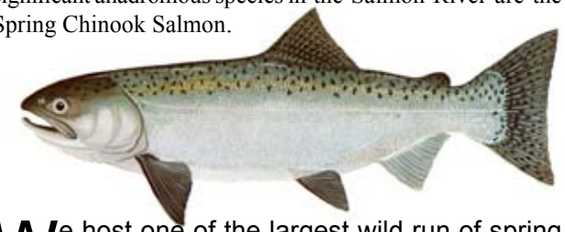
SALMON RIVER RESTORATION COUNCIL

has been working to improve the condition of the Salmon River watershed by increasing stakeholders cooperation, planning, education, communication, training, assessment, research, and "hands on" restoration methods to restore the aquatic and terrestrial ecosytems highlighting anadromous fisheries.

For tens of thousands of years the rivers of Northern CA have been the site of an annual miracle. Each year runs of wild salmon and steelhead continue to fight the current, returning from the ocean to the Salmon River to spawn. People have been linked to these fish for their subsistence and culture for thousands of years and remain so today. A homing tendency has led to the evolution of "stocks" that are sub-populations inhabiting individual rivers and migrating at different times. These wild salmonids as a whole, have survived, though certain stocks have been pushed to extinction by a combination of events, such as: Poor water quality; Migration barriers; Over fishing; Hatcheries; Droughts; Floods; Ocean conditions (El Nino-etc.); Catastrophic fires; Agriculture; Roads, Mining, and Logging. The creation of **7 dams** in the Upper Klamath basin significantly altered river conditions for fish and totally blocked the migration of salmonids to the Upper Klamath Basin. The Upper Basin consists of about 1/3 of the entire Klamath Basin. The most significant anadromous species in the Salmon River are the Spring Chinook Salmon.



We host one of the largest wild run of spring chinook remaining in CA. Recent population surveys show that their numbers have decreased to returns of only several hundred fish. Spring Chinook are considered a "sensitive" species of concern by the US Forest Service in CA. "King" salmon or chinook include both spring and fall runs in the Klamath. Although the "springers" were once the most abundant and prized chinook and historically revered by several Klamath tribes in unified ceremonies, they are currently afforded very little protection in regulation and policy. The in-river harvest is based on the estimated run size and is divided between commercial fishing, ocean fishing and the local tribes. Currently, the springers are not recognized by federal and state agencies in the Klamath Basin as being a separate evolutionary unit from fall run chinook. As a result, there are few management directives to protect them.

The Salmon River may hold one of the best opportunities for refugia for certain species of wild and anadromous fish due to its 1) Relatively intact biological nature with over 45% of the subbasin designated as wilderness, 2) Large component of public land, over 98% is federally managed and 3) Stakeholder involvement and strong community support.

Although there have been historic and some recent impacts to the watershed, the Salmon River remains one of the cleanest rivers left in CA if not in the West Coast. The subbasin water quality is unparalleled in the Klamath Basin. This is partly due to its remoteness and access difficulty. Resource extraction has been limited in the past century largely due to there being only 3 roads which access the watershed. These roads are one lane, landslide prone and two of the roads climb over 5500 feet.

The Salmon River community has a strong appreciation for its' fisheries. The SRRC has enlisted and trained several community members to assist managers in conducting fish counts and surveys on the Salmon River since 1992. We have provided over 500 volunteer person days surveying many species of anadromous fish at various life stages. All of the SRRC's formal fishery surveys are planned and coordinated with State and Federal agencies and local tribes.

The Spring Chinook /Summer Steelhead Population Surveys are conducted during the months of July~Aug. This popular event includes instruction and training on several subjects related to fish monitoring and restoration such as diving, water safety, fish habitat typing and juvenile fish identification.

Fish counters training in whitewater safety on the main stem of the Salmon

Fall Chinook Salmon carcass and spawning bed surveys are typically conducted for 6 weeks in Oct-Nov. Local volunteers work with personnel from managing groups to complete this annual survey. The results are used to determine what harvest levels should be set for the next year's ocean and in-river catch, as well as for determining fisheries presence in each subbasin and to identify use patterns of various habitat in each system.

Winter Steelhead surveys are held bi-weekly during April-May. This annual activity tracks the redds (nests) throughout the watershed. The habitats are monitored and fish barriers identified.

In addition to fisheries monitoring the Restoration Council has several cooperative activities underway to promote watershed health such as: Community education & training, Fire & Fuels management, Roads assessment & stewardship, Vegetation management- Native plant propagation and planting, Noxious weed control, Landslide stabilization, Reducing toxic materials and reducing impacts from resource users.

