

PRESS RELEASE
UPDATE REGARDING OUR KOKANEE & INLAND FISHERIES

By
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On Dec. 20, 2016 a meeting was held at the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, with representatives of Project Kokanee and Kokanee Power and CA DFW.

Before we go into the details, Project Kokanee and Kokanee Power would like to thank Kyle Murphy of the CA-DFW for his dedication and hard work to continue to improve our kokanee fishery and appreciate his ongoing efforts.

Some of the highlights – Effective March 2017, how anglers track kokanee limits will be changed. The new regulations will allow for 5 trout **AND** 5 inland salmon daily limits on most lakes (*exceptions are the 10 bag limit discussed below*). Inland salmon used to be co-mingled with trout for a total of only 5, now you can take home 5 trout **AND** 5 inland salmon (mix of kings [and/or] kokanee).

DFW is increasing the **daily bag limit and possession limit** of inland salmon to 10 daily and 20 in possession at the following lakes **ONLY**:

- Pardee
- Bullards Bar
- Bucks
- Trinity (kings included in the inland salmon limit count)
- Scotts flat

(For Example: anglers fishing a day at Lake Pardee, can take 10 kokanee AND 5 trout.)

Many people have noticed the decline in the kokanee fishery at Lake Berryessa – and quite honestly it's a concern to all; with many folks suggesting that we need to drastically increase the kokanee plants at Berryessa to revive the fishery. But good science and not anecdotal information must rule the day and the DFW has some interesting information they have gathered about Berryessa and may have a better understanding of what is happening.

A study over the past 18 months has been conducted on Lake Berryessa; in the hopes of identifying why the kokanee fishery has declined there. By using water quality samples from late 2015 and through 2016, the DFW has discovered that the dissolved oxygen content of Lake Berryessa is lower than needed for a thriving kokanee fishery. During the sample period, dissolved oxygen was measured at a level of 2; a level of 5 is needed for kokanee to thrive.

The watershed that fills Lake Berryessa is mostly rain and very little if any Berryessa runoff comes from snow – thus, the water entering the lake is warmer than other lakes that receive their water from snowmelt (think Pardee, Melones, Pedro). Speculation is when Berryessa's capacity level drops somewhere below 60% capacity, the hypolimnium of the lake is very small and that results in very low dissolved oxygen levels - causing the kokanee to die off. When

Berryessa fills, the hypolimnium layer is thicker and greater dissolved oxygen is available. Many may ask, why have we not seen this earlier? Keep in mind this is the first extended drought we have experienced since kokanee have been planted in Lake Berryessa. The last extended drought was 1986-1991; before kokanee were ever planted in Berryessa. Kyle mentioned that he was able to find sparse records noting a very low dissolved oxygen level during the 1976-1977 drought. More work is to be done, but this is good work and is fact based.

The 2015 kokanee egg take resulted in 57,000 kokanee fry being planted in California lakes. All of these fingerlings were planted in Stampede during the spring of 2016. Eggs brought from Washington State resulted in 500,000 kokanee fingerlings planted in all the other lakes that received plants in 2016.

The 2016 kokanee egg take for California was zero eggs. Approximately 1 million eggs are expected from Washington State in January 2017, with an expected plant size of approximately 825,000 fingerlings planted in the spring of 2017.

All Chinook planted in California lakes currently come from the Klamath River. They are triploid and placed into our various inland lakes. Actual Chinook plant numbers are determined after Klamath River mitigation numbers are met (Federally Mandated). If there are extra eggs, these are the candidates for planting into other lakes. The 2016 plant numbers for inland Chinook was 18,000 fingerlings in Shasta, 2,200 in Trinity, 1,800 in Whiskeytown and 42,000 Chinook fingerlings planted into Folsom Lake.

Due to an extremely poor return on the Klamath, in 2016, there will be zero chinook planted into California lakes in 2017. The return numbers were so low, that the Federal mitigation numbers for the Klamath River itself were not even met.

To overcome consistently poor Chinook returns from the Klamath, the DFW will be moving the triploiding process and equipment to the Feather River hatchery and use Feather River eggs as the source for Chinook for inland lakes. There is an abundance of Feather River eggs and it is felt that for the foreseeable future, the Feather River Chinook will provide a more consistent and abundant amount of plantable Chinook fingerlings into our inland lakes. Due to the complexity of the triploiding process and the staff training needed to ensure its success, there is still work to do, but the DFW hopes to be ready – we are still pending final approval for the move from the DFW. Chinook plants in most lakes we hope will resume in 2018; it's currently anticipated that Lake Oroville will receive its normal allotment of land locked Chinook for 2017.

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