

Klamath River Chinook Reoccupying Historic Habitat

November 3, 2024



The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) reports all adult fall-run Chinook salmon have been occupying and spawning in newly accessible habitat behind the former dam locations on the Klamath River. These are the first observations of anadromous fish returning to California tributaries upstream of the former Iron Gate Dam, since 1961.

October 15, spawning fall-run Chinook were observed in Jenny Creek, a Klamath River tributary 4.3 miles upstream from the recently re-moved Iron Gate Dam. Iron Gate was the southernmost barrier of the four dams removed from The Klamath.

In addition to the returning fall-run Chinook, an adult Pacific lamprey was observed swimming through CDFW's fishermen counting station, in Jenny Creek, three weeks ago.

One of the major goals of the Klamath River dam removal is to reestablish viable, wild, and self-sustaining populations of anadromous fish species for conservation, ecological benefits and to enhance Tribal,

commercial and recreational fisheries.

These returning adult salmon mark a major step toward reaching these goals.

CDFW's post dam-removal management strategy is to mostly allow these ocean-going fish species to naturally recolonize the 420 miles of newly accessible habitat.