salmon south of San Francisco, Sacramento River winter chinook and Sacramento River spring chinook) and has accepted a petition to list a fourth (coho salmon north of San Francisco).

Salmon and steelhead are unique among threatened or endangered species in that large scale artificial propagation programs annually release millions of individuals into the wild, where they may interact with listed natural populations. The ESA recognizes that conservation of threatened and endangered species can be facilitated by artificial propagation, and captive breeding programs are part of recovery planning efforts for a number of listed species (including Pacific salmon). Potential benefits of artificial propagation for listed species include supplementing natural populations to speed recovery and/or re-establishing natural populations in suitable but currently vacant habitat. Salmon hatchery programs can be consistent with the ESA if they do not impede progress towards recovery. Production hatchery programs designed to produce fish for harvest may be compatible with ESA recovery provided that adverse effects on listed natural populations are avoided or kept below certain thresholds, as yet undefined. These effects can be genetic, ecological, or incidental (e.g., bycatch of natural fish in fisheries targeting more abundant hatchery populations).

Concern regarding the effects of hatchery fish on natural populations centers largely on the loss of genetic factors important for survival of naturally spawning fish. If hatchery fish interbreed with natural populations, the genetic structure of the natural population may be affected if genetic differences exist between the hatchery and natural populations. In the extreme case, if fish from outside the basin have been imported and used as hatchery brood stock, there are likely to be genetic differences between the hatchery and natural populations. Even if the hatchery population is of local origin, however, some level of genetic change relative to the natural population is likely to occur in time due to the fact that hatchery rearing can change the mortality profile of a population. The resulting genetic changes, if transmitted to naturally reproducing fish, are unlikely to be beneficial to them.

Other expressed concerns are: (1) naturally spawning hatchery fish can have effects on natural populations, even if they leave few or no surviving offspring, by competing with natural populations for holding and spawning habitat, (2) hatchery production may mask declines in productivity of natural stocks, and (3) the presence of unidentifiable hatchery fish in natural populations can lead to substantial uncertainty in evaluating the status of the natural populations.

D. Authorizing Hatchery Activities under the ESA

NMFS is responsible for administering the provisions of the ESA with regard to west coast salmon and steelhead. The ESA allows listing of “distinct population segments” of vertebrates, as well as named species and subspecies. An ESU (evolutionarily significant unit) is a population of salmon determined by NMFS to meet the definition of a “distinct population segment” for purposes of listing under the ESA.

Table 1 lists the salmon and steelhead ESUs found in California. Under the ESA, it is illegal for any person – whether a private entity or a federal, state, or local government – to “take” endangered salmonids without federal authorization. The take prohibitions do not automatically apply to threatened species. NMFS may apply the take prohibitions to threatened fish, for specific activities, through a Section 4(d) rule, either at the time of listing or subsequently. “Take” is defined to mean harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to engage in such conduct. “Harm” is defined to mean an act which actually kills or injures fish or wildlife. Such an act may include significant habitat modification or degradation which actually kills or injures fish or wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including, breeding, spawning, rearing, migrating, feeding, or sheltering. For hatchery operations, take may be intentional, such as collection of broodstock, or incidental, such as interactions between hatchery and listed fish that might impair essential behavioral patterns.

Table 1. List of California salmon and steelhead ESUs.

ESU and Status (E-Endangered, T-Threatened, C-Candidate, NW-Not Warranted)	4(d) Take Prohibitions In Place	HGMP Exception Available	Geographic Distribution
S Oregon/N California Coast coho (T)	Yes	No	Cape Blanco (OR) to Punta Gorda (CA)
Central California Coast coho (T)	Yes	No[1]	Punta Gorda to San Lorenzo River
Sacramento River winter chinook (E)	Yes[2]	No	Sacramento River drainage
Central Valley spring chinook (T)	No	No[1]	Sacramento River drainage
California Coastal chinook (T)	No	No[1]	Redwood Creek (Humboldt County) to Russian River
Central Valley fall/late fall chinook (C)	NA		Central Valley
Upper Klamath Trinity Rivers chinook (NW)	NA		Trinity and Upper Klamath River Basins
Southern California Coast steelhead (E)	Yes[3]	No	Santa Maria River to San Mateo Creek
South-central California Coast steelhead (T)	Yes	Yes	Pajaro River to Santa Maria River
Central Valley steelhead (T)	Yes	Yes	Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers
Central California Coast steelhead (T)	Yes	Yes	Russian River to Soquel Creek
Northern California steelhead (T)	No	No[1]	Redwood Creek (Humboldt County) to Gualala River
Klamath Mountains Province steelhead (NW)	NA		Elk River (OR) and Klamath and Trinity rivers

1. NMFS expects to promulgate a 4(d) rule HGMP take exception in 2001. 2. Section 9 take prohibitions automatically apply to endangered species; no 4(d) rule is required.

The take of listed salmon and steelhead can be authorized under Sections 7 and 10 of the ESA. NMFS may also, through a Section 4(d) rule, apply the take prohibitions for threatened species, but except certain programs or activities, such as hatchery operations or recreational fisheries, if they meet requirements specified in the rule. A federal agency is required to enter into Section 7 consultation if it determines that an action which is authorized, funded, or carried out by the agency may affect listed species or critical habitat. Only incidental take of a listed species can be authorized through a Section 7 consultation. The obligation to enter into Section 7 consultation applies to federal agencies that operate hatcheries, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as well as to agencies such as the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), that fund hatcheries operated by the DFG.

The intentional take of listed species by a federal or non-federal project is illegal unless it is authorized through a Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit or the take is not prohibited by a 4(d) rule. A Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit authorizes the intentional take of listed species for research or propagation that furthers necessary or desirable scientific purpose or enhances the propagation or survival of the listed species. Incidental take by a non-federal entity may be authorized through a Section 10(a)(1)(B) permit. This would apply if listed species were incidentally captured and released during broodstock collection or if listed species were adversely effected by artificially-produced fish through ecological interactions, including disease, competition for food and habitat, and reduction of genetic integrity from breeding with artificially-produced fish. ESA compliance for hatcheries is dependent upon the species being propagated, as well as individual hatchery operations. For example, Livingston Stone Hatchery, a federally funded and operated hatchery which propagates Sacramento River winter chinook, was issued an incidental take permit under Section 7 regarding the effects of winter chinook propagation on other listed species and a Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit to allow the intentional take of winter chinook for its own program.

NMFS has published a 4(d) rule for Central Valley, Central California Coast, and South-Central California Coast steelhead ESUs which provides exceptions to Section 9 take prohibitions for certain activities. NMFS expects to publish a similar 4(d) rule for other threatened salmon ESUs in 2001. Under the rule, hatchery operations conducted in accordance with a Hatchery and Genetics Management Plan (HGMP) approved by NMFS are excepted from the application of ESA take prohibitions. An HGMP must (1) specify the goals and objectives for the hatchery program, (2) specify the donor population's "critical" and "viable" threshold levels, (3) prioritize broodstock collection programs in a manner that benefits listed fish, (4) specify the protocols that will be used for spawning and raising the fish in the hatchery, (5) determine the genetic and ecological effects arising from the hatchery program, (6) describe how the hatchery operation relates to fisheries management, (7) ensure that the hatchery facilities can adequately accommodate listed fish if they are collected for the program, (8) monitor and evaluate the HGMP to ensure that it accomplishes its objectives, and (9) be consistent with tribal trust obligations. The 4(d) rules do not remove the responsibility of a federal agency to consult under Section 7 of the ESA.

E. ESA Recovery Planning

The ESA and NMFS' recovery planning guidelines require that recovery plans be developed that evaluate the current status of the listed population or species, assess the factors affecting the species, identify recovery (delisting) goals, identify the entire suite of actions necessary to achieve these goals, and estimate the cost and time required to carry out those actions. The Southwest Region, NMFS, will be initiating formal ESA recovery planning efforts for listed salmonids in four areas of California: the southern Oregon/northern California coast, the north-central California coast, south-central California coast, and the Central Valley. NMFS anticipates that recovery planning will include evaluation of the use of artificial propagation for conservation and recovery of listed populations.

II. REVIEW PROCESS

A. Format

The Committee began meeting in September 1999 and met for one or two days monthly or bi-monthly until December 2000. Ten meetings (covering 17 days) were held.

The Committee compiled, presented, and discussed information on various topics, including specific details about each California hatchery; hatchery roles in salmon stock management, restoration, and recovery in the context of laws and policies; potential hatchery impacts on listed/candidate salmonids; and the need for ESA authorization of hatchery operations.

During the review, the Committee created several subcommittees which met independently. Topics considered by subcommittees included Warm Springs Hatchery, off-site release and straying, and issues related to hatchery operations in the Klamath Trinity River system. The subcommittees reported their findings to the full Committee for its consideration. The off-site release and Klamath Trinity subcommittees reports are attached to this report as Appendices I and II, respectively.

Finally, the Committee developed conclusions and recommendations which are included in this report. Following internal agency reviews, the report will be provided to the public for review and comment before it is finalized and submitted for approval to the Director, DFG, and the Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, NMFS.

B. Participants and Materials

The review was initiated as a joint NMFS and DFG undertaking. Early in the process it was agreed that meetings would be open to anyone wishing to attend, however efforts were not made to publicly announce the meetings. Participants in the review included DFG, NMFS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Yurok Tribe, and the Hoopa Valley Tribe. Members of the Committee and other attendees who were at two or more meetings are shown in Appendix III. A list of the major documents or reports handed out at the meetings is shown in Appendix IV.

Several handouts related to facts about individual hatcheries have been combined into one reference attached as Appendix V.

C. Public Review and Comment

This report will be distributed for review and comment to members of the public concerned with California's salmon resources including associations representing commercial and recreational fishing interests, other pertinent non-governmental organizations, and agencies responsible for funding hatchery mitigation programs. Comments will be summarized in this section, and resulting modifications to the report will be discussed.

[SECTION TO BE COMPLETED FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC REVIEW.]

III. ANADROMOUS FISH HATCHERIES IN CALIFORNIA

A. History

Anadromous fish hatcheries have been present in California since the first one was established on the McCloud River in 1872 by the United States Fish and Fisheries Commission. The initial purpose of this effort was to obtain Pacific salmon eggs for introductions into eastern U.S. waters to replace depleted Atlantic salmon stocks. The founders of this early hatchery reported that there had already been a great demand on the salmon stocks of the Sacramento River, and, because of heavy placer mining operations in the headwaters, the major spawning grounds on the Feather, Yuba, Bear, and American rivers had been destroyed.

With one exception, the nine State-operated anadromous fish hatcheries (see Figure 1 for locations) currently in operation in California were constructed, and are now operated, to mitigate for the loss of spawning habitat above dams - the hatcheries were expected to produce fish equal to what would have been produced upstream before the dams were built. Some mitigation hatcheries also produce additional fish for ocean enhancement, for use in studies to assess the

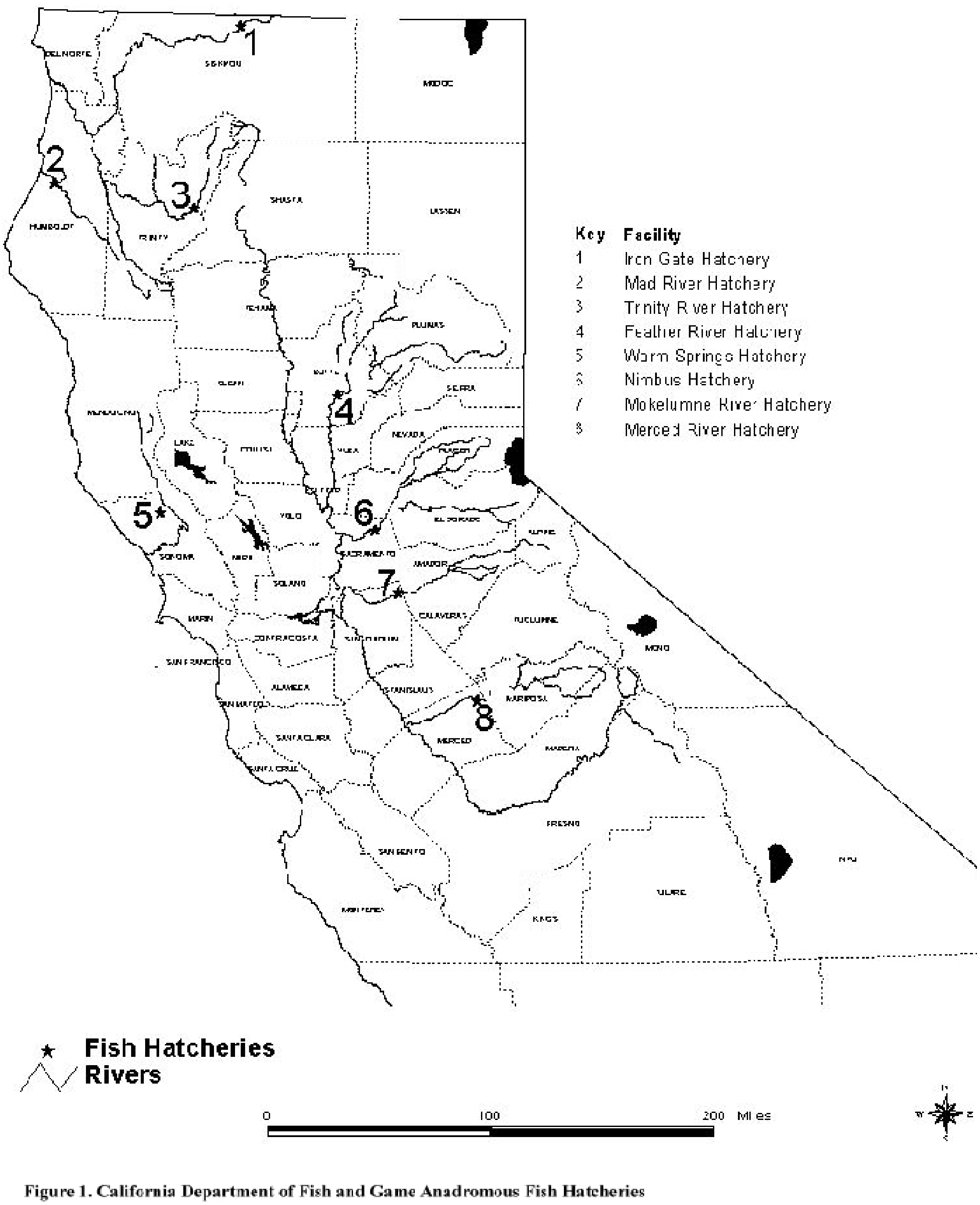

Figure 1. California Department of Fish and Game Anadromous Fish Hatcheries

effects of water operations on out-migrating salmon, and as mitigation for fish entrained at Delta pumping facilities. The exception, Mad River Hatchery, was constructed to produce fish that would augment natural production and support recreational and commercial fisheries in the Northern California coastal area.

B. State Statutes and Policies on Anadromous Hatcheries

Formal statutes and policies relating to the management of anadromous salmonids, including artificial propagation, are found in the Fish and Game Code (Code) and the policies of the Fish and Game Commission (Commission), respectively. The statutes in the Code result from legislation passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor. The policies are established by the Commission and reviewed about every 5 years. In general terms, the statutes and policies make the following statements relating to anadromous salmonid hatcheries in California:

(1) In the mix of artificial and natural production of anadromous salmonids, we are at the maximum percentage that should occur artificially. Preference should be given to increasing natural production when both artificial and natural production are feasible; this increase should be done primarily through stream habitat restoration and improvement.

(2) Artificial production shall not be considered appropriate mitigation for future loss of anadromous fish habitat.

(3) Salmon and steelhead shall be managed to protect, restore, and maintain the populations and genetics of all stocks.

(4) The State can participate in support of cooperative rearing programs, but the goal of increasing natural production takes precedence over these programs.

Consistent with legislative or Commission policies, policies and procedures relating to the operations of anadromous fish hatcheries have also been established by the DFG. They are included in "goals and constraints" documents for each hatchery. They include topics such as the source and use of appropriate brood stock; mating protocols; when to allow fish to enter the hatchery (and when to spawn them); what to do with excess adults, eggs, and fry. These topics are discussed in this report separately or when referring to individual hatcheries.

Table 2. Purposes and funding of DFG managed hatcheries

Hatchery	Purpose	State	Federal	Other
Iron Gate	Mitigation			Pacific Corp
Trinity River	Mitigation		USBR[1]	
Mad River	Augmentation	DFG		
Warm Springs Coyote Valley	Mitigation Enhancement		USCOE[2]	SCWA[3]
Feather River	Mitigation Enhancement	DWR[4] 4-Pumps[5]		Salmon Stamp
Nimbus	Mitigation		USBR	
Mokelumne	Mitigation Enhancement			EBMUD[6] Salmon Stamp
Merced	Supplementation Mitigation	DFG		4-Pumps

[1]U.S. Bureau of Reclamation [2]U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [3]Sonoma County Water Agency [4]California Dept. of Water Resources [5]Delta Pumps Fish Protection Agreement (DWR) [6]East Bay Municipal Utility District

C. Description of State Hatchery Operations

The State-managed hatcheries included in this review are: Iron Gate (Klamath River), Trinity (Trinity River), Mad (Mad River), Warm Springs (Russian River), Feather (Feather River), Nimbus (American River), Mokelumne (Mokelumne River), and Merced (Merced River). The DFG also manages artificial production programs on the Noyo and Eel rivers. A supplementation hatchery is being planned for establishment in the San Joaquin River system, but it is being discussed and reviewed through existing interagency efforts and it was not included in the current review. Recent statistics relating to each of the hatcheries in the review are included in Appendix V. Funding sources for the nine State hatcheries are summarized in Table 2.

D. Description of Cooperative Rearing Programs

The DFG began its Cooperative Fish Rearing Program in 1973 with the goal of increasing salmon and steelhead populations on a broad geographic scale. The program has involved partnerships with nonprofit groups and corporations, service clubs, counties, Indian tribes, and many individuals to produce salmon and steelhead for the benefit of fisheries and the enjoyment of California's citizens. There are currently 12 projects, from San Luis Obispo to the Smith River. Nine of the projects receive Salmon Stamp Funding, a self-imposed dedicated fee sponsored by commercial fishermen on ocean salmon landings and as a supplemental license stamp. Some programs collect fish for broodstock, while others rely on the DFG for fish. All of the projects are required to operate with a current 5-year plan, which must be approved by a DFG district biologist (the Cooperative Rearing Project Coordinator).

E. Description of Federal Hatchery Operations

Coleman National Fish Hatchery, located on Battle Creek in the upper Sacramento River, is a federal hatchery operated by the USFWS. The Service also operates an artificial propagation program for Sacramento River winter chinook, intended to aid in the recovery of the population, at Livingston Stone National Fish Hatchery. Coleman is undergoing its own review and assessment through an ESA Section 7 consultation. Although the hatchery and that effort were discussed in Committee meetings, the Committee did not make any recommendations on the operations at Coleman.

IV. SPECIFIC ISSUES DISCUSSED BY THE REVIEW COMMITTEE - Including conclusions and recommendations where appropriate

A. Interactions between Hatchery and Natural Populations - Hazards and Risks

In California, dams and water diversions have substantially reduced stream flows during winter and spring, modified downstream flow patterns, and blocked access to spawning areas. Estimates of the available spawning and holding habitat for salmon in the Central Valley range from 5-18% of that which was originally available (CDFG 1993, Yoshiyama et al. 1996). Hatcheries, constructed to replace the lost production, provide substantial fractions of the California chinook salmon harvest.

In supplying fish for commercial and recreational use and mitigating for lost spawning and rearing areas, California hatcheries are to be operated in such a way “that the populations and genetic integrity of all identifiable stocks of salmon and steelhead rainbow trout be maintained, with management emphasis placed on natural stocks” (Fish and Game Commission policy). The twin goals of replacing large amounts of lost production while maintaining the abundance and genetic integrity of the remaining populations are not easily accomplished. For example, although a spring run of chinook continues to return to the Feather River, the present evidence, based on allozyme data, suggests that the hatchery and natural populations of spring chinook are not genetically distinguishable from the fall run. Banks et al. (2000) used DNA microsatellites to study the population structure of Central Valley chinook. Genetically distinct populations of winter chinook, Butte Creek spring chinook, Mill/Deer Creek spring chinook, and fall/late fall chinook continue to exist in the Central Valley. However, they found few differences among fall chinook populations, in striking contrast with other fall chinook ESUs, where genetic structure corresponds closely to geographic structure of watersheds.

If the goal of maintaining the abundance and genetic integrity of natural populations is to be realized, the hazards associated with the interactions of hatchery and natural populations must be considered. The evaluation of risks is not an easy task: "We have found that the effects of artificial propagation are among the most difficult and controversial to incorporate into risk analyses for our ESA status review. Both direct and indirect evidence indicates that, in general, there is ample reason for concern about the effects of hatchery fish on natural populations, but seldom is there sufficient information to determine the magnitude of the effects or their long-term consequences. Nevertheless, the enormous scale of hatchery programs for anadromous Pacific salmonids guarantees that any risk analysis that ignores artificial propagation will be incomplete." (Wainwright and Waples 1998). The Committee accepted the statements in Waples (1999) that “substantial uncertainties remain about every major issue...”, however “...in spite of the major uncertainties, every major concern raised about hatcheries has some empirical basis.” The discussion to follow on hazards is presented in that light.

In the following discussion, a hazard is the potential adverse consequence of some action and a risk is the probability that a hazard will be realized. See the attached off-site release and straying subcommittee report (Appendix I) for a fuller description of the genetic, ecological and management hazards associated with artificial propagation.

1. Genetic Hazards

The potential risks of reducing genetic diversity in depressed natural populations through the constant infusion of hatchery fish have received much attention recently (Waples 1991, Adkison 1995, Currens and Busack 1995, Busack and Currens 1995, Campton 1995, Grant 1997, and Utter 1998). If the genetic differences observed among spawning populations of the same species have developed through selective adaptation to local environments, a loss of genetic diversity could result in a loss of productivity and long term viability of salmon populations. The apparent collapse of many Columbia River basin hatchery and natural stocks has generated concern regarding the short term effects that straying and interbreeding of hatchery populations with natural population may have on the fitness of the natural populations.

