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Region

# Species in the Spotlight:

## Sacramento River Winter-Run Chinook Salmon



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*The Sacramento River Winter-Run salmon is one of NOAA Fisheries' Species in the Spotlight.*

### Background

Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) are an iconic Part California's natural heritage that must be preserved in order to ensure the economic and recreational wellbeing of future generations. Millions of wild salmon once returned to spawn in the foothills and mountains of California's Central Valley. Streams fed by rainfall, snowmelt, and cold water springs encircled the valley, fostering a diversity and abundance of Chinook salmon. The endangered Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon are particularly important among California's salmon runs because they exhibit a life-history strategy found nowhere else on the West Coast. These Chinook salmon are unique in that they spawn during the summer months when air temperatures usually approach their warmest.

As a result winter-run Chinook salmon require stream reaches with



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*Illustration of a Chinook salmon. Credit: NOAA Fisheries*



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[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2015/09/  
spotlight\\_chinook\\_salmon.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2015/09/spotlight_chinook_salmon.html)