

Steelhead: largest return run in decades

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Additionally, with more than two thirds of the steelhead lifecycle spent in the Pacific, recent beneficial ocean conditions likely played a significant role in steelhead survival and return rates.

In addition to the 675 reintroduction program fish, 275 Deschutes River hatchery-origin steelhead were also released upstream—a reintroduction strategy adopted in recent years.

These adults, referred to as excess broodstock, are screened for disease, monitored post release, and are genetically identical to the other steelhead from the upper basin.

Conservation organizations and agencies celebrate the record steelhead run. Here are some reactions:

“The steelhead return to the Upper Deschutes basin during the 2024-2025 run has been much stronger than we anticipated, and we are seeing evidence of widespread spawning.

The adaptive manage-

ment changes we’ve made in the reintroduction program have undoubtedly contributed to this strong return. Additional factors such as favorable ocean conditions and freshwater migration conditions also play a significant role.”

– **Terry Shrader**, Pelton Round Butte mitigation coordinator for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

“The Deschutes River Conservancy and its partners have been working over the last 15 years to restore streamflow and improve habitat in the Crooked River, Whychus Creek, and Metolius system to benefit these fish coming home.

“This marks the largest return since the efforts to reintroduce fish above the Pelton Round Butte dam complex began, and shows the promise of restoring anadromous runs back to their home waters in the upper basin.”

– **Kate Fitzpatrick**, executive director for the



Deschutes River Conservancy.

“This year’s large return of adult steelhead from the reintroduction program has been exciting to see, and a tremendous amount of work has been expended to make this happen. NOAA Fisheries appreciates the conservation efforts of the

Deschutes River Conservancy, Deschutes Land Trust, local watershed councils, and irrigation districts. The Bureau of Reclamation has also been a great partner by storing and releasing water to assist with reintroduction.

“PGE and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs have made improvements to their operations and collection facility, resulting in many more juvenile salmon and steelhead being passed downstream.

“Additionally, adjustments by the Tribes and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife have contributed to larger numbers of juveniles being passed downstream.”

– **Scott Carlon**, fish biologist for NOAA Fisheries.



Migrating Deschutes River steelhead.

PGE

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APRIL 22, 2025
9AM-12:30PM

Warm Springs Community Wellness Center Parking Lot.
Supplies/Lunch provided & Raffle for participants

For more info contact Jillisa Suppah
jillisa@papalaxsimisha.org

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