Population genetic theory and some empirical studies suggest that artificial propagation causes rapid genetic changes in a hatchery stock relative to the natural stock from which it was initiated. The hatchery environment is very different from a stream, with two important consequences: first, breeding practices in hatcheries propagate adults without respect to the genetic factors that would have provided a reproductive advantage (or disadvantage) in streams, and second, the factors that govern mortality (natural selection) of fish raised in a hatchery are quite different from those in the natural environment, resulting in what is called domestication selection (Waples, 1991; Busack and Currens, 1995). Several studies, including those of Reisenbichler and McIntyre (1977), Reisenbichler (1997), and Reisenbichler and Rubin (1999), provide evidence that the fitness for natural spawning and rearing can be reduced by artificial propagation.

The straying of hatchery fish, and the resulting hybridization of hatchery and natural populations, pose two types of genetic hazards to natural populations: 1) if straying of hatchery populations occurs over a wide geographic range, a reduction in the genetic variation among populations may occur; and 2) genetic changes that occur in hatchery populations will be transferred through straying hatchery fish to natural populations, causing reduced fitness and productivity of the natural population.

2. Ecological Hazards

Straying by hatchery fish could pose a variety of ecological hazards to natural populations in other streams, such as competition for redd sites and redd superimposition, reduced productivity of natural fish breeding with hatchery fish, and disease transmission. These ecological interactions can also have genetic consequences because they alter the selective pressures operating on naturally produced fish (Waples, 1991).

Hatchery-origin fish spawning in the wild compete with natural fish for spawning habitat, and their offspring also compete for rearing habitat. Competition is probably most significant in streams with hatcheries (Battle Creek, Feather River, American River, Mokelumne River, Merced River), and in these cases, wild-spawning hatchery fish might only be considered strays because they have been denied access to their hatchery. In other streams, however, carrying capacities are generally unknown, and it is possible that all available habitat would be fully utilized by wild spawners and their progeny. In this case, hatchery strays could effectively reduce the carrying capacity for natural fish. Competition could also be important at population levels below carrying capacity if fish compete for the best spawning and rearing habitats. Similarly, competition between hatchery and natural fish could also occur in streams with hatcheries; in these cases, natural-spawning hatchery fish that didn’t enter the hatchery could compete with natural fish.

At some high level of hatchery production, it is also conceivable that there could be competition between hatchery and natural fish in the ocean. Such competition would likely be one related to the supply of food.

3. Management Hazards

Effective management of California’s salmonid resources requires adequate abundance estimates. Significant numbers of unmarked hatchery fish in natural spawning areas make population assessments difficult if not impossible. The CVPIA Anadromous Fish Restoration Plan, for example, mandates doubling (from a prescribed time period) of natural populations, which requires that natural populations be accurately enumerated. The accuracy and variance of most Central Valley escapement estimates are currently unknown and may not be sufficient to meet management needs, CalFed or CVPIA requirements (see section below on monitoring and evaluation).

Another major concern is that hatchery production (and straying) is masking declining productivity of natural populations. For example, many Central Valley streams have roughly stable spawner counts over the past 20 years. Some fraction of these spawners were of hatchery origin. Because the reproductive success of hatchery fish spawning in natural areas is largely unknown, the trends in productivity of naturally spawning stocks are also unknown; they may be self sustaining or declining (at a rate proportional to the fraction of fish that are of hatchery origin).

In the absence of adequate population assessments, the risk of making wrong management decisions could be high and the consequences serious. For example, if one overestimates the production of natural populations by underestimating the contribution of hatchery strays to natural production, one might set harvest rates at levels that are not sustainable for many natural populations.

Ocean fisheries are managed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) based on two Central Valley salmon stocks: Sacramento River winter chinook, an endangered species, and Sacramento River fall chinook. Winter chinook is the more constraining of the two as far as ocean fisheries are concerned. The current federal biological opinion requires a 31 percent increase in the spawning escapement of the species compared to the base years. This affects ocean fisheries south of Horse Mountain, near Shelter Cover in southern Humboldt County. The very large spawning escapements seen in the Central Valley in recent years have likely stemmed from ocean fishery restriction to protect these fish. The annual spawning escapement goal for Sacramento River fall chinook is 122,000-180,000 adult fish, which does not differentiate between hatchery and natural fish. Escapement goals in the PFMC area are usually based on natural spawners. There is no escapement goal for naturally produced Sacramento River fall chinook because of the lack of information on their contributions to the fisheries and the runs (LB Boydstun, personal communication, 2001). There is no solid data base at present upon which to project the natural escapement of any race of Central Valley chinook for the coming year.

4. Assessing Risk

Managers should be most concerned about serious hazards that have high risks of occurrence. Two hazards are of particular concern based on this standard. First, the management hazards posed by the masking effect are worrisome because masking is definitely occurring, and the odds of making management mistakes because of this are high. The masking problem could be solved with constant fractional marking of all hatchery production (Hankin 1982, Hankin and Newman 1999), and careful genetic and behavioral studies of naturally-spawning fish. Representative marking, with coded wire tags, of all hatchery release groups is also needed to partition the hatchery runs into their various age classes and to estimate their age-specific contributions to the ocean and river fisheries.

Second, the genetic hazards posed by large numbers of straying hatchery fish in natural spawning areas are a cause for more serious concern. While the probability of genetic failure is unknown, the long time-frame of hatchery programs certainly increases the risk. More importantly, the hazards are extremely serious, since they include extirpation of natural stocks and loss of significant genetic diversity, consequences that are not easily reversible.

The only way to minimize these risks is to minimize interactions between hatchery and natural stocks. The three obvious ways of reducing interactions are 1) reducing hatchery production, 2) minimizing the straying of hatchery stocks to areas where natural populations are relatively uninfluenced by hatchery production, and 3) minimizing the spawning of hatchery fish in natural spawning areas where hatcheries are located. Encouraging hatchery fish to enter the hatchery should be part of the program.

B. Programs Affecting Interactions Between Hatchery and Natural Populations

The Committee identified and discussed four practices that had the potential of increasing undesirable gene flow between populations.

1. Inter-basin Transfers of Stocks

Until the early 1980s, California's hatcheries occasionally used brood stock from other basins or moved fry to other basins (although it was only rarely done between Coastal and Central Valley basins). It can be done now only on an exception (permission required from DFG Regional and Headquarters managers) basis. Such transfers could affect the genetic resources in fish naturally occurring in the receiving basins. Transfer of diseases is another possible risk of this activity.

<u>Conclusions</u>: The DFG policy to restrict inter-basin transfers except in very limited circumstances is appropriate. Out-of-basin brood stock should only be permitted when the genetic characteristics of those fish are very similar to the genetic characteristics of the fish in the area of the hatchery, and when local origin fish are not available in sufficient numbers to meet hatchery objectives.

<u>Recommendations</u>: Continue to adhere to the policy. In addition, discontinue transferring steelhead from the Nimbus Hatchery to the Mokelumne River Hatchery.

2. Off-site Releases

Significant numbers of Central Valley hatchery-reared salmon are transported by truck to the San Francisco Bay and released. For example, in 1999 Feather River Hatchery released 78% (5.88 of 7.52 million) of its fall chinook smolts downstream of the Delta; Nimbus Hatchery released 100% of its 3.8 million fall-run there; and Mokelumne River Hatchery released 57% (1.72 of 3.04 million) there. In the same year, Feather River Hatchery released 100% (2.12 million) of its spring chinook smolts in San Pablo Bay.

Transporting hatchery fish downstream of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta improves their survival and contribution to fisheries as well as avoids competition of those fish with naturally-produced fish. However, off-site release also increases the straying rate of returning salmon from their hatchery of origin. Both the DFG and NMFS have expressed concern regarding the effects of straying hatchery fish on natural populations. The attached subcommittee report on off-site releases and straying (Appendix I) provides a detailed discussion of the topics.

Because of the lack of reliable estimates of CWT marked fish in Central Valley spawning ground and creel surveys, the few published estimates of Central Valley stray rates have relied on recoveries of tagged fish at hatcheries. For example Dettman and Kelley (1987) extrapolated the recovery of Feather River Hatchery chinook at other Central Valley hatcheries into the associated river populations and estimated 92% of the Feather River Hatchery fish released at Feather River Hatchery returned to the Feather River whereas 46% of Feathery River Hatchery fish released in the Delta returned to rivers other than the Feather.

The USFWS recently developed a straying index for groups of fish released at varying distances from CNFH (USFWS, 2000). The index assumes that the effects of release location are limited primarily to 1) the survival rates of smolts to recruits and 2) the stray rates of returning adults. If release location affects neither ocean distribution nor catch rates, defined as

ocean recoveries/(ocean recoveries + hatchery recoveries + unknown strays)

then two release groups from the same broodyear should generally experience similar catch rates. Differences in observed catch rates would presumably be due to differences in the straying rate. The number of strays were estimated as the number of additional strays necessary to produce equal catch rates for the two release groups. The stray index is calculated as

number of strays/(number of strays + hatchery recoveries)

Note that the number of unknown strays for groups released at CNFH are not estimated. As a result, the stray *index* for on-site releases is zero, but represents some positive, unknown, stray rate for fish released at the hatchery. Figure 2 presents the stray indices associated with different release sites.

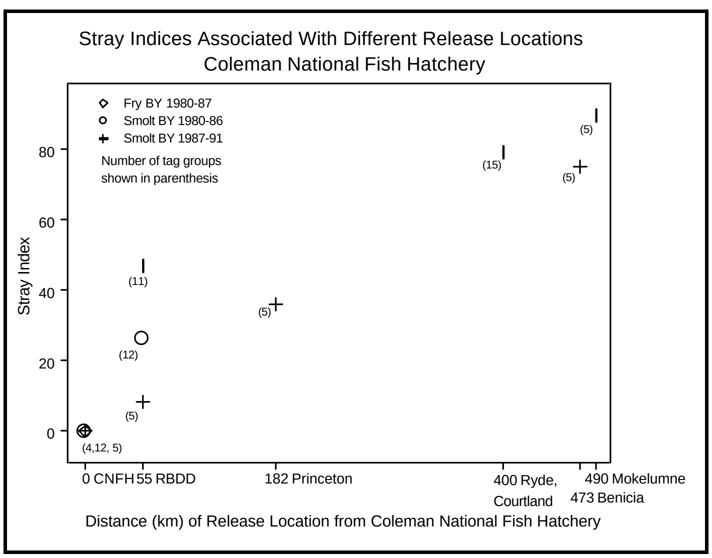

Figure 2   Stray indices plotted against distance downstream from Coleman National Fish Hatchery (from Table 2 of Straying Subcommittee report, Appendix I)

These paired releases also showed that ocean fishery contribution rates from releases made in the western Delta were generally higher than ocean contribution rates for releases made at the hatchery or in the upper Sacramento River; and that during some years, minimum brood stock needs at the hatchery could be met only by releasing fish at the hatchery, because the apparent increase in survival did not fully compensate for the high rates of straying associated with Delta-released fish.

Results of experiments by the DFG also showed that returns of adult salmon to ocean fisheries could be increased by releasing fish in the Delta, in some cases dramatically (e.g., three- to four-fold increases have been observed). Figure 3 shows ocean recovery rates for paired groups of fish released at the hatchery and at Rio Vista.

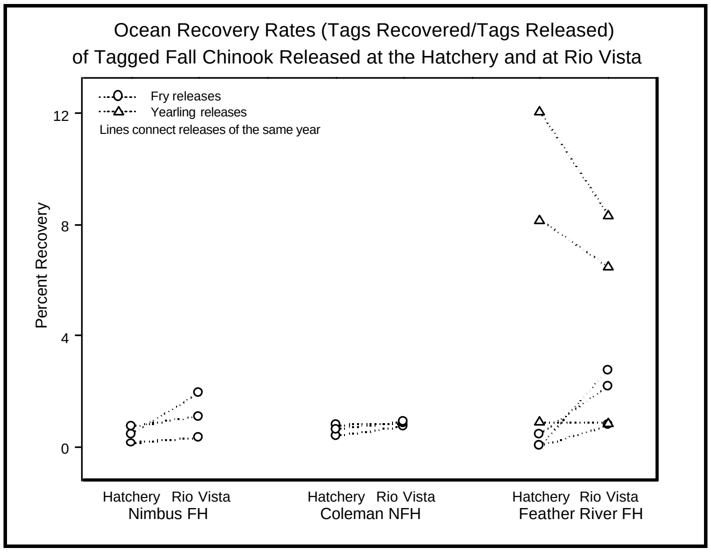

Figure 3 Recovery rates from ocean fisheries of tag groups released at the hatchery and at Rio Vista (from Table 3 of Straying Subcommittee report, Appendix I)

There was disagreement among members of the Committee over the relative benefits and risks of trucking hatchery fish to the Delta. The debate reflected scepticism regarding the importance of conserving (or attempting to restore) genetic diversity among the remaining Central Valley natural fall-run populations as well as a reluctance to make changes to hatchery operations that would likely reduce their effectiveness in preserving the salmon fishing industry. Those in favor of continued off-site release point out that locally adapted fall-run populations may no longer exist in the Central Valley. The lack of clear genetic differentiation among Central Valley fall chinook populations sampled to date supports this view, and is not surprising, given a hundred and fifty years of habitat destruction, intensive harvest, large scale fall chinook hatchery production with associated straying, and the "highly modified" hydrology of the valley. It is not clear to what extent genetic differentiation among local salmon populations reflects specialized adaptions to particular environments and how much is simply due to reproductive isolation resulting from homing to natal streams. Therefore, the lack of genetic differentiation among Central Valley fall chinook populations is not necessarily an indication of decreased stock productivity resulting from interbreeding with hatchery fish. There is no guarantee that ending the practice of trucking, by itself, will be sufficient to increase the genetic variation in Central Valley fall chinook.

Those opposed to planting fish in the Delta acknowledged the uncertainty regarding the risks of interbreeding between hatchery and natural populations and the resulting "dilution" of locally adapted genetic resources. They argued, however, that although there may be uncertainty regarding the actual levels of gene flow from hatchery to natural stocks or the efficiency of natural selection in maintaining the genetic makeup of natural populations, the critical status of most naturally spawning populations of salmon on the west coast and in California strongly argue in favor of precautionary approaches. A release strategy which substantially increases the rate of straying of returning hatchery fish has a high likelihood of increasing interbreeding between natural and hatchery populations of different watersheds, of exacerbating whatever negative effects hatchery populations have on natural populations, and is not in keeping with a goal of "maintaining the genetic integrity of all identifiable stocks of salmon." The high stray rates associated with trucking also make the assessment of naturally spawning populations more difficult. The need to truck fish is especially questionable during periods when there is no apparent shortage of hatchery reared fish. The escapement of hatchery produced salmon to the Central Valley has been so great in recent years that proposals have been made to reestablish commercial salmon fishing in San Francisco Bay.

Conclusions:

1. Artificial propagation of salmon poses management, ecological, and genetic hazards to natural salmon populations. The risk of these hazards is increased by high rates of straying of hatchery populations.

2. Off-site release results in increased rates of straying of hatchery reared salmon relative to fish released on-site (at or near the hatchery). Published reports and the recent analysis of CNFH returns suggest that release in the lower estuary or San Francisco Bay results in stray rates exceeding 70%. Straying rates vary substantially among natural populations, and rate estimates vary depending on the definition of straying and study design. Determining an "acceptable" or "natural" rate of straying is difficult and probably not particularly useful. However, the available estimates of stray rates for hatchery populations released at the hatchery indicate that the increase in the rate of straying of fish released west of the Delta is substantial.

3. The mortality associated with transiting the Delta can be eliminated for hatchery fish by transporting and releasing production west of the Delta. As a result, transported fish contribute to ocean fisheries at higher rates compared to fish released upstream or at the hatchery. Results from paired studies (hatchery release vs. downstream release) varied considerably, but overall recovery rates to ocean fisheries and inland returns were 30% higher for downstream releases.

4. In the Klamath Trinity Basin, experiments with off-site hatchery releases demonstrated some increased contribution rates to fisheries. However, in deciding whether to permanently implement off-site releases, the improved survival and resulting harvests did not seem to justify the potential negative effects of the increased rates of straying associated with the releases.

5. Water management practices within the Central Valley, including flow regimes below dams, temperature of reservoir releases, flow direction in some Delta channels and SWP/CVP exports in the south Delta, negatively affect juvenile salmonid emigration success and the ability of adults to home to natal streams. These problems exist for hatchery-produced and natural fish.

Recommendations:

1. The DFG should evaluate the genetic, management, and ecological risks associated with the substantial increase in straying of hatchery fish released off-site and weigh the risks against the benefits of increased survival and reduced interactions with naturally spawning stocks in waters adjacent to the hatchery. In certain cases, the risks posed to natural populations appear to outweigh the benefits from increased contribution to fisheries.

   a. Feather River Hatchery spring chinook should be released "in-river", not trucked to San Pablo Bay. The straying of Feather River Hatchery spring chinook may pose hazards for the few remaining natural spring chinook runs in the upper Sacramento, which are listed under the state and federal ESA.

b. Feather River Hatchery fall chinook should be considered for release “in-river”, rather than being trucked to San Pablo Bay. The fall chinook production is large and probably introgressed with the spring run. Straying of these fish may pose hazards to the long term productivity of naturally spawning fall-run populations in the Central Valley.

c. Nimbus Hatchery fall chinook should be considered for release “in-river”, rather than being trucked to San Pablo Bay. Straying of these fish may pose hazards to the long term productivity of naturally spawning fall-run populations in the Central Valley.

d. Mokelumne Hatchery fall chinook should be considered for release “in-river”, rather than being trucked to San Pablo Bay. Straying of these fish may pose hazards to the long term productivity of naturally spawning fall-run populations in the Central Valley.

Various ongoing studies, designed to investigate the relationship between juvenile salmon survival and flows and water export rates, require the transport and release of tagged hatchery salmon at locations in the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers and throughout the Delta. The Committee understands the need for such studies, but the increased straying of "study" fish released off site should be considered in their design and duration.

2. Hatchery releases and water management practices (including SWP/CVP exports) must be coordinated so that emigration survival is maximized. Flow patterns or poor water quality must be managed so not to impede normal migration of adult salmon and steelhead, lead to lengthened or aborted migration pathways, or to result in large numbers of downstream migrants being drawn to the pumping plants.

Because water management practices have already been adjusted to meet the needs of other fish species - e.g., winter and spring chinook salmon, Delta smelt, striped bass - it will be a challenging task to make further adjustments for hatchery fish. DFG and NMFS should meet in the near future with DWR and USBR representatives to determine a process (there are several existing State/federal efforts relating to fish and water exports) through which to proceed.

3. The DFG should continue the present policy of on-site release of salmon and steelhead produced in Klamath Trinity Basin hatcheries.

3. Inland Salmon Program

Following earlier experiments, in the 1970's the DFG began stocking chinook salmon in various California lakes or reservoirs to increase fishing opportunities. At first, out-of-state sources of eggs were used. Subsequently, because none of these sources could provide disease-free eggs, eggs that were in excess of DFG hatcheries’ needs were used. In the past 3 years, more than 600,000 young chinook salmon were introduced into 12 different reservoirs. The Committee discussed the possibility of salmon, in many cases from out-of-basin stocks, escaping downstream from the lake where they were planted, subsequently returning as adults into that stream, and the possibility of genetically mixing with adult salmon from that stream.

Conclusions: Some salmon released under the program, in many cases from out-of-basin stocks, could escape downstream from the lake where they were planted, and subsequently return as adults into that stream and interbreed with local stocks.

Recommendations: 1) Fish being planted under the inland waters stocking program should be sterilized to ensure that no genetic transfers will occur inadvertently. The capability to produce triploid (sterile) fish exists and is expected to be tested and evaluated this year, and 2) a monitoring program should be implemented to determine that this has been an effective measure.

4. Fry Release Program

Since 1982, fisheries management staff of the DFG's Sacramento Valley and Central Sierra Region have used hatchery-produced fry or fingerling fall-run chinook salmon to plant in selected tributaries of the Feather, Sacramento, American, and San Joaquin rivers. These fish were planted to re-establish runs where they were presumed to no longer occur. There was no formal evaluation procedure to measure either the success of the program or any negative effects (e.g., straying of returning adults) from it.

Conclusions: No formal evaluation procedure exists to measure either the success of the program or any negative effects (e.g., straying of returning adults) from it. This program could result in fish being planted over remnants of natural runs and thereby impacting those runs.

Recommendations: Suspend this program unless, 1) there is a better-defined need for the program and stated reasons for stream selections, and 2) there is a specific evaluation/monitoring component built into it.

C. Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Central Valley

The Committee discussed the DFG's program to evaluate the feasibility of implementing a constant fractional marking program in the Central Valley (see Hankin 1982, Hankin and Newman 1999, and Zajanc and Hankin 1998 for a discussion of the benefits of constant fractional and representational marking). Under such a program, all or a constant fraction of salmonids released from Central Valley hatcheries would be uniquely marked according to site of origin and site and date of release. The relatively low and variable proportion of chinook salmon that are currently marked at Central Valley hatcheries results in a lack of reliable data on which to base management decisions. In addition, both DFG and NMFS expressed concern regarding the inadequacy of Central Valley fresh water CWT recovery programs. Small sample sizes and non-random sampling may bias CWT expansions and subsequent estimates of the contribution rates of hatchery fish to naturally spawning populations and to freshwater recreational fisheries. A DFG/DWR workshop on escapement estimation methodology (UC Davis, June 22, 2000) highlighted the fact that the accuracy and variance of most Central Valley escapement estimates are unknown and may not be sufficient to meet federal and state management needs, CalFed or CVPIA requirements. Within the DFG, there is presently no forum for the review, discussion, or oversight of salmon escapement estimates.

The lack of adequate marking and sampling of Central Valley hatchery fish has several consequences.

1) An approved HGMP must evaluate, minimize and account for the propagation program's genetic and ecological effects on natural populations, including disease transfer, competition, predation and genetic introgression caused by straying of hatchery fish. Without effective monitoring and evaluation of returning hatchery populations, the effects of hatchery rearing and release strategies cannot be fully evaluated. Similarly, approved Fishery Management and Evaluation Plans, associated with the 4(d) rules, must include effective monitoring and evaluation programs to assess compliance and effectiveness.

2) There is currently no estimate of an exploitation rate for any Central Valley salmonid population. The lack of an exploitation rate estimate for Central Valley fall chinook substantially impairs NMFS' ability to assess fishery impacts on listed stocks that may share similar ocean and river distributions and vulnerability to harvest. None of the biological opinions that authorize the incidental take of listed salmon in ocean fisheries off California have been able to specify the amount of incidental take that occurs in ocean fisheries. This is a serious problem.

