

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Michael Boccadoro 916/441-7685
916/600-4383

Delta Coalition Calls on Governor and Fish and Game Commission to Address Striped Bass

UPLAND/SACRAMENTO, CA – The [Coalition for a Sustainable Delta](http://www.sustainabledelta.com) today called on the California Fish and Game Commission and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to take swift action and address the issue of striped bass predation in the Bay-Delta. The call for action came in comments this morning before the CA Fish and Game Commission meeting in Upland, California and in a separate letter to the Governor (both attached).

The striped bass, a non-native invasive species, is a well-known voracious feeder and predator. Unfortunately, they prey upon a number of federally and state listed native fish species, including delta smelt, long-fin smelt and juvenile salmon.

The California Department of Fish and Game has estimated that striped bass consume approximately 5 percent of the population of delta smelt in the Bay-Delta annually and in excess of 5 percent of the population of certain salmon species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has concluded that striped bass predation of delta smelt could foreclose recovery of that species.

“There is no question that striped bass represent a very real threat to endangered species and recovery of the Bay-Delta ecosystem,” said Michael Boccadoro, spokesman for the Coalition for a Sustainable Delta. “The Department of Fish and Game needs to take immediate action to halt all efforts that prop up the population of this non-native species.”

Earlier this year the Coalition filed a legal action against the California Department of Fish and Game and the California Fish and Game Commission for adopting and enforcing regulations to maintain an artificially high population of non-native striped bass in the Bay-Delta. The Department continues to enforce “size” and “bag limits” for striped bass fishing in the state. Fishermen are limited to two fish and each fish must be at least 18 inches in length. The limits are designed to further the Commission’s striped bass restoration goal of three million fish. These regulations, however, also effectively foster the demise of tens of thousands of threatened or endangered native delta fish.

“Unless and until all the factors or “stressors” that are impacting the estuary and its fisheries are addressed, there is no chance of sustaining the estuary. If state regulators and policymakers are not willing to address what is a straightforward and clear threat to the estuary, what hope do we have that they can address the bigger issues necessary to fix the delta,” Boccadoro concluded.

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For more information including a copy of the lawsuit, visit www.sustainabledelta.com