

Biologists identify pot gardens as salmon threat

September 30 2014, by Jeff Barnard



This 2013 photo provided by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife shows a department environmental scientist holding a dead juvenile Coho salmon found in Little Larabee Creek in Humboldt County, Calif. Federal biologists have identified the free-wheeling marijuana industry in the Emerald Triangle of Northern California and Southern Oregon as a key threat to salmon in danger of extinction. The final recovery plan for threatened coho salmon in the region was published Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2014 in the Federal Register. It calls for getting a better handle on how much water pot growers illegally withdraw from creeks where young fish struggle to survive, and minimizing it. (AP Photo/California Department of Fish and Wildlife)

Federal biologists say the marijuana industry in the Emerald Triangle of Northern California and southern Oregon is a key threat to salmon in danger of extinction.

The NOAA Fisheries Service announced Tuesday that it's issuing the final recovery plan for threatened coho salmon in the region.

It calls for getting a better handle on the amount of water pot growers illegally withdraw from creeks where young fish struggle to survive, and then minimizing it. Pot in the region is grown legally for medical purposes and illegally for the black market.

Other threats from the unregulated industry include clear-cutting forests to create pot plantations, building roads that send sediment into salmon streams, and spreading fertilizer and pesticides that poison the water.

The spotlight on [marijuana](#) grew out of a California study estimating how much water [pot](#) growers suck out of salmon streams.

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