3) The impact of straying hatchery fish on natural populations is a key federal ESA concern. Without adequate marking and monitoring of hatchery populations, the estimation of straying rates between watersheds and the genetic exchange between hatchery and naturally producing stocks will remain a matter subject to speculation.

4) Substantial effort and resources are being expended on improving the spawning and migration habitat for Central Valley salmonids. The CVPIA mandates doubling of natural populations and assessment of the progress toward meeting the goal. Evaluating the success of restoration actions and the impact of changes in water operations is difficult or impossible without adequate monitoring and evaluation of the populations the actions are intended to benefit.

<u>Conclusions</u>:

A constant fractional marking program and complementary inland monitoring program would allow the DFG to differentiate between natural and hatchery fish spawning in streams, clarify the abundance and distribution of hatchery fish in the system, determine their relative contribution to commercial and sport harvests, and evaluate factors affecting fish survival. The Committee agreed that such programs should be developed and implemented, but did not discuss or agree upon a specific time table.

<u>Recommendations</u>:

1. All agencies should pursue efforts to establish a constant fractional marking program at all hatcheries. Specific studies should be designed to determine how hatchery fish interact with naturally produced fish so that the effects of hatchery practices on population genetics and dynamics can be accurately determined.

2. All agencies should pursue efforts to develop adequate sampling programs to recover marked fish in the Central Valley. Sampling needs to occur in recreational fisheries, in hatcheries, and in the watersheds with, and adjacent to, hatcheries.

3. The DFG should establish a process to coordinate and oversee the methodologies for estimating salmon escapements to the Central Valley. The process should: 1) establish standardized techniques for estimating the size and age-composition of spawning runs; 2) standardize the training of stream crews to ensure the goals of CWT sampling are met; 3) develop strategies for improving the recovery rate of CWTs in the river recreational fishery.

2. Klamath Trinity Basin

A time series of accurate estimates of the contribution of hatchery fish to spawning escapement would be a valuable indicator of the status of naturally spawning populations. Variable marking rates of hatchery production make estimation of the proportion of hatchery fish in the run difficult. A constant fractional marking program has been implemented at TRH. If the proportion of hatchery fish in the Klamath Trinity Basin are to be accurately estimated, adults would need to be sampled as they entered the Klamath River and a coordinated constant fractional marking program between TRH and IGH would be necessary. Weirs (or other appropriate monitoring methods) on the major tributaries to the Klamath and Trinity would be necessary for sub-basin estimates of hatchery contributions.

Conclusion and Recommendations: The Committee endorses the concept of constant fractional marking in the Klamath Trinity Basin and representational marking of all lots of smolt and yearling chinook releases at both IGH and TRH, recognizing that concerns regarding the logistics of counting and marking a substantial fraction of the IGH fall chinook production would need to be addressed. The benefits of more accurate assessments of the proportion of hatchery fish in the Klamath Trinity Basin spawning escapement would need to be assessed with respect to costs of additional marking and monitoring.

D. Determining Production Goals

The objectives of salmon and steelhead hatchery operations in California fall into three major categories: 1) mitigation (replacement) of production lost by water project development and the associated permanent loss of habitat above dams; 2) enhancement production aimed at supporting higher levels of harvest in ocean and river fisheries; and 3) supplementation production aimed at starting or boosting populations where lack of spawning adults has been identified as the limiting factor. Most mitigation goals were specified during the authorizing process for the construction and operation of the hatchery. Enhancement production has been limited by hatchery capacity and available funds. The production objectives of DFG operated hatcheries are expressed in numbers of fish released (see Appendix V).

The listing of salmon and steelhead stocks under the ESA has resulted in restrictions which prevent ocean and inland fisheries from fully harvesting available hatchery fish. (See previous discussion about management hazards.) Hatchery stocks are typically more productive than natural stocks in that they produce more recruits per spawner; as a result, the commercial and recreational harvest of hatchery fish in mixed-stock ocean fisheries at harvest rates which naturally produced stocks can sustain will usually result in the "underharvest" of hatchery fish. Returns of hatchery fish to the Central Valley have increased substantially in recent years, as well as the levels of in-river recreational harvest. Because modern production hatcheries are so successful in supplying salmonids to the pool of harvestable fish, it is almost impossible to separate management of the fisheries from management of the hatcheries. Certain hatchery programs in California are directly funded by voluntary contributions from the salmon fishing industry. Hatchery production and harvest management must both be compatible with the survival of naturally produced stocks. Therefore, it may be appropriate to review hatchery enhancement and mitigation goals in light of changes in ESA status of salmon and steelhead populations, changes in fishing effort, or new information on the effects of hatchery operations on naturally spawning populations. Performance measures linked to existing or modified production goals would also be appropriate.

Conclusions: It is appropriate to review hatchery enhancement and mitigation goals and performance in light of changes in the CESA or ESA status of salmon and steelhead populations, changes in fishing effort, ocean or river conditions, or new information on the effects of hatchery operations on naturally spawning populations.

Recommendations: A process should be identified for the periodic (e.g., every 6 to 9 years or 2 to 3 brood cycles) review of hatchery production levels that would assess production at state operated hatcheries in light of any changes in ocean or freshwater harvest regimes or new information on the effects of hatchery operations on natural populations below impassable dams. Specific performance measures for each hatchery should be articulated, assessed annually, and discussed in the periodic review process.

E. Brood Stock Collection and Mating Protocols

Hatchery operations require selection of the adults used in spawning the next years' hatchery production (brood stock collection) and selection of adults for spawning (mating protocols). The procedure used in California's hatcheries has been to only use fish volitionally entering the hatchery, with the goals of maintaining genetic diversity and the retention of natural characteristics. Departures from that approach would occur in the case of depressed or listed populations.

Issues related to those goals include the following: 1)What brood stock selection and mating protocols should be used to make the hatchery production as representative as possible of the natural population and, specifically, what fraction should naturally spawned fish make up of the brood stock sample? Conversely, what fraction should hatchery produced fish be? This question is most urgent with steelhead; the DFG has started a 100% marking plan and the deliberate infusion of naturally produced fish will be possible.

2) Should brood stock selection take place in a way that is neutral compared to any measurable characteristic (e.g., run timing, size, color); or should some attempt be made to enhance some characteristic? In the past, brood stock selection has resulted in substantial changes in run characteristics (primarily shortening of run timing). A related question is whether there should be some attempt to spawn jacks at the proportion in which they occur in the run.

Conclusion: Mating protocols should be constructed to maximize the effective population size (in terms of genetic diversity) and to prevent divergence of natural and hatchery stocks.

Recommendations: We recommend that with large numbers (>500) of breeders, simple one-on-one breeder pairs are acceptable. For small populations (200-500), females should be split into multiple egg lots and fertilized with different males. Males should not be pooled for fertilization. For very small populations (<200), where the goal would be to maximize genetic diversity, a full factorial spawning design matching all adults with one another is suggested. For very small populations, preservation (through freezing) of male gametes is suggested.

If natural stocks are not limited (or not listed), the Committee encourages the use of natural fish as brood stock. If they are limited, further analysis should occur; if they are listed, ESA authorization of prohibited take is necessary.

The Committee discussed but did not make a recommendation on the use of jacks as brood stock.

F. Hatchery Programs and Recovery of Weak and Listed Stocks

The Committee heard a presentation on work being conducted at the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center on conservation hatchery strategies for Pacific salmonids. With the emphasis on natural fish required under the ESA, there is opportunity to modify the role of certain hatcheries from production to conservation. A conservation hatchery would operate on the concept that fish behaviorally and physiologically similar to natural cohorts can be produced if reared under conditions that simulate the natural rearing environment of each particular species under culture. A conceptual framework for doing so is presented in Flagg and Nash (1999). The efficacy of the concept merits further study.

Conclusions and Recommendations: NMFS is committed to working with the DFG to develop a role for hatcheries in the recovery of ESA listed salmonids and the conservation of non-listed stocks through the NMFS recovery planning process.

G. ESA Authorization of Hatchery Programs

Conclusions:

1. Most DFG anadromous hatcheries directly or incidentally "take" salmonids that are listed under the ESA. Section 4(d) take exceptions for hatchery programs operating under an approved HGMP are presently available only for Central Valley and Central California Coastal steelhead. However, NMFS is working towards having 4(d) hatchery exceptions available for all threatened salmonids in California. Whether under Section 4(d) rules (using HGMPs) or under Section 10 of the ESA, issuance of take authorizations will be contingent on provision of the same types of information and analyses.

2. The 4(d) rules do not remove the responsibility of a federal agency to consult under Section 7 of the ESA. Section 7 of the ESA requires that federal agencies, such as the Bureau of Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, consult with NMFS on activities they authorize, fund, or carry out to ensure they are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or destroy or adversely modify their critical habitat. NMFS urges federal agencies involved in programs under this limit to work closely with the DFG and with NMFS so that sufficient information is provided with the 4(d) documentation for

a concurrent section 7 consultation. NMFS will provide separate determinations for section 7 consultations. In the case of federally operated or funded hatcheries which request exception to take prohibitions under the 4(d) rule, the ESA section 7 consultation will serve as written concurrence of the HGMP, and will specify the implementation and reporting requirements.

3. A primary goal of the joint hatchery review was to discuss and identify programs, policies, and practices that are likely to arise as important issues in permitting anadromous hatchery programs under Section 7, 10, or 4(d) of the ESA. The conclusions and recommendations of this report reflect the general agreement of NMFS, DFG, and Tribal representatives on most of the substantial hatchery issues. While the review was motivated by the need to evaluate and permit hatchery activities under the ESA, the review is not part of the formal ESA permitting process. During the formal permitting process, additional issues may arise that require resolution.

Recommendations

1. HGMPs should be developed for all state anadromous hatchery programs, either by the DFG, or by the entity which funds the programs. Priority should be given to those hatcheries that propagate listed species for which take prohibitions currently exist, however the HGMPs should address the take of all listed species. The NMFS will provide as much assistance and guidance as possible in the development of HGMPs to ensure that information and analytical requirements are clearly defined and the approval criteria and processes are understood. NMFS and DFG recognize that certain provisions of the 4(d) HGMP exception, such as specification of the donor population's "critical" and "viable" threshold levels, or the determination of the genetic and ecological effects arising from the hatchery program, require information that is not presently available and that monitoring programs will need to be developed to supply the necessary information.

2. The conclusions and recommendations of this report should serve as interim guidelines for hatchery operations while the DFG proceeds with the development of HGMPs and NMFS completes the 4(d) regulatory process of applying take prohibitions and HGMP take limits to all threatened salmonids in California.

H. Cooperative Rearing Program

As with State hatcheries, cooperative hatcheries can be permitted to take threatened species under ESA Section 10 permits. However, if the Section 10 permit process is used, then each individual hatchery may have to be covered not only by the permit process but also by the ESA Section 7 consultation process and an environmental assessment. The HGMP process also could apply to the non-State cooperative hatcheries if those hatcheries can be tied to a State program. NMFS has proposed that the DFG consider a strategy under which the State oversight of cooperative hatcheries might provide a basis for a single HGMP or permit. This could allow NMFS to expedite approval of all cooperative hatchery activities in a faster process.

The issue is whether the DFG and NMFS can develop a strategy to facilitate the approval of cooperative hatchery activities.

Conclusions and Recommendations: It is agreed that it would be desirable to facilitate action on cooperative hatcheries' activity proposals or permits. However, it has not been clearly articulated how this could be done or the potential benefits to the State and the resources. It may be that a strategy can be developed that would not increase the liability or workload of the State, but options have not been clearly stated or evaluated. NMFS needs to provide additional information to describe the details of its proposed approach and to indicate the extent to which NMFS staff would assist in all aspects of the approach such that the DFG workload would not be increased significantly. NMFS and the DFG should continue to discuss this issue. In the meantime a Section 10 permit is needed for each operation.

I. Issues at Specific Hatcheries

1. Warm Springs Hatchery (WSH)

In 1999, a consultation under Section 7 of ESA was initiated between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the funding agency for the hatchery) and NMFS. Central California steelhead, coho salmon, and chinook salmon are all listed as threatened under the ESA. They occur in the Russian River and have been produced at WSH. DFG operates the hatchery. The issues are how should the hatchery be operated so that it doesn't jeopardize the continued existence of listed salmonids and how can WSH participate in efforts to recover listed fish.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The Committee formed a subcommittee to address interim operations at the hatchery. Their findings (proposed interim operations) are: "All agreed that current data are lacking to decide now how WSH should eventually be used to restore the runs of coho, chinook, and steelhead in the Russian River system. Specifically, questions about the genetic make-up of fish returning to the hatchery and those found in the "wild" need to be answered. The question of what best represents, or is closest to, the "founding stock" for these species needs to be explored. It was suggested that in addition to sampling fish from various locations, archived or museum specimens should be sought for genetic examination.

"In the context of doing genetic studies soon, agreement was reached as follows:

Steelhead - spawn only marked fish at WSH and Coyote, throughout the season as now. Relocate unused adults as follows - marked fish at WSH to the main stem Russian and those at Coyote to the West Fork below Mumford Dam; unmarked fish at WSH would be moved to Dry Creek or other selected tributaries, unmarked fish at Coyote would be placed in the West Fork near Forsythe Creek or above Mumford Dam.

Coho salmon - No hatchery production. Since virtually no coho have been produced at WSH during the last 3 years, no marked fish are expected to return to the hatchery. Unmarked fish arriving at the hatchery will be released in Dry Creek tributaries or at other sites deemed acceptable by DFG biologists.

Chinook salmon - No hatchery production. Relocate any adults returning to WSH to Dry Creek and those at Coyote to the Russian main stem (Mendocino Co.) or the West Fork as soon as logistically convenient.

"To reiterate, it was a strong feeling of the group that much genetic work remains to be done before final operations (production and restoration) can be decided for WSH. A large contract has recently been given by Sonoma County Water Agency to Bodega Marine Laboratory to fund such work. DFG is committed to continue collecting samples for these studies. In addition, NMFS is now prepared to run genetic samples at its Santa Cruz laboratory. Both sources of laboratory analyses should be used to the fullest extent."

2. Mad River Hatchery (MRH)

Construction of this hatchery was completed in 1971. It is the only existing salmon and steelhead hatchery built by the DFG exclusively for enhancement purposes. Currently, MRH raises 250,000 yearling steelhead for release in the Mad River. Because chinook salmon production goals (4,000,000 smolts and 1,000,000 yearlings) have not been achieved, the hatchery capacity has been used to rear some chinook, coho, and steelhead for restoration in the DFG's Central Coastal Region, coastal cutthroat trout for restoration and enhancement, and resident rainbow trout for stocking in local waters. Some chinook salmon have also been raised for the Inland Salmon Program

Conclusion: Very few coho and chinook are currently spawned at MRH. Consideration should be given to using the hatchery more for restoration of salmonid stocks (e.g., could it become a captive rearing facility?)

Recommendations: The DFG should cease spawning chinook and coho salmon at MRH. As needs arise, advantage should be taken of the capacity of MRH to rear salmonid stocks for recovery purposes.

3. Feather River Hatchery (FRH)

FRH was built by the California Department of Water Resources to mitigate for the loss of habitat upstream of Oroville Dam. The facility is the only Central Valley hatchery that rears spring chinook. Naturally spawning populations of Central Valley spring chinook are listed as threatened under CESA and ESA.

Interbreeding of spring and fall runs may have occurred in the Feather River prior to the construction of Oroville Dam, as a result of early hydro power and agricultural diversions blocking access to spring-run habitat in the upper watershed (DFG 1998). Attempts in 1968 and 1969 to allow spring chinook to enter the hatchery as soon as they arrived in the river (as early as April and May) resulted in significant pre-spawning mortality. Since 1970, hatchery policy has been to exclude spring run entry to the facility until onset of spawning, the period August through October. This practice has resulted in the inability to clearly identify spring chinook based on their adult upstream migration timing, which historically has been described as occurring between late February and June. Since the hatchery program's inception, practices have fostered this intermixing of fall run and spring run in the Feather River and within the hatchery. However, the spring-run pheno-type continues to occur in the system.

The Committee discussed the following issues:

a. Does the off-site release and resulting increase in straying of FRH spring chinook pose a significant risk to listed populations of Central Valley spring chinook? FRH spring chinook are currently planted in San Pablo Bay. The planting protocol likely results in straying of the hatchery population with potential for interbreeding with naturally spawning spring run populations in other basins. This is because the FRH spring run continue to return to the system during the normal migration of naturally produced fish.

b. Should efforts be made to reestablish a discrete run of spring chinook in the Feather River and if so, are there techniques or management options for better segregating the fall and spring runs to allow for a selection of brood stock that best represents the spring-run type?

<u>Conclusions</u>: The off-site release and resulting increase in straying of FRH spring chinook could pose a significant risk to listed populations of Central Valley spring chinook. FRH spring chinook are currently planted in San Pablo Bay. The planting protocol likely results in straying of the hatchery population with potential for interbreeding with naturally spawning spring run populations in other basins. Efforts should be made to reestablish a discrete run of spring chinook in the Feather River. The DFG should explore techniques or management options for better segregating the fall and spring runs to allow for a selection of brood stock that best represents the spring-run type.

<u>Recommendations</u>:

1. All the spring-run produced at FRH should be tagged for identification in fisheries, spawning surveys, and in hatchery returns.

2. FRH spring-run should be released "in-river", not trucked to San Pablo Bay. This recommendation is one step beyond that recommended by the subcommittee on off-site releases (they recommended that the DFG should consider such action). "In-river" means at or as close to the hatchery as is feasible, taking into account any environmental or ecological concerns (e.g., low flows, high water temperatures, competition with natural fish).

3. The DFG should continue to explore options to separate returning spring-run adults from fall-run adults. It should include follow up on the idea of a physical barrier in the Feather River to separate the races based on run timing.

4. Iron Gate and Trinity River Hatcheries

Naturally spawning populations of coho salmon in the Klamath Trinity Basin are listed as threatened under the ESA. Coho returning to the Trinity River are overwhelmingly of hatchery origin. The hatchery stock is considered part of the Southern Oregon/Northern California coho ESU but is not listed; however, NMFS considers the hatchery population important to recovery. Retention of coho has been prohibited in ocean fisheries off California since 1994 and in fresh water recreational fisheries in the Klamath Trinity Basin since 1997.

The Committee discussed the following issues:

a. Because there appears to be essentially no natural production of coho in the Trinity River, the hatchery stock of coho produced at Trinity River Hatchery will likely play an important role in coho recovery in the ESU. The DFG, Tribes and NMFS will need to consider how the coho program at TRH should best be utilized in the recovery of Trinity Basin coho.

b. The current document of operational goals and constraints for IGH stipulates the volitional release of chinook salmon smolts when the average size of the entire production reaches 90 per pound with a release date window of June 1 - 15. This time period often coincides with a reduction in the flow of water released by the Bureau of Reclamation into the Klamath River. The resulting low flows and deterioration of water quality reduces the rearing and migration habitat available for both natural and hatchery reared fish. Are alternative release strategies available that might reduce competition for limited habitat between hatchery and natural stocks?

c. Over the past 10 years, steelhead have returned to Iron Gate Hatchery in very low numbers. Coincident with the poor returns, hatchery staff have observed that the returning fish more resemble trout in size and coloration. Recoveries of tagged fish also suggest that the hatchery steelhead stock has “residualized”; that is, it has lost the propensity to migrate to the ocean, becoming a resident rainbow trout population. How should the problem be corrected?

d. Two issues were discussed with respect to practices which may delay the run timing of TRH spring chinook: 1) effects of the yearling program, and 2) adequacy of the two week closure of gates currently used to separate spring and fall chinook entering the hatchery.

The Goals and Constraints at Trinity River Hatchery require an annual production of one million spring chinook fingerlings (June release) and 400,000 yearlings (October release). Progeny from fish spawned earlier are ponded first and consequently are more likely to reach the target fingerling release size of 90 fish/lb by the June release date. The fish from earlier spawning therefore tend to be utilized for the smolt releases and, until recently, the yearling production was often dominated by eggs which were collected towards the end of the hatchery recovery period (lots spawned in late September through early October). Yearlings generally experience higher survival rates from release to maturity than do subyearlings (Hankin 1990). Spring chinook are spawned in the hatchery as they mature. If time of entry to the hatchery, and maturation and spawning, is correlated with time of river entry, it is possible that this kind of rearing and release practice may provide a selective advantage (but a bias) for later-returning spring chinook salmon.

For the past 3 years, fish for spring yearlings have been selected as smolts just prior to marking by the Hoopa Valley Tribe. Smolts for the spring yearling releases are selected from approximately the middle of the year’s production for the following reasons. For an accurate inventory, fish need to be about 100-150/lb. Fish that are larger than that, and subsequently released as yearlings, tend to have a large percentage of precocious males that will remain at the hatchery and fail to migrate downstream. Therefore larger (earlier ponded) fish are avoided for use in the yearling program. Smolts are inventoried by the standard practice of determining size of fish per pound then total number of pounds needed for the yearling production goal.

Although the spawning periods of the spring and fall run chinook do overlap, their spawning habitats were historically different, providing spatial separation of spawning populations. The spring run accessed higher streams and the fall run utilized lower mainstem and tributaries. Because the historical spawning habitat of the spring run is no longer accessible, the potential for interbreeding of the two races is high. The Committee recognizes and supports continued efforts to maintain a separation between spring and fall runs of chinook at the TRH. Hatchery personnel report that run timing and phenotypic characteristics appear to provide good separation between fall and spring runs. There is currently a 2 week gap between spring and fall collection, during which fish cannot enter the hatchery.

See Appendix II for the report of the Klamath Trinity Basin subcommittee.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

A process should be identified for the periodic (on the order of 6-9 years) review of hatchery production levels that would assess coho production at TRH and IGH in light of any of the following: (1) changes in ocean or freshwater harvest regimes, (2) new information on the effects of hatchery operations on natural populations below impassible dams, (3) recommendations coming out of tribal trust reviews, (4) changes to mitigation goals resulting from the upcoming FERC relicensing process in the Klamath Basin, or (5) changes in ESA status of Klamath Basin salmon and steelhead populations . The process would include the DFG, agencies responsible for mitigating of salmon production, the Tribes, and NMFS (if ESA issues were applicable). As recovery efforts proceed under the ESA, the Tribes, DFG, and NMFS will need to consider how the coho program at TRH should best be utilized in the recovery of Trinity Basin coho.

