

Chinook Salmon Return to Upper Alameda Creek in Thriving Conservation Effort

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After swimming through barriers of concrete and time, Chinook salmon are making a surprising return to the upper reaches of Alameda Creek for the first time in several decades. This remarkable event marks a conservation success, resulting from a series of restoration efforts aimed at encouraging migratory fish to traverse upstream habitats. The Alameda Creek Alliance, a key player in these environmental efforts, captured images of the determined fish navigating the recently completed fish ladders, indicating a significant milestone in local wildlife rehabilitation.

The return of the Chinook to places like Niles Canyon and Sunol Valley, as detailed in [a press release by the Alameda Creek Alliance](#), is the furthest upstream migration observed since the mid-1990s. The restoration has been a cumulative effort involving multiple agencies, including the Alameda County Water District, which oversaw many of the fish passage improvements totaling \$80 million over two decades.

These recent fish ladder constructions have replaced outdated dams and provided a way for not only the salmon but also steelhead trout, a Northern California threatened species,

to reach spawning grounds that had been inaccessible for nearly half a century. Operators of the ladder tout its design, which allows fish to move up a step, hold, and then move up another step, as Miller told the [San Francisco Chronicle](#). It's a profound mechanical insight, presenting a step-by-step path back to the wild, and perhaps a path to a sustainable future for the region's ecosystem.

Recent returns of the Chinook salmon not only serve conservation goals but also bolster the wider ecosystem. Eagles and otters, among other wildlife, are among the beneficiaries of the returned salmon, a phenomenon that has captured local attention.