

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 1, 2010  
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 15, 2010  
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009—10 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 2063**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Huffman**  
**(Coauthors: Assembly Members Chesbro and Evans)**  
(Coauthors: Senators Leno and Wiggins)

February 18, 2010

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An act to add Section 6902.5 to the Fish and Game Code, and to add Section 425.11 to the Government Code, relating to fish.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2063, as amended, Huffman. Fish: Chinook *and Coho* salmon.

Existing law establishes the Salmon, Steelhead Trout, and Anadromous Fisheries Program Act to protect and increase the naturally spawning salmon, steelhead trout, and anadromous fishery resources of the state. Existing law defines anadromous fish as fish that spawn in fresh water and spend a portion of their lives in the ocean.

This bill would add legislative findings and declarations to the act. The bill would proclaim a legislative goal of restoring Chinook *and Coho* salmon populations to sustainable levels, sufficient to support viable recreational, commercial, and tribal fisheries, within a decade. The bill would state the intent of the Legislature, in implementing this goal, that the department utilize best available science, a life cycle analysis, and scientifically driven hatchery operations in determining where to focus and prioritize conservation planning efforts for recovery of Chinook *salmon* and other salmonid species. The bill would also designate the Chinook salmon as the official state anadromous fish.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Section 6902.5 is added to the Fish and Game  
2 Code, to read:  
3 6902.5. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
4 following:  
5 (1) The Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), a fish  
6 native to many California streams for thousands of years, is an  
7 extremely important ecological, economic, and cultural resource  
8 to all the people of California.  
9 (2) Chinook salmon are anadromous fish that are born in fresh  
10 cold water streams, migrate hundreds of miles to the ocean where  
11 they spend most of their adult life, and then return to spawn and  
12 lay their eggs in the stream of their birth.  
13 (3) Salmonids have a long history of interactions with humans,  
14 appearing as images in Cro-Magnon cave art of 10,000 or more  
15 years ago, and have been an important food source for indigenous  
16 peoples throughout the salmonids’ geographic range, including  
17 Native American tribes in California. The first commercial harvest  
18 of Chinook salmon began in the Sacramento River in the 1850s  
19 when it provided food for the gold rush.  
20 (4) Chinook salmon *and other salmonids* have managed to  
21 survive and evolve over hundreds of years in California, showing  
22 extraordinary resilience in the face of tremendous change,  
23 including, but not limited to, the damming and diversion of most  
24 major California rivers, hydraulic mining during the gold rush,  
25 past timber harvesting and overfishing practices, loss of cold water  
26 and riparian habitat, competing demands for water, and changing  
27 ocean conditions.  
28 (5) Despite their resilience and cultural, historical, aesthetic,  
29 and economic importance, salmonid fishes, including Chinook  
30 ~~salmon~~ *and coastal Coho salmon species*, are in severe decline in  
31 most of their native habitats and many populations have been  
32 extirpated.  
33 (6) All Chinook salmon runs in California have declined  
34 dramatically. Of the four separate Central Valley Chinook salmon  
35 runs, two are listed under the federal Endangered Species Act of

1 1973 and the California Endangered Species Act and are currently  
2 threatened with extinction.

3 (7) The Central Valley fall run, the strongest of the four Central  
4 Valley Chinook salmon runs, has been the backbone of the  
5 recreational and commercial salmon fishing industry in California.  
6 However, the salmon fishing season has been closed the last two  
7 years due to a dramatic drop in the number of returning fish, which  
8 dropped 95 percent from 769,868 in 2002, to 87,940 in 2007,  
9 64,456 in 2008, and 39,530 in 2009, an ~~all-time~~ *all-time* low, and  
10 the third consecutive year that the number of returning fish has  
11 fallen below the 122,000 minimum escapement criteria necessary  
12 for long-term sustainable fishing. In 2004, the National Marine  
13 Fisheries Service placed the Chinook salmon from the Central  
14 Valley fall run on their “Species of Special Concern” list.

15 (8) The economic impact of the closure of the salmon season  
16 in 2008 and 2009 is estimated at over \$2 billion, with as many as  
17 23,000 jobs lost. The California salmon industry supports thousands  
18 of recreational fishers, over 1,000 licensed commercial boats (down  
19 from a high of over 8,000 boats in the 1970s), and hundreds of  
20 related businesses. Many of these businesses were forced to shut  
21 down in 2008 and 2009, while others managed to stay open through  
22 receiving federal disaster assistance. It is anticipated that if the  
23 salmon season is closed again in 2010 as many as 30 percent of  
24 the remaining businesses will fail.

25 (9) It is estimated that recovery of the Central Valley fall run  
26 could produce over \$5 billion in economic revenues and as many  
27 as 94,000 jobs.

28 (10) ~~Chinook salmon~~ *California’s salmon populations* need  
29 freshwater habitat that includes cold, clean water; appropriate  
30 water depth, quantity, and flow velocities; upland and riparian  
31 vegetation to stabilize soil and provide shade; clean gravel for  
32 spawning and egg-rearing; large woody debris to provide resting  
33 and hiding places; adequate food; and varied channel forms.

34 (11) Recovery of ~~Chinook salmon~~ *California’s salmon*  
35 *populations* will not be easy, but it is possible, thanks to the  
36 inherent adaptability of California’s salmonids to changing  
37 conditions. However, accomplishing this task will require renewed  
38 commitment and coordination on the part of the Legislature, state  
39 and federal fishery agencies, the fishing community, and other  
40 interested parties.

1 (b) The Legislature proclaims the goal of restoring Chinook  
2 *and Coho* salmon populations to sustainable levels, sufficient to  
3 support viable recreational, commercial, and tribal fisheries, within  
4 a decade. To accomplish this goal, it is the intent of the Legislature  
5 that the Department of Fish and Game and the Fish and Game  
6 Commission work together collaboratively with other public and  
7 private partners, including, but not limited to, the Ocean Protection  
8 Council, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries),  
9 the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Pacific Fisheries  
10 Management Council, fishing men and women, fishing businesses,  
11 local fishing communities, and other interested parties to restore  
12 thriving and sustainable populations of Chinook *and Coho* salmon  
13 in California. In implementing this goal, it is the intent of the  
14 Legislature that the department utilize best available science, a life  
15 cycle analysis, and scientifically driven hatchery operations in  
16 determining where to focus and prioritize conservation planning  
17 efforts for recovery of Chinook *salmon* and other salmonid species.

18 SEC. 2. Section 425.11 is added to the Government Code, to  
19 read:

20 425.11. The Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) is  
21 the official state anadromous fish.