Little information is available on either the status of natural coho populations or the extent of straying of hatchery reared coho into natural spawning areas. Although the operation of weirs throughout the entire run time of coho can be difficult or impossible, there may be certain tributaries where flows would allow an adult census. Where possible, monitoring strategies should be identified that would provide better information on the status of naturally spawning coho in the Klamath Trinity Basins. Additional efforts to genetically characterize hatchery and natural coho stocks within the Klamath Trinity Basins would be useful for any future decisions regarding the use of hatchery stocks or non-hatchery brood stock in recovery efforts.

Iron Gate Hatchery Fall Chinook Releases

Two changes in release strategy were identified that potentially could reduce competition between hatchery releases of IGH fall chinook and natural populations. Prior to implementing any major changes in rearing or release protocols, monitoring programs should be identified and implemented that will provide information on the effects of changes in the release dates, or size at release, on the interaction of hatchery and natural populations during the release period.

1. The release of chinook smolts from IGH should be accomplished by releasing each production group of chinook as they reach 90 per pound. Hatchery records show this begins around May 1st. This advancing (currently June 15th) of the release window should result in a more volitional release with lower numbers of hatchery fish entering the Klamath River at any given time. Fish released in May should experience lower temperature and higher water flows. This modification

of release strategy is intended to reduce impacts on naturally produced stocks and improve the survival of hatchery produced smolts by allowing access to the lower water temperature and higher water flows available in late May.

Methods should be identified for warming the water used at IGH in the egg incubation process in order to advance the hatching date for later lots of eggs. This would enable hatchery management to get the last group of chinook fingerlings closer to the 90 per pound smolt release size by the first week of June - when water conditions are likely to be more suitable.

2. DFG should consider the desirability of expanding the chinook yearling program at IGH and reducing the chinook smolt production. Releasing fewer smolts and more yearlings would relieve some of the hatchery-natural interactions that occur during the low-flow and poor water quality conditions present in the Klamath River during June and July. The time of the yearling release from IGH occurs during October 15 – November 15, which coincides with flow release increases from Iron Gate Dam, increased precipitation in the Klamath Basin, and substantially improved water quality conditions in the Klamath River. Interactions between hatchery and natural chinook would be minimized as a result of improved water quality and because most natural chinook would have already left the Klamath Basin.

Iron Gate Hatchery Steelhead

A lack of indicators of ocean residence of hatchery "steelhead" in combination with the very low return numbers have raised concerns that the Iron Gate Hatchery "steelhead" program is producing rainbow trout and few, if any, steelhead. However, recent observations of smoltification characteristics (backing down in the rearing pond and shedding scales) of a portion of the yearling steelhead production, as well as recovery of hatchery-marked adults by fisheries staff of the Yurok Tribe, indicate that some portion of IGH-reared steelhead are anadromous. The subcommittee recommended that the DFG continue efforts to identify the issues that have led to residualization of the steelhead population and determine whether measures need to be taken to reverse this trend. If the problem continues, a Committee (including, but not limited to, the DFG, NMFS, and the Tribes) should be formed to discuss the appropriate measures to address the problem. One option may be to find an appropriate, naturally spawning, population of steelhead in the Klamath Basin from which brood stock could be taken to reinitiate a steelhead program at IGH.

Trinity River Hatchery Chinook

<u>Spring and Fall Run Separation</u> - DFG should conduct an analysis of coded wire tag (CWT) recoveries from the early portion of the fall run to assess the presence of spring chinook and during the late portion of the spring run to assess the presence of fall run, in the respective pools of fish available for spawning. In addition, data should be gathered on whether CWT marked fish were used or rejected for spawning, based on phenotypic characteristics used by hatchery personnel to distinguish the two races. The analysis would then provide estimates of 1) the presence of fall run during spring brood stock collection; 2) the presence of spring run during fall run brood stock collection; and 3) how well phenotypic characteristics such as color serve to distinguish the races.

Spring Yearling Program - For both spring and fall chinook, the numbers of fish held for release as smolts and as yearlings should reflect the numbers of fish returning at different times of the run, in the same way that eggs are selected from all components of the run.

5. Noyo River Egg-taking Station

This egg-taking station was constructed in 1962. The goals of the program, developed prior to the federal and state listing of coho, include developing and maintaining an escapement of 1,500 adult coho to the station as well as providing up to one million coho eggs annually for selected DFG and private coastal area programs. Adult coho salmon are trapped and spawned and the resulting eggs/fry are reared at Mad River Hatchery (and formerly at Warm Springs Hatchery). Smolts are stocked in the Noyo River and in other selected coastal streams to maintain and restore coho runs there.

Conclusions: The program, which has the potential to be integrated into ESA recovery efforts for coastal coho, requires a Section 10 permit. The Noyo River, the egg-taking station, and Jackson State Forest land provide an opportunity to explore many issues related to hatchery/wild concerns, distribution and monitoring, land use and restoration. The system is large enough to be considered an important component of the northern California coho spawning habitat but small enough that it can be monitored with a reasonable amount of effort. The DFG and the SWFSC Santa Cruz are presently collaborating on several projects in the south fork Noyo, including adult coho spawner and carcass surveys that are able differentiate between hatchery and naturally spawned fish, and summer juvenile surveys (single pass snorkel counts of juvenile steelhead and coho).

Recommendations: Artificial production and stocking of Noyo coho should occur in the context of addressing the factors that led to the decline in the population of coastal coho. Present goals, which specify that 75% of the run will be taken for hatchery propagation, should be reviewed to ensure that sufficient numbers of spawners are passed above the station for natural propagation. Mating protocols should be developed that maximize the effective population size and specify the extent to which naturally spawned broodstock will be incorporated into the hatchery stock. An assessment plan should be developed for evaluating the genetic and ecological effects of stocking Noyo coho in the Noyo and other coastal streams.

6. Van Arsdale Fisheries Station

Operations at this facility on the Eel River began in the 1920s. Its original purpose was to take steelhead and salmon eggs for transfer to other waters in California and elsewhere. It has also maintained adult fish counts since the early 1930s. It continues to collect fish run data, and chinook and steelhead eggs have been taken for rearing elsewhere (MRH and WSH); smolts are imprinted and released back into the Eel River to rehabilitate the runs there.

The activities of the Van Arsdale station are similar in many respects to those of the Noyo station and require Section 10 authorization.

7. Mokelumne River Hatchery

In September 1999, the Southwest Acting Regional Administrator wrote to the Director expressing concerns about, and offering some recommendations for changes to, the design features for planned renovation of Mokelumne Hatchery. Among other things, the Regional Office proposed consideration of designing rearing containers that facilitate volitional release of juveniles, that have options for habitat complexity to produce fish that are more wild-like in appearance and behavior, and that have options for applying anti-predatory conditioning. The principal theme was that there should be more focus on design changes that could improve the quality and survival of hatchery-reared juveniles and that could lessen the genetic and ecological impacts of hatchery-reared salmon on natural stocks. Subsequent meetings involving NMFS, DFG and East Bay Municipal Utility District personnel resulted in agreement on some design features that move in this direction.

<u>Conclusions</u>: As a result of the meetings, East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) and DFG agreed to incorporate design elements that allow for the volitional release of juveniles and addition of coloration matched to the natural river substrate to the concrete for the construction of two raceway series. Additionally, EBMUD and DFG have agreed to support and conduct scientific studies that incorporate all of NMFS suggested design elements. These studies will determine the feasibility and efficacy of rearing fish under more natural conditions and provide future direction for hatchery design.

<u>Recommendations</u>: The effects of these design features should be monitored and evaluated for future adjustments. Also, see the second recommendation for Nimbus Hatchery.

8. Nimbus Salmon and Steelhead Hatchery

Nimbus Hatchery began operations in 1955. It was built by the Bureau of Reclamation as mitigation for Nimbus Dam on the American River. Its production goals are 4,000,000 fall chinook smolts and 430,000 steelhead yearlings. It also produces chinook fingerlings for the fry release program (see prior discussion).

The Committee discussed the following issues:

a. Trucking of chinook smolts to San Pablo Bay (dealt with under the off-site release/straying section of this report).

b. Interbasin transfer of steelhead eggs to Mokelumne River Hatchery.

c. Release of steelhead yearlings in the Sacramento River.

d. The origin (Eel River) of the current stock of steelhead.

<u>Conclusions</u>: Transport and release of chinook smolts in the western Delta increases the straying of Nimbus Hatchery production to rivers throughout the Central Valley. Interbasin transfer of steelhead eggs to Mokelumne River Hatchery is an inappropriate exemption of existing policy.

Release of steelhead yearlings in the Sacramento River should be discontinued.

Recommendations:

1. Consider releasing chinook smolts at the hatchery (see off-site subcommittee report) during periods when flow releases can be obtained to maximize smolt survival through the delta.

2. Discontinue supplying steelhead eggs to Mokelumne River Hatchery.

3. Continue to look for steelhead planting sites in the American River instead of in the Sacramento River. Sites in the American River should be downstream of major salmon spawning areas.

4. Participate as appropriate following the development of a genetic evaluation plan for steelhead. This plan, being developed by the DFG, will identify and designate new sources of steelhead brood stock for Nimbus Hatchery. The new brood stock would eventually replace the current brood stock, which is of Eel River origin.

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APPENDIX I. Off Site Release and Straying Subcommittee Report.

REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OFF-SITE RELEASE AND STRAYING OF HATCHERY PRODUCED CHINOOK SALMON

January 10, 2001

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I. INTRODUCTION

The migration of Pacific salmon from the ocean to their natal streams to spawn is a behavior that assures maturing adults a high probability of finding appropriate freshwater spawning habitat. Accurate homing behavior results in reproductively isolated populations and allows adaptive divergence to occur among populations. The frequency and extent of dispersal, or straying, from the natal spawning grounds define the demographic and genetic boundaries of a population. Straying is important in colonization and in developing metapopulation structure, and therefore plays an important role in reducing extinction risks.

Both the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have expressed concern regarding the effects of straying of hatchery fish on natural populations (DFG 1998, Myers et al. 1998). "The trucking of hatchery fish in the Central Valley has increased the rate of straying of returning adults, possibly to the detriment of the naturally produced fish. Hatchery fish have been important to maintaining ocean and in-river fisheries, and have incorrectly been perceived as a viable alternative to maintenance of natural spawning populations. Unfortunately, a successful hatchery program can mask the decline in the natural run due to straying of the returning adults, and this appears to be the case for chinook in many areas of the Central Valley and the Klamath River basin." (Boydstun et al. 1992)

A significant portion of Central Valley hatchery reared salmon are transported to the western Sacramento San Joaquin Delta (Delta) and released. Transporting fish downstream of the Delta improves their survival and contribution to fisheries; however, off-site release also increases the straying rate of salmon from the hatchery of origin. This report discusses the potential ecological and genetic effects of increased straying of hatchery produced salmon associated with off-site release programs. It also reviews the results of genetic studies of California's salmon populations, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations to the Joint Hatchery Review Committee.

II. MECHANISMS AFFECTING HOMING

Homing, and therefore straying, may be influenced by such factors as water temperature, flow, presence of other salmon, habitat quality, and so on. Although imprinting is important in homing behavior, straying may have a genetic component: males stray more than females and local populations may home better than transplanted ones (Bams 1976, McIsaac and Quinn 1988). Several studies suggest that older fish stray more than younger fish. It is not clear whether fish that stray actively identify their natal breeding grounds, then migrate elsewhere, or whether strays are unable to find their natal site.

Salmon generally return to the site where they were released (Ricker 1972). Displacement studies suggest that maturing salmon tend to reverse the sequence of olfactory cues they experienced during their seaward migration as juveniles. This process normally returns them to their natal river or hatchery. Depending on the distance of the release site from the rearing site, displaced salmon, upon returning to the odors of their release site, may not detect the odors of their rearing site, and seek the nearest river or hatchery. Solazzi et al. (1991) trucked coho salmon (reared at least in part at Big Creek Hatchery) to release sites below Bonneville Dam (river km 234), and Tongue Point (rkm 29). In addition, smolts were taken by boat in tanks receiving ambient water to the bar of the river (rkm 2), 19 km offshore in the river's plume, 19 km offshore outside the river's plume, and 38 km offshore in non-plume water. These six locations, progressively farther from the rearing site, produced the following proportions of salmon that returned to rivers outside the Columbia River system: <0.1%, 3.4%, 4.1%, 6.1%, 21.0%, and 37.5%.

Salmon are known to imprint on marine as well as freshwater environments; coho salmon trucked from the Little White Salmon Hatchery to Youngs Bay, Oregon, returned to Youngs Bay rather than the hatchery (Vreeland et al. 1975). Imprinting appears to occur up through the time of smolt transformation and precise homing may require smoltification coincident with seaward migration; hence salmon held too long in a hatchery will stray at high rates even though they were given a full opportunity to imprint (Dittman et al. 1996).

Water development in the Central Valley has drastically altered the in-stream hydrology of the Sacramento and San Joaquin river systems. In the upper reaches of both mainstems and tributaries, storage dams for domestic and agricultural water supplies, power generation, and flood control can restrict flows and change their seasonal pattern. Farther downstream, diversion and delivery systems, and flood bypasses can route large volumes of water away from their normal flow configuration. In the Delta, exports for the Central Valley and State Water projects (CVP and SWP) can substantially decrease the proportion of the water flowing toward the ocean. For adult salmonids returning to spawn, these operations can cause delay, misdirection, or obstruction, thus posing problems in homing to their native spawning areas.

Adult spawners must use the Delta as a migrational corridor to the upper Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and their tributaries. Their orientation depends in large part on an olfactory perception of their home-stream water; a “homing” or “parent” stream odor gradient is required to assure the fish’s return to its natal spawning grounds. CVP and SWP diversion of water at times can cause net reverse flows in the lower San Joaquin River, drafting Sacramento River water into its channels. The mixture of water from both systems in the interior Delta channels may confuse spawners bound for either system, resulting in delay and straying. For Sacramento River fish in particular, their migration can be lengthened, detouring them towards Georgiana Slough and the Delta Cross Channel, with the possibility of ending up in the Mokelumne River (Chadwick 1982).

Adult migrants also face the problem of irrigation return and flood bypass systems that empty confusing mixes of water into main channels. Manmade diversion and reconfiguration of water channels can remove water from a stream’s natural course and discharge it at distantly located streams, channels, or sloughs. Where this occurs, progeny from the stream where the original diversion occurred may be attracted to the water release location during their return. Drainage of water used for agriculture may also contain chemicals that may further confuse salmonid homing senses.

Water management releases may contribute to straying of salmonids if unfavorable water quality conditions result; fish may select a tributary other than that where they were raised if conditions are not acceptable upon return. In general, flows released by storage dams are largely determined by flood control during the winter, and in the spring and early summer by irrigation needs and at times salinity control. The latter operation may deplete the storage of cooler water available during the migration period of late summer and fall. Reduced flows, with accompanying higher than preferred temperatures and dissolved oxygen, may prevent fish from ascending a tributary, and cause them to continue into another .

III. ECOLOGICAL AND EVOLUTIONARY SIGNIFICANCE OF HOMING

After a period of ocean residence, anadromous salmonids return with high fidelity to their birthplace. Accurate homing assures that reproduction takes place in a proven environment and minimizes genetic exchange between geographically and temporally separated stocks. This reproductive isolation allows populations to diverge genetically (due both to drift and selection), and this genetic divergence may be the cause of much of the phenotypic diversity observed within Pacific salmonid species. Homing accuracy is not perfect, however, and dispersal can be advantageous, allowing colonization of new habitats. This section reviews the evolutionary and ecological significance of homing and dispersal.

A. Definitions

For the sake of the following discussion, homing is defined as returning to spawn with others of the same population near the natal area. Straying, or dispersal, in contrast, is spawning somewhere other than the natal area. In the context of evaluating off-site release, stocks with the same run timing in different drainages (e.g, Tuolumne and Stanislaus River fall chinook) and stocks with different run timing in the same drainage (e.g., Butte Creek spring and fall chinook) are considered to be different populations.

B. Why Home?

It is easy to see how natural selection could evolve navigational abilities and high migrational fidelity in anadromous salmonids. Freshwater salmonid spawning habitat is patchy and variable in quality, and adults expend considerable energy in the spawning migration. Once suitable habitat has been located by straying individuals, the ability of fish to return to the location of birth provides a reproductive advantage over individuals that are randomly searching for suitable spawning habitat.

Each phase of the salmon life cycle can be completed only under a narrow range of conditions (flow, water temperature, food availability, etc.) within constrained time periods. For a given stream, there may be narrow windows for upstream migration, egg incubation, juvenile rearing, and downstream migration. If homing accuracy and the initiation time and duration for these phases is heritable (Hard and Heard 1999 provide some evidence for the heritability of homing accuracy) and there is a larger difference among streams than within a stream over time, then there will be additional selection pressure for accurate homing and life history traits compatible with the local stream. Such selection would be expressed as life history diversity that matches the dictates of local environments.

The idea that high migrational fidelity and significant selection pressure in the spawning environment give rise to locally adapted populations is supported by the numerous observations of life history diversity within salmon species and even within drainages (Myers et al. 1998 contains a summary for chinook). In some cases, phenotypic differences have been shown to have a genetic component. Examples include directional orientation of inlet- and outlet-spawning sockeye (Quin

1985) and swimming endurance of coho from different streams raised in a common environment (Taylor and McPhail 1985). It is quite possible, however, that a portion of this diversity is phenotypic plasticity rather than local adaptation (Adkison, 1995), although the generally poor success of stock transplants (e.g., Reisenbichler 1988) suggests that local adaptation is real.

C. Why Disperse?

All species express a strong tendency to expand their range through dispersal. Every species has at least one dispersal stage in its life history (Mayr 1966). Salmon are no exception and disperse themselves through the process of straying. Straying provides for exchange of individuals between populations and allows the rapid colonization of unoccupied areas (e.g. New Zealand or the Great Lakes; see Quinn 1984, Milner and Bailey 1989). In general, however, it appears that straying migrants have limited success reproducing in new habitats when those habitats are already occupied by conspecifics. Tallman and Healey (1994), studying chum salmon from Vancouver Island, found that stray rates inferred from allozyme variation were lower than straying rates estimate directly from mark-recapture studies, and concluded that strays had lower reproductive success than fish returning to their natal streams. Stray fish may face barriers in mating with local fish or preferentially mate with one another; hybrid offspring may be less viable.

D. Genetic Differentiation among Stocks

Over time, frequencies of selectively neutral alleles in reproductively isolated populations tend to diverge due to genetic drift. Genetic drift is opposed by dispersal between populations. Allele frequencies can therefore be used to study population structure, and have been used to define conservation units (e.g., Myers et al. 1998). An implicit assumption is that if there is enough reproductive isolation to allow genetic drift, then local adaptation is possible. Genetic diversity is the result of local adaptation, and NMFS considers maintenance of within- and among-ESU[1] diversity critical in the conservation of ESUs and Pacific salmonid species (McElhany et al. 2000). In this subsection, we review studies of the genetic diversity of California's salmonids. Studies to date have focused on determining large-scale population structure (differences associated with major ecoregions) rather than fine-scale structure (diversity within a basin).

Utter et al. (1989) used allozyme variation to study chinook populations ranging from California to British Columbia. Within California, chinook from coastal watersheds, the Klamath-Trinity basin, and the Central Valley formed clusters distinct from each other and other west-coast chinook populations. In general, it appears that run time variation has arisen separately within basins, i.e., as an adaptation by the local ancestral stock rather than by dispersal.

Bartley and Gall (1990) present an analysis of allozyme variation in 35 populations of chinook from northern California. Within the Central Valley, there appears to be some degree of reproductive isolation between populations, and some samples (from a specific watershed or hatchery) contained alleles not found in some or all other Central Valley samples. Interpretation of this study is difficult because samples were primarily juveniles and might be mixtures of different races or populations (including hatchery populations).

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[1] An ESU (evolutionarily significant unit) is a population of salmon determined by NMFS to meet the definition of a "species" for purposes of listing under the ESA.

Gall et al. (1991) examined 78 isozyme loci in 37 chinook populations from California and Oregon. Central Valley populations formed a cluster distinct from other populations (California and Oregon coastal, Klamath). Within the Central Valley, data suggests there are about 15 migrants between populations per generation, which may reflect egg and fingerling transfers between hatcheries. Changes in allele frequencies were observed over time.

Nielsen et al. (1994a) documented differences in mtDNA genotypes and allele frequencies for 4 (3 hatchery, 1 natural) samples of Central Valley chinook. The natural population (a mixture of Mill Creek, Deer Creek, upper Sacramento and American Rivers) had an allele not found in any of the hatchery samples, and each of the hatchery samples had alleles not found in the natural samples, indicating isolation between hatchery and natural samples.

Nielsen et al. (1994b) looked at mtDNA polymorphisms in 312 samples taken from 7 populations of Central Valley chinook, including fall-, winter- and spring-run samples. They found significant differences between run timings, but no significant differences among fall-run hatchery populations. Dizon et al. (1995) caution against accepting the null hypothesis of no significant difference between populations without consideration of the statistical power provided by the sample.

Kim et al. (1999) examined major histocompatibility complex differentiation in Central Valley chinook using 4 alleles. The authors found that winter and spring chinook were significantly different than fall and late fall; no samples were taken to allow differentiation within the fall run to be examined.

NMFS (1999, unpublished update to status review summarized in 64 FR 50394; 2000, David Teel, personal communication) obtained additional allozyme samples for some California populations and added them to the analysis presented in the chinook status review (Myers et al., 1998). Winter and spring chinook samples were well-separated from the fall chinook cluster. Within the fall chinook cluster, four sub-groups were evident: 1) Merced River and Merced Hatchery, Tuolumne River and Nimbus Hatchery; 2) Feather River Hatchery fall and spring, Coleman National Fish Hatchery (CNFH) fall, and upper Sacramento late fall; 3) CNFH late fall; 4) Stanislaus River. G-tests of differences in allele frequencies were significant, with the exception of the following comparisons:

1. Tuolumne River - Merced River
2. Tuolumne River - Merced Hatchery
3. Tuolumne River - Nimbus Hatchery
4. Deer Creek Spring - Feather River Hatchery Spring

Finally, Banks et al. (2000) used DNA microsatellites to study the population structure of Central Valley chinook. They found that winter chinook were quite different from other runs, and that Butte Creek spring run chinook are distinct from spring-run from Mill and Deer Creek, as well as other chinook runs. Late fall-run chinook are similar to, but significantly distinct from, fall-run chinook. They found little differences among fall chinook populations; fall chinook appear to form a random-mating system throughout the valley. They present evidence for hybridization of fall and spring run fish within CNFH, and suggest that there are no genetic spring chinook in the Feather River Hatchery, in spite of the presence of chinook with a spring-run phenotype.

