Technical Guidance

California North Coast Water Availability Tool

On June 26, 2025, The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with Trout Unlimited and Foundry Spatial, released the California North Coast Water Availability Tool (CWAT). CWAT is a web-based tool that allows users to complete supporting calculations for a Water Availability Analysis consistent with the requirements of the Policy for Maintaining Instream Flows in Northern California Coastal Streams (Policy). This guidance is intended to aid prospective CWAT users, should not be considered legal guidance, and may be updated periodically.

How can I use it?

CWAT is accessible at this link: https://northcoastwater.codefornature.org/

To use CWAT, you will need to create an account and start a new project. You are encouraged to read the instructions and documentation provided. Use of CWAT can support applicants at multiple stages of our permitting process, including scoping a potential project, meeting Water Code requirements for filing new applications, and completing a WAA pursuant to the Policy requirements.

Technical Considerations

Division staff recommend consideration of the resources listed below for users interested in estimating the Upper Limit of Anadromy (ULA) and/or Points of Interest (POIs) per Policy Appendices A.1.4 and A.1.7.

- National Marine Fisheries Service Designated Critical Habitat (accessible through CDFW BIOS Database)
- National Marine Fisheries Service Intrinsic Potential Geographic Information System Data (accessible through CDFW BIOS Database)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife Fish Passage Database (accessible through CDFW BIOS Database) (Natural Total Barriers)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife Stream Inventory Reports (accessible to download here and to view through CDFW BIOS Database)
- Site-specific information (such as stream surveys prepared by a professional environmental consultant)

Submittal Materials

When submitting evaluations completed using CWAT to the Division, Division staff recommend including the following materials:

- Water supply report output package
- Cumulative diversion analysis package
- A screenshot of the streamflow gage selection map and table from within CWAT
- A screenshot of the map of your POIs from within CWAT
- A zip file download of the GitHub repository at the time the analysis was completed: https://github.com/FoundrySpatial/northcoastwater-calculations
- Documentation to support placement of ULA and POIs

(This Technical Guidance was last updated on February 18, 2026)