

## Record fish numbers at Round Butte

*From W.S. Power & Water and Portland General Electric*

Reintroducing salmon and steelhead to an area where they were cut off for more than five decades is hard work.

It takes collaboration with many partners, a commitment to sound science, and—more than anything—patience.

This summer, the Confederated Tribes Power & Water Enterprises and PGE biologists are thrilled to be seeing some big results.

More than 700 adult spring Chinook salmon have been released above Round Butte Dam: That is the highest number since the reintroduction effort began in 2010.

These results are likely related to improving ocean conditions, as well as an important adaptive management changes that the tribes and PGE have pushed for over many years.

We've been working with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to screen returning fish for disease, making it safer to release hatchery fish above the



Fish handling at the Pelton-Round Butte facility.

project.

This change has allowed us to release excess broodstock—fish not needed for spawning at the hatchery—into the upper basin, in addition to known origin fish—fish that originated in the Upper Deschutes basin and passed through the selective water withdrawal tower as juveniles.

With so many adults in the upper basin, we have already documented natural spawning upstream of the project, producing the next generation of ocean-going salmon.

We also initiated a comprehensive redd count program in the Metolius and Whychus Creek and will be surveying the tributaries,

alongside partners from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and local environmental organizations, to learn more about fish spawning behavior.

Additionally, we've tagged 100 of the adult fish with radio tags, allowing PGE biologists to track their movements and learn more about their habits as they head upstream.

These returns aren't just good news for today, but will also have long-lasting positive impacts for years to come.

In 2024, we hope to see an influx of young fish, the offspring of these adults, heading toward the ocean through the selective water withdrawal tower.

## New net in lake shows signs of success

*From W.S. Power & Water and Portland General Electric*

Record numbers of juvenile steelhead were collected this year at the Warm Springs Power & Water and PGE selective water withdrawal tower.

For the past decade, the partners have been working to improve fish collection at the selective water withdrawal.

Generating power at night

when fish are most active and acclimating fish in the upper basin have both helped, but there is still work to do. After visiting our peers at PacifiCorp, Puget Sound Energy and Tacoma Power, we learned they had all seen major improvements in juvenile fish passage by adding a lead net.

A lead net is a single panel of netting that extends into the reservoir, bisecting the

fish entrance and creating a 'wall' that guides fish toward the collector entrance.

This past February we installed our own lead net at the SWW, and our early results indicate that it's working.

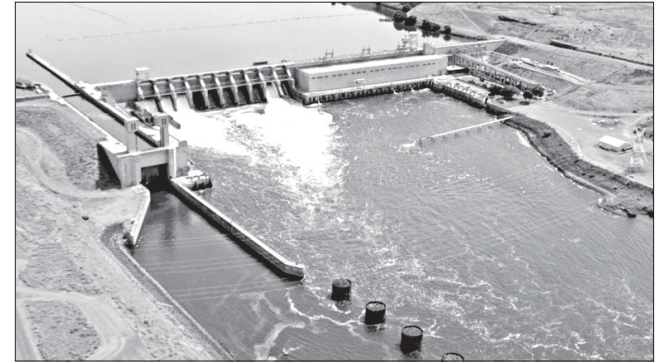
From 2010 to 2021, our average reservoir passage efficiency (the metric we use to measure fish collection) for steelhead has hovered around 10-15 percent.

## Tribal leaders praise Snake River dams report

The governor of Washington state, Jay Inslee, and U.S. Sen. Patty Murray just released a long-anticipated report on breaching the dams along the lower Snake River.

Echoing an earlier draft, they said that taking out the dams is ultimately the best chance for threatened and endangered salmon. But they also detailed the enormous impacts dam removal would have on clean energy, transportation and the broader economy.

They said now is not the right time to breach the



Lower Snake River dam may be breached.

dams, but that the option should continue to be on the table.

The Yakama Nation praised Inslee and Murray for "championing a compre-

hensive approach to Columbia Basin salmon recovery," said Jeremy Takala, chairman of the Fish and Wildlife Committee for the Yakama Nation.

