**Idaho -- Abstract of the 2012 status talk**

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The decline of the abundance of Snake River steelhead led to their listing as threatened in October 1997, pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act. Development of the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS), particularly the four dams and reservoirs on the Lower Snake River, is considered to be the primary factor in the decline of Snake River steelhead. About 60% of the historical steelhead habitat in Idaho is still available, primarily in the Salmon and Clearwater river drainages. About 30% of Idaho's existing steelhead habitat is included within designated wilderness or wild and scenic river corridors. There is a mix of natural and hatchery steelhead production strategies in Idaho, ranging from wild refugia to large-scale hatchery programs to provide harvest opportunities. Areas managed for wild steelhead include the Lochsa and the Selway river drainages of the Clearwater River, the Middle Fork and South Fork drainages of the Salmon River, Rapid River, tributaries of the Salmon River downstream of the MF Salmon River, and tributaries of the Clearwater River downstream of the SF Clearwater.

Since the 1960s, the composition of the steelhead run entering Idaho has changed. The proportion of hatchery origin steelhead has steadily increased due to declining returns of natural fish and development of hatcheries. During 1960’s, the Snake River steelhead run was essentially 100% wild. From 1975-79, the steelhead run at Lower Granite Dam averaged 59% naturally-produced fish and from 1985-89, the run averaged 24% naturally-produced fish. From 1990-99, the run averaged 13% naturally-produced steelhead. The run has averaged 14% naturally produced fish in the recent 10 years (2001-02 to 2010-11) . The wild component has been 22% of the total return the past two years (44,800 and 33,100 fish, respectively). This is the first time since the wild run has exceed 20% of the total since the 1988-1989 return.

Returns of hatchery origin steelhead at Lower Granite Dam have exceeded the mitigation goal for the past 10 years. The recent 10 year average hatchery return is 169,400. The hatchery return was 163,450 in 2010-11 and was 133,170 as of December 31, 2011 for the 2011-12 return.

IDFG has initiated an expanded sampling program at Lower Granite Dam. A representative sample from the entire run is taken to determine origin (hatchery clipped, hatchery unclipped, wild), age, six, and length. Genetic samples are taken from wild fish and using Genetic Stock Identification we can now parse the wild return into reporting groups. IDFG and other Snake River basin managers have initiated genetic sampling of hatchery broodstock so Parental Based Tagging (PBT) techniques may be used to identify fish at any life-stage. This method provides a 100% mark rate and allows identification of a fish to its parents (and hence hatchery and age). IDFG is embracing this technology for harvest management and stock identification purposes. All hatchery releases are also PIT-tagged to allow managers to make in-season estimates of the abundance of hatchery stocks using detections at Bonneville, McNary, and Lower Granite dams.