

Yurok Fisheries Department Encounters Major Spike in Dead Juvenile Salmon on the Klamath River

June 14, 2021



On Sunday, the Yurok Fisheries Department's Fish Disease Monitoring Crew counted 361 dead juvenile Chinook salmon in a rotary screw trap on the Klamath River, near Weitchpec. This is by far the single highest daily count of dead baby salmon since the fisheries department started collecting data on the catastrophic fish kill in early May. The deceased fish present the physical signs of a disease called *Ceratonova shasta*, which is killing salmon at an extremely rapid rate.

Typically, juvenile fish kills go unseen because a broad array of birds, mammals and even other fish species quickly consume sick baby salmon. It appears the fish are dying so fast that nature can't keep up. In mid-May, 98 percent of sampled salmon were severely infected by *C. shasta*. The disease is expected to eliminate an entire year class of fish, which will reduce the Klamath River's already imperiled salmon runs for many years to come.

For a people who depend on salmon for their physical and spiritual wellbeing, it is excruciatingly painful to watch this unfold in our backyard. No words can explain the level of trauma experienced from seeing baby fish die every day.