What can you do??

GET INVOLVED!!
ATTEND WORKSHOPS
and VOLUNTEER!!
Donations appreciated, too!

Protecting and improving the health of the rivers and forests may be the most important factor for sustaining our isolated communities. We all need to work together to improve the quality of our watershed.

We can't do it without you!

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SRRC's LONG TERM GOALS

Enlist community members in a cooperative approach to protect and restore the Salmon River aquatic and terrestial ecosystems.

Create economic stability in the community by diversifying job opportunities based on restoration and conservation.

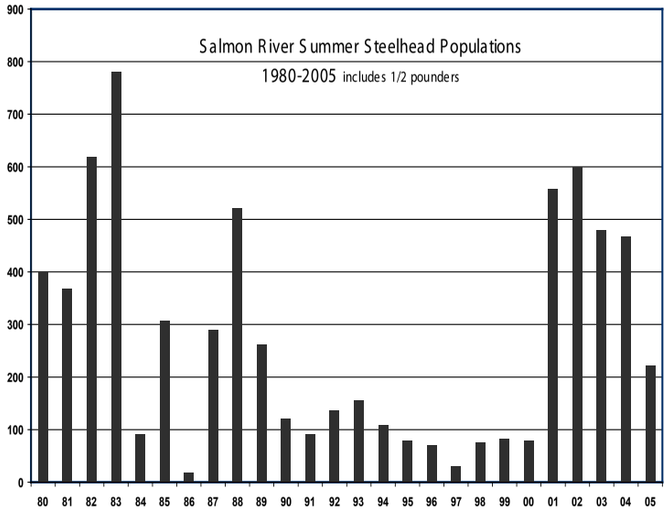
Promote cooperative planning, education and management efforts with the managing agencies, the local Native American Tribes and the communities.

Help fill the resource management gaps left by large governmental agencies which have a difficult time with small or nontraditional projects, in terms of both conception and implementation.

Partially funded by US Fish & Wildlife and the CA Dept of Fish & Game

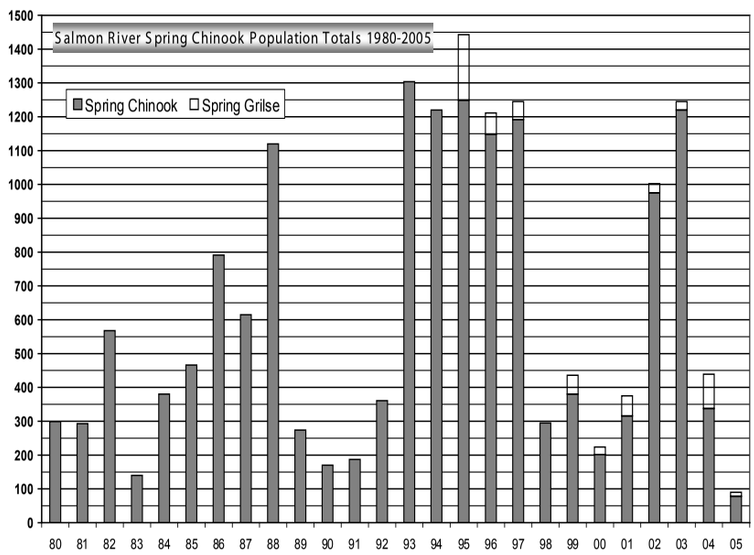
STEELHEAD TROUT Oncorhynchus mykiss

Steelhead spread their spawning migrations over a long period, historically entering streams throughout the year. Like the Chinook, there are currently at least 2 distinct run types left: Summer and Fall Steelhead. Summer steelies return to the river sexually immature beginning in April and hole up in deep pools of cold tributary streams until late fall/winter to commence spawning. They share the same needs as Coho for the smaller size spawning streams, but tend to go higher upstream. Winter steelhead populations have not been as well documented but we know they usually reenter the river between Dec. and Mar. and usually spawn immediately upon returning. Fingerling steelhead remain in the freshwater longer than our other salmonids, migrating out to the ocean after 2, or even 3, years. Half-pounders are small, sexually immature steelhead that return to freshwater after spending less than a year in the ocean;these populations are unique to Northern CA, Southern OR populations. Recent studies show that some native rainbow trout become steelhead under certain conditions. Steelhead populations on the Pacific west coast have been steadily declining for the last 30 years, with the summer run being very low. The 2000/2001 season for winter run steelhead was more promising.

