

State of California
The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

ANNUAL REPORT

2025 ANGLER CREEL SURVEYS IN THE LOWER KLAMATH RIVER



On the cover: Downstream view of the Klamath River mainstem from the mouth of Blue Creek.

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KLAMATH RIVER PROJECT – Sport Fish Restoration Act and Trinity River Restoration
Program Funding

2025 ANGLER CREEL SURVEYS IN THE LOWER KLAMATH RIVER

by

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2025 ANGLER CREEL SURVEYS IN THE LOWER KLAMATH RIVER

ABSTRACT

The in-river fishery for Chinook Salmon was closed in 2025 in the Klamath River basin. A limited creel survey was conducted along the lower Klamath River (Pacific Ocean to Hwy 96 Bridge in Weitchpec). The survey ran from August 6 through September 30, (during the first seven weeks of the normal fall survey period). The survey was not conducted during the spring survey period, as effort is generally very low, and was expected to be markedly less due to the fishery closure. The survey estimated the recreational fishery effort, releases of Chinook Salmon and the catch and release and harvest of Steelhead Trout. For years in which the salmon fishery is open, a goal of the creel survey is to help determine the contributions made by Trinity River Hatchery, Iron Gate Hatchery/Fall Creek Hatchery produced salmonids to the annual recreational harvest in the lower Klamath River. This year the survey was carried out to monitor potential accidental or illegal harvest of Chinook Salmon, monitor steelhead angling effort and harvest, and to provide outreach and education to anglers unaware of the fishery closure. Information provided by the creel survey helps assess the production and harvest goals of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, as well as providing real-time monitoring needed for in-season recreational harvest during the Klamath River Fall Chinook (KRFC) fishery.

In 2025, both the spring and fall Chinook Salmon fisheries were closed to recreational fishing. The non-quota managed fishery was closed from July 1 through August 14 and the last 9 days were monitored. The quota managed KRFC fishery was closed beginning August 15 and monitored only through September 30, as opposed to November 4 for years in which the fishery is open. Results from the 2025 creel surveys and subsequent Klamath River Technical Team review indicate an estimated harvest of zero Chinook Salmon. Subsequently, no hatchery-origin Chinook Salmon were encountered. Seasonal summaries and interannual comparisons of angler effort, angler harvest, harvest timing, catch and release estimates, length frequencies, hatchery compositions and coded-wire tag recoveries are presented.

TASK OBJECTIVES

- Quantify total recreational harvest, angler effort, catch-and-release, and catch per effort of salmonids in the lower Klamath River.
- Determine a cut-off date, or extent of overlap between spring and fall run Chinook Salmon entering the Klamath River.
- Determine the contribution to recreational harvest from fish produced at Trinity River and Iron Gate/Fall Creek hatcheries.

INTRODUCTION

The Klamath River basin is regarded as one of the most important contributors of Chinook Salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) to California's commercial, tribal and recreational fisheries. The salmonid resources are composed of both naturally-produced and hatchery-produced salmonids originating from the Klamath and Trinity Rivers. Angler harvest of Chinook Salmon has been monitored by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department/CDFW) to provide data for run-size estimates since 1978 (Boydston 1979, 1980; Lee 1984a, 1984b, 1985, Lau 1992-1997; Pisano 1998; Borok 1999-2004, Hanson 2005-2009). This report presents recreational creel survey results collected from the lower Klamath River between the river mouth at the Pacific Ocean and the Hwy 96 Bridge in Weitchpec (confluence of the Trinity River) from August 6, 2025 through September 30, 2025. The 2025 recreational creel surveys continue to support CDFW's annual monitoring efforts and adds to existing recreational harvest baseline information.

A goal of the creel survey is to estimate the contributions made to the annual recreational fish harvest in the lower Klamath River by fish produced at Trinity River Hatchery (TRH), Iron Gate Hatchery (IGH)/Fall Creek Hatchery (FCH), and in natural spawning areas. In addition, annual creel survey data helps measure progress towards meeting production and harvest objectives of the Trinity River Restoration Program and contributes to the management of fall Chinook Salmon stocks across the west coast by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC). Information provided by the fall creel survey is also used by CDFW to determine, in real time, when recreational anglers have reached the in-river recreational harvest sub-quota of adult fall Chinook Salmon for each section of the lower Klamath River.

Recreational Quotas and Harvest Management

The recreational seasons for Chinook Salmon fishing do not directly align with the creel survey start and end dates. Currently, two adjacent creel survey efforts are conducted; a late spring survey from July 1 through August 5 and a fall survey from August 6 through November 4. A fall-run Chinook Salmon creel survey has been conducted since as early as 1978 and was operated in similar fashion to the contemporary version since the late 1980's. Historically, the fall creel survey was the only recreational fisheries survey operated on the Klamath River, starting on August 6, nine days before the regulatory start of the quota managed KRFC fishery on August 15. This was implemented to address annual variation of river entry timing of the fall run and increased the ability to recover fall-origin coded wire tags (CWT's), in turn, increasing the accuracy of harvest estimates and delineation between spring and fall run timing. The spring creel survey was implemented in 2010. Until 2018, the spring survey began on April 30 and ran through August 5, to provide more robust estimates of spring Chinook Salmon harvest and further help delineate between spring and fall Chinook Salmon harvest estimates.

The spring Chinook Salmon recreational fishery in the Klamath basin is exclusively managed under State authority and not subject to the PFMC allocation process. Upper Klamath Trinity River Spring Chinook Salmon are listed as "Threatened" under the California Endangered Species Act (State of California, 2022). During the period of candidacy and review, the Fish and Game Commission (FGC) significantly shortened the season for this stock from a start date of January 1 to a start date of July 1, beginning in 2019. With this shortened season came reduced daily bag limits and limiting open areas. In 2021 the FGC voted unanimously to ratify the findings and subsequently listed the species. These findings specified the protection for genetically identifiable homozygous alleles for early run-timing. Such identification is of course limited to genetic assay, and not directly applicable to in-season fishery management. Based upon the best available data, it was determined that the July 1 start date provided significant protection to homozygous fish that enter the river earlier in the year, and based upon migration rates and tributary entry timing, it is presumed that the protected fish have already passed through the open lower Klamath River sector by July 1, and thus are not vulnerable to recreational harvest. Similarly in the Trinity River, the protection of homozygous spring Chinook Salmon is focused on the South Fork Trinity River population. The spring fishery is only open upstream of the confluence of the South Fork Trinity with the mainstem Trinity River, thus affording the same protection to these fish while in transit through the lower Trinity River.

The fall Chinook Salmon fishery is subject to the PFMC allocation process and subsequent fishing regulations are implemented by the State. Each year an annual in-river recreational harvest quota for adult (age ≥ 3) fall Chinook Salmon returning to the Klamath Basin is recommended by PFMC. The quota and annual regulations are then

considered and adopted by the FGC. Of this quota, 50% is allocated to the lower Klamath River extending from the ocean to the Hwy 96 Bridge in Weitchpec [river kilometers (rkm) 0.0 to 68.8], and the remaining allocation is split between the mid-Klamath River (17%) (rkm 68.8 to 306.0) and the Trinity River (33%). No quota is assigned to jacks (age 2). The Department monitors or models each of these areas for fall Chinook Salmon harvest and determines when the quota of each portion has been met or is projected to be met. Once a sub-quota in any of the sections is met, an adult Chinook Salmon harvest closure goes into effect in that section of river. Within the lower Klamath River sub-quota area, a closure is enacted at the mouth of the river (spit area) if 15% of the basin quota (equivalent to 30% of the Lower Klamath River sector quota) is caught downstream of the Hwy 101 Bridge. Under current regulations, anglers are also required to cease fishing in this area when the adult component of their daily bag limit is met. Anglers would still be permitted to fish in other areas but must release any adult Chinook Salmon caught. Meanwhile, anglers in other portions of the river are still permitted to catch and release adult Chinook Salmon in the process of catching the jack component of the daily bag. A regulation change was implemented in 2023 establishing a range of size cut-offs (total length) to delineate grilse and adult salmon that is determined each year in the annual regulations package. This change was made to align the adult regulations with variable average size in adult salmon that return to the river (Lindke et. al., 2023). After all sub-quotas are met, (with the exception of the spit area at the mouth of the Klamath River) fishing for jack Chinook Salmon and other legal species is still permitted, but the entire river is closed to the harvest of adult Chinook Salmon.

