

Field Activity Advisory

Adult Spring-Run Chinook Salmon Holding and Spawning Habitat Study

June – December 2018

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, as part of the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP), will release approximately 180 adult spring-run Chinook salmon into Reach 1 of the Restoration Area as part of a holding and spawning habitat use study. This effort will track and assess spring-run Chinook salmon summer holding areas, spawning habitat, egg survival, emergence rates, and incubation habitat quality using telemetry, snorkel surveys, redd/carcass surveys, and emergence traps. Monitoring efforts for the study will continue until juvenile spring-run Chinook emergence is complete. This study will assist the SJRRP in identifying potential limitations in the available spawning habitat and inform managers of the need, or lack thereof, to implement spawning habitat restoration actions.



SJRRP biologists track Chinook salmon using acoustic telemetry

Who: California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Reclamation

What: Approximately 180 adult spring-run Chinook salmon from brood years 2012 – 2016, raised at the Interim Salmon Conservation and Research Facility in Friant, California, will be released to the San Joaquin River to study habitat use and survival. The fish will be tracked and individually identified using acoustic telemetry, passive integrated transponder (PIT), t-bar anchor tags, and parental-based tags. Offspring of the adult spring-run Chinook can be identified using genetic testing. Fish movements and summer holding habitat will be monitored using a network of fixed-site acoustic receivers and a portable acoustic receiver, in addition to snorkel surveys. Beginning in August, spawning habitat selection and redd morphology will be monitored by redd and carcass surveys to recover salmon carcasses and find, measure, and mark redds produced by released salmon. Triangles made with reinforcing bar and anchored with mesh rock bags (i.e., “redd grates”) may be placed over redds to minimize superimposition. To assess spawning success and egg survival, emergence traps will be installed and monitored to assess the number and condition of emerging juveniles. All surveys will include a crew of two to five individuals floating the river by drift boat or kayak one to three times per week.

Where: Reach 1, Friant Dam to SR-99 (approximately 24 river miles). Drift boats and kayaks will be launched from publicly accessible areas or private property with landowner permission.

When: June – December 2018

Recreational Fishing: No recreational fishing that uses bait, lures or other means to target salmon in SJR above the Merced River confluence is allowed per California Fish and Game Code. Any inadvertently caught salmon

must be immediately returned to the river. To confidentially report poaching, call the CDFW CalTIP line at 888-334-CalTIP (888-344-2258).

Salmon Carcasses: Salmon die after spawning, so the carcasses of these fish will remain in the river. The carcass supports ecosystem function, returning nutrients and other beneficial products back into the river's ecosystem as it biodegrades. Carcasses will have a color coded tag that contains the Program's hotline phone number. River users that find a tagged salmon carcass or tag are asked to call the hotline number and report the tag color and location of the find.

Questions about this activity should be directed to the study's agency points-of-contact provided below.

Pat Ferguson

Environmental Scientist
California Department of Fish & Wildlife
Phone: 559-243-4014, Ext. 292
Email: Patrick.Ferguson@wildlife.ca.gov

Lori Smith

Supervisory Fish Biologist
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Phone: 209-334-2968, Ext. 343
Email: Lori_Smith@fws.gov

Questions about SJRRP or its field activities on public and private land should be directed to the SJRRP Public Affairs Specialist and Landowner Coordinator using the information provided below.

Josh Newcom

Public Affairs Specialist
San Joaquin River Restoration Program
Phone: (916) 978-5508
Email: sneucom@usbr.gov

Craig Moyle

Landowner Coordinator
San Joaquin River Restoration Program
Phone: 916-418-8248
Email: craig.moyle@mwhglobal.com

Contact the SJRRP Hotline, 916-978-4398, or email RestorationFlows@restoresjr.net if you see any problems or have any concerns.

**For more information, please visit the SJRRP Web site at www.restoresjr.net.
Field Advisories for activities are available at
www.restoresjr.net/activities/field/index.html**