Idaho – Status Review

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Steelhead and steelhead fisheries are an integral part of the fabric of Idaho. Statewide long-term management goals for the anadromous fishery program are: 1) maintain genetic and life history diversity and integrity of both natural and hatchery produced fish; 2) rebuild naturally producing populations of anadromous fish; 3) achieve equitable mitigation goals for losses of anadromous fish caused by the FCRPS; 4) improve overall life cycle survival sufficient for delisting and recovery; 5) allow consumptive harvest by sport and treaty fishers; and 6) coordinate PNW regional management with Idaho management objectives and long-range program goals. The Snake River Distinct Population Segment, which contains all of Idaho’s populations, was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1997. A variety of anthropogenic factors have contributed to the decline of Idaho steelhead and their subsequent listing. At present, approximately 60% of the historical steelhead range is accessible within the state, primarily within the Clearwater and Salmon river drainages. Within the existing range, extensive spatial areas are set aside for wild fish priority where artificial production is limited or absent. Average wild adult escapement past Lower Granite Dam has averaged approximately 36,000 fish since spawn year 2010. Wild steelhead production, productivity, and genetic integrity within the state are monitored through Genetic Stock Identification techniques. In addition, the state has initiated habitat restoration in wild steelhead areas subjected to extensive anthropogenic alterations over the past 150 years. Hatchery steelhead are the other significant component of Idaho’s anadromous fishery program. Idaho steelhead hatchery programs release approximately six millions smolts annually. These releases have resulted in an average of approximately 145,000 hatchery adult steelhead migrating past Lower Granite Dam since spawn year 2010. Fisheries targeting hatchery steelhead generate an estimated 1.5 million hours of angler effort and a conservative estimate of over 50 million dollars in associated revenue annually within the state.