

Field Activity Advisory

Adult Spring-Run Chinook Salmon Holding and Spawning Habitat Study

June – December 2019

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, as part of the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP), will release approximately 133 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 with available spawning habitat and inform managers of the need, or lack thereof, to implement spawning habitat restoration actions.



SJRRP biologists tracking Chinook salmon using acoustic telemetry

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

What: Approximately 133 adult spring-run Chinook salmon from brood years 2013- 2017, raised at the Interim Salmon Conservation 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. All adult spring-run Chinook salmon will be individually marked, and offspring 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. 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 from private property with landowner permission.

When: June – December 2019

Recreational Fishing: No recreational fishing that uses bait, lures or other means to target salmon in the SJR above the Merced River confluence is allowed per state 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.

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

Josh Newcom

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San Joaquin River Restoration Program
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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/get-involved/field-advisories/**