

Chum Reintroduction (Brian Alfonse, Assistant Project Leader):

This week was another wet one on the Lower Columbia with 2.5 inches of rain recorded over the past seven days. This rain brought our streams back up and forced us to stop our Stewart Creek fence weir trap for two days. We continued operating our two screw traps throughout the week but the Conyers Creek trap had been stopped by logs on two occasions. We had a big day at the Stewart Creek trap on Tuesday with a total catch of 247 Coho fry, unfortunately this was the last day we were able to run the trap for the week. We also caught our first Chum Salmon fry of the year at Stewart Creek on February 29th, which is six days earlier than when we caught our first Chum last year. At the Clatskanie River trap our catch totals are still less than 10 Coho Salmon smolts or fry per day. Despite these low catch numbers we has still managed to recapture two of these smolts and one fry.

	Chum	Coho		Chinook	Steelhead			Cutthroat					Trout
	Fry	Fry	Smolt	Fry	<90	90-119	≥120	<90	90-119	120-159	160-249	≥250	Fry
Weekly Catch as of : March 3, 2016													
Clatskanie River (screw trap)		1	10										
Conyers Creek (screw trap)		28	1				1		4				
Stewart Creek (fry trap)	1	283	1										
Season Catch Totals													
Clatskanie River (screw trap)		12	16							1			
Conyers Creek (screw trap)		39	6				2	2	5		2		
Stewart Creek (fry trap)	1	297	1					1					

Mid-South Coast (Pat Burns, Assistant Project Leader):

West Fork Smith:

The steady stream of returning adult steelhead continued this past week at the trap site. We tagged and released an additional 22 adult steelhead (14 females and eight males), giving us a total of 189 tagged adults for the season (75 females and 100 males). The total of tagged adults to date is greater than the full season average and we still have another two months to add to it. Spawning ground surveys continued throughout the basin this past week. Recorded observations were low for both live adults and redds although this week’s surveys were the tributaries sites which tend to hold lower number of steelhead spawners. Trap efficiency remains high at 86%. This would be our third highest trapping efficiency (range 21.1-91.2%) and well above the project average of 48.8%.

The juvenile smolt trap fished the entire week although catch of salmonids was very low. The crew has reported moderate numbers of coho fry and coho smolts on the surveys so it may be a matter of time when we begin to see an increase in the juvenile salmonid catch.

Winchester Creek:

Rain at the trap site has kept the trap turning on its own so the motorization is on hold for at least another week. Catch at the site while not spectacular has been steady with 2-4 coho smolts caught per day and more importantly a few recaptures. We trapped our first adult Pacific lamprey this week which is always exciting for some of us as well as a couple of ammocoetes measuring 13 and 15 mm respectively.

Mid Coast (Adrian Gonzalez, Crew Leader):

The smolt trapping season is in full swing and not without its hiccups. However, we are seeing a slow titration of fry and even a few smolts at all our sites. Our new EBA Wesley Shum is acclimating to the season well and picking up all the nuances of smolt trapping, he's a great addition to the Mid-Coast team. Chris has been a great help this week in training Wes and will be working a weekend schedule the remainder of the season.

Mill Creek-Siletz started up on Monday and has since had more debris than fish. With the first decent rains of the season and some heavy winds we've had a lot of live well cleaning. Despite this, the trap is spinning well and picking up recaps. Mill Creek-Yaquina on the other hand has been plagued with trap issues. Two days this week the screen has stopped spinning without blowing any fuses and we've had some fry mortalities as a result. The fact that the fuse hasn't blow tells us it's not an electrical problem, and Thursday I showed Wes how to change out the motor, this should resolve the issue. Luckily, the fast water that funnels into the trap has changed and so we have held off on finishing the panel wall at the trap, so fish are able to navigate around the trap until we know the issue is truly fixed.

Richard similarly started the Lobster Creek Humphrey traps (East Fork and Upper Main) on Monday and has had some issues at East Fork. With the rains in the off season, the creek has blown out what used to be a rock weir that funnels the water into the trap and instead altered the flow to carve to the far side bank, diverting much of the water to the port side of the trap. Richard has spent some back breaking time rebuilding the rock weir and has corrected much of the deviation. We had a rock float downstream and stop the screen from spinning, but in an area with light sand stone cobble and boulders this is to be expected from time to time. Upper Main has been issue free and both traps are catching Coho fry and even a smolt or two.

Cascade Creek was started last Monday and we have our first week of data. This site always seems to have a lot of Coho smolts moving right off the bat, putting it in a week early has helped us capture those first migrants. The week started off with 12 smolts and by mid-week went up to 44 smolts. The recap rate has been great. Bill has the trap fishing well! On Sunday, Bill started up Tenmile Creek, after a week of battling the mighty brute Sitka. The hole we normally fish the trap at was made deeper this year and the stream now naturally funnels toward the trap, which is good and has resulted in a few recaps. The swifter water has its draw backs for The Great Panel Wall, but Bill has been chipping away at it. Week two down, only four months to go!

North Coast (Derek Wiley, Assistant Project Leader):

We saw an increase in steelhead catch at the traps and redd activity on the spawning grounds this week, particularly on the NF Nehalem where over 40 redds were marked in our mainstem reaches. After a wet winter we were hoping the start of screw trapping would yield a break from the rain, but hopes were dashed this week with plenty of the wet stuff to go around. The traps were fished intermittently this week and will likely be fished sparingly next week as significant rain is predicted for the next ten days. After overdoing it on the “anti-rain” dance last spring, I decided to forego the dance this year and let Mother Nature do her thing. I am already questioning that decision and may have to break the dance out again if the wet pattern doesn’t change. Fortunately, this week’s catch was light and few fish seem to be moving right now.