Steelhead Meeting 2021 – Abstract

Title: Monitoring recreational steelhead fishery impacts through mobile applications

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Managing complex fisheries that includes both wild and hatchery components requires data that accurately reflects recreational harvest. Until recently, Oregon's primary source of salmon and steelhead recreational catch data came from voluntary self-reporting on paper harvest cards that are returned to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) at the end of each year. The time-lag in obtaining angler-reported catch cards has not allowed ODFW to use the data for in-season monitoring. In addition a significant portion of the harvest cards are returned with incomplete, incorrect, or unreadable information.

Beginning in 2019 the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife implemented a new recreational licensing system (ELS) that includes the ability for anglers to record fish on their electronic harvest cards, allowing for real time data collection from recreational anglers. In this presentation we will focus on the data being recorded in the new system and we will provide a demonstration of the mobile and the web applications to illustrate the processes that anglers use to document their harvest. We will then discuss how the first two years of this data is being analyzed, identified sources of potential bias, and our roadmap for system improvements. We are confident that ELS will provide the opportunity to gather real time fisheries data and help with more accurate accounting of harvest data. However, we understand that there are still several unanswered questions about how well anglers sampled via this new system represent the entire angling population, and are in the process of developing methods to use the data to estimate sport fishery harvest.