

April 17, 2009



The Honorable Jim Lecky

Protected Resource

National Marine Fisheries Service

1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 1100

Portland, OR 97232

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of University of California, Irvine from the Biological sciences department, to express my concern about the decline number of Southern Pacific Eulachon (*Thaleichthys Pacificus*) in the Colombia River basin and the Mad River in California since 1999 until present. (ID: 0648-XF87).

I urge the NMFS to change the status of Pacific Eulachon to a threatened or endangered species.

As a biological science major at UCI, I have been studying the importance of the existence of different species of fishes in our ecosystem. The pacific Eulachon is particularly important for its contribution to our ecosystem, particularly because of its role in the diet of many ocean and shore predators; many of the large predatory fishes prey on Eulachon such as salmon, whales, sea lions, spiny dogfish, and pacific halibut. In addition, because Eulachons feed on small crustaceans and planktons, they help keep the levels of these small creatures constant in the ecosystem.

In closing, I would like to respectfully urge the NMFS to take action in providing protection and designating critical habitat for the Pacific Eulachons. I would be happy to serve upon protecting the Eulachons in any way possible.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions about this important matter, please contact me at (310) 280-6630.

Sincerely,

Azadeh Sajjadi

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The letter is in regards to the 50 CFR part 223 Endangered Species Act of 1973 (proposed rule for Pacific Eulachon). The issue is that the Pacific Eulachons are decreasing in number in California's Mad River and also the Colombia River basin since 1999 until the present date. Eulachons have been proposed threatened in march 2009 and the Commerce department is making a decision on whether they should be listed as endangered or threatened species or not. If they list Eulachons as endangered or threatened, the there would be protective regulations and designations of critical habitats. This would help the species to avoid becoming extinct like many other species have with the help of ESA. The agencies responsible for making decisions to whether Eulachons should be listed as endangered or not are: National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Department of Commerce.

This proposal was first introduced on July 16, 1999, by Mr. Sam Wright of Olympia, Washington to designate critical habitat for the Eulachons. However, nothing was done to designate critical habitat or provide protection for the Eulachons because there was not enough substantial scientific information about the issue. However, on November 8,2007 there was another petition from the Cowlitz Indian Tribe requesting that Eulachons in the U.S should be listed as endangered. On March 12,2008 it was determined that the petition presented enough information and therefore the petition action maybe warranted. Consequently, on march 9,2009 the Eulachons were proposed threatened and decisions are currently being made to whether they should be listed as threatened or not.

Comments on this proposal should be received by the responsible agencies by May 12,2009. Also a public hearing will be held on April 27,2009. The location and exact time would be posted on the Federal Register not less than 15 days before the hearing is held.

Scientists and many people who live close to where the fishes spawn are working to list Eulachons as endangered because they have important effects on the ecosystem in the area. Their extinction would only harm the ecosystem and affect the fishery business in the area. However, there are also people who live in the area who do not wish the Eulachons be listed as endangered because they do not want to lose their private properties as the specie's critical habitat.

Citation and references:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/esa/other.htm>