

---

# Los Angeles Times

---

FEBRUARY 2, 2011

## Feds taking another look at the delta's longfin smelt

by Bettina Boxall

---

Is another resident of the troubled Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta headed for the federal endangered species list?

In a court settlement approved Wednesday, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has agreed to take another look at the delta's dwindling population of longfin smelt to see if it deserves federal protection.

The service in 2009 denied a petition to list the San Francisco Bay-delta population of the longfin, an anadromous member of the smelt family that lives in estuaries along

the Pacific Coast from the Bay Area to Alaska. The agency concluded that the bay-delta longfins were not a distinct population because they migrate into the Pacific Ocean and can swim up the coast to breed with other longfin groups.

The Center for Biological Diversity and the Bay Institute, which filed the petition, challenged the denial in U.S. District Court. Under the court settlement, Fish and Wildlife will launch a new review based on a study of longfins throughout their range. If the entire population doesn't qualify

for endangered species protection, the agency has agreed to reconsider whether delta longfins are distinct.

Longfin smelt, already listed as threatened under the California Endangered Species Act, are one of a number of native delta fish in serious decline. For more on the effort to save the much-maligned delta smelt, read Wednesday's story in The Times: A small fish caught in a big fuss