In response to the salmon fishing closures beginning in 2023, the Department and FGC have been working to streamline salmon fishing regulations in the Klamath River basin. Spring and fall regulation packages previously existed separately. Due to this, emergency rulemaking actions were required to close the spring fishery the 2023 and 2024. As of May 2025, the spring and fall regulations have been combined into a single package for recommendation, review and adoption each year. Now the FGC is able to adopt the regulations for spring and fall fisheries, each with a suite of options, to craft the most scientifically appropriate, size, daily bag and possession limits each year.

In years when the salmon fishery is open, regulations for the spring season (July 1 through August 14 on the lower Klamath River, and through August 31 on the Trinity River) can allow for the harvest of between 0 and one Chinook Salmon, with no size restrictions. The possession limits during the spring season can allow 0 and two Chinook Salmon. During the fall season (starting August 15 in the Klamath River, and September 1 in the Trinity River), fishing regulations can allow for the harvest of up to 4 Chinook Salmon per day, with no more than 4 adult Chinook (fish greater than a predetermined total length in inches). Possession limits are traditionally equal to three daily bag limits, or 0 to 12 Chinook Salmon.

Steelhead Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*) regulations are in effect year-round throughout the basin. Anglers are permitted to harvest two hatchery Steelhead Trout per day with a possession limit of four. Recreational harvest of Coho Salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) is not permitted in the entire Klamath basin due to their current threatened status. Regulations allow the harvest of “hatchery” rainbow trout or “hatchery” Steelhead Trout. The Steelhead Trout and Rainbow Trout regulations prohibit harvest of naturally produced native trout including cutthroat trout, however regulations permit the harvest of up to 10 brown trout (*Salmo trutta*, non-native) per day in the Trinity River, which are not hatchery reared or marked.

The 2025 fishing regulations for the anadromous portions of the Klamath and Trinity basin are provided at the end of this report (Appendix B).

METHODS

Description of the Fishery and Creel Sample Areas

To estimate angler catch and effort, CDFW divides the Klamath basin into several sectors throughout the mainstem Klamath and Trinity Rivers. On the Klamath River, Area 1 ranges from the mouth of the Klamath River at the Pacific Ocean to the highway 101 bridge. During the fall season, Area 1 harvest estimates serve to implement a sub-area quota closure at the mouth of the Klamath River. Area 2 ranges from the Highway 101 bridge upstream to the Highway 96 bridge. This area is sampled exclusively within its lower extent. Roy Rook Boat Ramp is the only developed ramp between Highway 101 and Highway 96, and accounts for nearly all of the boat-based effort in this stretch of river. Highly concentrated shore effort exists at the Klamath Glen and Blakes Riffle locations. All shore access or primitive boat launch locations above this are difficult to reach or inaccessible to the public. Recreational effort originating above Blakes Riffle is not sampled, but previous information suggests that this area accounts for <1% of the recreational effort in Area 2. Both areas are surveyed during the spring and fall creel efforts. Area 3 is upstream of the Hwy 96 bridge to Iron Gate Dam and has not been surveyed by CDFW since 2002. Spring Chinook Salmon fishing is not permitted in Area 3. Fall Chinook Salmon harvest in Area 3 is estimated using a ratio estimator based on catch in Areas 1 and 2. Following dam removal in 2024, the upstream boundary of Area 3 was moved from Iron Gate Dam to the CA-OR border. The Klamath River mainstem from Lakeview Road bridge (near Iron Gate) to the CA-OR border is currently closed to salmon fishing due to ongoing restoration efforts and re-establishment of Chinook Salmon in and above this section of the Klamath River.

On the Trinity River, sector boundaries are different during spring and fall seasons. Spring Chinook Salmon fishing is not permitted downstream of the confluence with the South Fork Trinity River or in the South Fork Trinity River. During the fall season, fishing

is permitted throughout the entire mainstem Trinity River, with the exception of a closure from the Highway 299 West Bridge at Cedar Flat, to the Denny Road Bridge at Hawkins Bar. During the spring season, the Trinity sector harvest estimates are derived from tag returns from fish originally tagged at the Junction City weir operated by CDFW's Trinity River Project in cooperation with Hoopa Valley Tribe. During the fall season, the lower Trinity River sector (below the Denny Rd. bridge at Hawkins Bar) harvest is partially informed by Hoopa Valley Tribe creel survey estimates, which survey recreational anglers on the Trinity River from the confluence with the Klamath River upstream to the Willow Creek Weir. The upper Trinity sector (above the Highway 299 bridge at Cedar Flat) harvest estimates are derived from tag returns from fish originally tagged at the Willow Creek weir operated by CDFW's Trinity River Project in cooperation with Hoopa Valley Tribe. Note that this report does not include these sectors and only provides estimates for the lower Klamath River creel survey. For 2025, sites denoted in red in Figure 1 were active "creel" sites for stationary or roving components of the survey. Sites denoted in blue were inactive "rover" sites, indicating that samplers could periodically check them throughout the season to see if effort and/or ability to access the site develops. No inactive rover sites were sampled in 2025. Active and inactive sites have remained same for both spring and fall creel surveys since 2017.

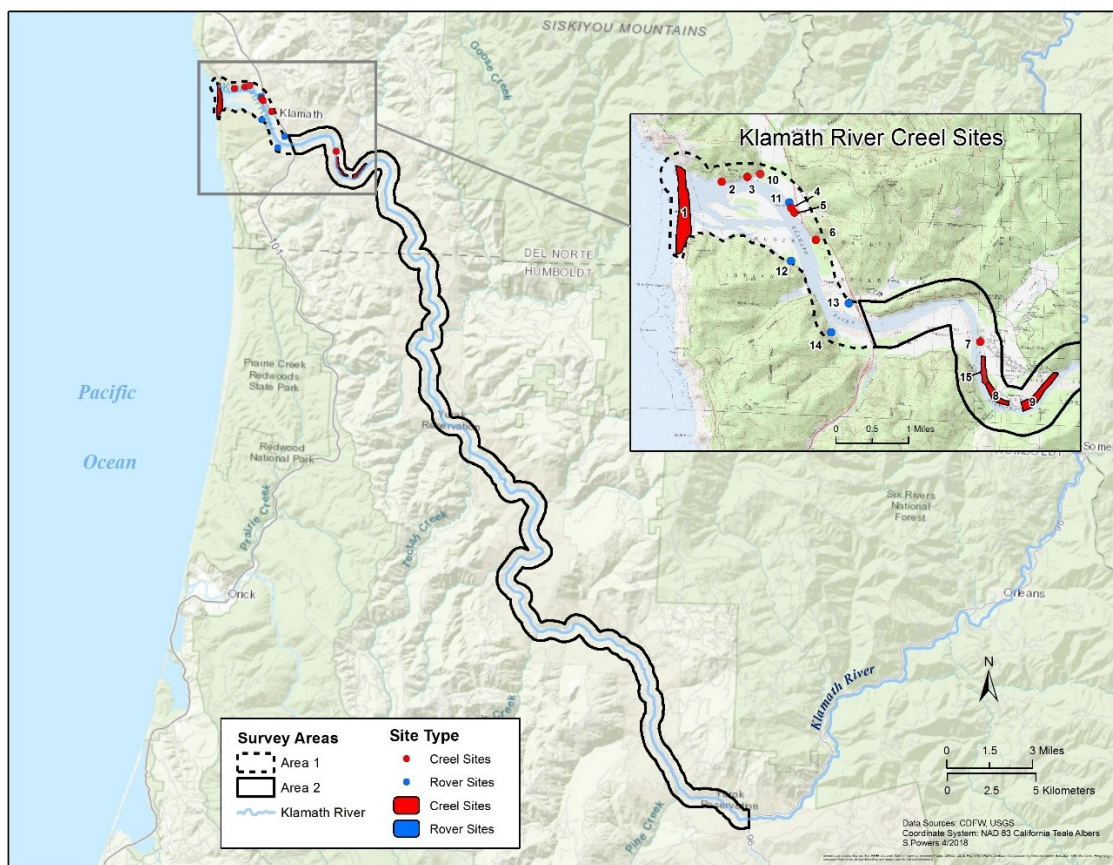


FIGURE 1. Map of lower Klamath River creel survey sites. Location names can be found in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Active and inactive sampling locations for lower Klamath River creel surveys.

