

Salmon in the Classroom, Salmon in the Bypass

Putah Creek Council thanks 2017 project funders and partners:

PG&E
Water Resources Association of Yolo County
Putah Creek Council Members
CalTrout
UC Davis
CA Department of Fish & Wildlife



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**Salmon in the Classroom, Salmon in the Bypass
2017 Program Summary**

Overview

The Salmon in the Classroom, Salmon in the Bypass program utilized science- and place-based learning to foster a better understanding of salmon ecology and the interplay between flood control, farming, and habitat. In-class lessons and activities taught students about salmon life cycle and biology, adaptations salmon use to survive, and the roles floodplains play in both their lives and ours. In-class assemblies mimicked the floodplain field trip experience and afforded students an opportunity to learn about flood control, rearing fish in floodplains, zooplankton, wildlife habitat in farmlands, and salmon anatomy. Concepts and practices used in this program complement the Next Generation Science Standards for California.

Audience

In 2017, 276 students from Winters and Davis participated in the Salmon the Classroom, Salmon in the Bypass program. The students participated in three in-class lessons and a field trip. Our message also directly touched the 28 adult chaperones and teachers who participated in the program, most of whom completed the same exercises as the students. We are confident that everyone left the program more aware of how California's trout and salmon can use the same water, farms, and floodplains as its human residents.

Total Participants

School	City	Grade	Classrooms	Students	Adults
Shirley Rominger Intermediate School <i>Lessons only</i>	Winters	5th	4	110	4
St. James School	Davis	4th	1	30	2
Birch Lane Elementary	Davis	5th & 6th	2	58	4
Gibson Elementary	Woodland	5th, 4th - 6th Special Ed.	4	105	6
Davis Waldorf School <i>Assembly only</i>	Davis	4th	1	20	1
Totals:	3 cities	3 grade levels	12	323	17
13 volunteers					

Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

The primary goal of the program was to utilize salmon as a way to engage the hearts and hands of students as they learned about fish, water, and land use in the Putah Creek - Yolo Bypass region.

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Description	Measurable objective	Final Outcome
Coordinate permitting for custody of eggs and release of salmonids	10 classes enrolled in program	No eggs available in 2017 due to poor river conditions
Train 10 local teachers in care and maintenance of fish and fish tank	10 teachers trained	No applicable training due to lack of eggs
Offer in-class lessons to each of 10 classrooms for students to learn about salmonid biology	10 classrooms visited	11 classrooms received in-class lessons
Offer field trips to each of 10 classrooms for students to visit salmon and steelhead habitat	10 field trips	8 classes received in-class assembly programs in lieu of field trips (site flooded); 4 classes opted to travel to Nimbus Fish Hatchery for a field trip
Release salmonids back to natal waters	100% released	Not applicable due to lack of eggs

Program narrative

In November and December, Putah Creek Council (PCC) education coordinator, Karin Young, recruited teachers to join the Salmon in the Classroom Program. In total, this program reached 12 individual classrooms at 5 schools in Winters, Woodland, and Davis. The four Winters classrooms received in-class lessons, the four Woodland classrooms received both in-class lessons and in-class assemblies. Of the Davis classrooms, three received both in-class lessons and in-class assemblies while one only participated in the in-class assembly.

All of the schools had planned on raising steelhead eggs from the Nimbus Fish Hatchery in February. In January, the Hatchery informed teachers that no eggs would be available due to poor river conditions and low returning steelhead numbers. Also in January, project partners at UC Davis and CalTrout informed PCC staff that the usual field trip site, Knaggs Ranch in the Yolo Bypass, would be inaccessible through March due to flooding.

In late January and February, students in Winters, Woodland, and Davis participated in three in-class lessons led by PCC education staff focusing on salmon life cycles, differences between salmon and humans, adaptations salmon use to survive, and how floodplains are a crucial part of the salmon life cycle.

In March, students and teachers participated in in-class assemblies that were designed to mimic the half-day field trip experience at Knaggs Ranch. Students and teachers rotated through three activity stations at their schools:

- Learning about salmon anatomy by investigating two adult carcasses donated from the Nimbus Fish Hatchery
- Exploring the salmon food chain by observing and identifying zooplankton in microscopes
- Examining specimens of wildlife commonly seen at Knaggs Ranch, and experiencing the “Wheel of Misfortune,” representing salmon survival odds

At the end of the trip, program staff and volunteers gathered the participants to compile any final questions, hear favorite observations, and encourage them to spread their salmon knowledge in their community.

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Photos:



A volunteer points out zooplankton samples.



A volunteer helps students identify wildlife specimens.



Students examined adult carcasses to learn internal and external anatomy.



A volunteer guides students through the Wheel of Misfortune.