

WHY A HATCHERY?

Before the dams were built...

Before the rivers were tamed...

Before the gold was forced from the ground by hydraulic mining...

Before the time of ever-increasing human use of the streams and their water...

salmon and steelhead returned from the ocean to the streams of their origin, to renew the cycle of life. In the ocean they found rich sources of food. In the cool running streams they found a safe habitat for their young.

Of these fish, some 100,000 returned to the American River. Those coming in the spring swam far up into the mountain streams, spending the summer in cool pools before spawning in the fall. Those coming in the fall, when river flows were low, waited little time before spawning in the streams of the foothills.

By 1900, habitat destruction in the higher streams of the American River had eliminated most of the originally more numerous spring run. By the 1940's this run was extinct.

When the United States Bureau of Reclamation began planning dams on the American River to meet the water needs of the rapidly expanding California population, it recognized that 75% of the spawning beds for the remaining fall run would be covered by Nimbus and Folsom Lakes, leaving only seven miles of the original spawning grounds.

Nimbus and Folsom Dams prevent salmon and steelhead from reaching most of their historic spawning areas. The United States Bureau of Reclamation, which owns the dams, built and funds the Nimbus Fish Hatchery to maintain the populations of American River salmon and steelhead.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife operates the facility, which annually produces 4,000,000 Chinook salmon and 430,000 Steelhead trout.

**Nimbus Fish Hatchery
Stat Sheet**

	<u>SALMON</u>	<u>STEELHEAD</u>
Number of fish released annually	4 million	430,000
Number of fish spawned (average)	2,600	200
Number of eggs taken	6 million	1-2 million
Average number of eggs per female	5,200	5,600
Average weight at spawning	15-35 lbs	6-10 lbs
Record weight	138 lbs (Alaska) 107 lbs (California) 62.5 lbs (Nimbus)	42 lbs (Alaska) 23 lbs (California) 20 lbs (Nimbus)
Incubation time	45 days	35 days
Spawning season	Oct.- Dec.	Jan. –Mar.

For more information on the Nimbus Fish Hatchery and other Department of Fish and Wildlife programs contact

CDFW, Region 2
Hatchery Information
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