Site Name	Site #	Area	Active (Y/N)
Mouth (North and South)	1	1	Y
Requa Boat Ramp	2	1	Y
Panther Glen ¹	3	1	Y
Riverside RV Park ²	4	1	Y
Golden Bear RV Park ²	5	1	Y
Townsite Ramp	6	1	Y
Roy Rook Boat Ramp	7	2	Y
Upper Klamath Glen ³	8	2	Y
Blakes Riffle ³	9	2	Y
Anglers Cove ¹	10	1	Y
Chinook RV Park	11	1	N
Kamp Klamath	12	1	N
Klamath RV Corral	13	1	N

Klamath River RV Park	14	1	N
Lower Klamath Glen³	15	2	Y

^{1,2,3} = Adjacent sites; sampled concurrently

Area 1: This area consists of the 4.5 rkm between the mouth of the Klamath River and the Highway 101 bridge and is referred to as the estuary. Nearly all shore angling effort in this area takes place at the mouth of the river. River mouth configuration, which changes annually, determines which side (north or south) affords better shore angling. Creel sampling of shore anglers is conducted primarily at the South Mouth, but anglers who accessed the mouth from the North side could be interviewed when intercepted by creel samplers. The roving sampler monitors this site for vehicles parked in the access area and visually monitors the North side of the mouth to determine shore-based anglers that used this access. In recent years, shore access use on the North side has been almost non-existent, due to the extremely southward configuration of the river mouth.

Boat access locations in Area 1 include private resort docks and both public and private boat ramps below Highway 101 bridge. These include three resort docks; Golden Bear RV Park, Riverside RV Park and Panther Creek RV Park, and two boat ramps; Old Townsite Boat Ramp and Requa Boat Ramp (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Area 2: This area extends from the Highway 96 Bridge (rkm 68.0) in Weitchpec downstream to the Highway 101 Bridge at Klamath (rkm 4.5). The division between areas 2 and 3 was historically the falls at Coon Creek (rkm 54.4) near the community of Johnson's Riffle (Pecwan), but it was moved to its current location in 1999 to make the distinction clearer for anglers.

Shore angling in the lower 5 rkm of Area 2 is generally confined to two popular and easily accessed riffles (Klamath Glen and Blake's Riffle). Angler access to these locations is limited to specific, well-defined routes, which enables a complete accounting of angler effort and catch during a sample day at these locations. Shore angling access upstream of Blake's Riffle is limited to three access points: the mouth of Blue Creek (rkm 26.3), the mouth of Ah Pah Creek (rkm 27.5), and Bear Riffle (rkm 29.8). Some of these points can be accessed by vehicle (some of which require access through private land) but have accounted for less than one percent of angling effort according to estimates in past surveys (Hopelain 2001). The Klamath River Project has been considering re-surveying this section of Area 2 to determine if angler effort patterns have changed since the early 2000's.

Boat access in Area 2 is essentially confined to one public boat launch (Roy Rook Ramp), which enables nearly complete sampling of boat angler effort and catch for each sample day. Occasional primitive boat launching occurs at the shore sites as well.

During each sampling day in Area 2, creel surveys were conducted at all locations above Highway 101 bridge (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Creel Survey Methods

Survey and analytical methods used during the creel survey in 2024 were essentially the same as those described for the 1983 - 1987 seasons (Hopelain 2001). Data are presented in Julian week (JW) format throughout this report. During the 2024 survey season, Julian weeks began on Wednesdays (August 6) and ended on Tuesdays (September 30) (Appendix A). Catch-and-release data are expanded in the same manner as harvest data in each area.

Selection of sampling days for 2025 was a simple random sample per JW, as no statistically significant difference in effort has been found between weekdays and weekend days due to the volatility of the fishery. Areas 1 and 2 were each sampled two days per week, with no concurrent sampling of both areas on a given day.

For both angling modes, interviews are conducted in the same manner. Each angling access site was visited throughout the day by a roving sampler, or was attended to by a stationary sampler in the case of sites with greater levels of effort. If angler effort completely diminished at a site attended by the stationary sampler, they may move to another site where effort currently exists or is most likely to develop. CDFW staff interviewed anglers as they departed shore fishing grounds or boats as they returned to the boat ramp or resort dock, and recorded the following information:

1. Was the angler or boat finished fishing for the day at this time?
2. What area did the anglers' effort or catch come from? (Boats only; shore anglers not asked this question)
3. Total hours spent fishing (to the nearest half hour).
4. The first three numbers of their ZIP Code (to identify general area of origination).
5. Harvested fish were identified to species, inspected for marks, external tags and unusual conditions, and measured to the nearest centimeter fork length. Also, a scale sample was collected for the purpose of aging the fish.
6. For Chinook Salmon missing an adipose fin, indicating presence of a coded wire tag, the head was removed and retained by staff.
7. The number and species of fish caught and released (actually released, not lost) was recorded by age class (grilse or adults) as reported by the angler.

Stationary and Roving Sampling

As noted above, sampling locations are relatively stable, but the survey does allow for effort shifts. New effort locations can be captured in the roving component of the survey.

In Area 1, stationary samplers were primarily located at one of three sites, River Mouth (South Access), Golden Bear RV Park, or the paired sites of Panther Glen and Anglers Cove Resorts. These three access locations account for most of the recreational angling effort in Area 1. The roving sampler then primarily surveyed effort occurring at all other sites.

In Area 2, stationary samplers were located at Roy Rook Ramp, while Blakes Riffle and Klamath Glen were surveyed by a single roving sampler.

Addition or subtraction of sampling sites is primarily based upon dominant effort levels as they occur over multiple seasons. Unless dictated by a drastic shift in effort locations, stationary and roving sites remain the same throughout an entire survey season. For 2025, all sampling sites remained constant throughout the season.

Harvest and Effort Estimating Procedures

Harvest and effort estimation for the creel survey were generally the same as in previous years, with some minor differences (i.e. estimation of angler effort from adjacent data when interview data was not available on a given day) reflecting decreased angler effort due to the Chinook fishery closure.

Angler harvest, catch and release, and angler effort were estimated for each Julian week, creel survey area, and mode of angling (for Area 1 only) as follows:

$$\hat{Y}_j = \sum_{i=1}^n y_i I_i \left(\frac{N_j}{n_j} \right)$$

where: $\hat{Y}_j$ = estimated harvest, catch and release, or effort in the j^{th} week

y_i = total counts of harvest, catch and release, or effort on the i^{th} day

N_j = number of legal fishing days in week j

n_j = number of sample days in week j

I_i = sampling ratio on day $i = \frac{\text{Total anglers or boats enumerated on day } i}{\text{number of anglers or boats sampled on day } i}$

Area 1: Angler harvest, catch and release, and angler effort were estimated separately for boat and shore angling groups in Area 1, then summed to generate an estimate of weekly totals. Estimation methods are the same for “mode of fishing” used by the angler. For shore-based recreational anglers, we record and account for missed anglers, refusals and language barriers, all of which are counted as missed interviews and thus expanded for by I_i in the above equation. Anglers who access fishing grounds by boat, regardless of whether the boat is used for angling or simply for transport to a

shore angling location, are expanded for in a similar manner. An exception is that a missed, refusal or language barrier boat is denoted on the field data with the boat being the sampling unit (as opposed to individual anglers on the boat). Missed boats are then factored into daily expansion within I_i as described above. Secondly, the roving component of the survey captures additional interviews and missed anglers/boats, refusals and language barrier data. Thirdly, there are some sites in Area 1 that have private boat access but do not allow CDFW staff onsite. Samplers at neighboring sites monitor boats at inaccessible sites by recording the number of unsampled boats that return to those locations in a day. Combining all of these sources for daily expansion data, estimates of total effort for the given sampling area can be made for the entire day. It is important to note that there can also be substantial tribal fishing effort in Area 1, and samplers are trained to identify tribal shore anglers and boats using best judgement. Boats used in the tribal gillnet and subsistence angling fisheries are generally excluded from counts, but if contacted by a sampler, are recorded and “Non-Fishing” (NF) to indicate they are not part of total recreational effort.

