

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

News Release



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USFWS Announces It Will Release About 4.5 million Salmon Smolts from Coleman National Fish Hatchery Onsite Beginning Friday

Sacramento – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced today it will release approximately 4.5 million fall Chinook salmon smolts from the Coleman National Fish Hatchery (NFH) near Anderson, CA. The fish will be released onsite into Battle Creek beginning Friday. Last week, due to anticipated poor conditions in the lower Sacramento River and eastern Delta, the Service trucked about 2.5 million salmon smolts to acclimation pens in Rio Vista, CA, for release into the western Delta. Recent rains have resulted in better forecasted conditions, allowing this group of smolts to be released onsite, as is the normal practice for Coleman NFH.

Coleman NFH typically releases about 12 million fall Chinook smolts annually into Battle Creek, a tributary of the Sacramento River, allowing them to complete the imprinting cycle during their outmigration to the ocean. A continuing severe drought in the Central Valley of California, however, is producing conditions in the Sacramento River and Delta that may be detrimental to the survival of juvenile salmon. In response, the USFWS developed a set of triggers to be used to determine if an alternate release strategy would be necessary to avoid unacceptably high levels of juvenile fish mortality. That strategy involved trucking the smolts to sites closer to the ocean if any triggers were met as the smolts became ready for release. Last week, some triggers were met and the USFWS trucked about 2.5 million salmon smolts to Rio Vista for release. However, recent rains have improved river and Delta conditions, resulting in none of the triggers for trucking being met. Therefore, the USFWS will release this group of fish onsite this Friday.

The decision to truck or release fish onsite is based on continual assessment and forecasts of environmental conditions. The next group of juvenile salmon will be ready for release on April 23. At that time, the USFWS will reassess the triggers to determine if those fish can be released onsite or will need to be trucked to the western Delta.

Coleman National Fish Hatchery was constructed in 1942 as part of the mitigation measures to help preserve significant runs of Chinook salmon threatened by the loss of natural spawning areas resulting from the construction of Shasta and Keswick dams on the upper Sacramento River. Coleman NFH contributes up to 100,000 Chinook annually to the ocean fisheries as well as thousands of fish for the fisheries in the Sacramento River.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov/cno>. Connect with our [Facebook page](#), follow our [tweets](#), watch our [YouTube Channel](#), and download photos from our [Flickr page](#).

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