

Salmon and Steelhead Benefits Moving Ahead

A massive multibillion-dollar program to benefit ESA-listed fish at critical points in their lifecycle is moving forward in the Columbia River Basin - despite the fact that the 2008 Biological Opinion and two others before it have been tied up in litigation.

Major changes in three of the four “Hs” – hydro, habitat, and hatcheries -- are taking place, all paid for by the region’s electricity customers. And harvest reform is starting to be taken seriously, as experiments on selective fishing techniques move forward in the region. Major actions are highlighted below.

Northwest families and businesses have invested billions of dollars in salmon protection with survival rates for young salmon heading downstream to the ocean improving markedly, and adult returns trending up.

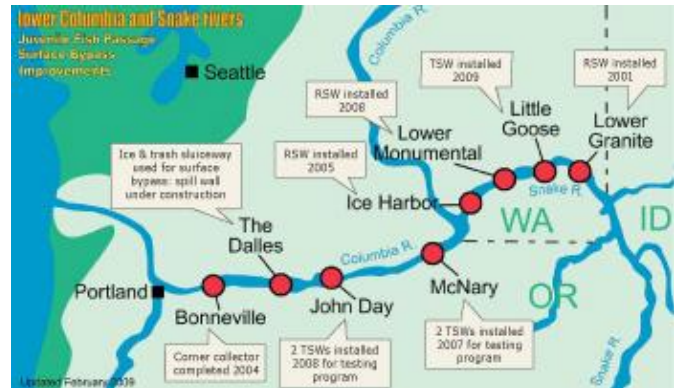
- Overall, in-river survival is through the dams is three times higher than it was 30 years ago. Snake River steelhead migrating downstream last year survived at their highest level ever.
- New spillway structures at dams pass young salmon with 97 to 100 percent survival at most locations, and the “corner collector” at Bonneville Dam has a 100 percent survival rate.
- Changes in the way the dams operate – dedicating more water to fish during the spring and summer months – have increased survival, as have programs to reduce predation by birds, sea lions, and other aquatic animals.
- Adult returns have varied widely over time, strongly indicating that other factors – ocean conditions or harvest – are having significant impacts. However, adult returns in the past decade have been trending up.

Adult Returns at Bonneville Dam 1938-2008 (wild and hatchery).



Modifications at the eight federal dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers over the past decade add up to a major hydro system overhaul.

- Mammoth removable spillway weirs, or “fish slides,” have been added at the four lower Snake River dams – Lower Granite, Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, and Little Goose – and at McNary and John Day dams on the Columbia River.
- A highly effective collector was built at Bonneville Dam to attract and move juvenile fish past the dam unharmed.



- A new spill wall at The Dalles Dam was built to improve conditions and reduce predation by birds as fish exit the spillway.
- Spill deflectors added at seven of the eight mainstem dams allow juvenile fish to travel more safely via spillway passage routes.

Habitat projects throughout the four Northwest states are restoring spawning and rearing grounds, opening tributary channels for fish to use, and providing more water in-stream.

- The 2008 Columbia Basin Accords with states and tribes added **\$100 million each year** to build on existing habitat work and make further improvements. The Accords also fund hatchery initiatives aimed at reducing impacts on native salmon and steelhead.
- An agreement with the State of Washington in 2009 added **\$45 million more** to improve conditions in the Columbia River estuary.



Northwest RiverPartners is a partnership of farmers, electric utilities, ports, and large and small businesses in the Pacific Northwest. We are dedicated to ensuring the Columbia and Snake remain living, working rivers to benefit families and businesses in the region.

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