

Fishing ban expanded in California

By Aaron Kinney, Bay Area News Group

SACRAMENTO – Taking an even more aggressive approach to protecting drought-stricken fish, state wildlife officials on Wednesday tightened already unprecedented restrictions on recreational fishing in Northern California.

The California Fish and Game Commission voted unanimously to extend shutdowns along the northern coast until the spring to safeguard threatened steelhead and endangered coho salmon. The commission also expanded the prohibition to include most of the Russian River in the North Bay and key spawning habitat in the American River east of Sacramento.

Charlton Bonham, director of the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, acknowledged the bans will be difficult for anglers and rural towns whose livelihoods depend on steelhead fishing during the winter. But, he added, the fishing community is overwhelmingly supportive of the state's intervention.

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