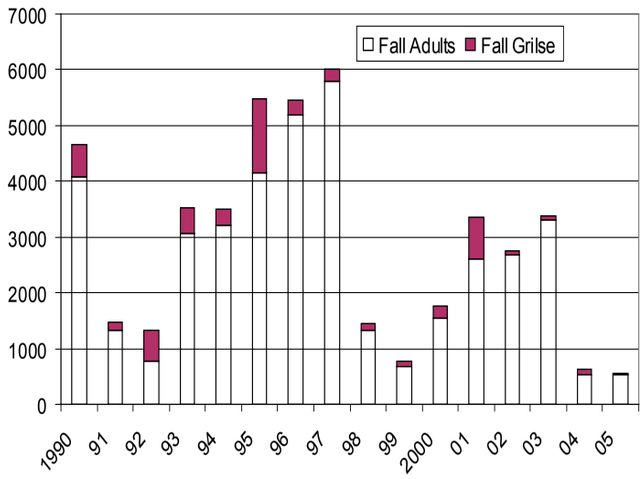


SPRING CHINOOK (King) SALMON Oncorhynchus tshawytscha **-A RUN UNIQUE TO THE SALMON RIVER**

Spring run chinook were once the most abundant salmon in CA and in the Klamath Basin. The Upper Klamath Basin was once the most prolific areas for spawning. Inter-tribal world renewal ceremonies at the mouth of the Salmon River (or Katamin "the Center of the World") historically insured that the spring salmon made it to the spawning grounds in the upper reaches in the Basin. Today the state-wide annual run totals of wild "Springers" can be less than 1000 fish in some years and exists only in the Sacramento and Klamath Basins. This almost extinct run is thought to be low due to two main causes. One reason is that by 1910 canneries at the mouth of the Klamath River had seriously depleted the numbers. The second reason is that seven dams in the mid-upper Klamath completely block all access for fish to the Upper Basin which is thought to be the most used spawning habitat historically. In the last 20 years the spring chinook count in the Salmon River averaged only 600 fish, with the total count being less than 200 in two different years. The 2000 run of fish was 222, which is the lowest year since 1980. Although current genetic data identifies fall and spring chinook as the same species, these runs have significantly different life history and habitat needs. Some of the differences between spring and fall chinook include, Springers: 1) Enter the river from late spring/summer prior to full maturity; 2) During the summer they move upriver and wait out the summers in the in the coolest waters, deepest pools and best hiding places; 3) Spawning occurs earlier in the fall during Sept/Oct; 4) Use spawning and rearing habitat higher up in the system; 5) Juveniles mature slower in the colder headwaters and fry stay in the river longer. The juveniles head out to sea where they mature to be the largest salmon, averaging 20 lbs. Not enough is known about these fish to confidently predict the big problems. More attention should be given to the Salmon River Spring Chinook which is currently listed as a "sensitive" species by the USFS in Region 5 (CA). A Spring Chinook Recovery Plan was developed by concerned parties in 1991 to help these fish. Many feel that with the numbers being so low we need to reopen the plan and update it as needed.



Salmon River Fall Chinook Count 1990-2002



FALL RUN CHINOOK (King) SALMON Oncorhynchus tshawytscha

Fall chinook enter the river from the end of summer through fall with a late run continuing until Feb. Our fall chinook spawning is at its peak in Oct. and Nov. Shortly after emerging, young chinook make their way slowly down river. By June, as the water level drops, the fingerlings are well on their way to the ocean where they feed for 2-5 years before beginning the cycle again. Both chinook and coho die after spawning. These fish are regulated by the Dept. of Fish & Game.

COHO (Silver) SALMON Oncorhynchus kisutch

The red-sided, green-backed coho salmon arrive in alarmingly small numbers to spawn in only a few of CAs' rivers from Sept~Nov before spawning in Oct~Jan. They'll spend one season smolting (a change necessary to enter saltwater) and usually two seasons in the ocean before they return to their spawning ground. Coho often spawn in tributaries that flow only in winter. They are smaller and more agile than the chinook; then travel higher up in the system and use the smaller tributaries, underscoring the importance of even the smallest creeks. Juvenile coho and steelhead juveniles rearing in the same small streams tend to use different areas of the creek. Coho are known to stay in the margins or edge of the streams and prefer slower water. After gravitating downstream they'll be found in tight schools nearer the surface than steelhead. This species was listed as an "Endangered" species in 1998 and is afforded extra protection.