

SAN JOAQUIN HATCHERY

Self-Guided Tour



Welcome to the San Joaquin Fish Hatchery, part of Friant Interactive Nature Site. This facility is located in the town of Friant along the banks of the mighty San Joaquin River.

PURPOSE

The purpose of San Joaquin Hatchery is to grow fish that are released into lakes and streams for your fishing enjoyment! It was originally built in 1954 in response to habitat loss after the completion of the Friant Dam. The hatchery went into full production in 1955 making it over 65 years old. It is one of the 22 fish hatcheries operated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

FISH RAISED

San Joaquin Hatchery raises Rainbow trout, Golden trout, Brown trout, Brook trout and Kokanee salmon. The hatchery is a major production hatchery with up to 3 million fish on site and releases over 1 million fish each year.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE FISH?

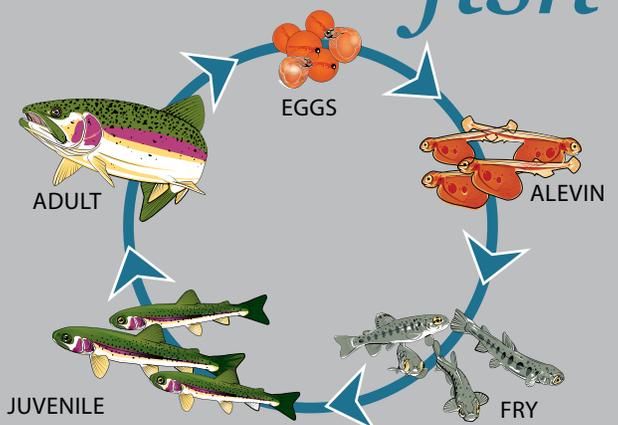
The fish are released, also known as fish plants, or stocked into lakes and streams. These releases occur in 12 counties throughout central California. A stocking map showing the locations where the fish are released can be found in the kiosk in front of the raceways. Information can also be found at www.wildlife.ca.gov/fishing.

THE HATCHERY BUILDING

(#1 ON MAP)

The hatchery building is the place to view trout in different life stages. Fish lay eggs, the eggs hatch into alevin, then develop into fry. The fry begins eating and matures into a juvenile or fingerling (finger sized). Automatic feeders hang above the metal troughs dispensing feed every half an hour. Hatchery workers watch over the young fish every day to make sure they are healthy. Once they are 3-4 months old the fish are transferred to the outdoor raceways.

The LIFE CYCLE of a fish



FOOD (#2 ON MAP)

Just like you, fish need food and water. Outside of the hatchery building you will see very tall metal bins on stilts. The different bins hold different sizes of food. As the fish grow larger, they eat bigger nuggets of specially manufactured fish food containing protein, nutrients, and vitamins. Each day the hatchery goes through approximately 3,000 pounds of fish food. To aid in feeding the fish, hatchery staff drive a custom-made cart filled with fish food up and down the raceways 3 times a day dispensing breakfast, lunch, and dinner to the fish.

MEAT ROOM (#3 ON THE MAP, EMPLOYEES ONLY)

The large building beyond the feed bins, is lovingly referred to as the Meat Room. Historically, before manufactured fish food was available, employees spent time concocting their own fish food. The recipe consisted of raw ground beef liver, milk, and cooked wheat.

RACEWAYS (#4 ON MAP)

Raceways are the long rectangular concrete rearing ponds where fish mature from fingerlings into adults. The San Joaquin River is the perfect source for the cool clean water the fish need to live. Water is temporarily diverted from the river and gravity fed through the facility before returning to the river. Water temperatures range from 51-59 degrees Fahrenheit at the hatchery.

RELEASING

Most rainbow trout are released when they are ½ pound or 10-12 inches long. The majority of fish are 9-12 months old when released into local waterways. Sometimes a select few are raised to become 'trophy trout' weighing in at a whopping 4 pounds or more making them amazing to catch!

Specialized trucks are used to transport and release the fish, with some holding up to 5,000 pounds of fish in one load. All trucks are equipped with water tanks and canisters of oxygen which keep the water oxygenated for the fish during transport.

Kokanee salmon are released when they are only 1-2 inches allowing them to fully develop in the lake. But some trout really go out in style, soaring high in the sky before being released as air-plants. Once a year these juvenile fish are loaded onto airplanes and flown to remote high mountain lakes. Because of their torpedo like shape and the thin layer of slime covering their bodies, the fish can easily break through the surface of the lake water and survive without injury.

FISHING

Visit www.wildlife.ca.gov for more information on fishing, fish stocking locations, species, regulations, and licenses.

QUESTIONS (#5 ON MAP)

San Joaquin Hatchery Office is open Monday–Friday from 7:00 am – 3:00 pm.

HOURS

San Joaquin Hatchery is open to the public 7:00 am – 3:00 pm everyday.

San Joaquin River Parkway Trail and Small Fry Children's Trail is open sunrise to sunset everyday.

GO FISH!



Friant Interactive Nature Site

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Hatchery Hours: Open Daily 7:30 am - 3:00 pm