## Big win for endangered Klamath Basin fish

Endangered suckers and salmon in the Klamath Basin face a greater shot at survival thanks to federal funds recently awarded.

Oregon's U.S. Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden announced the first 33 Klamath Basin restoration projects to receive funds totaling more than \$26 million this year.

The money is part of \$162 million from the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for improving the ailing health of the Klamath Basin in Oregon and Cali-



Klamath sucker fish facing better chance of survival.

fornia during the next five years.

All of the projects are dedicated to restoring fish populations and habitats, especially endangered Lost River and shortnose sucker fish and coho and chinook salmon.

Fourteen of the projects will help Oregon.

Nearly half of the money this year, \$10 million, will go to the Klamath Falls National Fish Hatchery to breed 60,000 sucker fish annually. The fish are native to Upper Klamath Lake and are

vital to the Klamath Tribes, but their populations have plummeted due to drought, over-irrigation, pollution and habitat loss.

The Klamath Tribes will receive more than \$1 million to breed and monitor more Lost River suckers and to restore some of their spawning sites.

They'll also receive nearly \$1 million more to grow their own chinook salmon fishery. The Klamath Tribes have not had access to native Klamath River salmon fisheries for more than a 100 years.

## Federal energy agency wants lower Klamath dams gone

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has issued a final Environmental Impact Statement recommending the removal of the four lower Klamath River dams along the border of Oregon and California. The dam removal would be one of the largest in U.S. history, second to the removal of the Elwha Dam on Washington's Olympic Peninsula.

"Restoring the impounded reaches to a free-flowing river would have significant beneficial effect on restoring

salmon runs, access to traditional foods, Tribal cultural practices, and a characteristic fluvial landscape," read the environmental impact statement.

Additionally, dam removal is expected to improve water quality and fisheries along with terrestrial and aquatic resources used by nearby tribes. "These benefits would aid in the continuation and restoration of tribal practices and traditions that have been adversely affected."

## Yurok Tribe studies Klamath Chinook die-off

In late August and early this month, dozens of dead Chinook Salmon were observed along a 40-mile stretch of the Lower Klamath River.

The Yurok Tribe's Fisheries Department had determined the fish suffocated due to a pathogenic bacteria known as gill rot.

Tribal fisheries staff have also noticed salmon with Ich

infections, a parasitic ciliate often germinated by poor water quality and temperature changes.

The area where the dead fish were found, from Blakes Riffle to Weitchpec, has warmer than average waters due to the reservoirs behind four dams.

Due to warmer waters and flagging fish health, the Yurok Tribe called for addi-

tional water to be released from the Lewiston Reservoir in Trinity County with the aim to cool down the river and reduce fish congregations.

Whether the diseases will result in a massive fish kill remains unclear, but the Yurok, Hoopa Valley and Karuk Tribes are all working on solutions to diminishing fish health.

## States close salmon fishing below Bonneville Dam

With Chinook salmon catches trending well above expectation, fishery managers from the states of Oregon and Washington announced last week that they were closing the season along the lower Columbia River from Bonneville Dam to Buoy 10, including the Camas Slough. This was a state action, and not tribal regulation.

Fishery managers with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife agreed to close salmon fishing downstream of Bonneville Dam after preliminary data showed impacts to Lower Columbia River "tule" Chinook—which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act—were much

higher than anticipated.

"This closure is a big deal and a decision not taken lightly, but we've got to do this to ensure fisheries remain within their conservation limits on these listed runs of fish," said Tucker Jones, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Ocean Salmon and Columbia River program manager. "It kills us to have to close fishing before Labor Day weekend."

**Cascades East Transit Route 20** serves travelers between Warm Springs and Madras. You can find the schedule at the Cascades East transit website, where you can also download their real-time app: [cascadeseasttransit.com/routes-schedules/warm-springs-madras-route-20/](http://cascadeseasttransit.com/routes-schedules/warm-springs-madras-route-20/)

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