

Happy New Year from all of us at PGE and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs! We have many reasons to celebrate 2018 — a record high collection efficiency of smolts at the Selective Water Withdrawal, a significantly greater return of fall Chinook than last year, and opportunities to collaborate with our partners in Central Oregon and across the Pacific Northwest. We look forward to another year of hard work here in the Deschutes basin, and we hope to experience more milestones on our journey of fish reintroduction.

Forward this newsletter to anyone who shares your interest in the safe passage of fish on the Deschutes. Subscribe or unsubscribe by sending an email to deschutes.passage@pqn.com.

Featured Study: Kokanee Re-Sight Study (Part 2)



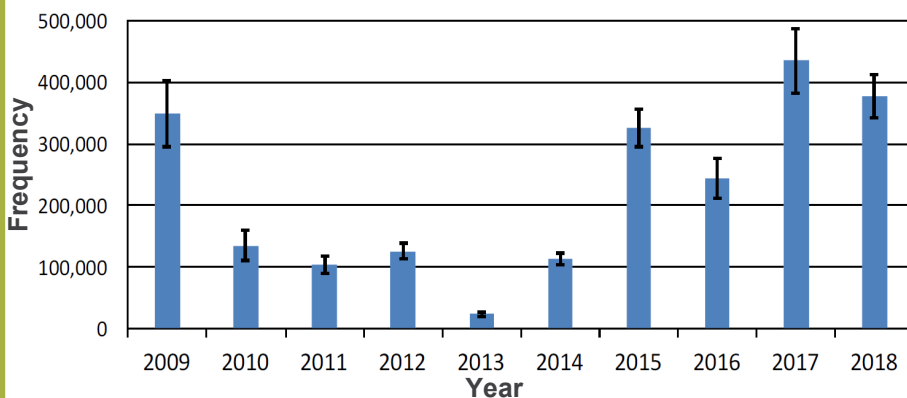
Back in August, participants from the Tribes, PGE and ODFW captured thousands of kokanee in Lake Billy Chinook and released the fish back into the Metolius basin marked with brightly colored streamer tags. Biologists returned to the water in November to observe and count these fish, completing the second stage in the kokanee mark re-sight study.



How does the study work?

- Staff from the partnering organizations suit-up in waders, orange vests (for safety during hunting season) and polarized sunglasses (to cut the glare on the water and more easily spot the fish).
- Our scientists wade through designated sections of the Metolius river and its side channels, counting kokanee, using a wading staff to stay balanced and a tally counter to keep track of numbers (see photo on right).
- Any fish spotted with an identifying tag are recorded, as well as the total number observed.
- The kokanee are often seen swimming in pairs in the river’s main stem or congregating in large numbers in the side springs. The fish are fast, colorful, and distinctive in appearance.
- Survey numbers are used to generate an estimate for the abundance of spawning kokanee in the Metolius basin.

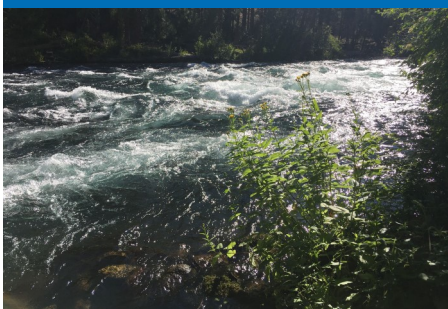
2009-2018 Metolius River Kokanee Spawner Abundance Estimates



What have we learned from the surveys?

- An estimated **377,206** Lake Billy Chinook kokanee spawned in the Metolius River basin in fall 2018.
- The ten-year average is **223,586** kokanee spawners. 2018’s count is 169% of the ten-year average.
- The collaborative study involved over 50 people from four organizations.
- For more [pictures](#) and [videos](#) of this year’s kokanee count, join our Environmental Community Group on [Facebook](#).
- Read about Part 1 of the study on our [Updates and Events page](#).

