The Stanislaus River Steelhead Life Cycle Monitoring Program – Methods

Daily Info – Environmental Data

River flow was taken from the California Data Exchange Center website using the Orange Blossom Bridge gauge. Water temperature data was also taken from the CDEC website using the USGS Goodwin Canyon gauge and Orange Blossom Bridge gauge.

Adult and Juvenile Steelhead Data

The methods used in this survey entail observing and counting live steelhead, Pacific lamprey, chinook, and Sacramento sucker fish and redds by hiking, kayak, or drift boat depending on the river portion sampled and accessibility of the site. The single pass method was used for observing fish. Steelhead were categorized as either adults or juveniles based on whether they were greater or smaller than 16 inches, which was determined by visual estimation.

Steelhead and Pacific Lamprey Redd Data

Redd measurements were taken using a metric stadia rod or measuring tape, based on methods used in California Coastal Spawning surveys and the Lower American River Monitoring (Gallagher 2002, Cramer Fish Sciences, 2020.) GPS location of redds were taken. Steelhead, chinook, and Pacific lamprey redds were distinguished by size characteristics of the redd. Steelhead redds are smaller than Chinook redds, and Pacific lamprey redds are smaller than both. Lamprey redds are distinguished by lacking a defined tailspin.

Steelhead Carcass Data

Steelhead carcasses encountered during this survey as well as the escapement survey were documented. Date seen, riffle (location), forklength, sex, and whether physical samples were collected of the specimen are noted.