Taken together, the Banks study and NMFS coast-wide allozyme data paint a consistent picture. One point is that there are genetically distinct populations within Central Valley chinook, composed of winter chinook, Butte Creek Spring chinook, Mill/Deer Creek spring chinook, and fall/late fall chinook. The apparent lack of geographic structure of fall chinook within the Central Valley is in striking contrast with other chinook ESUs, where genetic structure corresponds closely to geographic structure of watersheds. One hypothesis in accord with this observation is that the history of stock transfers and off-site release in the Central Valley has resulted in homogenization of fall chinook. The other explanation for this pattern is that for some reason, Central Valley fall chinook, unlike other chinook from the Central Valley or anywhere else, naturally have weak homing tendency, perhaps because this is advantageous at the edge of the range

The data gathered to date has some serious gaps. The lack of adequate fall chinook samples from Mill, Deer and Butte Creeks should prevent us from making a final conclusion about homogenization of fall chinook and about the status of spring chinook in the Feather River. In general, spring chinook throughout the Pacific northwest are often most similar to fall chinook from the same basin, indicating that spring and fall chinook in a basin share a common ancestor. The divergence of Butte Creek from other spring chinook in the Central Valley and the similarity of spring and fall chinook in the Feather River are consistent with this. By corollary, we might predict that fall chinook in Mill, Deer and Butte Creek will show some similarity to spring chinook from these basins, and that they therefore will be different from other fall chinook populations.

At first glance, one might suppose that elevated straying between hatchery and natural populations is not a problem, since much of the damage (loss of any local adaptation) has been done. We could, however, hypothesize that if straying ceased, natural selection would lead to local adaptation (and therefore population differentiation) and increased productivity of natural populations. As discussed in the risk assessment section, hatchery straying poses genetic risks to natural populations beyond merely the reduction of genetic diversity through spatial homogenization. Furthermore, Mill, Deer and Butte Creek may harbor genetically distinct fall chinook populations that could be an important component of fall chinook genetic diversity, and it would be precautionary to protect this diversity.

IV. REPORTED STRAY RATES IN NATURAL POPULATIONS

Because of the relative ease of tagging hatchery fish, most estimates of straying come from hatchery populations and relatively fewer exist for natural salmon. Table 1 displays the the considerable differences in stray rates in natural populations that have been reported among rivers and species. For example, Shapovalov and Taft (1954) observed considerably higher rates for coho populations (15-27%) in central California coastal streams than have been reported for several Vancouver Island natural coho populations (0-3.9%, Labelle, 1992). Because estimates of straying will vary depending on the study design and how straying is defined, the determination of a “natural” rate of straying is difficult and probably not particularly useful.

Table 1. Estimates of straying (the percentage of marked fish returning to a location other than that in which it was marked) for Pacific salmonids. - from McElhany et al. (2000).

Species	% Straying	Geographic scale of straying[1]	Origin	Reference
Sockeye	0.6 - 1.5	Cultus Lake, British Columbia	Natural	Foerster 1968
Chum	2.2 - 10	350 - 2000 km	Natural	Sakano 1960
Chum	17.4 - 54	British Columbia	Natural	Tallman & Healey 1994
Chum	5.2 - 5.4	British Columbia »10 km	Hatchery	McQuarrie & Bailey 1980 (Quinn 93)
Coho	15 – 27 0 – 3.9 1 – 65 0 - 67	Scott and Waddell: 10 km; B C: 9 – 159km; Puget Sound: <150 km; WA coast: <150 km	Natural	Shapovalov & Taft 1954 Labelle 1992 Vanderhaegen & Doty 1995
Coho	0.0 - 27.7 1 – 7 <0.5 – 4 0 – 12.4	British Columbia: 7-58 km Puget Sound: <150 km; WA coast: <60 km; Columbia: <150 km	Hatchery	Labelle 1992 Vander Haegen & Doty 1995
Steelhead	2 - 3	Scott and Waddel 10 km	Natural	Shapovalov & Taft 1954
Chinook (fall)	3.2	> 60 km but w/in Columbia basin	Natural	McIsaac 1990
Chinook (fall)	4.6 – 5.7 7 - 10 40 - 86 8 54 < 3 2 – 25 1.2	Lewis: w/in Columbia basin; On-site release Sacramento: 48-336 km Off-site release Sacramento: 48-336 km On-site release Sacramento Off-site release Sacramento Puget Sound: <150 km WA coast: <150km SE Alaska > 7 km	Hatchery	Quinn et al. 1991 Cramer 1989 Cramer 1989 Dettman & Kelly 1987 Dettman & Kelly 1987 Vander Haegen & Doty 1995 Hard & Heard, 1999
Chinook (spring)	0.3 - 3.6	98.3% w/in 50 km, 1.7% out of Columbia basin	Hatchery	Quinn & Fresh 1984
Coastal cutthroat	0 - 30	Oregon Coastal 70-150 km	Hatchery	Giger 1972

1 Geographical scale of straying refers to the distance from the spawning area, or point of release, that the study defined as constituting "straying"

II. STRAY RATES IN HATCHERY POPULATIONS

A. Central Valley

1. Off-site Release Programs

The production and release of fish from large scale salmon hatcheries in California during 1999 was approximately 47.8 million salmon and 2.8 million steelhead. About a quarter of the 1999 chinook production (approximately 11.6 million) was transported by truck and released west of the Delta. Three California State hatcheries located in the Central Valley (Feather, Mokelumne, and Nimbus hatcheries) accounted for roughly 99% of the off-site releases, with San Pablo Bay being the primary destination. Merced Hatchery production is released within the San Joaquin basin, above Jersey Point. Approximately 6,600,000 salmon received coded wire tags prior to release while 100% of the steelhead received adipose fin clips.

2. Estimates of Stray Rates

The number of published estimates of stray rates for Central Valley hatchery salmonids is limited. The many studies involving marked hatchery fish, particularly those conducted in the 1970s and 1980s, were intended to evaluate release strategies through examination of contribution rates to ocean fisheries and inland returns.

Hallock and Reisenbichler (1979) estimated "relative homing tendencies" of CNFH and Nimbus Hatchery chinook salmon released at their respective hatchery compared to releases at Rio Vista. Homing tendency was defined as the quotient of the ratios of the hatchery recoveries to ocean recoveries for fish released at Rio Vista and at the hatchery:

$$\frac{(HatcheryRecoveries_{RioVistaRelease}/OceanRecoveries_{RioVistaRelease})}{(HatcheryRecoveries_{HatcheryRelease}/OceanRecoveries_{HatcheryRelease})}$$

They reported that the homing tendency for CNFH fish released at Rio Vista was only 18% that of fish released at the hatchery, while the homing tendency of Rio Vista-released Nimbus fish was 74% that of fish released at the hatchery. Comparative returns or dispersal of returning fish from off-site releases was qualitatively recognized as substantial straying in CNFH steelhead (Hallock 1980), and chinook salmon from Mokelumne River and Feather River hatcheries (Meyer 1984, 1987).

Analyses of data for coded-wire tagged salmon (which included some of the above studies) have provided some chinook straying rates. Dettman and Kelley (1987) estimated that the proportion of Feather River Hatchery produced spawners returning to the Feather River was 92% for fish released from the Feather River Hatchery into the Feather River and 46% for fish transported and released in the Delta and estuary, that is straying rates of 8% for fish released at the hatchery and 54% for fish released in the Delta. Their estimate assumed the number of stray rates to other rivers were proportionate to the fraction of Feather River Hatchery tags observed in hatcheries on those rivers. Based on this relationship and the results of Hallock and Reisenbichler (1979), they speculated that stray rates for Nimbus fish released on-site and in the estuary would be 8% and 32%, respectively. An alternative analysis of coded wire tag (CWT) data by Cramer (1989) estimated Feather River Hatchery chinook stray rates of 7% from on-site releases and 69% for those released in the estuary, and rates for CNFH fish of 10% and 86% for releases on-site and at Knights Landing, respectively.

In comparing on-site hatchery and releases of yearling fall chinook salmon from the Feather River Hatchery, Sholes and Hallock (1979) reported a 10% stray rate for fish released on-site compared to a 70% stray rate for releases made near Sacramento.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recently developed a straying index for groups of fish released at varying distances from CNFH (USFWS, 2001). The index assumes that the effects of release location are limited primarily to 1) the survival rates of smolt to recruits and 2) the stray rates of returning adults. If release location does not affect ocean distribution and catch rates, then two release groups from the same broodyear should generally experience similar catch rates; differences in observed catch rates would presumably be due to differences in the straying rate. Catch rates are defined as ocean recoveries/(ocean recoveries + hatchery recoveries + unknown strays), and hatchery recoveries include fish returning to Battle Creek. If two release groups are similar except for location of release then differences in catch rates can be accounted for by estimating the number of additional strays necessary to produce equal catch rates. The stray index is then calculated as the strays/(strays + hatchery recoveries). Note that in the data presented here, the number of unknown strays for groups released at CNFH are not estimated, that is the stray rate is arbitrarily set at zero, and the stray index for groups released at CNFH, 0.0, represents the actual unknown stray rate for fish released at the hatchery.

Beginning in the late-1970s and into early 1990s, the USFWS released experimental groups of fall chinook juveniles reared at CNFH at various sites in the Sacramento River and the Delta. These off-site releases were performed primary to test whether the contribution to ocean fisheries (i.e. survival from release to recruitment to fisheries) could be increased without reducing the hatchery returns below that needed for hatchery broodstock requirements. These studies showed that ocean fishery contribution rates from releases made in the western Delta were generally higher than ocean contribution rates for releases made at the hatchery or in the upper Sacramento River. However, the rates of return to the hatchery of fish released in the western Delta were generally equal to or sometimes less than for than those released at the hatchery. It was also quite evident that high straying rates were occurring with the Delta releases and that the resulting strays were not limited to the upper Sacramento River. The studies showed, during some years, minimum brood stock needs at the hatchery would be met only by releasing fish at the hatchery because the high rates of straying associated with Delta released fish was not overcome by the apparent increase in survival.

In 1989, the USFWS made a decision to truck all of the CNFH fall chinook production fish to the City of Benicia because of very poor in-river low flows, drought-related conditions, and high Delta exports. In 1990, with the continuation of the drought and poor in- river conditions, the production was again trucked down river. However in that year, because Delta exports were being curtailed combined with the concerns of the possibility of not getting enough broodstock back to the hatchery, only half of the production was released at Benicia, with the remaining half released at Princeton Ferry (rm165) on the Sacramento River. In 1991, the poor in-river drought related conditions continued but because Delta exports were further curtailed, all of the production was released at Princeton Ferry. In 1992, in-river conditions returned to more normal conditions and the hatchery returned to its usual practice of releasing nearly all of their production fish at the hatchery. Since 1992, all fall chinook production fish have been released at the hatchery.

Fall Chinook Salmon Analysis of mean stray indices for broodyear 1980 through 1987 fry releases and broodyear 1980 through 1986 smolt releases (Table 2) suggested a disruption in the imprinting cycle seemed to have a greater effect on fry releases. Fry releases made at the Red Bluff Diversion Dam (RBDD) resulted in a stray index more than double that of smolt releases. Releases of marked smolts from broodyears 1987 to 1991 were part of a site of release evaluation conducted in cooperation with the DFG. Analysis of the data demonstrate releases of fish west of the Delta result in higher ocean contribution rates and likely overall survival than upstream releases. However, the drawback of the survival advantage is that a high percentage of returning fish from downstream release sites “stray” (stray index 75.3%) presumed again to be due to the interrupting of the imprinting process. Physical evidence of increased straying associated with the downstream release groups from this study has been collected. Eighteen “strays” from the Benicia

Table 2. Summary Table for Mean Stray Indices for Releases of Cnfh Fall Chinook Salmon Smolts and Fry. Number of Groups Examined Are in Parenthesis.

Release Location	Stray Index (%)		
	Broodyear 1980 - 1987	Broodyear 1980 - 1986	Broodyear 1987 - 1991
Battle Creek	0.0 (4)	0.0 (12)	0.0 (5)
Red Bluff Diversion Dam	47.2 (11)	26.3 (12)	8.4 (5)
Princeton			36.1 (5)
Various Downstream Locations	79.3 (15)		
Benicia			75.3 (5)
Mokelumne River	89.7 (5)		

release groups were encountered during various field surveys or hatchery operations. Locations of these recoveries include: Clear Creek (1), Feather River (4), American River (8), Mokelumne River (3) Tuolumne River (1), and Merced River (4). Two “strays” from the Princeton release groups were also encountered in Clear Creek, while no strays were recovered/reported from the RBDD release groups or the on-site Battle Creek release groups.. All results of the broodyear 1987 - 1991 site of release evaluation can be found in Niemela (1996).

Late-fall Chinook Salmon Broodyears 1993 - 1995 were used in the analysis of straying of late-fall chinook salmon using the same methodology described above. Beginning with broodyear 1993, requests have been made from Interagency Ecological Program, and the various participating agencies (NMFS, DFG, DWR, USFWS) for CNFH to provide late-fall chinook salmon for releases into the interior Delta (Georgianna Slough), and various downstream control sites (i.e., Ryde, Isleton, Courtland, Port Chicago). The release groups have been requested as surrogates for winter-run chinook salmon and to evaluate and model modifications to Delta operations as to their potential effects (positive/negative).

In this straying analysis, indices of straying were generated for the releases made into the Delta and other downstream locations. Delta and downstream release sites generated relatively large stray indices of 71.4%, 54.3%, and 84.7% for broodyears 1993 through 1995 respectively. For these broodyears, multiple release groups for both on-site and downstream/ Delta locations were made, making this analysis more telling and likely more powerful than the analysis conducted with fall chinook salmon (see below). These data suggest that between approximately 54 and 84% of adults resulting from groups of juvenile released into the Delta ended up in freshwater locations other than Battle Creek. Tagged adults from these release groups have in fact been noted in the American River at Nimbus Hatchery (Alan Baracco, DFG, Personal Communication).

During 1993 through 1995, approximately 839 CNFH-origin coded-wire tagged late-fall chinook salmon adults were recovered directly at the hatchery, while 32 were collected at the Keswick Dam fish trap in the upper Sacramento River. The recovery values suggest a stray rate of approximately 4%. However, as the Keswick Dam is now the terminus for adult migration in the Sacramento River, it was felt that 4% would be reflective of a minimum value, as not all “strays” would be accounted for at this location.

B. Klamath Trinity Basin

Current hatchery production for the Klamath-Trinity (KT) basin is released on-site from the two large hatcheries, Iron Gate Hatchery and Trinity River Hatchery. During the late 1970s off-site releases of hatchery produced fish were conducted to evaluate the effects of site of release on rates of return to the hatchery and the various fisheries. Report authors were unable to locate any records regarding decisions to begin or discontinue off-site releases from Iron Gate or Trinity River hatcheries.

Two separate studies (Hankin, 1985 and Reavis and Heubach, 1993) were conducted in the KT basin that examined chinook salmon straying rates. In both of these studies straying was defined as "total estimated hatchery coded-wire tag escapement that failed to return to the hatchery of origin". Thus, hatchery produced chinook that returned to their basin of origin but failed to return to either Iron Gate or Trinity River Hatcheries were considered strays. Note that this definition of straying differs from the definition used to develop the stray indices for CNFH discussed earlier.

Estimated salmon escapement within the KT basin is produced in two separate ways; Trinity River escapement is based on mark-recapture estimates based on fish tagged at weirs and recaptured at Trinity River Hatchery, while Klamath River estimates are primarily based on carcass counts. Thus, Trinity River CWT estimates are based on the percentage of CWT fish observed at the weir, while Klamath River CWT estimates are based on actual or expanded counts observed in censussed spawning grounds.

Hankin (1985) analyzed recoveries of chinook salmon CWT release groups from Iron Gate and Trinity River hatcheries for brood years 1976-1980 for survival and stray rates. Off-site releases of Trinity River fall chinook were included in the analysis. The principal findings regarding stray rates were the following:

1. Iron Gate Hatchery fall chinook tend to stray at a much lower rate than Trinity River Hatchery fall chinook. Trinity River Hatchery fish are regularly recovered at Iron Gate hatchery and in some years at the Cole Rivers Hatchery on the Rogue River. Iron Gate Hatchery fish rarely are recovered at the Trinity River Hatchery or outside the river system.

2. Average overall straying rates for fish released from Iron Gate Hatchery as fingerling and yearling chinook were 22% and 18% respectively, and 58%, 57% and 45% for on-site Trinity River Hatchery fall fingerling, yearling and yearling plus chinook releases.

3. Average overall straying rates for off-site Trinity River Hatchery fall chinook fingerling releases were far greater than for fingerling on-site releases: straying rates averaged 90% for three off-site release groups.

4. Out of basin straying was observed for Trinity River, primarily in Oregon and to a lessor degree Washington.

5. Release and recovery data for Iron Gate Hatchery chinook reared at off-site ponds was inconsistent and could not be analyzed in a useful manner.

Reavis and Heubach (1993) compared survival and homing tendency for tagged groups of fall-run chinook salmon reared at Trinity River Hatchery and stocked at several locations in the Trinity River. Paired groups of releases (same brood year and release type) for the 1977-84 brood years were performed using Trinity River Hatchery and downstream off-site releases. Homing tendency of the off-site release groups was compared to the Trinity River Hatchery release groups using observed recoveries of adults. The homing tendency rate was calculated using a ratio of return rate (Trinity River Hatchery returns) to the catch rate for each paired release group. The quotient of the two ratios (Trinity River Hatchery and off-site) is the estimated homing tendency for the group released downstream relative to the group released at the hatchery. A value of 1.00 indicates that the homing tendency of the group released downstream is the same as that of the group released from the hatchery; a value of 0.10 indicates that the group released downstream returns to Trinity River Hatchery at a rate of only 0.10 of the group released at Trinity River Hatchery.

The results of the paired release tests indicate that homing tendencies for off-site releases were considerably less than their Trinity River Hatchery released counterparts. Off-site releases of fall chinook fingerlings returned to the hatchery at a rate ranging from 0.07 to 0.56 as compared to Trinity River Hatchery releases. Furthermore, the distance of release from the hatchery and homing rates for the off-site release groups indicated that the further the release site was from the hatchery, the less likely those fish would return to the hatchery. Results of yearling release groups were similar, although homing rates improved, ranging from 0.48 to 0.74 as compared to their Trinity River Hatchery released counterparts.

The decision to experiment with off-site hatchery releases in the basin during the late 1970's and early 80's was in response to low returns at basin hatcheries and to the fisheries. The off-site release experiments, although somewhat successful for increasing contributions to the fisheries, were deemed too risky by DFG and the Klamath River Basin Fisheries Task Force when weighing the increased contribution rates versus the potential effects of genetic dilution and/or disease on natural stocks as a result of hatchery fish straying, and were therefore discontinued.

III. BENEFITS AND HAZARDS OF OFF-SITE RELEASES

A. Benefits

1. Increased Contribution to Ocean Harvest

Maximizing the potential of Central Valley hatchery salmon production is the prime motivation for the DFG’s off-site release programs. Studies conducted with salmon from CNFH, Nimbus Hatchery (Hallock and Reisenbichler, 1979), Feather River Hatchery (Sholes and Hallock, 1979), and Mokelumne River Hatchery (Meyer, 1984) suggested that survival and subsequent contribution to the ocean fisheries could be increased by transporting and releasing fish in the western Delta. The studies used similar groups (in size of fish and number released) of marked (fin-clipped or coded-wire-tagged) hatchery fish released at the hatchery and downstream. Relative survival was determined through subsequent contribution of each group to the ocean fisheries and returns to the hatchery. Contribution (recovery) rates were calculated for each group as the observed number marked fish recovered at the hatchery (or the estimated number of marked fish recovered in ocean fisheries) divided by the number of marked fish released. During the 1970s, the furthest downstream planting location was primarily in the Sacramento River near Rio Vista. This site was replaced by the current release locations in the lower end of the estuary (Benicia) and San Pablo Bay (Vallejo and Rodeo) following studies of contribution rates from releases made in this environment (Meyer, 1986, 1987, 1994a, 1994b).

Table 3 summarizes recovery rates reported in three studies, and unreported data derived from DFG's coded-wire-tagging database. It includes those fall-run salmon releases replicated for a minimum of three brood years with recoveries through age 5-year-old. In all cases, estimation of ocean recoveries (sport and commercial fisheries) were based on data from fairly extensive sampling systems utilized by the Pacific coast states. Reported recoveries at the hatcheries were considered accurate since every fish is examined for marks.

Hallock and Reisenbichler (1979) reported a 157% increase in the contribution to ocean fisheries of fish released at Rio Vista compared to fish released at Nimbus, although the increase was not statistically significant (p>10%). They also observed a significant (p<5%) increase of 63% in returns to the hatchery of fish released at Rio Vista relative to hatchery released fish. CNFH chinook released at Rio Vista showed a 39% increase in contribution to ocean harvest but an 83% decrease in returns to the hatchery. Sholes and Hallock (1979) reported a 26% decrease in the ocean contribution rate of yearling chinook from the Feather River Hatchery released at Rio Vista and a 72% decrease in the returns to the hatchery, compared to fish released at the hatchery. Downstream releases of Mokelumne River Hatchery yearlings (Meyer,1984) resulted in ocean contribution rate over 2.5 times that of releases made at the hatchery, although there was a large drop in the return rate to the hatchery. Unpublished data from the DFG's CWT data base show substantial increases in both ocean contribution rate (1153%) and hatchery recoveries (259%) for Feather River Hatchery smolts released in the western Delta.

