

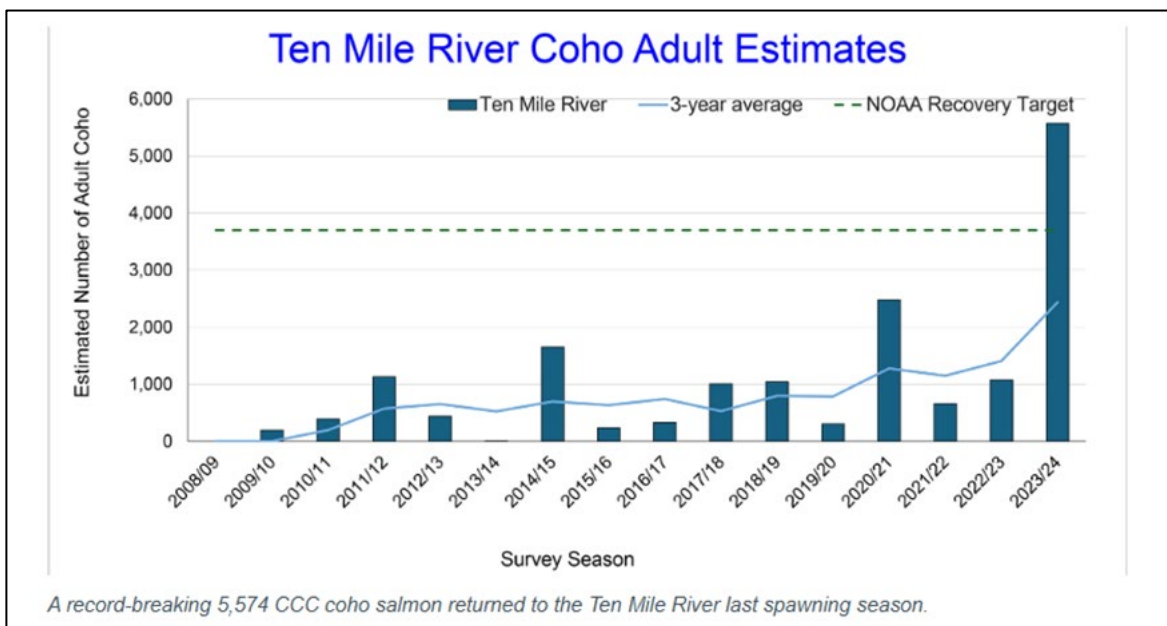
HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON HABITAT ISSUES

The Habitat Committee (HC) met in person April 10 – 11, 2025 to discuss current habitat-related issues. The following report highlights relevant items for Council consideration.

California

Update on the Senate Bill (SB) 605 Wave & Tidal Energy Draft Phase II Consultant Report: At the March Council meeting, the Marine Planning Committee and the HC briefed the Council on this report to the California Legislature and the Council requested further tracking of this process. On April 2, The California Energy Commission held a public workshop for the Report on their Sea Space Analysis for Wave & Tidal Energy. The report included tidal & wave energy potential along the California coast, technology considerations, sea space conflicts, and protective measures for environmental and ocean user impacts. The Draft Report is currently out for a 45-day public review through May 16. The final deliverable for SB 605 will be a report to the governor and legislature office summarizing phase 1 and 2 reports, which will then trigger another public workshop and comment period. The final version is expected to be published by the end of the year. The HC can provide the MPC with some high level comments to contribute to a quick response letter. The Council will have another opportunity for detailed comments on the final report.

Winter habitat restoration leads to increased returns of endangered Central California Coast (CCC) coho salmon - The HC is happy to share [good news from NOAA's Office of Habitat Conservation](#) and their partners, including The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Trout Unlimited. Following six years of habitat restoration on the lower Ten Mile River in Mendocino County, endangered juvenile CCC coho salmon are utilizing newly restored winter instream and floodplain habitat (including habitat not used for 70 years) and have returned in record numbers. More than 5,500 adult coho returned during the 2023-2024 spawning season, surpassing National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recovery target of 3,700 fish for the first time (see graph below). TNC



reports that juvenile fish using the restored habitat are growing much faster than fish that aren't using the habitat, which should improve their overall fitness and survival. These patterns are encouraging news for CCC coho salmon for at least one cohort; hopefully, restoration will boost abundance of the other two cohorts that exist in the system as well.

Klamath River

Klamath River Update - The habitat committee heard updates on the Klamath River as it adjusts to the removal of the lower four dams. In Fall of 2024 over 2,000 fall-run Chinook Salmon expanded into the newly opened habitat and spawned there, with many salmon making it past Keno Dam. As those spawners' progeny head to the ocean, they are facing far less disease than in recent years. The polychaete worm population that is the intermediate host for the parasite *Ceratonova shasta* has experienced a substantial reduction in numbers through scour and being smothered by the reservoir sediments. The incidence of infection in the remaining worms has been low. In addition, water samples through mid-April have detected no *C. shasta* spores.

With regard to water management, the National Marine Fisheries Service Biological Opinion compliance point for releases to the Klamath River has moved 44 miles upstream to Keno Reservoir, from the now-removed Iron Gate Dam. Secretary of the Interior Burgum has directed the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to review its operations considering how Oregon water adjudication interacts with the availability of water to be released to the mainstem Klamath River to meet Endangered Species Act and Tribal Trust responsibilities. At present BOR is still working through their review, which creates uncertainty on how this may affect Council-managed species. The HC will continue to track these issues and brief the council as more is known.

Columbia River

Delay of Columbia River Systems Operations (CRSO) Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) - In December 2024, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) published a [Notice of Intent to prepare a supplemental EIS for the CRSO](#). The HC briefed the Council at the [March Council meeting](#) and the Council directed the HC to prepare a draft comment letter for Council review ahead of the May comment deadline. Subsequently, the HC submitted additional background information on the scoping process into the April Briefing Book in [Habitat Committee Supplemental Report 1](#). However, in early April, the co-lead agencies announced they will [delay the scoping process](#).

This delay is in response to an [Interim Final Rule](#) issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) as directed in [Executive Order 15154](#). EO 15154 simultaneously rescinds CEQ's administrative authorities over National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Regulations and issues new guidance to agencies on implementing NEPA, including expediting permit approvals and prioritizing efficiency and certainty over other objectives, and better describe their proposal to the public. These changes to how NEPA is administered will likely affect all NEPA reviews.

The HC will continue to track the SEIS scoping process and prepare a draft letter for Council review at the appropriate time.

Other

National Fish Habitat Partnership – The HC reported in March that the [National Fish Habitat Board](#) is seeking nominations for a board member seat representing the commercial fishing industry. The deadline for nominations has been extended to April 30th. The HC encourages the nomination of

a West Coast representative, as the current Board does not have a west coast commercial fisheries rep. Applicants should email a resume and letter of interest to info@fishhabitat.org. For more information and background, visit: <https://bit.ly/3Rrj6z4> and contact Stan Allen sallen@psmfc.org.

PFMC
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