

Why is DFW planting fewer and smaller fish in 2015?

1. Funding for Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) trout hatcheries is managed in a fiscally conservative manner with ample and prudent financial reserves. To operate within the allowed budget for trout production, DFW must reduce the poundage of fish produced to 1.6 million lbs statewide for 2015. Meanwhile, the Fish Production and Distribution Program is seeking increased access to the prudent financial reserve.
2. We will be out planting our broodstock as we always have and we will be making adjustments as we move through the year.
3. As with private and government fish hatcheries nationwide, fish production costs have increased in several areas:
 - a. Increasing fish feed and fuel costs
 - b. Increased cost for pumping ground water (cost of water and cost of electricity)
 - c. Water quality monitoring and reporting required by the Clean Water Act
 - d. Invasive species monitoring and reporting
 - e. Careful analysis and avoidance of potential effects to threatened and endangered species as per California and Federal endangered species acts.
 - f. The production of sterile (triploid) trout and salmon for recreational fishing activities, as mandated by California State Legislature
 - g. Maintenance and infrastructure costs for DFW's aging hatcheries
4. By planting smaller fish DFW will accomplish fiscal savings and still provide good recreational fishing.
 - a. DFW is placing emphasis on put-and-grow fisheries. These fisheries rely on food naturally occurring in lakes that small fish can eat to grow to larger sizes in time. Examples of this include Lake Davis and Lake Crowley which provide excellent fisheries. Additionally, the kokanee and inland Chinook programs rely on this strategy of fish planting and also provide fine fisheries.
 - b. Due to unprecedented drought in California, DFW hatcheries were forced to evacuate fish to avoid catastrophic loss of fish, and fish were either relocated or planted early. Consequentially, the disrupted growing schedule for fish at these hatcheries is impacted, making it difficult to achieve a ½ lb fish by the time normal fish planting takes place. By producing and releasing fish at ¼ lb fish per pound, recreational fish will still be released at a catchable size while reducing costs, and will align size and fish numbers more with mandated legislation with regards to heritage trout species (e.g. Lahontan cutthroat).