For shore-based anglers, essentially all effort is captured from the river mouth (South Mouth Access). However, the roving sampler collects additional data on shore-based anglers on the North side of the mouth, thus providing complete information for daily expansions of shore-based angling.

Area 2: Harvest estimates for the area upstream from Hwy 101 to Hwy 96 Bridge at Weitchpec were calculated in the same manner as described above, with minor changes to sampling protocol. Boat access is almost exclusively limited to the one developed boat ramp in Area 2 (Roy Rook Ramp), but anglers may launch smaller boats (i.e. kayaks, drift boats, etc.) at the shore fishing sites as well. Samplers working the shore sites interview primitive boat launch anglers as available, or may note them as missed, refusal or a language barrier as normal. The daily expansions for boat effort are calculated as described above, with the exclusion of any offsite missed boats, as this is unique to Area 1.

For shore-based effort, a roving sampler monitors effort along the two shore sites. Samplers conduct periodic counts to enumerate anglers throughout the day at each individual site. This, in conjunction with the number of completed interviews and missed anglers, refusals or language barriers is used to estimate the total number of angler trips for the day, I_i , in the equation above.

Age Classification for Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Trout

The adult component of harvest for spring Chinook Salmon is not separated into individual age classes. For fish harvested during the spring fishery, regulations do not delineate between jacks and adults, however samplers use a de facto 55cm FL cut-off

when recording data in the field. Age classification of Chinook salmon is then determined by post-season fork length measurements from Trinity River Hatchery, as there is no scale analysis currently conducted. Recreational fishing regulations identify within a range of sizes of fall adult Chinook Salmon as greater than 20 to 24 inches (50.8 to 60.9 centimeters) in total length annually. The FGC will adopt a length cut-off each year with the annual regulations package. The CDFW then uses the adopted length cut-off (TL in), translated to the corresponding fork length (FL cm), to estimate adult harvest during the season and for real-time quota monitoring. However, the actual age two proportion of jack fall Chinook Salmon is determined post season through scale analysis. Scales collected from harvested fish are mounted and read by the Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and proportions of each age class are estimated using bias corrections from known-age CWT hatchery fish collected within the harvest sample (KRTT 2026). Steelhead Trout less than or equal to 42 cm FL were considered half-pounders, and those larger were considered adults.

Coded Wire Tag Recoveries, Processing, and Estimation of Hatchery Proportions

Coded-wire tag recovery is an important component in the creel survey. Recovery of CWTs allows for estimation of hatchery proportions and hatchery of origin. Additionally, CWT recovery is important for establishing run timing during the early part of the season when the fishery transitions from the spring run to the fall run. All heads collected from adipose fin-clipped fish are assigned individual head tag numbers, which allows for the tracking of each head through the CWT extraction and decoding process. When a head is recovered during the regular sampling of an angler or boat they are considered “random” recoveries and used in subsequent hatchery apportionment. When heads are provided to field samplers outside of the sampling frame (i.e., an angler saves the head from an adipose fin-clipped salmon caught on a day when CDFW was not sampling the area) are considered “non-random” recoveries and are used only to validate origin and run-timing.

Under normal circumstances, approximately 25% of Chinook Salmon produced at TRH, FCH and IGH (now defunct) received CWTs and are externally marked by removal of the adipose fin. For the newly opened FCH, the CWT and ad-clip marking strategy is for 25% for smolts released in May/June and 100% for yearlings released in November. Additionally, the Department is working towards implementation of fry releases marked via parentage-based tagging (PBT; a genetic based tagging method), which does not utilize ad-clip or CWT's, and those fish would be slated for release by April 1 each year. At this point fry releases are not occurring at FCH. With regards to Coho Salmon, hatcheries strive to mark 100% of hatchery produced fish by clipping the adipose fin (TRH and FCH) and are no longer using the left and right maxillary clips to identify Klamath or Trinity produced fish. Successful clipping rates for Coho Salmon generally exceed 99% at TRH and IGH/FCH thus we assume a 100% marking rate. Trinity River Hatchery Steelhead Trout are marked at a targeted rate of 100% by the Hoopa Valley

Tribe by removing the adipose fin. Successful marking rates of Steelhead Trout at TRH have generally exceeded 98% since 2006 (B. Matilton, Hoopa Valley Tribe Fisheries, unpublished data), so for regulatory purposes unmarked fish are assumed to be of natural origin. The now decommissioned Iron Gate Hatchery had not produced Steelhead Trout since 2012, and currently there are no plans to produce Steelhead Trout at the newly opened Fall Creek Hatchery. The proportion of total harvest attributed to hatchery Chinook Salmon is estimated by expanding recovered CWTs by hatchery production multipliers. Contributions of hatchery Coho Salmon (if illegally harvested) and Steelhead Trout to harvest in the lower Klamath River is estimated from the proportion of marked fish recorded by creel samplers.

RESULTS

Harvest estimates for fall Chinook Salmon will always be consistent with the KRTT determined cutoff date, while demographic or other data may be presented within the time scale of the spring or fall creel survey seasons depending upon the needs of long-term data sets.

Note: Totals may differ slightly due to rounding errors in calculation between weekly estimates and final season totals.

Estimated Angler Effort

During the limited creel survey, angler effort totaled 2,265 trips resulting in 10,277 angler hours (Table 2).

TABLE 2. 2025 Angler effort during spring and fall creel surveys on the lower Klamath River.

Season	Date	Area 1		Area 2		Combined	
		Trips	Hours	Trips	Hours	Trips	Hours
Spring	Not surveyed	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fall	Aug 6-Sep 30	189	418	2,076	9,859	2,265	10,277
Total		189	418	2,076	9,859	2,265	10,277

Observed Harvest/Harvest Estimates/Length Frequencies

Length frequencies of observed Chinook Salmon are made available to KRTT to inform the jack/adult size cutoff if an insufficient number of scale samples or hatchery data are recovered. The length cutoff for fall Chinook Salmon is determined by post-season scale aging furnished later in this document under "Age Classification of Chinook Salmon".

During the creel survey, zero Chinook Salmon were reported harvested by anglers or observed by samplers.

During the creel survey a total of 18 Steelhead Trout (14 adults and 4 half-pounders) were harvested. Harvest was minimal and peaked in Julian week 32. A total of three harvested Steelhead Trout were observed by samplers. Fish ranged in size from 22 to 60 cm FL and all were hatchery marked (Figures 2 and 3).