In each of five consecutive years, beginning in 1988, four groups of approximately 50,000 fall chinook salmon smolts from CNFH were released at Battle Creek, RBDD, Princeton, and Benicia. Rates of contribution to ocean fisheries were highly variable, depending on year and location of release, but followed generally similar trends within years for all release sites. Over the five years of investigation, fish released at Benicia contributed approximately three-fold more fish to the ocean fishery than releases at Battle Creek, RBDD, or Princeton. Average ocean fishery contribution rates were 0.310% for Battle Creek, 0.369 for RBDD, 0.318 for Princeton, and 0.947 for Benicia (USFWS, unpublished data). It should be noted that the differences in ocean contribution rates were observed during years of drought and below average flows in the Sacramento River. In 1988 when average daily flows in the Sacramento River were above average, ocean contribution rates were essentially equal between groups of fish released at the various locations.

In general, studies to measure the effects of down stream release on contribution rates to ocean fisheries (recoveries/number of fish released) suggest that the release of smolts in the western Delta improves the survival and subsequent contribution to ocean harvest relative to fish released at the hatchery. While off-site release may increase in ocean contribution rates by as much as 10 fold, the increase in survival does not necessarily result in increased returns to hatchery, presumably due to the increased straying of returning adults.

TABLE 3. Summary of Recovery Rates for Hatchery vs. Downstream Releases of Marked Fall-run Chinook Salmon.

Brood Year	Release Site Site	Avg.Wt. of fish (g)	Total No. Released	Ocean Recovery Rate 1/	Percent increase, Rio Vista compared to hatchery release	Source Hatchery Recovery Rate 2/	Percent increase, Rio Vista compared to hatchery release
1968 a/	Nimbus FH	5.9	250,265	0.12%	190%	0.028%	111%
	Rio Vista	5.7	252,904	0.33%		0.059%	
1969 a/	Nimbus FH	5.3	258,818	0.46%	318%	0.024%	229%
	Rio Vista	5.3	263,064	1.93%		0.079%	
1970 a/	Nimbus FH	5.6	258,278	0.73%	49%	0.085%	1%
	Rio Vista	3.8	257,213	1.08%		0.086%	
			TOTAL		**AVERAGE**		
Combined	**Nimbus FH**		**767,361**	**0.44%**	157%	**0.046%**	63%
	Rio Vista		**773,181**	**1.12%**		**0.075%**	
1968 a/	CNFH	6.4	294,834	0.38%	88%	0.060%	-73%
	Rio Vista	6.6	320,586	0.72%		0.016%	
1969 a/	CNFH	5.2	327,962	0.77%	10%	0.058%	-83%
	Rio Vista	4.6	327,265	0.84%		0.010%	
1970 a/	CNFH	5.5	371,672	0.61%	44%	0.055%	-91%
	Rio Vista	5.8	367,869	0.89%		0.005%	
			TOTAL		**AVERAGE**		
Combined	**CNFH**		**994,468**	**0.59%**	39%	**0.058%**	-83%
	Rio Vista		**1,015,420**	**0.82%**		**0.010%**	
1967 b/	Feather River FH	38.0	56,400	8.17%	-21%	0.817%	-56%
	Rio Vista	38.0	50,400	6.47%		0.357%	
1969 b/	Feather River FH	60.0	20,625	12.07%	-31%	0.508%	-97%
	Rio Vista	60.0	20,025	8.34%		0.015%	
1970 b/	Feather River FH	76.0	59,520	0.88%	0%	0.091%	-67%
	Rio Vista	76.0	59,820	0.87%		0.030%	
			TOTAL		**AVERAGE**		
Combined	**Feather River FH**		**136,545**	**7.11%**	-26%	**0.472%**	-72%
	Rio Vista		**130,245**	**5.23%**		**0.134%**	
1977 c/	Mokelumne River FI	57.0	44,287	1.15%	128%	0.063%	-86%
	Rio Vista	53.0	44,284	2.62%		0.009%	
1978 c/	Mokelumne River FI	68.0	38,739	2.18%	218%	0.289%	-91%
	Rio Vista	65.0	36,610	6.94%		0.025%	
1979 c/	Mokelumne River FI	93.0	39,137	0.53%	174%	0.059%	-85%
	Rio Vista	93.0	42,504	1.45%		0.009%	
			TOTAL		**AVERAGE**		
Combined	**Mokelumne River FI**		**122,163**	**1.29%**	184%	**0.137%**	-90%
	Rio Vista		**123,398**	**3.67%**		**0.014%**	
1978 d/	Feather River FH	4.5	181,028	0.01%	15120%	0.001%	1100%
	Port Chicago	7.4	110,122	0.76%		0.012%	
1979 d/	Feather River FH	8.3	176,851	0.45%	389%	0.094%	55%
	Port Chicago	8.8	168,143	2.18%		0.146%	
1980 d/	Feather River FH	8.1	178,831	0.01%	46050%	0.001%	18600%
	Rio Vista/Port Chicago	7.3	87,203	2.77%		0.187%	
			TOTAL		**AVERAGE**		
Combined	**Feather River FH**		**536,710**	**0.15%**	1153%	**0.032%**	259%
	Rio Vista/Port		**365,468**	**1.90%**		**0.115%**	

DATA SOURCE:
a/ Hallock & Reisenbichler, 1979.
b/ Sholes & Hallock,1979.
c/ Meyer, 1984.
d/ Unpublished data, DFG CWT-database.

1/ Number of estimated sport and commercial harvest recoveries for entire Pacific coast divided by number released.
2/Actual returns to hatchery of origin.

Releases of CNFH marked smolts from broodyears 1987 to 1991 were part of a site of release evaluation conducted in cooperation with the DFG. General conclusions from that report as well as the additional analysis demonstrate releases of fish west of the Delta result in higher ocean contribution rates and likely overall survival than upstream releases (USFWS, 2001)

2. Reduced competition and predation on local natural spawning populations

Salmon released as smolts (60-90 mm fork length) are unlikely to feed on natural origin salmonids (Petrusso, 1998; BPA 1997). However, significant predation may occur when yearling salmonids are released during the emergence of natural salmon (Steward and Bjornn 1990).   Yearling chinook and steelhead have a greater potential for preying on newly emerged salmon fry due to their larger size, piscivorous feeding habits and, in the case of steelhead, a tendency to residualize to non-anadromous life history patterns. Sholes and Hallock (1979) estimated 500,000 yearling chinook salmon released in California's Feather River consumed 7,500,000 emergent chinook salmon and steelhead trout fry. Hallock (1989) reported sampling of stomach contents of steelhead yearlings released into Battle Creek in February and March 1975 revealed an average of 1.4 fall chinook salmon per steelhead stomach.

Competition for limited resources may occur when hatchery and natural origin salmon and steelhead overlap in time and space (Steward and Bjornn 1990, Cannamela 1992). Nickelson et al. (1986) and Nielsen (1994) reported that pre-smolt releases of hatchery-origin coho salmon were associated with displacement of natural coho from their usual territories.

The extent of competition and predation by hatchery origin salmon and steelhead on natural origin salmonids will depend on such factors as the presence of natural populations at the time of hatchery releases, the relative sizes of the hatchery and natural populations in relation to carrying capacity, the speed with which the hatchery fish emigrate to the ocean, and whether the hatchery fish are piscivorous at the time of release.

The effects of competition and predation may be reduced or eliminated by transporting hatchery fish to areas where competition and predation are less likely to occur. For example, steelhead from Nimbus Hatchery and CNFH are transported for release in the Sacramento River due to concerns regarding predation. The variable flows and turbidities in the Sacramento River during January and February may reduce the ability of steelhead to find and identify prey. Bigelow et al. (1995) found no evidence of piscivory in the stomach contents of 133 hatchery steelhead collected in the Sacramento River.

B. Hazards and Risks

A *hazard* is the adverse consequence of some action. *Risk* is the probability that a hazard will be realized. Artificial propagation creates many hazards for natual salmonid populations, and the increased straying caused by off-site release increases risk. It is important to remember that even if off-site release didn't increase straying *rate*, large release groups could generate large *numbers* of strays. In this section, we review the hazards posed by artificial propagation and how straying from hatchery populations increases risk. Hazards can be grouped into three categories: management hazards, ecological hazards and genetic hazards.

1. Ecological hazards

Straying by hatchery-origin fish could pose a variety of ecological hazards to natural populations, including competition for redd sites and redd superposition, reduced productivity of natural fish breeding with hatchery fish, and disease transmission. These ecological interactions can also have genetic consequences because they alter the selective regime of the natural fish (Waples, 1991).

Hatchery-origin fish spawning in the wild must compete with natural fish for spawning habitat, and their offspring must also compete for rearing habitat. Competition is probably most significant in streams with hatcheries (Battle Creek, Feather River, American River, Mokelumne River, Merced River), and in these cases, wild-spawning hatchery fish might only be considered strays because they have been denied access to their hatchery. In other streams, however, carrying capacities are generally unknown, and it is possible that all available habitat would be fully utilized by natural spawners and their progeny. In this case, hatchery strays would effectively reduce the carrying capacity for natural fish. Competition could be important at population levels below carrying capacity if fish compete for the best spawning and rearing habitats.

Aside from the genetic hazards discussed below, if hatchery fish have reduced or no fitness in the wild, then natural fish that breed with hatchery fish could have lower reproductive success than if they had bred with another natural fish. The results of Tallman and Healy (1994) suggest that this could be a real concern.

Straying could provide several ways for diseases to pass from hatchery fish to natural fish or from one watershed to another. For instance, there are some diseases that are endemic to the Central Valley. Central Valley fish have some level of immunity to these diseases, unlike fish from other basins. Straying of Central Valley hatchery fish into other basins has been observed, and these strays could bring diseases with them. Another possibility is transmission between natural and hatchery fish within a basin, either between adults on the spawning ground, or from carcasses to offspring which may feed on them.

2. Genetic hazards

The genetic hazards posed by hatchery programs have received much attention recently with the apparent collapse of many Pacific Northwest hatchery and natural stocks; see Waples (1991), Currens and Busack (1995), Busack and Currens (1995), Campton (1995), Grant (1997), and Utter (1998) for more detailed reviews. In this section, we summarize these papers.

Straying of hatchery fish into natural spawning areas directly poses two types of genetic hazards: 1) reduction of among-population genetic variation and 2) non-adaptive genetic changes within the hatchery that are then transferred to the natural populations causing reduced fitness.

Even if hatchery programs could avoid deleterious genetic changes within their hatchery stock, significant straying of hatchery fish to natural populations would result in gene flow from the hatchery to the natural populations. This gene flow can easily overwhelm the processes maintaining among-population genetic variation (e.g., drift, mutation, natural selection). Elevated straying can, over time, result in homogenization of populations; available evidence suggests that this already may have happened in the Central Valley fall chinook. Loss of among-population genetic variation has short- and long-term consequences. Among-population genetic variation is important for the long-term evolutionary potential of salmonids. Genetic variation is the raw material of natural selection, and salmonids will need it to adapt to natural and anthropogenic environmental change. NMFS considers within-ESU and among-population genetic diversity as one necessary component of viability for salmonid populations and ESUs (McElhany et al., 2000). One short-term consequence of homogenization is the loss of local adaptations and reduced productivity.

Elevated straying between genetically distinct populations can also cause outbreeding depression by disrupting gene complexes. Gene complexes are groups of linked alleles (i.e., they are close together on the same chromosome) that work together to produce phenotypes. These clusters can be disrupted by outbreeding, even when outbreeding is with fish of very similar phenotype. A compelling example of this is provided by the studies of Gharrett and coworkers (Gharrett and Smoker 1991, Gharrett et al. 1999) using cryopreserved gametes. In these studies, even- and odd-year pink salmon from the same stream (presumably the same selection regime) were crossed. As predicted by population genetic theory regarding gene complexes (Dobzhansky 1955, Emlen 1991), the first generation of offspring had similar survival as the parents, but their offspring had much reduced survival compared to non-outbred fish.

Another kind of outbreeding depression could result from hatchery fish breeding in the wild. Population genetic theory and some empirical studies show that artificial propagation causes rapid genetic changes in the hatchery stock. These changes come from two sources. First, hatcheries present a selective regime very different from the natural environment, which can result in domestication selection (Waples 1991, Busack and Currens 1995). Second, breeding practices and a relaxed selective regime can result in the accumulation of mutations that are selectively neutral in the hatchery but deleterious in the wild (M. Lynch, in preparation). For salmonids, empirical evidence for a loss of fitness due to artificial propagation comes from several studies, including those of Reisenbichler and McIntyre (1977), Reisenbichler (1997), and Reisenbichler and Rubin (1999), which show that stock productivity declines with increasing time with hatchery propagation. When domesticated or mutation-laden hatchery fish breed in the wild, nonadaptive alleles are transferred to the natural populations. If this gene flow is high, it can overcome natural selection which would otherwise remove these alleles from the natural population.

3. Management hazards

Effective management of California’s natural salmonid resources requires reasonably accurate abundance estimates. Significant numbers of unmarked hatchery fish in natural spawning areas makes population assessment difficult if not impossible. Indeed, uncertainty about the contribution of hatchery-origin fish to fall-run chinook natural spawning populations was a major concern of the NMFS’s BRT. Besides the ESA, the CVPIA AFRP mandates doubling of natural populations, which requires that natural populations be accurately enumerated– something that is quite difficult when many unmarked hatchery fish are present on the spawning grounds. A recent workshop on escapement estimation methodology (UC Davis, June 22, 2000) highlighted the fact that management of the Central Valley’s salmonid resources is currently severely hindered by poor escapement estimates.

A major concern is that hatchery production and straying is masking declining productivity of natural populations. For instance, many Central Valley streams have roughly stable spawner counts over the past 20 years. Some fraction of these spawners (20-50%?) were born in a hatchery. This situation can be interpreted in several ways. One extreme is to assume that hatchery fish do not contribute to natural production, i.e., they are not reproductively successful. In this case, the natural fish productivity is enough to sustain the population, although the real natural population size is smaller than the apparent size. On the other extreme, one could assume that hatchery fish are as reproductively successful as natural fish. In this case, production is not self-sustaining, since without the hatchery production subsidy, the population would decline at a rate proportional to the fraction of fish that are of hatchery origin. In reality, the situation might lie somewhere between these extremes. Even if all hatchery production was marked, population assessment would still be difficult without detailed studies of reproductive success of hatchery-origin fish.

In the absence of accurate and precise population assessments, the risk of making wrong management decisions is high, and the consequences of these decisions could be serious. For instance, if one overestimates the production of natural populations by underestimating the contribution of hatchery strays to natural production, one might set harvest rates at levels that are unsustainable for many natural populations. Another product of highly uncertain population assessments is an inability to prioritize stocks for habitat restoration.

Another type of management hazard associated with off-site release is political. The NMFS is required by the ESA to protect natural populations and their ecosystems. It will be politically difficult to design and implement recovery plans for listed species, and will require broad public and stakeholder support. For may stakeholders, the presence of abundant salmon runs is important, but the origin of the runs is less important. These stakeholders would be more interested in habitat improvements required by natural spawners if their use of natural resources depended on the productivity of these natural runs. Off-site release programs may therefore reduce the political will and political capital required to save natural salmon runs.

C. A qualitative risk assessment

Managers should be most concerned about serious hazards with high risks of occurrence. From the above discussion, two hazards are outstanding by this standard. First, the management hazards posed by the masking effect are worrisome because this masking is definitely occurring, and the odds of making management mistakes because of this are quite high (in fact, the apparent poor status of many California chinook populations may be the result of failures in this area). On the other hand, these mistakes could be remedied if caught in time, and the masking problem could be solved with constant fractional marking of hatchery production (Hankin 1982, Hankin and Newman 1999) and careful genetic and behavior studies of naturally-spawning fish.

The genetic risks posed by artificial propagation are exacerbated by off-site releases and are a cause for serious concern. While the probability of genetic failure is unknown, in light of the problems in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia hatcheries and the long time-frame of hatchery programs (longer than the lifespan of water development; Hilborn 1992), the risk may be quite high. Furthermore, the hazards are extremely serious, since they include extirpation of natural stocks and loss of significant genetic diversity, and not easily reversible in less than evolutionary time scales. In the Central Valley, fall chinook may already be largely homogenized, and spring chinook are threatened by strays from the Feather River Hatchery. Both spring- and fall-phenotype chinook at Feather River Hatchery can produce offspring with spring-run phenotype, and these fish could interbreed with Butte, Deer and Mill Creek spring chinook. The only way to minimize these risks is to minimize interactions between hatchery and natural stocks. The two obvious ways of reducing interaction would be reducing the numbers of returning hatchery fish (either through decreased production or selective harvest strategies), or by reducing the numbers of fish released off-site.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

1. Artificial propagation of salmon poses management, ecological, and genetic hazards to natural salmon populations. The risk of these hazards is increased by high rates of straying of hatchery populations.

2. Off-site release results in increased rates of straying of hatchery reared salmon relative to fish released on-site (at or near the hatchery). Published reports and the recent analysis of CNFH returns suggest that release in the lower estuary or San Francisco Bay results in stray rates exceeding 70%. Straying rates vary substantially among natural populations, and rate estimates vary depending on the definition of straying and study design. However, the available estimates of stray rates for hatchery populations released at the hatchery indicate that the increase in the rate of straying of fish released west of the Delta is substantial.

3. The mortality associated with transiting the Delta can be eliminated for hatchery fish by transporting and releasing production west of the Delta. As a result, transported fish may contribute to ocean fisheries at rates of three fold and higher compared to fish released upstream or at the hatchery.

4. In the Klamath Trinity Basin, experiments with off-site hatchery releases demonstrated some increased contribution rates to fisheries. However, in deciding whether to permanently implement off-site releases, the improved survival and resulting harvests did not seem to justify the potential negative effects of the increased rates of straying associated with the releases.

5. Water management practices within the Central Valley, including flow regimes below dams, temperature of reservoir releases, flow direction in some Delta channels and SWP/CVP exports in the south Delta, negatively affect juvenile salmonid emigration success and the ability of adults to home to natal streams.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The DFG should evaluate the genetic, management, and ecological risks associated with the substantial increase in straying of hatchery fish released off-site and weigh the risks against the benefits of increased survival and reduced interactions with naturally spawning stocks in waters adjacent to the hatchery. In certain cases the risks posed to natural populations appear to outweigh any benefits from increased contribution to fisheries. The review sub-committee recommends that the following off-site production releases in the Delta be considered for on-site release.

A. Feather River Hatchery spring chinook. The straying of Feather River Hatchery spring chinook poses hazards for the few remaining natural spring chinook runs in the upper Sacramento, which are listed under the state and federal endangered species acts.

B. Feather River Hatchery fall chinook. The fall chinook production is large and probably introgressed with the spring run. Straying of these fish may pose hazards to the long term productivity of naturally spawning fall-run populations in the Central Valley.

C. Nimbus Hatchery fall chinook. Straying of these fish may pose hazards to the long term productivity of naturally spawning fall-run populations in the Central Valley.

2. Hatchery releases and water management practices (including SWP/CVP exports) should be coordinated so that emigration survival is maximized. Flow patterns or poor water quality should not impede normal migration of adult salmon and steelhead or lead to lengthened or aborted migration pathways.

3. The DFG should continue the present policy of on-site release of salmon and steelhead produced in Klamath Trinity Basin hatcheries.

VI. RESEARCH NEEDS

1. Research should be continued to further understand the genetic structure and ecology of salmonid populations in California. Although some information is available regarding the genetic relationships among both hatchery and natural salmonid populations in California, expansion of this knowledge is necessary to better enable fishery managers to make informed decisions regarding fishery resources. In addition, better information regarding the life histories of hatchery and natural salmonids is also necessary for effective management.

2. Research should be conducted to further assess the interactions between natural and hatchery salmonids. As changes occur in hatchery operations and the aquatic environment, interactions between hatchery and natural salmonids may also change. The continued evaluation of hatchery programs is imperative for their effective management.

ANCILLARY INFORMATION ON KLAMATH TRINITY

Annual escapement estimates are generated for fall chinook within the basin and estimates for spring chinook, coho and steelhead are generated for the Trinity River. Estimating CWT recovery rates is a part of these tasks. This information is used for cohort analysis, part of the population modeling used to predict future abundance within the basin. These estimates are then used to partition harvest quotas to the various user groups.

Klamath basin escapement is determined from carcass, weir counts, and redd surveys. Major sub-basins such as the Scott, Shasta and Salmon rivers are censussed annually by the Department, Forest Service, Tribes, Fish and Wildlife service and volunteers. Weir counts are performed annually on Bogus Creek. Bogus Creek is located just downstream of Iron Gate Hatchery (IGH). Approximately 90% of chinook spawning occurs in the basin tributaries, the remaining 10% spawn in the mainstem. Very limited information exists for coho and steelhead numbers in the Klamath basin due to the difficulty in maintaining census operations under high flow conditions.

Based on CWT recoveries, IGH fall chinook display a high fidelity for the hatchery. The highest number of strays are encountered in Bogus Creek, while very few are recovered elsewhere, with the exception of the 1995 return year. During that year, the K-T basin experienced a very large (~220,000) return of fall chinook that overwhelmed IGH. The hatchery ladder was closed for a period of time that led to high stray rates that year. Subsequent to this, policy was changed to facilitate more consistent operations.

The Scott, Salmon, and Shasta River, various tributaries, and Bogus Creek sub-basins have been monitored annually for a number of years. Carcass and weir counts provide the best information within the basin for examining the incidence of straying in the Klamath Basin. Table 1 below summarizes sampling expansions of total CWT recoveries in these sub-basins and total recoveries at IGH. It should be noted that all CWTs are included here, regardless of origin and that this table should only be interpreted as a rough estimate for assessing straying. CWT groups released from Trinity River Hatchery (TRH), Trinity River wild, and several small ponding sites within the Klamath and Trinity basins have been recovered in some of these areas. However, the vast majority of CWT codes found are of IGH origin. Bogus Creek enters the mainstem Klamath in close proximity to IGH and the high rate of straying is expected.

Table 1. CWT recoveries in selected Klamath Basin sites.

Year	Salmon River	Scott River	Shasta River	Bogus Creek	Misc.Tribs	IGH
1999 a/	0	0	5	245	2	674
1998	0	0	0	153	0	1141
1997	2	2	0	29	0	471
1996	17	0	0	15	1	542
1995	3	19	66	590	87	1186
Totals:	22	21	71	1032	90	4014
% combined totals	0.42	0.40	1.4	19.7	1.7	76.5

a/ Preliminary data

Annual CWT recovery percentages for the 1995-99 return years for the above selected sites (Table 1), have ranged from a low of 5.7% (1996) to a high of 39.2% (1995), averaging 18.1% for sites other than IGH. These percentages should be considered minimums since mainstem spawning is estimated from redd surveys and recovery of carcasses has been minimal due to the difficulty in recovering these fish. It is assumed that some mainstem spawners, particularly those found in the upper Klamath near IGH, would be of hatchery origin.

