Battle Creek Watershed: March 2011 Update
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) Activities

RED BLUFF FISH & WILDLIFE OFFICE    JIM SMITH, PROJECT LEADER

Hatchery Evaluation Program:    Kevin Niemela

Following completion of brood year 2011 hatchery spawning seasons for late-fall Chinook and steelhead, the Hatchery Evaluation program staff are working through coded-wire tag (CWT) recovery, reading, and reporting. More than 4,100 coded-wire tags recovered during the fall Chinook spawning season have been extracted, read, and verified, and the data have been reported to the Coast-wide database. Nearly 4,300 coded-wire tags were recovered during the late-fall Chinook spawning season; all have been extracted and read, and we are currently working through second-reads for verification.

Sacramento River Winter Chinook Carcass Survey
DFG and USFWS staff completed the 2010 Sacramento River Winter Chinook Carcass Survey in August. This information is used to estimate the abundance of winter Chinook spawners.

Battle Creek Fall Chinook Counting Weir
DFG and USFWS staff have completed operation of the seasonally installed fish counting weir in lower Battle Creek. The fish counting weir was operated from mid-August through mid-November 2010, for the purpose of estimating the abundance of fall Chinook in Battle Creek. Final run size estimates will be derived by DFG after the data has been checked for accuracy. The final data is reported in Grand Tab (the DFG annual report summarizing Chinook population estimates for the Central Valley; http://www.calfish.org/tabid/104/Default.aspx ).

Battle Creek Monitoring    Matt Brown

Adult Salmonid Monitoring

We began the 2011 monitoring season on March 1, 2011. A new process will occur this year: as fish swim through the ladder, they will travel into the Coleman NFH spawning building for bio-sampling (measurement, enumeration, documentation and genetic samples) by RBFWO and CNFH staff. On a daily basis, fish will be bio-sampled and released upstream. This process will continue until March 28, when the upstream ladder will open and fish will swim into Battle Creek above the barrier weir.

The trap in the ladder will not be used for bio-sampling this year because it appears to have delayed fish passage last year. Note that two years of radio-telemetry studies indicate that the ladder does not delay fish passage. The fisheries agencies will consider modifying the trap or its location, or building a new trap, potentially in the monitoring vault which was built for this purpose.
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Spring Chinook Snorkel Surveys
During the period 9/20/2010-11/4/2010, we completed six snorkel surveys to count spring Chinook salmon redds and sample Chinook carcasses. This year our sampling effort increased from three to six surveys in order to recover as many carcasses as possible. Our objective with increasing sampling effort was to attempt to collect as many coded wire tags as possible to determine which hatchery the tagged fish had originated from (high numbers of tagged fish had been seen on video footage). During the snorkel surveys, we counted a total of 94 redds and recovered seven coded-wire tags from carcasses. Information on the coded-wire tags indicated all seven fish were from the Feather River Hatchery (in Oroville). Six fish were spring Chinook and one was a fall Chinook.

Juvenile Salmonid Monitoring (November – July)
We began the 2010-2011 juvenile salmonid production monitoring season on November 18, 2010. As of March 3, 2011, we have captured 3,775 spring Chinook salmon in our rotary screw trap.

Recently completed annual reports on adult salmonid monitoring, juvenile salmonid monitoring, and fish community studies are available at http://www.fws.gov/redbluff/cypia.html

COLEMAN NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY COMPLEX
SCOTT HAMELBERG, PROJECT LDR

Fish Releases:
Over 1 million Late-fall Chinook salmon were released in December 2010.
Approximately 700,000 steelhead juveniles were released in early January 2011.
Over 120,000 winter Chinook salmon were released from Livingston Stone NFH on February 3, 2011.

Spawning:
Spawning of fall Chinook salmon was completed prior to Thanksgiving 2010. Adequate numbers of adults returned to achieve the egg collection target.

Spawning of both late-fall Chinook salmon and steelhead began in December 2010 and was completed at the end of February 2011.

Winter Chinook:
In the first week of collection, two adults have been retained (John Rueth, LS NFH).

Outreach:
New video on the Salmon Festival completed. Friends Group and CNFH staff will have informational booth at the March 4-6th Shasta Fairgrounds “Sport, Boat and RV Show”.

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