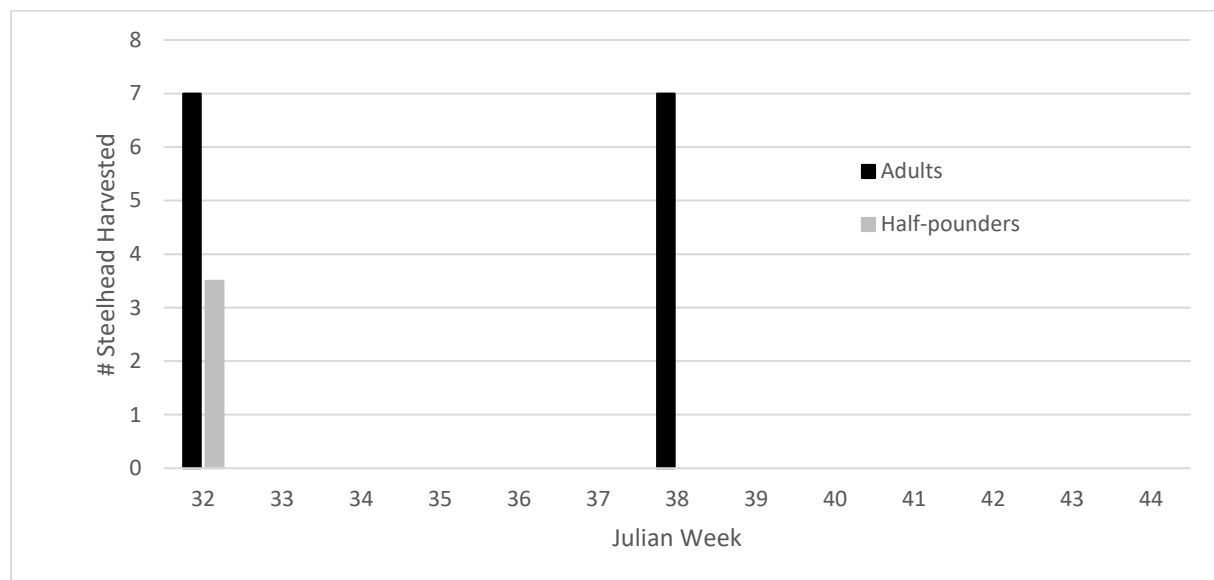


FIGURE 2. Harvest of Steelhead Trout during the fall creel survey, 2025.

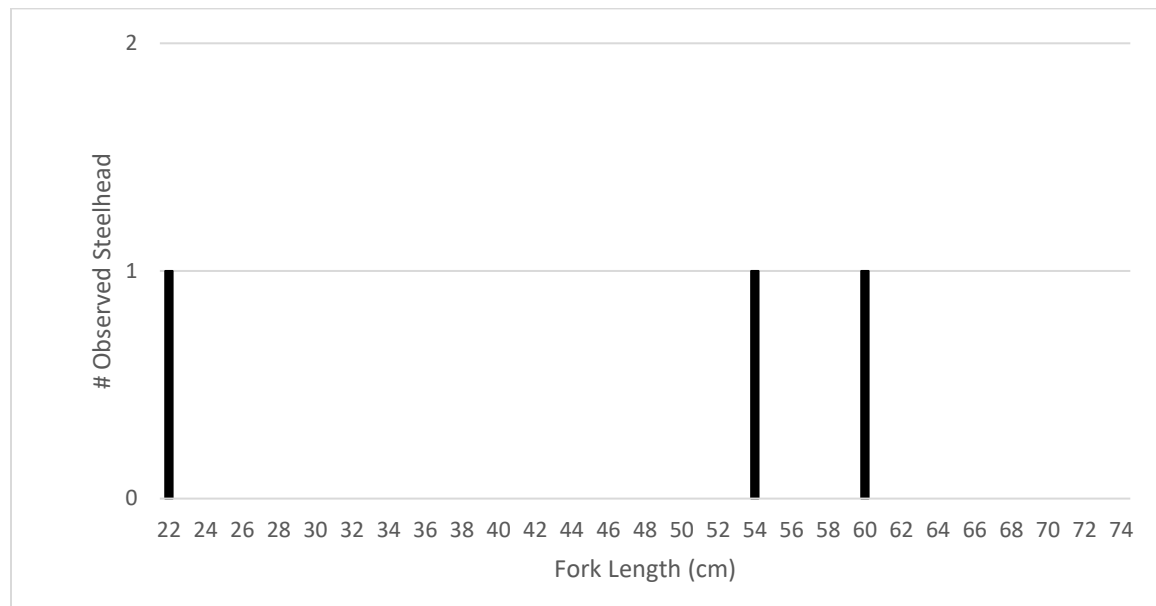


FIGURE 3. Fork length frequency of Steelhead Trout harvested during the fall creel survey, 2025.

During the creel survey, zero Coho Salmon were reported harvested by anglers or observed by samplers.

Age Classification of Chinook Salmon, Coded-Wire Tag Recovery and Hatchery Contribution

No fish were estimated harvested in the recreational fishery therefore no scale aging was completed, no CWT's were recovered, and no hatchery contribution is estimated.

Catch and Release Estimates

During the creel survey, a total of 2,819 Chinook Salmon (1,131 adults and 1,688 jacks) were caught and released (Figure 4). Releases of both adult and jack Chinook Salmon peaked in Julian week 35, which coincided with highest levels of angler effort during the survey.

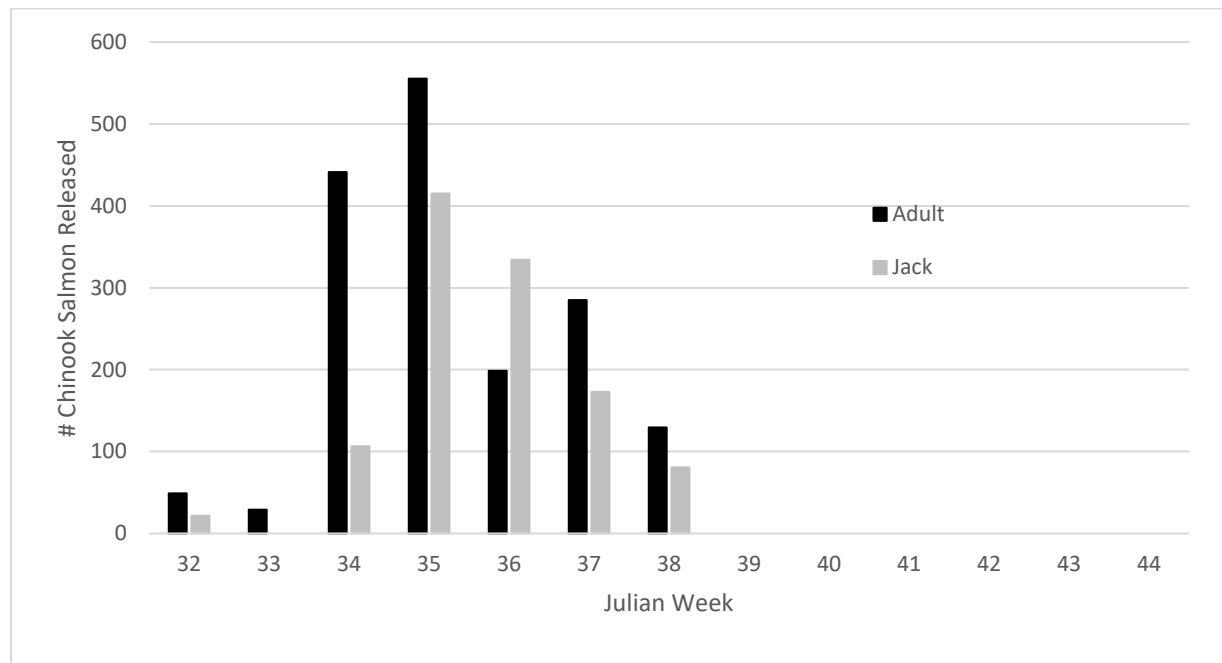


FIGURE 4. Catch and release of Chinook Salmon during the fall creel survey, 2025.

A total of 1,575 Steelhead Trout (425 adults and 1,150 half-pounders) were caught and released during the creel survey (Table 3 and Figure 5). Steelhead Trout releases peaked in Julian week 37.

