

AB 2684 (Stone)

Hatchery Salmon Research for Population Restoration

SUMMARY

AB 2684 establishes further marking and tagging practices for salmon raised and released from California hatcheries, allowing for the collection of better scientific data aimed at revitalizing our salmon populations and fisheries.

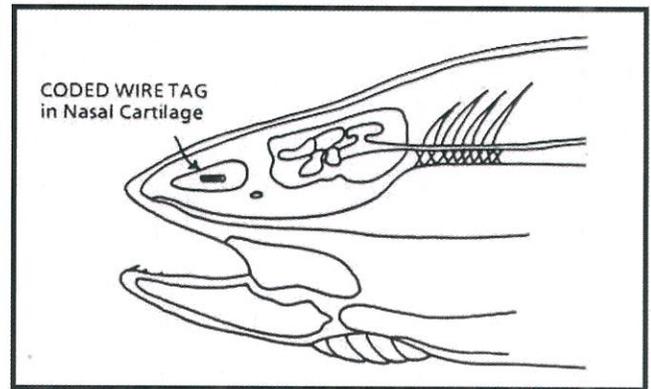
PROBLEM

Wild stocks of salmon in California's waters have gone from being some of the largest salmon runs in North America to some salmon runs being listed on the endangered species list. Most losses in population numbers are attributed to habitat loss through the building of dams and other operations to divert water resources. Seven salmon hatcheries, built as a mitigation response to the diminishing populations, have been a key tool in attempts to revitalize the stocks, but there is insufficient scientific data to further address and restore salmon stocks to appropriate levels.

Research to evaluate the effect of hatchery salmon and steelhead on California's wild stocks was funded by the federal government, conducted by the California Hatchery Scientific Review Group, and published with various recommendations¹. The researchers identified the need to control for the undesirable impacts of hatchery salmon on natural salmon: (1) displacement of dwindling natural populations by more robust hatchery origin populations, (2) genetic and ecological risks posed by reduced diversity among populations, (3) underestimation of natural salmon by ambiguous counts of post-release hatchery salmon. The twin goals of proper conservation with a complimentary and abundant commercial harvest have yet to be achieved due to a lack of proper data.

Although current hatchery tagging operations make use of coded-wire tagging for a small subset of hatchery origin salmon, the usefulness of data currently gathered is limited by a lack of full tagging

and tracking among the hatchery population. In general, hatchery operations have only been able to attain a 25% rate of coded-wire tagging of hatchery runs. Tags contain microscopically etched-on data for site-of-origin, release date, and distinguish a hatchery salmon from wild salmon with the use of a tag detecting wand.



SOLUTION

By requiring the coded-wire tagging of hatchery Chinook salmon, Coho salmon and Steelhead, and the adoption of policies supported by scientific research and findings, AB 2684 will set California on a data-driven path to abundant conservation and restoration.

SUPPORT

California Association for Recreational Fishing
California-Nevada Conference, International Union
of Operating Engineers
Northwest Marine Technology, Inc.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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¹ California Hatchery Scientific Review Group (California HSRG). 2012. California Hatchery Review Report. Prepared for the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. June 2012. WEB LINK: <http://cahatcheryreview.com/reports/>