



News for Immediate Release

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Contacts:

Ted Thomas, Information Officer (916) 653-9712

Jennifer Iida, Information Officer (916) 653-3925

DWR's Underwater Light and Sound Show Keeps Salmon in Safer Waters

SACRAMENTO – An underwater light and sound show apparently is keeping juvenile salmon on the right path in the Delta.

An evaluation by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and other agencies indicated that its “bubble barrier” of underwater strobe lights and electronic sounds kept approximately two-thirds of ocean-bound Chinook salmon from taking a risky detour into Georgiana Slough from the relatively safe main channel of the Sacramento River.

Studies indicate that 65 percent of the salmon smolt that swim into Georgiana Slough near Walnut Grove don't survive to reach the ocean. The slough leads young salmon through the predator-infested waters of the interior Delta toward the huge export pumps of the State Water Project and federal Central Valley Project.

DWR installed the “bubble barrier” – so called because the strobe lights and offensive electronic sounds are contained within a curtain of bubbles – at the head of Georgiana Slough in February of 2011. Results of the barrier – utilizing Bio-Acoustic Fish Fence (BAFF) technology to create its underwater wall of light and sound – was evaluated over a 45-day period by DWR, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Geological Survey. Approximately 1,500 juvenile salmon were tagged and tracked, using underwater sound receivers.

The bubble test was in response to a National Marine Fisheries Service requirement that DWR and the Bureau of Reclamation pursue engineering solutions to reduce the diversion of young, ocean-bound salmon into the central and southern Delta. DWR also successfully used the BAFF technology at the head of Old River in the south Delta in 2009 and 2010.

Details of the Georgiana Slough study may be found at:

http://baydeltaoffice.water.ca.gov/sdb/GS/docs/GSNPB_2011_Final_Report+Append_090512.pdf