

Field Activity Advisory

San Joaquin River Juvenile Salmon Trap and Transport Study

February 9 – May 31, 2015

This notice is to inform the public of an upcoming research study to trap and haul juvenile fall-run Chinook salmon from the Fresno area to downstream of the San Joaquin River (SJR) Restoration Area.

The purpose of the proposed action is to support the Settlement Restoration Goal by taking adaptive management actions to respond to unsuitable environmental and passage conditions in years when fish will not be able to emigrate on their own volition. The effort will evaluate the feasibility of implementing similar temporary actions in the future, and monitor fish movements in certain areas of the SJR during dry hydrologic water-year types as defined by the Restoration Settlement, where no flow pulses are available to cue juvenile salmon to downstream migration under low water conditions.

Who: Bureau of Reclamation.

What: This effort will begin to establish acceptable practices for capturing and transporting fish in subsequent low flow years when the SJR may not be contiguous throughout the Restoration Area. In the fall 2014, 510 adult fall-run were translocated to Reach 1 of the SJR and more than 80 spawning redds (nests where eggs were laid) were documented. The successful outmigration of juvenile salmon is critical for survival to adulthood and to support the goal of the Restoration Program to restore Chinook salmon to the SJR. Factors determining successful outmigration include suitable water temperatures, adequate and timely flow for downstream movement, and a passable watercourse, none of which are available in some reaches of the Restoration Area due to low flow water conditions. If successful, similar actions could be used in the future with juvenile salmon when flows limit the connectivity of the river.



Photo: 2014 juvenile fish collection weir maintenance and operation.

To capture fish, temporary fence weirs will be installed at four locations on the San Joaquin River from Highway 41 to downstream of Highway 99 Bridge. The fence weirs would be constructed from bank to bank, using wire mesh panels and supporting metal posts leading to a collection box. Fish would enter the collection box through a V-shaped passageway that inhibits exit. Restrictive bars at the collection box entrance would allow smaller fish to enter and block larger fish (i.e., predators). In addition to weirs, temporary fish collection nets will be installed at a location downstream of Highway 99 Bridge and a rotary screw trap temporarily installed near Highway 99.

Temporary fish collection structures will include flashing safety lights and flagging to alert boaters. As appropriate, temporary fence weirs will include boat passage with bright paint and signage to direct boaters. Reclamation will place buoys and signage to alert boaters of the temporary fish collection structures.

Collection boxes will be checked for fish and weirs cleaned of debris daily. Fish will be collected from all sites and transported to the downstream release site daily.

When: Juvenile fall-run Chinook salmon trap and haul activities will occur from mid-February through May 31, 2015, depending on hydrologic conditions. Following completion of the study, fish collection structures will be removed.



Photo of juvenile Chinook salmon.

Where: Predetermined sampling locations within Reach 1 of the San Joaquin River Restoration Area from Highway 41 to downstream of Highway 99.

Considerations: Access to the locations will occur from the public right-of-way or in areas where private landowners have granted access.

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

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Questions about the SJRRP's field activities on public and private land should be directed to the SJRRP Outreach Coordinator or Landowner Coordinator using the information provided below.

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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/activities/field/index.html