

## **Wright, Bryan – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**

### **Presentation Title: California sea lion predation on steelhead at Willamette Falls, 2014-2020**

#### **Abstract for the 2021 Pacific Coast Steelhead Management Meeting**

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While the first known record of a California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*) at Willamette Falls, Oregon, was of a single animal in the 1950s, by the mid-1990s there were frequent observations of California sea lions foraging there for winter steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and spring Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*). Concerned that Willamette Falls would become another "Ballard Locks"—a site in Washington where California sea lions effectively extirpated a run of steelhead in the 1980s and 1990s—Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife began a predation monitoring program at the falls in 1995, as well as a sea lion marking program at Astoria in 1997 to identify and track sea lions in the Columbia River Basin. This presentation will summarize the history of this natural resource conflict along with the population status and life history of California sea lions. In particular, it will focus on the estimation of winter steelhead predation by California sea lions at the falls from 2014-2020.