Salmon in the Stanislaus River

Population counts conducted throughout the year suggest that the Stanislaus River currently has enough habitat to support about 2,500 female salmon and approximately 1.5 million juvenile salmon.

Roughly the same number of salmon spawned in 2013 and 2014, yet the number of juveniles produced in 2015 was about 75% lower than the previous spring. Water temperatures were unusually high during spawning and egg incubation in 2015, likely resulting in the demise of a substantial number of eggs.

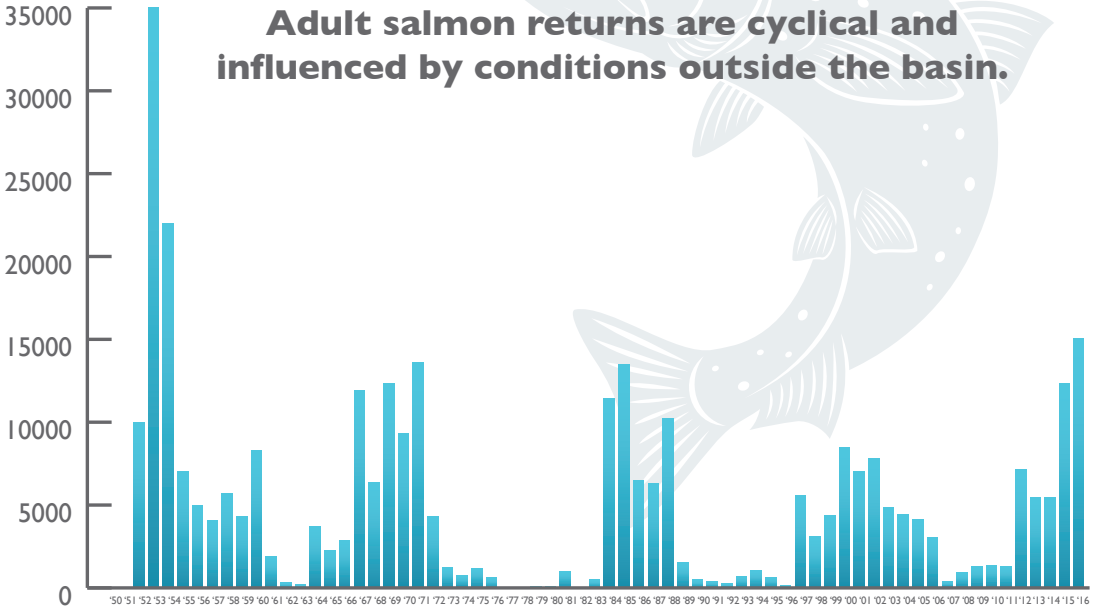
Trying to improve salmon populations by increasing flow is not based on scientific evidence. Many studies prove increasing flow does not create more salmon habitat in the Stanislaus River.

The most effective way to produce more juvenile salmon in the river is through habitat improvement, augmenting spawning habitat, increasing juvenile rearing habitat availability at contemporary flows and reducing predation.

Predation is the biggest cause of mortality for young fish. Non-native predators such as largemouth bass, smallmouth bass and striped bass have been estimated to eat 95% or more of young salmon before they reach the Pacific Ocean.

Weir monitoring in the Stanislaus River has revealed that the majority of returning Chinook salmon are strays from Northern California hatcheries, leading to interbreeding with wild stock and reduced genetic integrity.

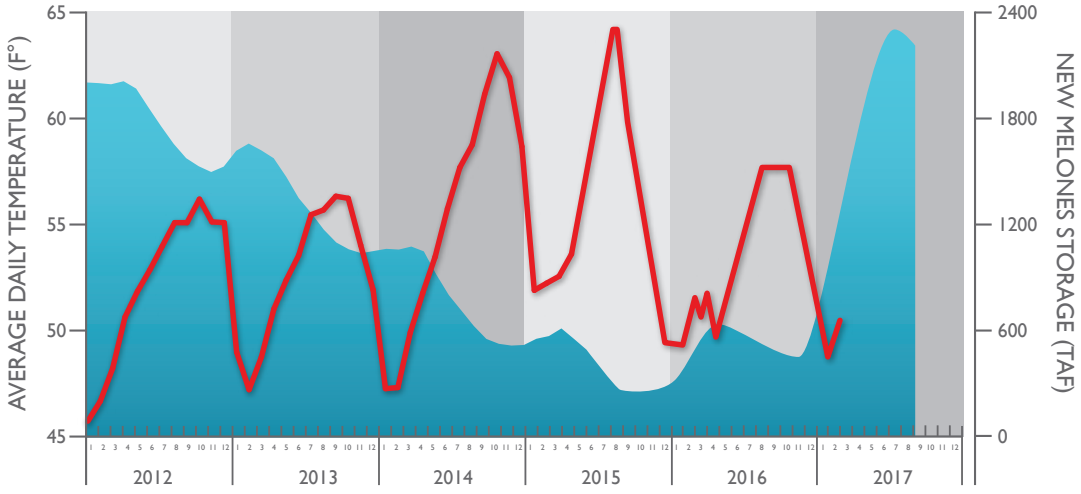
Adult salmon returns are cyclical and influenced by conditions outside the basin.



Spawning Adults 1950-2016

Low reservoir levels result in higher water temperatures!

Shallower, slower rivers are warmer, especially in the summer. With the level at New Melones Reservoir approaching an all-time low, there is a risk that there won't be enough cold water to release to protect fish.



Source: FISHBIO