Discover PGE Parks



- PGE now operates two additional campgrounds on the Metolius arm of Lake Billy Chinook. [Perry South](#) is a 62-site campground with boat ramps, docks, and excellent fishing. 12-site [Monty Campground](#) is located down a rugged road, along the clear, fast-running Metolius River — it is the perfect spot for those looking to get away from it all. **Both of these campgrounds will be open for reservations on February 1 for all summer dates after Memorial Day Weekend.**
- Pelton and Promontory Campgrounds are now open for reservations for all dates in 2019. [Plan](#) your vacation now.

Juvenile Fish Update

Juvenile Species	Nov. 2018	Yearly Total (through Nov. 2018)
Chinook	543	21,165
Kokanee	2,219	44,816
Bull Trout	40	598
Rainbow Trout	1	36

- In November 2018, 2,834 fish from five species of salmonids were processed at the Fish Transfer Facility at the Selective Water Withdrawal. 543 Chinook were released downstream into the Lower Deschutes River.



Adult Fish Update

Adult Species	Dec. 2018	Yearly Total (hatchery, wild, and upper basin)
Summer Steelhead	405	1,003 (Sep 2018 - May 2019)
Fall Chinook	118	610 (through Dec. 2018)
Spring Chinook	0	1,003 (through Dec. 2018)
Sockeye	0	49 (through Dec. 2018)

- December is typically a slow month at the Pelton Trap due to the tail end of the fall Chinook run and colder weather. However, temperatures have been fairly mild this year, so we haven't seen the typical dip in summer steelhead numbers this month.
- 405 adult summer steelhead were captured in December. Four of these fish were released above Round Butte dam. A total of 24 steelhead have returned and been released into the upper basin so far this run year.
- Fall Chinook numbers typically begin declining in December. 118 fall Chinook were captured at the adult trap in December, compared to 448 in November.

Complete daily fish counts (including identifying tags and hatchery vs. wild origin) can be [found online](#).

Announcements, News, and Events

- The Crooked River Wetlands project, completed by the City of Prineville and supported by PGE and Tribes' Pelton Round Butte Fund, received recognition from two national organizations. Read more on [KTVZ News](#).
- An [article in the Bend Bulletin](#) explored the potential affects of climate change on Central Oregon rivers.
- PGE and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs are now accepting applications for the 2020 Cycle of the Pelton Round Butte Fund. The Fund provides funding for watershed restoration projects that benefit salmon and steelhead in the Deschutes River Basin above and below the Pelton Round Butte Hydroelectric Project. The application materials and directions can be found on the [PGE website](#).

Join Us for Eagle Watch 2019

All-day fun for the whole family in Eagle Village — hot dogs, kids' activities, education stations, traditional dancing and more. Proceeds from the silent auction and raffle will support ongoing Golden Eagle research.

When: February 23-24, 2019

Where: Round Butte Overlook Park at Lake Billy Chinook

Visit oregonstateparks.org or find us on [Facebook](#) for more information.



The Plain Facts

Our fish reintroduction strategy on the Deschutes River is informed by the latest science. PGE and the Tribes are constantly making adjustments as we gather data, learn new information and consult with the Fish Committee.

One of these changes is a shift from fry stocking to a smolt-stocking program. This transition has been taking place over the past several years in response to data showing that smolts return at a higher rate and compete less with native redband trout. In 2019, there will be no fry stocking of steelhead in Whychus Creek. By 2020, fry stocking will be completely phased out and smolt releases will increase throughout the basin. Fisheries managers are also in the process of implementing smolt acclimation. This means that ocean-going Chinook and steelhead will be held in place for 10-30 days prior to release. Acclimated smolts may be more accustomed to water temperatures and develop a better "imprint" of the river, allowing them to navigate back home from the ocean more effectively. Experimental acclimation in 2018 greatly improved our collection of juveniles at the SWW, so acclimation sites will be expanded in 2019.

Thank you for reading our January 2019 newsletter!

Visit our [website](#) to find more information about the Deschutes, including informative videos, fact sheets, and reports. News, updates and past issues of this newsletter can be found [here](#).

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