

Smith River Summer Fish Count 2011 Report

*The Smith River Alliance
P.O. Box 2129
Crescent City, California*

This report provides a concise summary of the 2011 Summer Fish Count on the Smith River hosted by the Smith River Alliance in partnership with the USFS Smith River National Recreation Area, California Department of Fish and Game, and Redwood National and State Parks. For details on background for this annual survey and methods, please refer to previous reports available at www.smithriveralliance.org.

Survey Dates: The majority of surveys in all forks were completed on July 30, 2011. Additional surveys occurred intermittently until September 1, 2011. No major hydrologic events occurred between these dates.

Survey Crews: A total of 40 volunteers, including 15 team leaders, participated in the survey. Less experienced surveyors were placed as duplicates on larger teams to maintain consistency of skill and effort.

Training and Quality Assurance: Standardized training was offered, as in years past, to all new volunteers, as well as those returning who required a refresher. This training took place at Rock Creek Ranch on July 29, 2011 and approximately 20 volunteers participated. Topics included size calibration, swiftwater safety, appropriate team counting techniques, and fish species identification. After interviews with team leaders, one reach was re-surveyed to provide more accurate data.

Survey Extent: A total of 19.5 miles of the South Fork were surveyed as ten non-contiguous reaches from the Buck Creek confluence to the Lower South Fork Gorge. A total of 18 miles were surveyed on the Middle Fork as seven non-contiguous reaches from the anadromous barrier near Griffin Creek to Shady Bend, just downstream of the town of Gasquet. A total of 1.2 miles of the North Fork were surveyed, in one reach from the confluence of Stony Creek to the confluence with the Middle Fork. All three forks combined amount to 38.7 miles of surveyed stream.

Fish by Reach: Averages of 42 trout per mile were recorded in the South Fork, 30 trout per mile in the Middle Fork, and 26 trout per mile in the North Fork. There was no clear trend of relative abundance in the upstream or downstream direction. Steelhead trout sightings were evenly distributed across the South Fork, while the majority of steelhead in the Middle Fork were concentrated in the middle and upper reaches. Resident Rainbow Trout were concentrated in the uppermost reaches of both the South and Middle Forks. Spring Chinook sightings were concentrated in the upper reaches of the South Fork.

Other Species: Pacific Giant salamanders and Pacific lamprey were observed in the South Fork. Rough-Skinned newts, Yellow-Legged frogs, and Western Pond turtles were observed in the Middle Fork.

Visibility: Water clarity in the South Fork enabled identification of fish at distances of up to 30 feet. Several measurements of visibility – determined by ability to identify parr marks on a large lure – indicated that typical and functional visibility due to variable light conditions may more typically be closer to 15-20 feet.

Water Temperature: Temperature gauges on the South Fork and Middle Fork recorded temperatures consistent with averages found in previous years (63 degrees Fahrenheit on the South Fork and 58 degrees Fahrenheit on the Middle Fork). A one-time reading in the North Fork recorded 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

Total Fish Counted:

Fish Category	Species	Size	South Fork (19.5 mi)	Middle Fork (18 mi)	North Fork (1.2 mi)
Cutthroat, large	<i>O. clarki clarki</i>	12 – 20"	145	58	4
Cutthroat, medium	<i>O. clarki clarki</i>	10 – 12"	274	106	12
Cutthroat, small	<i>O. clarki clarki</i>	7 – 10"	330	329	12
Resident Rainbow	<i>O. mykiss</i>	10 – 12"	64	50	3
Steelhead	<i>O. mykiss</i>	16 – 28"	5	3	0
Half-pounder	<i>O. mykiss</i>	12 – 16"	0	1	0
Chinook	<i>O. tshawytscha</i>	18 – 42"	5	0	0
Sucker	<i>C. rimiculus</i>	8 – 20"	23	7	4

Appendix Table A provides a reach summary of the 2011 surveys.

Appendix Table B provides a summary of fish count results from all survey years.

This report was prepared for the Smith River Alliance by:

Rachel McCain, Rachel.McCain@nps.gov

APPENDIX TABLE A:

Fish observed by segment in the South Fork and Middle Fork Smith River, Summer 2010.

