Northwest Salmon & Steelhead Recovery

September 2008

Middle Columbia Recovery Domain

Listed Species:

Middle Columbia River Steelhead

Management Units:

- Oregon
- Washington Gorge *(White Salmon, Klickitat & Rock Creek)*
- Yakima Subbasin
- Southeast Washington

What is in a Recovery Plan?

- An explanation of steelhead biology
- Recovery goals & viability criteria
- An assessment of current status, limiting factors & threats
- Recovery strategies & site-specific actions
- Estimates of time & costs to implement actions
- Research, monitoring & evaluation to track progress

Overview: Middle Columbia River Steelhead Proposed Recovery Plan

The Proposed Endangered Species Act (ESA) Recovery Plan for the Middle Columbia River Steelhead Distinct Population Segment (DPS) was released on September 24, 2008 for public review and comment. There will be a 90-day comment period.

Salmon & Steelhead Recovery Planning

Salmon and steelhead are a treasured icon of the Pacific Northwest. They are important to our environment, economy, and culture. Eighteen species of Pacific Northwest salmon and steelhead are currently listed under ESA.

The ESA requires recovery plans to be developed for all listed species. For the ESA, recovery means that the species is again naturally self-sustaining over the long term, no longer needs the protection of the ESA, and can be "delisted."

A recovery plan provides a roadmap for communities seeking to secure the long-term benefits of healthy watersheds and rivers for salmon and steelhead. It helps organize people, processes, and resources for more effective action.

Habitat, Hydro, Hatcheries and Harvest

This plan summarizes information from four locally developed recovery plans for "management units" encompassing Middle Columbia River tributaries in Washington and Oregon. The DPS plan also uses information from two "modules" developed by NMFS to address conditions in the Columbia River mainstem and estuary that affect all the Middle Columbia steelhead: the Hydro Module, which summarizes effects of the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) and other mainstem dams, and the Estuary Module. For hatchery effects, the Plan relies upon Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans and *Artificial Production for Pacific Salmon* (Appendix C of Supplemental Comprehensive Analysis, NMFS 2008 FCRPS Biological Opinion). For fishery management planning, it refers to the U.S. v. Oregon process for mainstem fisheries, and Fisheries Management Evaluation Plans for tributary fisheries.

Snake River Salmon Recovery

YAKIMA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE RECOVERY BOARD

Middle Columbia River Steelhead

Factors Limiting Steelhead Survival

The major factors currently limiting the viability of Middle Columbia river steelhead populations are:

- Degraded tributary habitats
- Impaired fish passage in the mainstem Columbia River and tributaries
- Hatchery-related effects
- Predation/competition/disease

Middle Columbia River Steelhead Status

Salmon and steelhead viability, or likelihood of long-term survival, is assessed in terms of four characteristics: abundance, productivity, diversity, and spatial structure of populations and major population groups.

Of the 17 populations of Middle Columbia River steelhead, four are at high risk of extinction over the next 100 years, and ten are at a moderate risk of extinction. Three populations, the North Fork John Day, Deschutes Eastside and Fifteenmile Creek, are currently considered viable. The recovery plan focuses on actions to improve the status of populations and ensure long-term persistence of the species.

Strategies for Recovery

The recovery plan proposes actions to reduce or mitigate the limiting factors and threats to steelhead survival throughout the life cycle:

Tributary Habitat

Protect highest quality habitats, maintain existing unimpaired healthy watersheds, and restore habitat conditions through passive and active measures.

Hydrosystem

Improve juvenile and adult steelhead migratory passage and survival in the Federal Columbia River Power System.

Hatcheries

Improve hatchery management to minimize impacts of hatchery fish on naturally produced steelhead. Supplement natural production where appropriate.

Predation

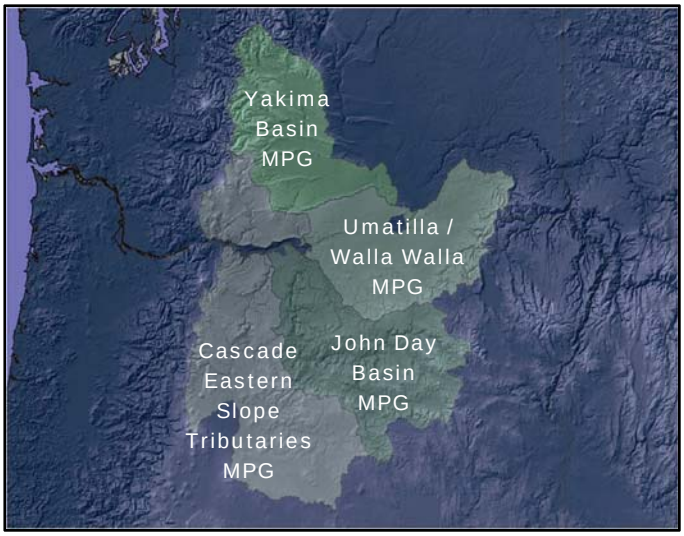
Reduce predation on steelhead in the Columbia River and estuary.

Harvest

Maintain low-impact fisheries, increase harvest of hatchery strays.

Coordination

Coordinate research and planning within the range of the Middle Columbia River steelhead.



Middle Columbia River Steelhead Major Population Groups

Learning Over Time & Adaptive Management

Monitoring and research will be needed to support adaptive management and allow managers to make sound decisions for the future. As actions are taken and the results monitored, new information will help us learn what works best for the fish.

For More Information

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