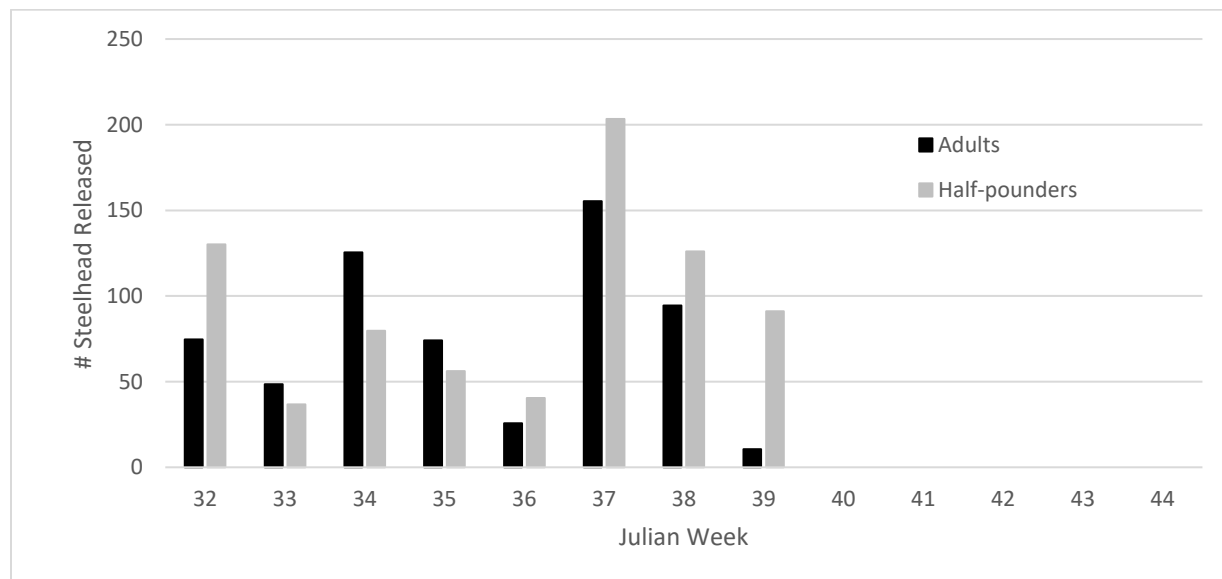


FIGURE 5. Catch and release of Steelhead Trout during the fall creel survey, 2025.

During the creel survey, zero Coho Salmon were reported caught and released by anglers.

2025 Season – Weekly Trends and Season Totals

For the 2025 season, overall catch and effort were consistent from the start of the survey through Julian week 38 and then dropped off precipitously in the last week of the survey (Table 3).

TABLE 3. Harvest, catch-and-release and angler effort by Julian week during the 2025 lower Klamath River spring and fall creel surveys.

J Week	Effort		Harvest				Release			
	Angler		Steelhead		Chinook		Steelhead		Chinook	
	Trips	Hours	1/2 Iber.	Adult	Jack	Adult	1/2 Iber.	Adult	Jack	Adult
Spr 27*	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Spr 28	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Spr 29	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Spr 30	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Spr 31	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Fall 32	426	1765	4	7	0	0	130	75	49	22
Fall 33	200	669	0	0	0	0	37	49	29	0
Fall 34	318	1462	0	0	0	0	80	125	441	107
Fall 35	366	1418	0	0	0	0	56	74	555	415
Fall 36	351	1771	0	0	0	0	40	26	198	334
Fall 37	311	1657	0	0	0	0	203	155	285	173
Fall 38	242	1218	0	7	0	0	126	95	130	81
Fall 39	53	317	0	0	0	0	91	11	0	0
Fall 40	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Fall 41	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Fall 42	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Fall 43	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Fall 44	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Spring Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fall Total	2265	10277	4	14	0	0	764	609	1688	1131
Creels Total	2265	10277	4	14	0	0	764	609	1688	1131

* - includes last day of JW 26

NS - Not surveyed

Long Term Effort/Catch Trends

Long term data sets for the lower Klamath River fall survey pertain to the time-period of August 6 through November 4 unless otherwise noted and are not adjusted to reflect annual changes in fall run harvest timing.

The average fishing trip length during the 2025 season was 4.5 hours, or 0.2 hours more than the 1992-2025 long-term average (Table 4). Catch per unit effort (CPUE) is presented on a rolling 20-year time frame. For 2025, Chinook Salmon CPUE was 0.2743 (0.16245 for jacks and 0.11005 for adults), or approximately 27 Chinook Salmon of any size being released for every 100 hours of angler effort in 2025, which is nearly double of the average CPUE over the rolling 20-year period (Figure 6).

TABLE 4. Number of angler trips, total angler hours, and average angler hours per trip in the lower Klamath River fall creel survey, 1992 – 2025. NS=Not surveyed.

Year	Trips	Hours	Hours/Trip				
				2009	14,736	67,160	4.6
1992	11,190	33,080	3.0	2010	11,516	58,842	5.1
1993	16,081	51,889	3.2	2011	11,833	56,759	4.8
1994	15,100	54,748	3.6	2012	17,641	87,748	5.0
1995	19,881	63,369	3.2	2013	22,402	102,381	4.6
1996	27,929	91,019	3.3	2014	12,616	60,376	4.8
1997	18,402	67,154	3.6	2015	16,756	77,228	4.6
1998	17,606	52,145	3.0	2016	7,981	36,651	4.6
1999	11,852	45,109	3.8	2017	4,070	16,678	4.1
2000	14,150	57,184	4.0	2018	10,181	44,204	4.3
2001	20,116	88,053	4.4	2019	14,339	60,747	4.2
2002	18,376	85,925	4.7	2020	10,852	47,794	4.4
2003	16,514	79,228	4.8	2021	8,557	37,094	4.3
2004	15,180	71,397	4.7	2022	9,719	40,488	4.2
2005	12,629	61,000	4.8	2023	NS	NS	NS
2006	8,902	41,792	4.7	2024	1,036	4,023	3.9
2007	13,913	64,101	4.6	2025	2,265	10,277	4.5
2008	10,827	56,005	5.2	Average	13,489	56,717	4.3

*-decreased survey due to fall fishery closure

**-no survey due to inland salmon closure

***-limited survey due to inland salmon closure

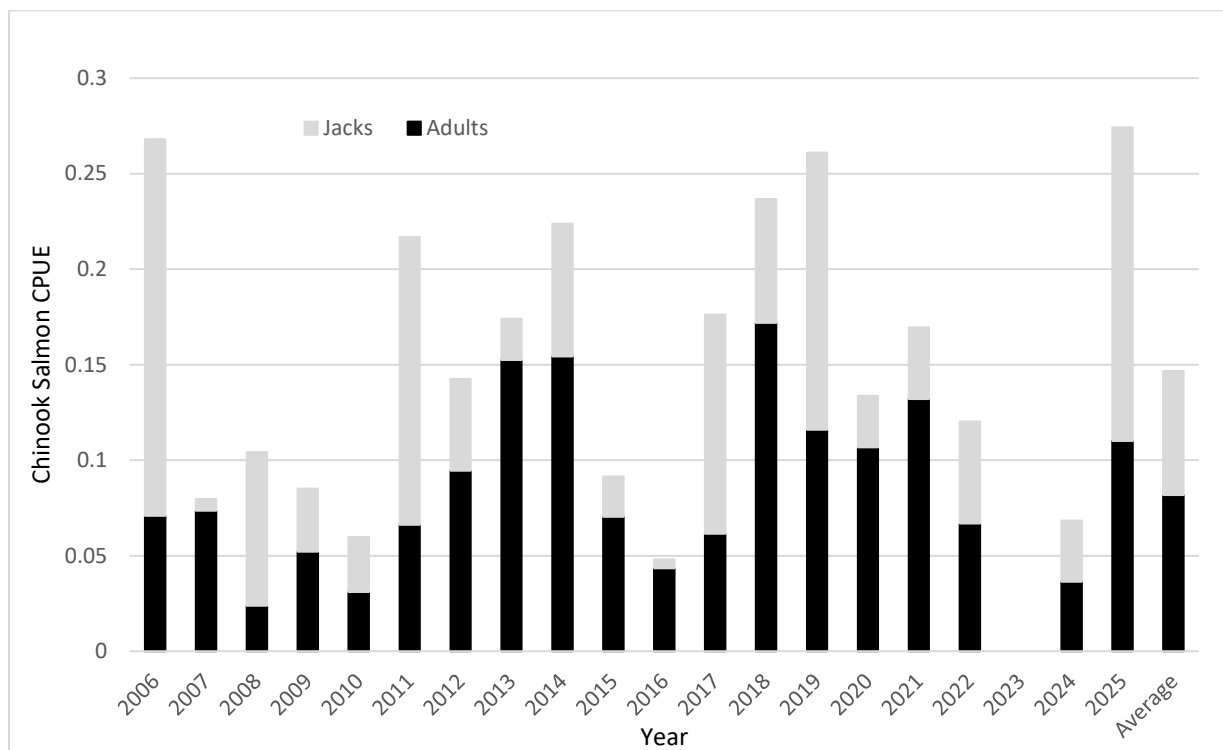


FIGURE 6. Chinook Salmon catch per hour of angler effort during the lower Klamath River fall creel survey 2005-2024. Note: 2006 - jack harvest only 2017 – salmon fishery closed starting Aug. 15, 2023 - salmon fishery was closed; no survey, 2024 and 2025 – salmon fishery closed; limited survey.

