

# Fish Passages

## Caltrans Clears the Way for More Unobstructed Travel



*Photo courtesy of Steve Martarano, USFWS*

*Caltrans completed fish-passage remediations at seven locations in 2015, improving access to habitat for salmon and steelhead trout. A Chinook salmon, above, swims upstream in a Sacramento River tributary in Shasta County.*

**C**altrans is making it easier for fish to swim in waterways that transect the state highway system.

The department completed fish-passage remediations at seven locations in 2015, improving access to habitat for salmon and steelhead trout, which are listed as threatened or endangered in California. Caltrans demonstrated improvements in all reporting categories: completed remediations, new assessments, active (funded) projects and identification of priority locations

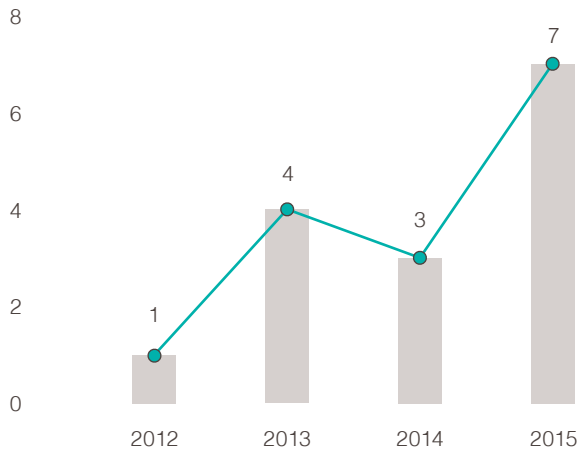
Since 2006, Caltrans has remediated 37 barriers that included the seven in 2015. An additional 37 locations are partially or fully funded, and 50 locations were identified in 2015 as having the highest biological value, but have not yet been funded. Of those 50, Districts 1 (Eureka), 2 (Redding), 4 (Oakland), 5 (San Luis Obispo) and 7 (Los Angeles) each have 10 locations. Passage assessments are ongoing in Districts 3 (Marysville) and 10 (Stockton).

Additionally, 455 fish passage assessments were completed at state highway locations to identify where drainage systems may affect access to fish habitat. Of the 455 assessments, 425 were determined to not be barriers and the remaining 30 locations were found to have either partial or total barriers.

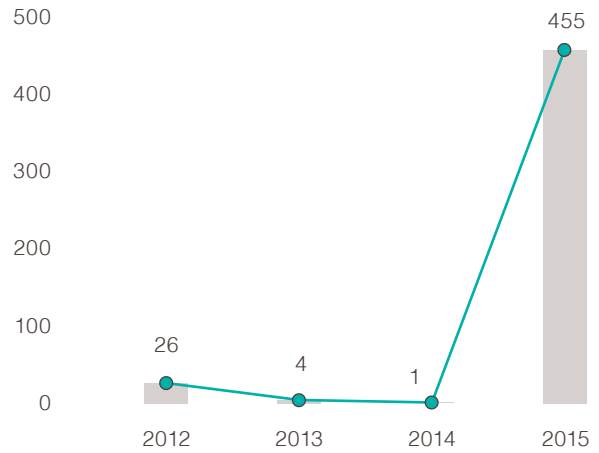
In 2015, Caltrans funded 22 new locations for future remediation, including 18 sites that were determined to be high in biological priority for both Caltrans and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Biological priorities are identified due to the presence of endangered or threatened salmon and steelhead, as well as high quality habitat. Four of the future remediation sites were identified as needing routine maintenance or repair.

Remediations often involve replacing culverts — the pipes that carry water beneath roadways — with larger culverts or small bridges, so fish and other wildlife can travel unimpeded through watercourses. This is a priority for Caltrans as part of its mission to make

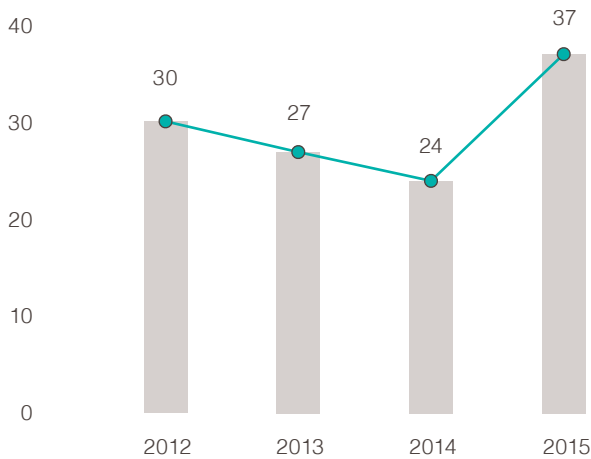
### Completed Fish Passage Remediations



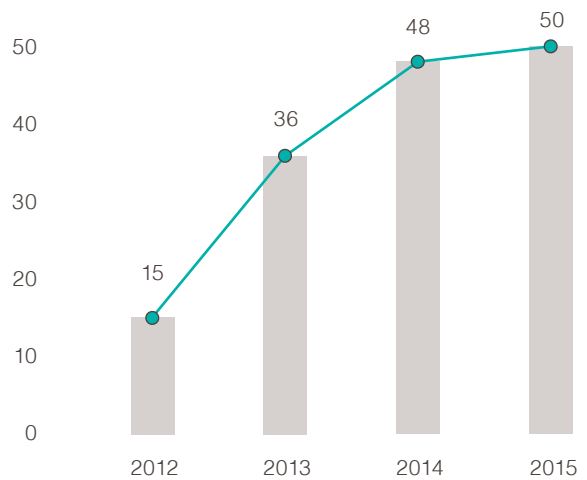
### Completed Fish Passage Assessments



### Active Fish Passage Remediations



### Priority Fish Passage Barriers



“long-lasting, smart mobility decisions that improve the environment (and) support a vibrant economy,” as spelled out in the [Caltrans Strategic Management Plan](#). Many of the fish that depend on California’s streams and rivers are important to the state’s industry, recreation and the natural environment.

Over the past year, Caltrans has worked with partners to find efficiencies, such as standardizing designs for small bridges and employing “accelerated bridge construction,” in which precast bridge elements are assembled at the site, reducing construction time and environmental impact.

In September 2016, Caltrans initiated the first-ever meeting of the Bay Area Fish Passage Advisory Committee, bringing together partners from all seven Bay Area counties in District 4 (Oakland). The meeting

was well attended by external agency partners and supported by staff and managers in various internal divisions.

The drought has posed additional challenges to the migration of anadromous fish — sea-going fish that breed in fresh water — and the recovery of listed salmonid populations. State and federal partner agencies are working to identify stretches of watershed that are likely to provide cool water during the late summer and early fall to sustain salmonid populations such as southern steelhead and coastal coho, which have been particularly hard-hit by drought. MM

*Source: 2015 Fish Passage Annual Report; Senior Fisheries Biologist Melinda Molnar*