*CTT = Coastal cutthroat trout; RBT = Resident rainbow trout; SHT = Steelhead trout; SKR = Sucker,
CHK = Chinook salmon.*

South Fork	Mileage	S CTT	M CTT	L CTT	SHT	SKR	CHK	RBT	Total	TPM
Craigs - MF Confluence					not surveyed					
Secret-Craigs	1	5	17	5	1	1	0	0	28	28
Little Jim-Secret	3	48	41	21	0	7	0	1	111	37
Sand Camp-Little Jim	2	57	33	14	0	10	0	1	105	53
RCR-Sand Camp	1.5	22	23	11	0	4	0	2	58	39
Gordon Creek-RCR	3	51	26	12	1	0	0	1	91	30
Rattlesnake-Gordon	2	21	15	15	1	0	3	6	58	29
Stevens-Rattlesnake	1.2	22	15	8	1	0	0	6	52	43
Hurdygurdy-Stevens	1.3	26	31	11	0	0	0	0	68	52
Indian Bar-Hurdygurdy					not surveyed					
McClendon-Indian Bar	2	58	48	35	1	1	1	39	181	91
Buck Creek-McClendon	2.5	20	25	13	0	0	1	8	66	26
Total	19.5	330	274	145	5	23	5	64	818	42
Middle Fork	Mileage	S CTT	M CTT	L CTT	SHT	SKR	CHK	RBT	Total	TPM
NF-Shady Bend	3	129	20	15	0	4	0	0	164	55
Panther Flat-NF	2.5	24	13	10	0	3	0	9	56	22
Grassy Flat-Panther Flat					not surveyed					
Patrick-Grassy Flat	2	25	9	7	2			10	53	27
Siskiyou-Patrick	2.5	50	29	13				1	93	37
Idlewild-Siskiyou	3	57	14	2				4	77	26
Griffen-Idlewild	3	15	10	7	1	0	0	6	39	13
Falls-Griffen Creek	2	29	11	4	0	0	0	20	64	32
Total	18	329	106	58	3	7	0	50	546	30
North Fork	Mileage	S CTT	M CTT	L CTT	SHT	SKR	CHK	RBT	Total	TPM
Stony Creek-MF Confluence	1.2	12	12	4	0	4	0	3	31	26
Grand Totals	38.7								1395	36

APPENDIX Table B:

Summary of previous summer adult fish surveys in the main forks of the Smith River with total counts in the South Fork.

Year	SF Date	Start	End	Miles	Chinook	CTT>12"	SHT	RBT	Other Forks	Surveyors
1982	7/26-8/27	Eightmile	Middle Fork	25	11	91	5	NA	MF, NF	William T. Mitchell
1989	8/28	GO Road	Craigs Cr	13.2	2	125	5	NA		USFS?
1990	9/11	GO Road	Craigs Cr	13.2	0	138	7	NA		USFS?
1991	9/9-12	GO Road	Craigs Cr	13.2	1	51	8	NA	MF	Wood/Rogers (CDFG)
1992	9/3-5	Rattlesnake	Scaling Stat.	11	1	120	8	NA	MF, NF	USFS/Reedy
1993	9/7-9	Hurdygurdy	Middle Fork	15.2	17	111	4	NA	MF, NF	USFS/Reedy
1994	8/10 – 9/5	Harrington	Scaling Stat.	27	8	190	7	13	MF, NF	USFS/Reedy
1995	8/2-3	Hurdygurdy	Middle Fork	15.2	21	161	4	19	MF, NF	USFS/Reedy
2000	8/19	Hurdygurdy	Lower Concrete Br	8	1	101	2	2		SRA/Reedy
2001	8/18	Hurdygurdy	Scaling Stat.	13.2	2	235	1	6		SRA/Reedy
2002	8/24	Indian Bar	Gorge	15	14	283	4	17		SRA/Reedy
2003	8/6-14	Eightmile	Middle Fork	25	17	290	2	29	MF	SRA/Reedy
2004	8/15	Hurdygurdy	Scaling Stat.	13.2	12	126	8	39	MF	SRA/Reedy
2005	7/23-8/16	Buck Cr	Middle Fork	23	2	216	13	46	MF	SRA/Reedy
2006	7/29-8/3	Eightmile Creek	Middle Fork	25	11	336	11	43	MF, NF	SRA/Reedy
2007	7/28	Indian Bar	Middle Fork	15	3	156	9	17	MF	SRA/Reedy
2008	7/26	Indian Bar	Middle Fork	15	2	214	1	12	MF	SRA/Reedy
2009	7/25	Buck Creek	Middle Fork	22.6	0	171	10	58		SRA/Reedy
2010	07/31	Buck Creek	Middle Fork	22.6	0	170	3	34	MF	SRA/McCain
2011	07/30	Buck Creek	South Fork Gorge	19.5	5	145	5	64	MF, NF	SRA/McCain

Note: The above table lists all known surveys. The Middle Fork and North Fork were not surveyed in any year when the South Fork was not surveyed. Data prior to 1992 was not provided with complete descriptions of data collection methods or personnel.