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NOAA Extends Southern Range of Central California Coast Coho Salmon

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. – NOAA’s Fisheries Service has today published with the *Federal Register* a final rule to extend the southern range of federally protected Central California Coast Coho salmon from San Lorenzo River to Aptos Creek; a distance of approximately seven miles.

The boundary for the evolutionary significant unit (ESU) of Central California Coast Coho salmon previously extended from Punta Gorda in northern California south to and including the San Lorenzo River near Santa Cruz, Calif. This ESU was listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act on October 31, 1996, and reclassified as an endangered species on June 28, 2005.

On April 2, 2010, NOAA Fisheries Service accepted a petition from a private landowner to review whether coho salmon found in streams south of San Francisco Bay should be taken off the federal list of endangered species. In July, a biological review team was formed by scientists and fishery experts from NOAA, the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Forest Service to analyze the request.

The biological review team concluded that coho south of San Francisco Bay are part of the listed population and that the range should be extended approximately seven miles south to include Soquel and Aptos Creeks. The reasons for including these waterways are the recent observation and genetic analysis of coho salmon in Soquel Creek, and the similarity of habitat and watershed conditions that support the spawning and rearing of coho salmon in both watersheds.

A proposed rule requesting additional information was published for public comment in the *Federal Register* on February 4, 2011. All comments received were addressed in the final rule.

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-30-

On the web: <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/04/02/2012-7860/endangered-and-threatened-species-range-extension-for-endangered-central-california-coast-coho>