



State of California
Department of Fish and Wildlife

M e m o r a n d u m

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To: Kevin Thomas
Environmental Program Manager- Region 2 Fisheries
California Department of Fish and Wildlife

From: Ben Ewing
District Fisheries Biologist
Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, and Lake Counties
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Cc: Fish Files

Re: Clear Lake hitch fish rescue from Cole Creek tributary, Lake County

On March 21, 25, 28, and 31, 2016, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) personnel, along with a member from the Robinson Rancheria at Clear Lake, conducted a multi-day fish rescue on an unnamed tributary to Cole Creek (Lake County). The purpose of the rescues was to capture and relocate Clear Lake hitch (*Lavinia exilicauda chi*) (HCH-C), a threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). All HCH-C that were rescued were released at Clear Lake State Park where Cole Creek enters Clear Lake.

On March 18, 2016, a flooded field with a reported 1000 HCH-C had been identified by a property owner of the Green Acres community to a member of the Chi Council for the Clear Lake hitch (Figures 1 and 2). On March 21, 2016, a member of the Department and a member of the Robinson Rancheria, assessed and conducted a fish rescue on the unnamed tributary/agricultural field to Cole Creek upstream of the Clark Road Crossing (Figure 3). Eleven HCH-C were collected using various sized dip nets and placed into a cooler with an operating aerator. No mortalities were documented at the release (Figure 4). Fifty-six HCH-C were found dead in the field. The dead HCH-C were measured for standard and total length in millimeters (mm), checked for passive integrated transponder (P.I.T.) tags, and disposed of off-site. Average total length for the dead HCH-C was 306 mm (12 in.).

On March 25, 2016, members of the Department and a member of the Robinson Rancheria conducted a second fish rescue on the unnamed tributary/agricultural field to Cole Creek upstream of the Clark Road Crossing. A total of 206 HCH-C were collected using a backpack electrofisher and various sized dip nets and placed into a cooler with an operating aerator. Three mortalities were documented at the release.

On March 28, 2016, members of the Department conducted a third fish rescue on the unnamed tributary/agricultural field to Cole Creek upstream of the Clark Road Crossing. A total of 339 HCH-C were collected using a backpack electrofisher and various sized dip nets and placed into a cooler with an operating aerator. Three mortalities were documented at the release.

On March 31, 2016, members of the Department conducted a fourth and final fish rescue on the unnamed tributary/agricultural field to Cole Creek upstream of the Clark Road Crossing. A total of 108 HCH-C were collected using a backpack shocker and various sized dip nets and placed into a cooler with an operating aerator. Three mortalities were documented at the release.



Figure 1. Agricultural field off Glebe Road, Kelseyville, Lake County (3/21/2016).



Figure 2. Unnamed tributary to Cole Creek
off Glebe Road, Kelseyville, Lake County
(3/21/2016)



Figure 3. Unnamed tributary rescue site and release site at Clear Lake State Park, Lake County.



Figure 4. One of 11 HCH-C being released at the Cole Creek mouth on 3/21/2016.

Due to the added stress of measuring and tagging the rescued HCH-C, the Department chose to exclude that from the rescue. Although rescued fish were not measured or tagged, they were scanned for P.I.T. tags that had previously been injected into the HCH-C. One HCH-C rescued was a recapture that was tagged earlier in 2016 from Kelsey Creek.

