

Regional Water Quality Control Board  
North Coast Region

Executive Officer's Summary Report  
8:30 A.M., Thursday, June 13, 2013  
Santa Rosa

- ITEM: 10
- SUBJECT: Presentation regarding the Recovery Plan for the Evolutionarily Significant Unit of Central California Coast Coho Salmon (*Jonathan Warmerdam and Charlotte Ambrose, National Marine Fisheries Service*)
- BOARD ACTION: This is an information item. No action will be taken by the Regional Water Board.
- BACKGROUND: Coho salmon are an emblematic species of California, akin to the massive herds of bison that once roamed the Great Plains. Coho, like many aquatic species, are a biological indicator of the health of our streams, the legacy of our actions, and the weight of our footprint on the watersheds in which they have returned to spawn for upwards of a million years.
- Today, the number of wild adults returning to California streams – estimated to have been as high as 500,000 in the 1940s - have continued to spiral downwards and are currently at around one-percent of historic numbers. There is no single factor responsible for the decline of coho salmon; however, the destruction and modification of habitat over 150 years has been identified as a primary cause.
- Central California Coast (CCC) Coho Salmon are the southern and most imperiled of the two distinct populations in the state, known as evolutionarily significant units (ESUs). The populations of CCC coho salmon have declined to a point where they face the very real threat of extinction within the upcoming decades, or years.
- In September 2012, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) completed the CCC Coho Recovery Plan. The NMFS is the responsible agency for recovery and extinction prevention of endangered species as required by the federal Endangered Species Act.
- DISCUSSION: Charlotte Ambrose, the Coho Recovery Coordinator for NMFS, will introduce the Recovery Plan to the Regional Water Board, detail the key measures identified to improve conditions, discuss targeted goals to prevent extinction and recover the species, and identify opportunities for coordination with the Regional Water Board.