

Presentation, 2021 Pacific Coast Steelhead Management Meeting

Information needs for managing native winter steelhead in the Upper Willamette River

Winter steelhead are native to the Upper Willamette River and have been listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act since 1999. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife collects adult passage data at Willamette Falls and in the North Santiam River. Some spawning surveys are conducted in tributaries upstream. These surveys have been done intermittently since 1985 and most were index surveys on short, standard reaches. Redd densities from these surveys are used to apportion the run over Willamette Falls to the different spawning tributaries. Redd densities may not represent the distribution or abundance of spawning winter steelhead. Some data has been collected on wild juvenile O. mykiss and steelhead smolts, at Willamette Falls and in the North Santiam River. However, little data is available on survival and distribution of juvenile steelhead or their life histories. Data on smolt-to-adult returns would be especially useful to water and fisheries managers. We discuss current data needs and how to prioritize studies on native winter steelhead. We hope this will lead improved monitoring and infrastructure in the upper Willamette Basin.

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