Trinity Basin chinook, coho and steelhead escapements are estimated using mark-recapture methods. Temporary weirs are put into the river near the towns of Willow Creek (rkm 48.4) and Junction City (rkm 131.5). Fish are trapped and tagged at the weirs and later recovered at TRH (rkm 179.8). Estimates are made based on the number of marked fish times the ratio of unmarked to marked fish recovered at TRH. The Junction City weir (JCW) is used to make estimates for Spring-run chinook, while the Willow Creek weir (WCW) is used to make estimates of fall-run chinook, coho, and fall-run steelhead. Harvest rate estimates for these species are determined from the return of reward tags, which are placed on a percentage of fish at each weir. In contrast, Klamath basin estimates for fall chinook are based on carcass and redd counts. Klamath harvest estimates are based on creel census data.

The percentage of TRH marked fish (CWTs) in each year's run is determined by examining the percentage of marked fish at each weir for each species. This percentage is then multiplied by the overall run-size to produce a CWT run-size estimate. For example, if the fall run of chinook salmon was estimated at 50,000 fish and 10% of all fall chinook trapped at WCW were AD marked, then 5,000 would be the CWT estimate for that year and species. The overall CWT run-size is apportioned to the various hatchery release groups based on the percent composition of each group returning to TRH. All fish entering TRH are examined and counted, thus the difference between the CWT run-size estimate and the number of CWT's counted at TRH plus estimated in-river CWT harvest is the estimated number of CWT strays.

TRH produced fish display a moderate to high fidelity to return to the Trinity River, but not necessarily to the hatchery itself. Straying of TRH produced fish has been documented in the Klamath River and to several Oregon locations (Hankin 1985). Within the Trinity Basin, both races of chinook and coho salmon are estimated to stray at considerable rates. The term "stray" in this context is defined as the percent age of hatchery spawners that do not enter the hatchery upstream of the weir from which the estimate was developed. Annual estimated stray rates are presented in Table 2. These values are developed by the CDFG, Trinity River Project, for cohort reconstructions used in annual escapement projections by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC). Chinook release types (fingerling and yearling) are aggregated.

Table 2. Estimated Stray Rates for Trinity River Hatchery Produced Chinook and Coho Salmon.

Year	Spring Chinook a/	Fall Chinook b/	Coho b/
1999 c/	46.5%	49.6%	30.8%
1998	56.3%	44.9%	57.0%
1997	47.1%	40.3%	75.8%
1996	64.6%	70.3%	N/D d/
1995	N/D	75.0%	N/D
Mean Stray Rate:	53.6%	56.0%	54.5%

a/ Estimated stray rate above Junction City Weir. b/ Estimated stray rate above Willow Creek Weir. c/ Preliminary data. d/ N/D=No data. CWT estimates in Table 2 are based on overall run-size estimates which have differing levels of confidence intervals by year and species. Additionally, naturally produced chinook salmon were tagged for a number of years in the upper basin. Returns of these fish may have positively biased TRH CWT run-sizes. However, this table provides a good indication that significant straying within the Trinity Basin does occur.

AGENCY POLICIES/GUIDANCE REGARDING PRESERVATION OF GENETIC RESOURCES AND STRAYING OF HATCHERY POPULATIONS

National Marine Fisheries Service

The legislative history of the Endangered Species Act, which is intended to slow the current pace of species extinction, notes: "As we homogenized the habitats in which these plants and animals evolved, and as we increase the pressures for products that they are in a position to supply (usually unwillingly) we threaten their - and our own - genetic heritage. The value of this genetic heritage is quite literally incalculable. From the most narrow possible point of view, it is within the best interests of mankind to minimize the losses of genetic variations. The reason is simple: they are potential resources. They are keys to puzzles which we cannot solve, and may provide answers to questions which we have not yet learned to ask." (H.R. Rep. No. 412)

"The major constraints governing the use of artificial propagation in ESA recovery programs should be the maintenance of genetic and ecological integrity and diversity in listed species. Artificial propagation of unlisted species should be conducted to minimize adverse impacts to listed and unlisted species. The liberation of large numbers of fish genetically distinct from natural fish and the impacts of mixed-stock fisheries associated with this enhancement may have profound consequences for the viability of some distinct populations, including loss of genetic integrity and ecological diversity, increased competition, and elevated levels of harvest and natural predation." (Hard et al. 1992)

NMFS recent characterization of viable salmon population attributes (McElhany, P., et al. 2000) contains the following guidelines: Natural rates of straying among subpopulations should not be substantially increased or decreased by human actions. This guideline means that habitat patches should be close enough together to allow appropriate exchange of spawners and the expansion of the population into under-used patches, during times when salmon are abundant. Also, stray rates should not be much greater than pristine levels, because increases in stray rates may negatively affect a population's viability if fish wander into unsuitable habitat or interbreed with genetically unrelated fish..

Natural processes of dispersal should be maintained. Human-cased factors should not substantially alter the rate of gene flow among populations. Human caused inter-ESU stray rates that are expected to produce (inferred) sustained gene flow rates greater than 1% (into a population) should be cause for concern. Human caused intra-ESU stray rates that are expected to produce substantial changes in patterns of gene flow should be avoided.

In July 2000, NMFS adopted a rule under section 4(d) of the ESA prohibiting the "take" of 14 groups of salmon and steelhead listed as threatened ESA. This rule prohibits anyone from taking a listed salmon or steelhead, except in cases where the take is associated with an approved program. It provides a way to permit the "take" of listed fish for a variety of hatchery purposes through the development of a Hatchery and Genetics Management Plan (HGMP). Among other things, the HGMP must evaluate and minimize the genetic and ecological effects of propagation programs on natural populations, including disease transfer, competition, predation and genetic introgression caused by straying of hatchery fish.

California Department of Fish and Game

Current direction for the California Department of Fish Game regarding salmonid genetic resources are provided by Fish and Game Commission policies, Department management policies, and hatchery guidelines (goals and constraints). It is the policy of the Fish and Game Commission that the populations and genetic integrity of all identifiable stocks of salmon and steelhead rainbow trout be maintained, with management emphasis placed on natural stocks. The Department's Salmon and Steelhead Stock Management Policy focuses on the Commission's stand to protect the genetic integrity of stocks, through evaluation of salmon or steelhead streams and classification of their stocks according to probable genetic source and degree of integrity. Management and restoration efforts, and the role of artificial production are guided by this classification system.

The objective of the Department's hatchery system to maintain genetic integrity of local stocks is accomplished through limitation of interbasin transfer of eggs or fish and development of mating protocols, appropriate to each facility. Guidance on, or limitations of, straying by hatchery-produced salmonids is not specifically provided by state policies. It is a general objective of hatchery operations to minimize interactions between artificially- and naturally-produced fish. However, this goal is primarily intended toward interactions of juveniles (e.g. competition, predation) rather than returning adults.

Oregon

Operating Principles for Wild Fish Management (Division 7 Oregon Administrative Rules, Fish Management and Hatchery Operation Effective June 1, 1992)

Interbreeding of hatchery and wild fish: The interbreeding of hatchery fish with wild fish of the same taxonomic species poses risks to conserving and utilizing the genetic resources of wild populations. To reduce this risk, naturally spawning hatchery fish, whether originating from on-site releases or from strays from other release sites, shall be limited by both number in the natural spawning population and genetic characteristics. Options consistent with these rules are:

(a) Release no hatchery fish;

(b) Release hatchery fish that meet the following minimum standards and limit the number of hatchery fish in the naturally spawning population to 50% or less of the breeding population:

(A) Originates from wild fish belonging to the population specified by the statewide wild population list (OAR 635-070529(3)) for the geographic location under consideration;
(B) After broodstock is initiated, incorporates at least 30% wild fish on the average every brood year;
(C) Twenty-five percent or less of the wild donor population is taken for hatchery brood stock in any year;
(D) No intentional artificial genetic changes occur; unintentional artificial changes are avoided;
(E) Wild-type phenotypes are maintained in hatchery fish;

(F) The hatchery program shall be monitored annually and evaluated every 10 brood years to determine if the standards in paragraphs (A) through (E) are being met. If the standards are not being met, the number of hatchery fish spawning in the natural population shall be decreased as directed in subsection (c) of this section.

(c) Release hatchery fish, but limit the number of hatchery fish spawning in the natural population such that the further the deviation from the requirements of subsection (b) of this section the lower the proportion of hatchery fish that shall be allowed to spawn in the natural population consistent with current Department guidelines. Hatchery fish that do not at least meet the standards in paragraphs (A) and (C) in subsection (b) of this section shall be restricted to less than 10% of the naturally spawning population.

Wild Fish Gene Resource Conservation Policy: Wild fish shall be managed to maintain their adaptiveness and genetic diversity. These characteristics are important for maintaining the evolutionary potential of populations and preventing the serious depletion of these species in natural ecosystems. The Department recognizes and accepts that genetic changes will occur as part of the natural evolutionary process.

Hatchery Fish Gene Resource Management Policy: Hatchery fish populations shall be managed to maintain genetic diversity, to assure that the populations meet the management objectives for which they are produced, and to maintain their optimum biological and economic value.

<u>Washington</u>

Guidance Regarding Allowable Gene Flow: Genetic diversity within and among stocks will be maintained or increased to encourage local adaptation and sustain and maximize long-term productivity. Conditions will be created that allow natural patterns of genetic diversity and local adaptation to occur and evolve. Human caused gene flow between species, major ancestral lineages, genetic diversity units, or stocks through direct transfer of fish across stock or other boundaries should not be allowed. This will require the development of local broodstocks for many hatchery and other enhancement programs. Where there is no supplementation program in place, the allowable percentage of the total wild spawning population that is made up of fish raised in a hatchery is given in Table 1. For supplementation programs of hatchery-origin fish, proportions of hatchery fish will be decided on a case-by-case basis. These percentages of hatchery fish in Table 1 are surrogates for and are equal to allowable gene flow. Other measures of potential gene flow may be used (e.g., migrants per generation), if they result in similar levels of potential gene flow. Where treaty fisheries are affected, the Department shall address gene flow within the brood stock planning framework with affected tribes.

Table 1. Allowable Percentages of Hatchery Fish on the Spawning Grounds.

Level of Similarity of Hatchery Fish	Maximum % of Wild Spawning Population that is of Hatchery Origin
High	5-10%
Intermediate	1-5%
Low	0-1%

This policy uses the stricter definition of similarity that compares the hatchery fish with an ideal locally adapted wild fish. This maintains a higher level of local adaptation in populations that are already locally adapted, and increases the rate at which a hatchery influenced wild population becomes locally adapted. Similarity is determined based on the geographical origin, hatchery history, and hatchery practices that have affected the hatchery fish. In a hatchery population with high similarity, the hatchery fish will be of local wild stock origin and have few generations in the hatchery. There will be regular introductions of new wild broodstock into the hatchery population and the hatchery rearing conditions will be similar to wild conditions. Time spent in the hatchery will be limited and strict spawning guidelines will be followed. A highly similar stock will need to pass all these tests. A low similarity hatchery population will have many generations in the hatchery. There may have been selection for timing or size and the population may have been at very low numbers at times. There are few introductions of wild fish or it may have been started with non-local fish. A low similarity stock will have to meet only one of these criteria. Intermediate stocks exceed all the low criteria, but fail to meet at least one of the high criteria. Most current hatchery populations will be either low or medium similarity.

Hatchery fish spawning in the wild shall be controlled and limited so that the majority of stocks in a major watershed, river basin, or GDU do not have any hatchery gene flow, and so that the higher maximum percentages of hatchery fish on the wild spawning grounds noted are exceptions (i.e., occur infrequently and not in the most abundant or most unique components of the larger population groupings).

Department staff shall emphasize use of broodstock in fish culture operations that are locally adapted and highly similar to the wild stocks in that area. In some cases, however, it is better to use broodstocks that have been selectively bred or are adapted to cultured conditions. Such existing programs are the rainbow trout strains used for the stocking of lakes and the use of early-time returning winter steelhead. Using hatchery adapted fish where gene flow and ecological interactions with wild stocks can be controlled (is essentially zero) is a recognized and valid management tool. (from WDFW website - Additional Policy Guidance on Deferred Issues Concerning Wild Salmonid Policy, Adopted by Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission December 5, 1997)

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APPENDIX II. Klamath-Trinity Subcommittee Report.

Report of the Klamath Trinity Basin Hatchery Review Subcommittee
December 18, 2000

Trust Obligations to the Tribes

The Hoopa Valley and Yurok Indian Tribes (Tribes) possess a federally reserved right to harvest Klamath Trinity Basin fishery resources in an amount sufficient to support a moderate standard of living, up to 50% of the available harvest (DOI 1993). Klamath Trinity basin fishery resources include the production of Iron Gate and Trinity River Hatcheries, which mitigate for salmon production lost from the construction of dams on the Trinity and Klamath Rivers. The sub-committee affirmed that hatchery fish are a critical component of tribal fisheries, that the Tribes have a stake in hatchery operations and their participation in the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG)/National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) review of hatchery operations in the Klamath Trinity Basin is vitally important.

From a federal perspective, NMFS has both responsibility for administering the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and a federal trust responsibility to Indian tribes. In 1997 the Secretaries of the Departments of the Interior and Commerce issued an Order clarifying federal responsibilities when implementation of the ESA affects Tribal trust resources or exercise of treaty rights. The Order provides that tribes will not bear a disproportionate burden for conservation of listed species. Before Indian fishing rights may be constrained, it must be demonstrated that the conservation purposes of the contemplated restriction can not be achieved through the reasonable regulation of non-Indian activities. A 1998 letter from the Assistant Secretary of NOAA states that tribes may expect as a matter of policy that tribal fishing rights will be given priority over the interests of other federal and non-federal entities. These principles will apply to any actions that NMFS might consider with respect to hatchery operations in the Klamath Trinity Basin and their impact on ESA-listed species.

ESA Status of Klamath Trinity Basin Salmon Stocks

Klamath Mountains Province Steelhead - Not warranted for listing. The ESU includes steelhead from the Elk River in Oregon to the Klamath and Trinity Rivers in California, inclusive.

Southern Oregon/Northern California Coho - This Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) is listed as threatened and consists of all naturally spawned populations of coho and their progeny that are part of the biological ESU and reside below long-term, naturally impassible barriers in streams between Punta Gorda and Cape Blanco. Hatchery populations from the Mattole, Eel, and Trinity Rivers and Rowdy Creek are considered part of the ESU (Mad River coho were not in the ESU, Iron Gate Hatchery (IGH) coho were of uncertain relationship to the ESU). None of the hatchery stocks in the ESU are considered “essential” for its recovery, and are therefore not listed. NMFS determined that two of the hatchery populations may play an important role in recovery efforts: Mattole River, because the natural population is very depressed, and the Trinity River, because there appears to be essentially no natural production in the basin. It is important to note that the determination that a hatchery stock is not ``essential'' for recovery does not preclude it from playing a role in recovery. Any hatchery population that is part of the ESU is available for use in recovery if conditions warrant. In this context, an ``essential'' hatchery population is one that is vital to fully incorporate into recovery efforts (for example, if the associated natural population(s) were extinct or at high risk of extinction). Under these circumstances, NMFS would consider taking the administrative action of listing the existing hatchery fish.

Upper Klamath-Trinity Chinook - Not warranted for listing. Includes all Klamath River Basin populations from the Trinity River and the Klamath River upstream from the confluence of the Trinity River. These populations include both spring- and fall-run fish that enter the Upper Klamath River Basin from March through July and July through October and spawn from late August through September and September through early January, respectively.

Southern Oregon and Northern California Coastal Chinook - Not warranted for listing. Includes streams from Euchre Creek, OR, through the Lower Klamath River (inclusive).

Production Levels

The subcommittee discussed the appropriateness of current hatchery coho production goals - how the goals were originally developed; whether mitigation was intended to replace a certain number of returning spawners, a certain number of outmigrants, or some amount of total adult production (ocean harvest + river harvest + spawning escapement); and whether production goals had been adjusted in consideration of the prohibition of coho retention in ocean and in-river sport fisheries. Because there appears to be essentially no natural production of coho in the Trinity River, the hatchery stock of coho produced at Trinity River Hatchery (TRH) will likely play an important role in recovery of naturally spawning populations.

Recommendation: The subcommittee recommends that a process be identified for the periodic (on the order of 6-9 years) review of hatchery production levels that would assess production at TRH and IGH in light of any of the following: 1) changes in ocean or freshwater harvest regimes; 2) new information on the effects of hatchery operations on natural populations; 3) changes in ESA status of Klamath Basin salmon and steelhead populations; and 4) changes to mitigation goals resulting from the upcoming Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) relicensing process for Klamath Basin hydro-electric facilities. The process would include the DFG, agencies responsible for mitigating of salmon production, the Tribes, and NMFS (if ESA issues were applicable). As recovery efforts proceed under the ESA, the Tribes, DFG, and NMFS will need to determine how the coho program at IGH and TRH should best be utilized in the recovery of Klamath-Trinity Basin coho.

Time of Release

Iron Gate Hatchery Release Strategies

Several sub-committee members expressed concern regarding the current release strategy of fall chinook from IGH. The current operational goals and constraints document for IGH stipulate the volitional release of 4.9 million chinook salmon smolts when the average size of the entire production reaches 90 per pound with a release date window of June 1 - 15; and 1.08 million yearlings between October 15 – November 15.   The June release is not a true volitional release because of the short release period; hatchery personnel crowd the fish out of the production ponds a few days after the pond screens have been removed. This procedure is often necessary to avoid the effects of increasing temperatures and decreasing water flows that typically occur in the river during June. The reduced flows minimize the amount of habitat available in the river, which increases the likelihood of competition between hatchery fish and the natural coho salmon (listed as "threatened" under the ESA), chinook salmon, and steelhead that are residing in the river. Reduced flow often results in poor water quality in the river, such as warm water temperature and low dissolved oxygen levels. This poor water quality results in extreme fish densities at areas of cold water refugia, such as the confluences of cold water tributaries.

The consequences of these poor water quality conditions were evident during the latter part of June, 2000, when temperatures in the mainstem Klamath River were in excess of 24EC and a substantial “fish kill” occurred. Several factors may have contributed to the poor water quality conditions following the release of 4.9 million smolts from IGH on June 9 and 10, 2000, such as: 1) the Bureau of Reclamation reduced flows in the mainstem Klamath to near 1,000 cfs on June 20, 2) unseasonably high air temperatures during the spring and early summer of 2000, and 3) reduced thermal refugia areas from tributaries because of the high air temperatures and diminished or depleted snow packs. Field crews that were monitoring the fish die-off noted high densities of fish located at the confluence of cold-water tributaries, with few live fish seen between these areas of cold water refuge. The densities of fish at these locations were likely exacerbated by the large number of hatchery smolts in the river. Densities of this magnitude are likely detrimental to natural fish populations by increasing stress (to fish already stressed from poor water quality), increasing competition for food and space, and increasing the likelihood of disease transmission between fish.

The subcommittee discussed two potential release strategies that may alleviate negative interactions between hatchery and natural fish following the release of IGH chinook smolts: 1) volitionally releasing a portion of the hatchery smolts earlier in the year when river flows are higher; and 2) releasing fewer hatchery smolts and increasing the number of yearlings released.

Earlier Release of Hatchery Smolts Volitionally releasing a portion of the fish prior to the minimal June flows may alleviate some of the problems resulting from reduced habitat availability and poor water quality. One concern with advancing the release date is whether fish have reached the smolt stage, and are ready to migrate directly to the ocean, minimizing their interaction with natural fish. DFG staff noted that under current conditions at IGH, some of the chinook that were spawned earliest in the season are at the smolt stage by early May and are segregated from fry spawned later in the season. A volitional release of certain groups could begin in early May after they have reached the smolt stage. The volitional release would increase the likelihood that the fish leaving the hatchery have reached the smolt stage. Another concern with advancing the release date to early May is that this is a critical time for natural fall chinook rearing in the mainstem Klamath River and the hatchery fish may compete for the limited available habitat.

Chinook eggs that are incubating at IGH are often exposed to extremely cold temperatures during the winter months (as low as 36EF by January 1). These cold temperatures increase incubation time, delay hatching and the time at which the fish smolt. Modification of the facility to heat the water used for incubation would decrease incubation time and result in earlier hatching and increase the number of chinook reaching the smolt stage in early May.

Increased Yearling Release and Decreased Smolt Release Releasing fewer smolts and more yearlings would relieve some of the hatchery-natural interactions that occur during the low-flow and poor water quality conditions present in the Klamath River during June and July. The time of the yearling release from IGH occurs during October 15 – November 15, which coincides with flow release increases from Iron Gate Dam, increased precipitation in the Klamath Basin, and substantially improved water quality conditions in the Klamath River. Interactions between hatchery and natural chinook would be minimized as a result of improved water quality and because most natural chinook would have already left the Klamath Basin.

Currently, IGH’s production of yearlings is at full capacity, with the use of an auxiliary facility located at Fall Creek, approximately 11 miles upstream of IGH. Water temperature at IGH during summer months, when yearlings are being reared, is less than optimal. The Fall Creek facility maintains optimal water temperature during the summer months and much of the water is not utilized. However, it is currently unclear how many additional yearlings could be reared from this water source. The facility at Fall Creek is now operated at capacity, so substantial modifications would be required to raise more yearlings at this facility. However, if funding becomes available, these modifications seem feasible. With the FERC process occurring over the next five years, it is possible that costs to upgrade the hatchery facilities could be a component of the mitigation responsibilities associated with the new license.

The potential effects of shifting some of the smolt production to yearling productions would need careful analysis, including changes in survival and maturation rates, size at age in ocean fisheries, emigration rates, increased domestication, and the costs associated with rearing fish for a longer period and upgrading facilities at Fall Creek and IGH.

Any hatchery operations (current or proposed) should be given thorough consideration regarding potential impacts to natural populations. Implementation of hatchery practices should occur in conjunction with an adaptive management approach, with the objective being to assess the impacts of hatchery operations on natural populations.

