

California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead Trout (CACSSST)

July 9, 2026 Meeting

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CACSSST stands for the California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead Trout, an advisory body that collaborates with state agencies and conservation groups like California Trout. It advises the state on fish restoration

<https://fisheries.legislature.ca.gov/california-advisory-committee-salmon-and-steelhead-trout-cac>

1. Predator–Prey Relationship and Salmon Survival

Based on the best available science, what percentage of mortality for California's Sacramento, San Joaquin, Klamath, and coastal Chinook salmon populations is currently attributed to pinniped predation compared to other mortality factors such as ocean conditions, habitat loss, water operations, disease, and fisheries? How has that relationship changed over the past 30 years as pinniped populations have increased?

2. Consumption Rates and Population-Level Impacts

What is the average daily food requirement of an adult harbor seal and an adult California sea lion, and how many juvenile and adult Chinook salmon would an individual pinniped be expected to consume over the course of one year? When those estimates are multiplied by current pinniped populations along the West Coast, what is the estimated annual consumption of Chinook salmon from California's Sacramento, San Joaquin, Klamath, and coastal stocks?

3. Expansion into Freshwater Systems

What scientific evidence explains why harbor seals and California sea lions are now traveling farther into estuaries, the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta, and rivers—including locations more than 200 miles inland? Are these movements primarily driven by prey availability, learned behavior, reduced deterrence, increasing pinniped populations, changes in river conditions, or other environmental factors?

4. Management Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act

Given the recovery of many West Coast pinniped populations since passage of the 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act, what management

tools currently exist under federal law to reduce significant predation on threatened and economically important salmon populations? Are current authorities sufficient, or would amendments to the Act or expanded management authority be necessary to effectively balance marine mammal conservation with salmon recovery?

5. Future Population Management and Recovery Goals

If scientific evidence demonstrates that pinniped predation is limiting the recovery of California Chinook salmon populations—including Sacramento, San Joaquin, Klamath, and coastal stocks—what population management strategies have been evaluated (such as non-lethal deterrence, relocation, targeted removal under existing law, or legislative changes), and what measurable reduction in pinniped predation would be expected to produce meaningful improvements in salmon survival and adult returns?

These questions are framed to:

- * Focus on measurable scientific data rather than assumptions.
- * Address the predator–prey dynamics between pinnipeds and Chinook salmon.
- * Explore why pinnipeds are increasingly entering freshwater systems.
- * Discuss legal management options under the 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act.
- * Connect management actions to potential improvements in salmon recovery.

Next meeting is: October 8, 2026

Targeting 1-4:30pm.

Possible agenda items include:

- * Klamath Fall Creek hatchery production update.
- * TU hydrologist presentation on coastal stream in stream flows management concepts.
- * Update on the Pacific Whiting permit application
- * The potential for fishing regulations changes on the Eel and Russian rivers to protect CC Chinook salmon from incidental harm.

- * Update on cannabis program – enforcement, program priorities, funding allocations, etc.