Angler Demographics

As with previous years' surveys, anglers were asked for the first three digits of their home ZIP code. This provides broad scale indications of the geographic distribution of recreational anglers participating in the fishery. During the survey season, anglers from the local 955 ZIP prefix (Eureka, Crescent City, Arcata, etc.) accounted for 35% of anglers participating in the survey. In total, an estimated 91% of anglers originated in California, 5% were from Oregon, and an additional 4% originated from elsewhere (Figure 7).

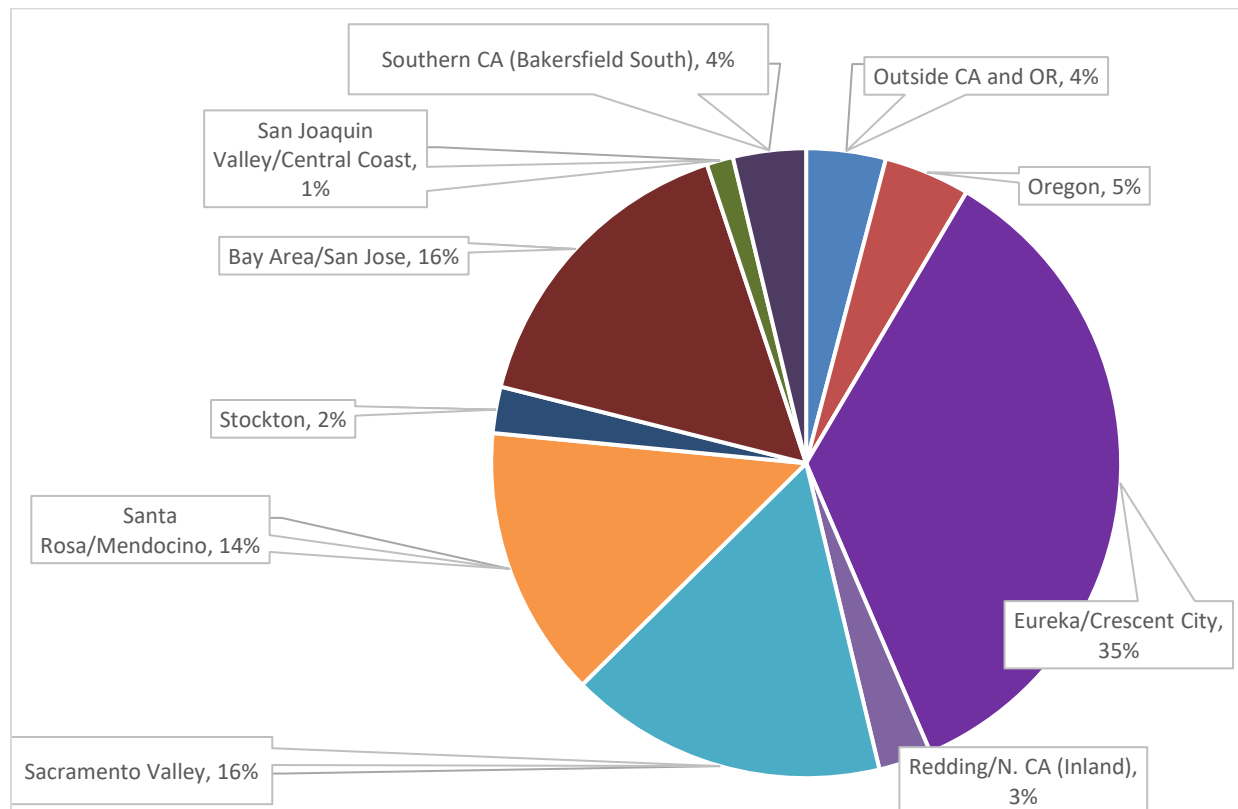


Figure 7. Origins of recreational anglers during 2025 survey season by three-digit ZIP code prefix.

DISCUSSION

Due to the salmon fishing closure, it is assumed that all angler effort was directed towards Steelhead Trout. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that some anglers were effectively targeting salmon. Generally speaking, anglers primarily target Steelhead Trout in Area 2 (above Highway 101 bridge), either boat-based, or from the popular shore angling sites for Klamath Glen and Blakes Riffle. The overall distribution of angler effort, catch (for both Steelhead Trout and Chinook Salmon) and Steelhead Trout harvest reflected this trend.

Chinook Salmon “bycatch” was minimal in Area 1, accounting for less than 6% of Chinook Salmon caught, while Area 2 accounted for nearly 95% of the catch that occurred. The boat-based effort in Area 2 accounted for approximately two-thirds of all Chinook Salmon caught.

Generally, there exists an overlap in the run-timing of spring and fall Chinook Salmon. The temporal extent of the overlap varies annually, but a hard cutoff date (currently August 15) is necessary for developing annual fishing regulations. In 2025, survey data analysis was unable to determine whether or not there was overlap between spring and fall Chinook Salmon because no CWTs were recovered.

The lower Klamath River recreational Chinook Salmon fishery is comprised of fish produced naturally in the Klamath and Trinity River basins and fish produced at IGH/FCH and TRH. However, the hatchery composition of the basin is in the process of changing. As the four lower dams on the Klamath River have been removed, IGH has been decommissioned, and current and future hatchery production on the Klamath will exclusively come from Fall Creek Hatchery. The last year of Chinook Salmon production occurred at IGH in 2023, and after 2028, effectively zero Chinook Salmon of IGH hatchery origin will exist. At this time, FCH does not have the same production capacity at IGH, however as noted earlier, the fry release/alternative tagging strategies are being considered to increase the total number of fish to be released from FCH.

When the fishery is open, a ratio estimator is used to estimate harvest in the non-surveyed area above Highway 96 bridge (Area 3). This estimator was not used in 2025 due to the fishery closure, and therefore no harvest was estimated for this sector. Staff have been assessing the feasibility of implementing a creel survey in Area 3 to update this estimator, and in light of recent dam removal efforts and the future need for monitoring angling effort in this sector, staff will be further developing a survey plan and attempting to secure funding to implement this survey.

The final 2025 Klamath basin run-size estimate was 70,022 fall Chinook Salmon. The adult run size (used for management purposes) was approximately 51,421, or approximately 180% of the pre-season projection of adult river return of ~28,600 (KRTT 2026). Improved returns to California rivers in 2025 and increased ocean abundance forecasts for the following year resulted in the PFMC recommending ocean and in-river fisheries in California for 2026. After three consecutive years of closure, the in-river quota for KRFC has been established at 3,248 adult fish. At their May 6 teleconference meeting, the FGC adopted the quota and Department recommended fishing regulations for in-river Chinook Salmon. For the spring season, the daily bag limit will be one Chinook Salmon (no size limits) and a two fish possession limit. For KRFC there will be a two fish daily bag limit with no more than one fish greater than 23" total length. Salmon possession limits during the KRFC fishery will be equal to three daily bag limits (a total of 6 fish, with no more than 3 greater than 23" total length. Steelhead Trout and other trout fisheries will remain open as usual.

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APPENDIX A. List of Julian weeks and their calendar equivalents.