Recommendations:

1. The subcommittee identified a release strategy that may reduce impacts on natural populations by allowing smolts to be volitionally released at an earlier date. The release of chinook smolts could be accomplished by volitionally releasing each production group of fish as they reach 90 per pound (Table 1). Hatchery records show this begins around May 1st. The extension of the release window should result in lower numbers of hatchery fish being released into the Klamath River at any given time. Fish released in May should experience lower temperature and higher water flows. River flows are much more favorable in mid May, 2,500 to 3,000 cfs versus 1,000 cfs starting around June 15th. Because the need to crowd fish out to meet temperature, flow and time constraints would be less of a factor, the release would be more truly volitional. This modification of release strategy should reduce impacts on naturally produced stocks during periods of extremely poor water quality and improve the survival of hatchery produced smolts by allowing access to the lower water temperature and higher water flows available in late May.

Table 1. Proposed Changes to Stocking Goals and Constraints for Igh

		Stocking Goals and Constraints			
Species	Egg Allotment	Type	Number	Minimum Release Size	Target Release Dates
Chinook	10,000,000	Smolt	4,920,000	90/lb.	May 1 - June 15
		Yearling	1,080,000		Oct. 15 - Nov. 15

The DFG should explore the possibility of warming the water used at IGH in the egg incubation process in order to advance the hatching date for later lots of eggs. This would enable hatchery management to get the last group of chinook fingerlings closer to the 90 per pound smolt release size by the first week of June.

2. The presence of millions of hatchery smolts in the mainstem Klamath River during late spring and summer months may negatively impact natural populations. The subcommittee recommends that the DFG explore the desirability for expanding the chinook yearling program at IGH and reducing the chinook smolt production.

3. Advancing the release time of IGH fall chinook could potentially impact natural chinook that are rearing in the mainstem Klamath River during the month of May. Prior to implementing this strategy, or other major changes in rearing or release protocols, monitoring programs should be identified and implemented that will provide information on the effects of changes in rearing and release strategies, in particular on the interaction of hatchery and natural populations during the release period.

Iron Gate Hatchery Steelhead

Beginning in the 1989-90 season, steelhead have returned to IGH in substantially lower numbers compared to previous years. Returns dropped sharply to a low of 12 fish in the 1995-96 season and have since been just above or below 100 fish. It is the opinion of hatchery personnel that coincident with the poor returns, the fish that were spawned more resembled trout in size and coloration. Scale samples from adults returning to the hatchery in 1993 (BY 1990) were examined for growth patterns. Of the 11 marked fish, none showed an accelerated growth patten attributable to ocean or estuarine residence; of the 12 unmarked fish, 3 showed ocean growth patterns and consensus could not be reached on one sample. Since 1998 all steelhead released from IGH have been fin clipped. Only one marked fish has been captured at the out-migrant trap operated at Big Bar below Orleans on the Klamath River. Anglers do catch marked steelhead between the hatchery and Interstate 5. A possible explanation for the low returns and apparent residualization of the run is that during the drought of the late 1980s and early 1990s migrating yearlings encountered thermal barriers and either chose not to pass through elevated temperatures or died attempting the passage, with a resulting resident population created below the hatchery. Similar changes may also have occurred in naturally spawning populations.

Recommendation: The lack of indicators of ocean residence of hatchery "steelhead" in combination with the very low return numbers provide sufficient grounds to conclude that the IGH "steelhead" program may be producing rainbow trout and few, if any, steelhead. The subcommittee recommends that the DFG contiue efforts to identify the issues that have led to the residualization of the steelhead population and determine whether measures need to be taken to reverse this trend. If the problem continues, then a committee (including, but not limited to, the DFG, NMFS, and the Tribes) should be formed to determine the appropriate measures to address the problem. One option is to find an appropriate, naturally spawning, population of steelhead in the Klamath Basin from which brood stock could be taken to revitalize the steelhead program at IGH.

Trinity River Hatchery Spring Chinook

Spring Fall Chinook Separation Returning spring chinook usually begin to appear at the hatchery by mid-May of each year. The adult fish hold below the ladder through summer until the first week in September, when the spawning facility is opened to begin the new production year. Only a few females may be ripe on the initial spawn. Spring egg taking peaks in about three weeks, then declines until approximately October 12th. By this date, the early run is clearly over, and the ladder gate is dropped for a two week lull between the first and second runs. The fall run arrives as the spring wanes. Early fall fish are held, but usually succumb before egg maturity. Hatchery personnel report that run timing and phenotypic characteristics appear to provide good separation between fall and spring runs. There is currently a 2 week gap between spring and fall collection, during which fish cannot enter the hatchery.

The ladder is reopened at approximately October's end to receive the accumulating fresh run. The fall run spawning period extends through November and December, usually not past the new year. The ladder remains open continuously the second time, also trapping coho and winter steelhead.

Egg take is distributed throughout the two runs, collecting assigned allotments of three million spring eggs and six million fall eggs. Egg incubation is in proportion to the run magnitude and excess eggs are destroyed at earliest run size determination.

Although the spawning periods of the spring and fall run chinook do overlap, their spawning habitats were historically different, providing spacial separation of spawning populations. The spring run accessed to higher streams and the fall run utilized lower mainstem and tributaries. Because the historical spawning habitat of the spring run is no longer accessible, the potential for interbreeding of the two races has increased. The subcommittee recognizes and supports continued efforts to maintain a separation between spring and fall runs of chinook at the TRH.

<u>Recommendation</u>: The subcommittee recommended conducting an analysis of coded wire tag (CWT) recoveries from the early portion of the fall run to assess the presence of spring chinook and during the late portion of the spring run to assess the presence of fall run, in the respective pools of fish available for spawning. In addition, data should be gathered on whether CWT marked fish were used or rejected for spawning, based on phenotypic characteristics used by hatchery personnel to distinguish the two races. The analysis would then provide estimates of 1) the presence of fall run during spring brood stock collection; 2) the presence of spring run during fall run brood stock collection; and 3) how well phenotypic characteristics such as color serve to distinguish the races. If the analysis suggests a substantial presence of spring chinook during the early portion of the fall spawning season (or fall chinook during the late portion of the spring spawning season), and a significant number of one race being collected and spawned as the other, then the DFG should consider solutions such as increasing the 2 week gap between brood stock collection, or discarding of eggs collected during a period where CWT data indicated a larger than acceptable number of spawners collected from the non-target race. A population geneticist should be consulted to quantify what proportion of the run comprised of spring chinook should be considered "unacceptable", with the goal being to maintain genetic differences between spring and fall chinook populations.

<u>Selection of Broodstock for Yearling Program</u> The current Goals and Constraints for TRH require that egg collection for all species be representative of the entire run (date of return to hatchery). Accordingly, annual production is the progeny of adults having varied time of entry, spawning, time of egg hatching and juvenile growth.

These Goals and Constraints further require an annual production of one million spring chinook fingerlings (June release) and 400,000 yearlings (October release). Progeny from earlier returning fish are ponded first and consequently are more likely to reach the target fingerling release size of 90 fish/lb by the June release date. The fish from earlier spawning therefore tend to be utilized for the smolt releases and, until recently, the yearling production was often dominated by eggs which were collected towards the end of the hatchery recovery period (lots spawned in late September through early October). As yearlings generally experience higher survival rates from release to maturity than do fingerlings (Hankin 1990), it is possible that this kind of rearing and release practice may provide a selective advantage for later-returning spring chinook salmon.

For the past three years, fish for spring yearlings have been selected as smolts just prior to marking by the Hoopa Valley Tribe. Smolts for the spring yearling releases are selected from approximately the middle of the years production for the following reasons. For an accurate inventory, fish need to be about 100-150/lb. Fish that are larger than that, and subsequently released as yearlings, tend to have a large percentage of precocious males that will remain at the hatchery and fail to migrate down stream. Therefore larger (earlier ponded) fish are avoided for use in the yearling program. Smolts are inventoried by the standard practice of determining size of fish per pound then total number of pounds needed for the yearling production goal.

The alteration of run-timing as a result of hatchery practices has implications for both the genetic diversity and stock characteristics of the spring chinook race originally inhabiting the Trinity Basin. In addition, the effect may have significant management and allocation implications such as determining racial segregation (spring/fall chinook) for terminal fisheries and by extension for marine fisheries harvesting Klamath Basin chinook. The procedures used to allocate river harvest into spring or fall races include the analyses of coded wire tags. Over the past seven to eight years, river fisheries have reported an apparent protraction of the spring run timing for TRH spring chinook over that previously observed. Coded wire tag data serve as surrogate to estimate the proportions of naturally produced adult chinook belonging to the spring or fall races occurring in these fisheries. Accordingly, to the extent that protracted run timing is an artifact of hatchery practices, river fisheries may underestimate true fall chinook impacts and bias estimates of ocean harvest rates.

Recommendation: For both spring and fall chinook, the numbers of fish held for release as smolts and as yearlings should reflect the numbers of fish returning at different times of the run, in the same way that eggs are selected from all components of the run.

Marking

A time series of accurate estimates of the contribution of hatchery fish to spawning escapement would be a valuable indicator of the status of naturally spawning populations. Although annual estimates of naturally spawning fish and hatchery returns are available for Klamath-Trinity Basin salmon, unknown numbers of hatchery fish spawn naturally. Variable marking rates of hatchery production make estimates of the proportion of hatchery fish in the run difficult. A constant fractional marking program will likely be implemented at TRH (Zajanc and Hankin 1998, Hankin and Newman 1999). Since few Klamath fish stray into the Trinity, a coordinated program with IGH may not be necessary to estimate the proportion of hatchery fish in the Trinity. However, in order to estimate the proportion of hatchery fish in the Klamath Trinity Basin, adults would need to be sampled as they entered the Klamath River and a coordinated marking program between TRH and IGH would be necessary. Appropriate monitoring methods on the major tributaries to the Klamath and Trinity would be necessary for sub-basin estimates of hatchery contributions.

Recommendation: The subcommittee endorsed the concept of a coordinated constant fractional marking and representational marking of all lots of smolt and yearling chinook releases at both IGH and TRH, recognizing that concerns regarding the logistics of counting and marking a substantial fraction of the IGH fall chinook production would need to be addressed.

Monitoring

Little information is available on either the status of wild coho populations or the extent of straying of hatchery reared coho into natural spawning areas. Although the operation of weirs throughout the entire run time of coho can be difficult or impossible, there may be certain tributaries where flows would allow an adult census. Where possible, monitoring strategies should be identified that would provide better information on the status of naturally spawning coho in the Klamath Trinity Basins. The subcommittee agreed that additional efforts to genetically characterize hatchery and wild coho stocks within the Klamath Trinity Basins would be useful for any future decisions regarding the use of hatchery stocks or non-hatchery brood stock in recovery efforts

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Appendix III. Membership of Joint Hatchery Review Committee and Attendance at Meetings. "Other Attendees" attended at least two committee meetings.

Members of the Committee
Pete Adams, NMFS
Alan Baracco, DFG
Bruce Barngrover (until 6/30/99), DFG
Tim Farley, DFG (Chair)
Svein Fougner, NMFS
Dan Free (until 10/31/00), NMFS
Royce Gunther (as of 7/1/00), DFG
Craig Heberer, NMFS
Bruce MacFarlane, NMFS
Dan Viele, NMFS
Craig Wingert, NMFS
Shirley Witalis (as of 11/1/00), NMFS

Subcommittee on Off-site Release and Straying
Dan Free, NMFS
Scott Hamelberg, USFWS
Craig Heberer, NMFS
Bob Kano, DFG
Steve Lindley, NMFS
Wade Sinnen, DFG
Jim Smith, USFWS (Chair)
Dan Viele, NMFS

Subcommittee on Klamath Trinity Issues
Dave Hankin, Hoopa Tribe
Dave Hillemeier, Yurok Tribe
George Kautsky, Hoopa Tribe
Neil Manji, DFG
Pat Overton, DFG
Mike Orcutt, Hoopa Tribe
Gary Ramsden, DFG
Kim Rushton, DFG
Dan Viele, NMFS (Chair)

Other Attendees
Rich Bryan, DFG
Bill Cox, DFG
Rich Dixon, DFG
Roger Ellis, DFG
Gene Fleming, DFG
Anna Kastner, DFG
Dan Logan, NMFS
Dennis McEwan, DFG
Mary Ellen Mueller, USFWS
Armando Quinones, DFG
Gary Stacey, DFG
Tresa Veek, DFG
Larry Week, DFG
Terry West, DFG
David Woodbury, NMFS

Appendix IV. List of Major Handouts at Meetings.

CFM Implementation Plan - a CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Projects and Programs proposal solicitation for doing constant fractional marking of chinook salmon at Central Valeey hatcheries.

A Conceptual Framework for Conservation Hatchery Strategies for Pacific Salmonids (NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-NWFSC-38)

Upper Eel River Chinook Emergency Hatchery Program

Hatchery and Genetic Management Plan (HGMP) Template

California Department of Fish and Game Inland Salmon (chinook) Program

Thermal Otolith Marking of Trinity River Hatchery Production

Revised Klamath River Basin Fall Chinook Salmon Run Size, In-River Harvest and Spawner Escapement – 1998 Season

Noyo River Fisheries Station Coho Salmon Management Plan

Alternative Methods of Propagation of Spring-Run Chinook, Feather River Hatchery

DFG Cooperative Fish Rearing Program - Status Report

Appendix V. Production and Release Data for Salmon and Steelhead Hatcheries in California. (*source: DFG-NMFS Hatchery Review documentation; personal communication with hatchery managers).*

Hatchery	Species Run	Production Goals	Brood 1998 - Release 1999 Production	Tags/Marks	Size and Time of Release	Locations for Release
Coleman NFH	late-fall chinook	1,000,000 smolts	1,102,540	100% CWT since BY 92	13-14/lb. (Nov.-Jan.)	released primarily in Battle Creek; some experimental releases down river and in the Delta.
Coleman NFH	fall chinook	12,000,000 smolts	13,030,993 smolts + 755,073 fry (fry program discontinued after 99 year releases)	~8% CWT since BY 95; BY 98-99 Release: 1,004,914 CWT	smolts~90/lb. (Apr.) fry =300-500/lb.(March)	smolts released primarily in Battle Creek; fry released below RBDD
Coleman NFH	steelhead	600,000 smolts	496,525	100% ad-clip since BY 98	~4/lb. (Jan.)	75% in Sac. R. at Balls Ferry and 25% in Battle Creek
Coleman NFH	winter-run chinook	200,000 smolts	153,000	100% CWT since BY 91	~85 mm.(Jan.)	trucked to Sac. R. near Redding (Caldwell Park)
Feather River	spring chinook	5,000,000 smolts	1,850,000	~14% CWT (301,200 for 99 Release)	40-60/lb. (May-July)	trucked to San Pablo Bay
Feather River	fall chinook (regular production)	6,000,000 smolts	7,921,787	~5% CWT (301,600 for 99 Release)	40-60/lb. (Apr.1-Aug.15)	trucked to San Pablo Bay and study release sites in Delta
Feather River	fall chinook (Salmon Stamp Program)	2,000,000 post-smolts	2,098,920	unmarked	~30/lb. (May-July)	trucked to San Pablo Bay
Feather River	fall chinook (inland chinook program)	600,000 yearlings	BY 99-00 Release: 566,669 were destroyed due to IHN	unmarked	8-10/lb. (November)	trucked to local lakes
Feather River	fall chinook (for trib. stocking)	~750,000 fry if excess production available	500,000	unmarked	~500/lb. (Jan.-Feb.)	trucked to various tributaries
Feather River	steelhead	450,000 yearlings	345,810	100% ad-clip	~4/lb. (Jan.-Feb.)	trucked to Gridley
Iron Gate	coho	75,000 yearlings	BY 98-00 Release: 77,147	75,460 with left max.clips	~7/lb. (Mar.15-May 1)	released in Klamath R. at hatchery
Iron Gate	steelhead	200,000 yearlings	37,080	35,970 with adipose and left-max clips	~12/lb. (Mar.15-May 1)	released into Klamath R. at hatchery facility.
Iron Gate	fall chinook	4,920,000 smolts 1,080,000 yearlings	4,965,229 smolts 1,122,127 yearlings	smolts ~200,000 CWT yearlings ~100,000 CWT	smolts~ 90/lb. (June 1-15) yearlings~10/lb. (Nov.1-15)	released in Klamath R. at hatchery facility.
Mad River	steelhead	250,000 yearlings	BY 99-00 Release: 368,082	100% ad-clip	4-8/lb. (March-May)	released in Mad R. at hatchery

Hatchery	Species Run	Production Goals	Brood 1998 - Release 1999 Production	Tags/Marks	Size and Time of Release	Locations for Release
Mad River	fall chinook (Mad R. strain)	4,000,000 smolts 1,000,000 yearlings	21,600 yearlings	unmarked	smolts~60/lb. (May-June) yearlings 8-10/lb. (Oct.)	trucked to the Mad R. estuary
Mad River	fall chinook (rearing for Upper Eel River Chinook Emergency Hatchery Program)	12,500 yearlings 12,500 pre-smolts (production rearing split between Mad R. and Warm Springs)	14,490 yearlings	100% CWT	yearlings=10-15/lb. (Oct.-Nov.)	trucked to Van Arsdale station for acclimation (~2 weeks) and release into upper mainstem Eel R.
Merced River	fall chinook	960,000 smolts or up to 300,000 yearlings (only produce yearlings if adult return very low)	913,329 smolts	666,602 CWT and 130,786 dye marked;	smolts 70-90/lb. (Apr.1-June 30); yearlings 6-10/lb. (Oct.1-Dec.30)	~60% volitionally released at hatchery; ~40% trucked to specific sites for study releases. For BY 98-99 Release: 44% into Merced R.; 12% into Tuolumne R.; 12% in Stanislaus R.; 32% San Joaquin R.
Mokelumne River	fall chinook (mitigation production - experimental releases)	1,000,000 smolts	1,000,000	~300,000 CWT	40-75/lb. (May-June)	~100,000 CWT at New Hope, Moke, R.; ~100,000 CWT at Chips Isl., San Joaquin R.; ~100,000 CWT + remaining unmarked smolts at Thorton, Moke. R.
Mokelumne River	fall chinook (Salmon Stamp Program)	2,000,000 post-smolts	1,600,000	~100,000 CWT	25-30/lb. (Apr.15-July 31)	trucked to San Pablo Bay
Mokelumne River	fall chinook (mitigation production for in-river releases)	500,000 yearlings	422,000	100% CWT	~10/lb. (Sept.-Oct.)	released in Mokelumne R.
Mokelumne River	steelhead (eggs and/or fry from Nimbus and Feather R. hatcheries)	100,000 yearlings (reared at Moke. hatchery)	102,440	100% ad-clip	4/lb. (Jan.-Feb.)	released in Lower Mokelumne R.
Nimbus	steelhead	430,000 yearlings	400,060	100% ad-clip	4/lb. (Jan.-Feb.)	trucked to Sac. R. at/or below Discovery Park
Nimbus	fall chinook	4,000,000 smolts	4,486,000 smolts	unmarked	40-60/lb. (Apr. 15-July 31)	trucked to San Pablo Bay
Nimbus	fall chinook (for ocean net pens)	? smolts	243,808	52,008 CWT - Tyee Club fish, remainder unmarked	30-70/lb. (May-June)	trucked to ocean net pen holding facilities
Nimbus	fall chinook (reared for Mokelumne hatchery)	up to 4,000,000 eggs?	200,680 fingerlings	unmarked	~200/lb. (May)	trucked to Mokelumne hatchery for acclimation and release

Hatchery	Species Run	Production Goals	Brood 1998 - Release 1999 Production	Tags/Marks	Size and Time of Release	Locations for Release
Nimbus	fall chinook (tributary plants)	500,000 fingerlings	540,870	unmarked	180-300/lb.(April)	trucked to Sac. R. tributaries
Trinity River	spring chinook	1,000,000 smolts 400,000 yearlings	959,000 smolts 399,000 yearlings	smolts ~16% CWT; yearlings ~35% CWT	smolts~50/lb. (June 1-15); yearlings 10-12/lb. (Oct.1-15).	volitional at hatchery; early lots reach size requirements first and are released as smolts, later ones serve as yearlings
Trinity River	fall chinook	2,000,000 smolts 900,00 yearlings	1,991,000 smolts 993,000 yearlings	smolts~10% CWT yearlings~35% CWT	smolts~90/lb. (June 1-15); yearlings 10-12/lb. (Oct. 1-15).	volitional at hatchery; early lots reach size requirements first and are released as smolts, with later ones serving as yearlings
Trinity River	coho	500,000 yearlings	493,700	100% right max. clip	10-20/lb. (Mar.15-May 1).	volitional at hatchery facility
Trinity River	steelhead	800,000 yearlings	382,900	100% ad-clip	7/lb. (Mar.15-May 1). Fish < 6 inches held for additional year and released as 2 yr. olds. Have not done this for several years.	volitional at hatchery facility
Warm Springs Russian River (Don Clausen Hatchery)	fall chinook (for Dry Creek strain)	1,000,000 yearlings	No production past two years	No production past two years	~10/lb. (Oct.-Nov.)	100 yards to 3 miles downstream of hatchery facility
Warm Springs Russian River (Van Arsdale - Eel River Fish)	fall chinook (rearing for Upper Eel River Chinook Emergency Hatchery Program)	37,500 yearlings 37,500 pre-smolts (production rearing split between Mad R. and Warm Springs)	45,100 yearlings	100% CWT	yearlings =10-15/lb. (Oct.-Nov.) pre-smolts reared for 40-60 days.	trucked to Van Arsdale for acclimation and release into the upper mainstem Eel R.
Warm Springs (Don Clausen Hatchery)	Steelhead (for Dry Creek strain)	300,000 yearlings	302,005	100% ad-clip	~4/lb. (Dec.-Apr.). In Dec., grade steelhead and release all fish 4.0/lb. or larger. Release all others no later than April regardless of size.	trucked to Dry Creek + 40,000 lb. trucked to Coyote Valley Fish Facility for release into Russian R.
Coyote Valley Fish Facility	Steelhead (reared at WSH but held 30 days at Coyote to imprint)	200,000 yearlings	229,451	100% ad-clip	~4/lb. Jan.- March.	volitionally in East Fork Russian R. above confluence with Russian R.

Table notes: The terms smolt, post-smolt, and yearling denote size. In the case of smolt, the size is what has been determined by DFG staff to correlate with the ability and propensity of those fish to migrate upon release.
The term "post-smolt" was coined to differentiate the larger fish that are released specifically for ocean enhancement.