

Larger salmon releases planned after California fish die-off

The Associated Press January 28, 2015 Updated 43 minutes ago

REDDING, Calif. — Officials plan to more than triple the number of endangered winter-run Chinook salmon released into the Sacramento River following a massive die-off last year.

The Redding Record-Searchlight reports (<http://bit.ly/1wANWlx>) that in February the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plans to release about 600,000 into the water below the Keswick Dam on the Sacramento River.

Agency Spokesman Steve Martarano says the first of three releases from the Livingston Stone National Fish Hatchery north of Redding is expected next week.

Warm water is to blame for killing off about 95 percent of the eggs and recently hatched fish released from the hatchery. The winter-run salmon rely on water below 60 degrees for spawning.

The drought forced water levels in Lake Shasta down.

During normal years, colder water for fish is pulled from a deeper pool beneath the surface of the lake and sent through the dam into the river.

But after three years of drought, the lake fell to its second-lowest level on record and the cold water was depleted.

State Department of Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman Jordan Traverso said typically about 27 percent of the young salmon released from the hatchery survive. State officials estimate survival last year at roughly 5 percent.

"It means there is a high likelihood that there may not be many, if any, naturally spawned winter-run returning to spawn in 2017," Traverso told the newspaper.

Other methods will be used to restore salmon levels. Officials also plan to rescue fish stranded in warm water pools in the Sacramento River, release fish into the cooler water of Battle Creek and do more restoration work on the creek.

Information from: Record Searchlight, <http://redding.com>

Join The Conversation

[Copyright](#)

© 2015 www.fresnobee.com and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.fresnobee.com>