Julian week	Inclusive dates			Julian week	Inclusive dates		
1	01-Jan	-	07-Jan	27	02-Jul	-	08-Jul
2	08-Jan	-	14-Jan	28	09-Jul	-	15-Jul
3	15-Jan	-	21-Jan	29	16-Jul	-	22-Jul
4	22-Jan	-	28-Jan	30	23-Jul	-	29-Jul
5	29-Jan	-	04-Feb	31	30-Jul	-	05-Aug
6	05-Feb	-	11-Feb	32	06-Aug	-	12-Aug
7	12-Feb	-	18-Feb	33	13-Aug	-	19-Aug
8	19-Feb	-	25-Feb	34	20-Aug	-	26-Aug
9 ¹	26-Feb	-	04-Mar	35	27-Aug	-	02-Sep
10	05-Mar	-	11-Mar	36	03-Sep	-	09-Sep
11	12-Mar	-	18-Mar	37	10-Sep	-	16-Sep
12	19-Mar	-	25-Mar	38	17-Sep	-	23-Sep
13	26-Mar	-	01-Apr	39	24-Sep	-	30-Sep
14	02-Apr	-	08-Apr	40	01-Oct	-	07-Oct
15	09-Apr	-	15-Apr	41	08-Oct	-	14-Oct
16	16-Apr	-	22-Apr	42	15-Oct	-	21-Oct
17	23-Apr	-	29-Apr	43	22-Oct	-	28-Oct
18	30-Apr	-	06-May	44	29-Oct	-	04-Nov
19	07-May	-	13-May	45	05-Nov	-	11-Nov
20	14-May	-	20-May	46	12-Nov	-	18-Nov
21	21-May	-	27-May	47	19-Nov	-	25-Nov
22	28-May	-	03-Jun	48	26-Nov	-	02-Dec
23	04-Jun	-	10-Jun	49	03-Dec	-	09-Dec
24	11-Jun	-	17-Jun	50	10-Dec	-	16-Dec
25	18-Jun	-	24-Jun	51	17-Dec	-	23-Dec
26	25-Jun	-	01-Jul	52 ²	24-Dec	-	31-Dec

¹-Eight-day week in each leap year (years divisible by 4).

²-Eight-day week every year.

Appendix B. Excerpt from 2025 Klamath River Basin Regulations (T14 CCR §7.40(b)(50)).

Body of Water	Open Season and Special Restrictions	Daily Bag and Possession Limit
(50) All anadromous Waters of the Klamath River Basin and Trinity River downstream of Lewiston Dam. (Del Norte, Humboldt, Siskiyou, and Trinity cos.). (See North Coast District Regulations, subsection 7.00(a) for the non-anadromous waters of the Lower Klamath River Basin, and 7.50(b)(73).)		
1. Bogus Creek and tributaries.	All anadromous portions of Bogus Creek. Closed to all fishing all year.	
2. Klamath River main stem from the California-Oregon state line to the mouth.		
a. Klamath River from California-Oregon state line to Copco Road bridge at Copco.	Nov. 1 through Feb. 28 and fourth Sat. in May through Aug. 31. Only artificial lures with barbless hooks may be used.	Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon. 0 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*.
i. Shovel Creek main stem downstream of barrier located approximately 2.75 miles upstream from Ager Beswick Road.	All anadromous portions of tributaries. Closed to all fishing all year.	
b. Klamath River from Copco Road bridge at Copco to Lakeview Road bridge near Iron Gate.	Closed to all fishing all year.	
i. Fall Creek downstream of barrier located approximately 1 mile upstream from Copco Road	All anadromous portions of tributaries. Closed to all fishing all year.	
ii. Jenny Creek downstream of barrier located approximately 2 miles upstream from Copco Road	All anadromous portions of tributaries. Closed to all fishing all year.	

iii. Scotch Creek main stem downstream of barrier located approximately 3/4 mile upstream from Copco Road	All anadromous portions of tributaries. Closed to all fishing all year.	
c. Klamath River from Lakeview Road Bridge near Iron Gate to Interstate 5 bridge.	Jan. 1 to Aug. 14.	2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
	Fall-run Quota: 0 Chinook Salmon: Aug. 15 to Dec. 31, 2025.	Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon. 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*.
d. Klamath River from Interstate 5 bridge to the Highway 96 bridge at Weitchpec.	Jan. 1 to Aug. 14.	2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*.
	Fall-run Quota: 0 Chinook Salmon Aug. 15-Dec 31, 2025.	Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*.
e. Klamath River downstream of the Highway 96 bridge at Weitchpec	Jan. 1 through Jun. 30	2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*.
	Jul. 1 through Aug. 14	Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon** 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*.
	Fall-run Quota: 0 Chinook Salmon Aug. 15-Dec 31, 2025.	Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*.

Fall Run Quota Exception: Spit Area (within 100 yards of the channel through the sand spit formed at the Klamath River mouth). This area will be closed to all fishing after 15% of the total Klamath River Basin quota has been taken.

All legally caught Chinook Salmon must be retained. Once the adult (greater than 23 inches) component of the total daily bag limit has been retained, anglers must cease fishing in the spit area.

3. Salmon River main stem, main stem of North Fork downstream of Sawyer's Bar bridge, and main stem of South Fork downstream of the confluence of the East Fork of the South Fork.	Nov. 1 through Feb. 28.	2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
4. Scott River main stem downstream of the Fort Jones-Greenville bridge to the confluence with the Klamath River.	Fourth Sat. in May through Feb. 28.	2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
5. Shasta River main stem downstream of the Interstate Highway 5 bridge north of Yreka to the confluence with the Klamath River.	Fourth Sat. in May through Aug. 31 and Nov. 16 through Feb. 28.	2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
6. Trinity River and tributaries.		
a. Trinity River main stem from 250 feet downstream of Lewiston Dam to the Old Lewiston Bridge.	Apr. 1 through Sep. 15. Only artificial flies with barbless hooks may be used.	2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
b. Trinity River main stem downstream of the Old Lewiston Bridge to the Highway 299 West bridge at Cedar Flat.	Jan. 1 through Jun. 30.	10 Brown Trout. 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
	Jul. 1 through Aug. 31.	Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon. 10 Brown Trout. 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
	Fall-run Quota: 0 Chinook Salmon Sep. 1 through Dec. 31, 2025.	Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon 10 Brown Trout.

		2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
c. Trinity River main stem downstream of the Highway 299 West bridge at Cedar Flat to the Denny Road bridge at Hawkins Bar.	Jan. 1 through Jun. 30.	10 Brown Trout. 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
	Jul. 1 through Aug. 31.	Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon 10 Brown Trout 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
	Sep. 1 through Dec. 31.	Closed to all fishing
d. New River main stem downstream of the confluence of the East Fork to the confluence with the Trinity River.	Sep. 15 through Nov. 15. Only artificial lures with barbless hooks may be used.	2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
e. Trinity River main stem downstream of the Denny Road bridge at Hawkins Bar to the mouth of the South Fork Trinity River.	Jan. 1 through Jun. 30.	10 Brown Trout 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
	Jul. 1 through Aug. 31.	Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon 10 Brown Trout 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
	Fall-run Quota: 0 Chinook Salmon Sep. 1 through Dec. 31, 2025. This is the cumulative quota for subsections 6.e. and 6.f. of this table.	Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon 10 Brown Trout 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
f. Trinity River main stem downstream of the mouth of the South Fork Trinity	Jan. 1 through Aug. 31.	10 Brown Trout 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*

River to the confluence with the Klamath River.	Fall-run Quota: 0 Chinook Salmon Sep. 1 through Dec. 31, 2025. This is the cumulative quota for subsections 6.e. and 6.f. of this table.	Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon 10 Brown Trout 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
g. Hayfork Creek main stem downstream of the Highway 3 bridge in Hayfork to the confluence with the South Fork Trinity River.	Nov. 1 through Mar. 31. Only artificial lures with barbless hooks may be used.	2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
h. South Fork Trinity River downstream of the confluence with the East Fork of the South Fork Trinity River to the South Fork Trinity River bridge at Hyampom.	Nov. 1 through Mar. 31. Only artificial lures with barbless hooks may be used.	2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
i. South Fork Trinity River downstream of the South Fork Trinity River bridge at Hyampom to the confluence with the Trinity River.	Jan. 1 through Mar. 31.	2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*
	Nov. 1 through Dec. 31.	Closed to the take and possession of Chinook Salmon 2 hatchery trout or hatchery steelhead*