

December 6, 2018
PGE Clackamas River Fisheries Newsletter, Fall 2018

Welcome to the Clackamas River Fisheries Newsletter! Thank you for your interest in native fish, wildlife habitat, parks and recreation on the Clackamas. This quarterly newsletter will feature information about our scientific studies, link to the latest fish counts, provide updates on collaborative projects, and highlight our innovative approach to fish passage.

Learn more about our work on the Clackamas throughout this newsletter, and please forward this email to any friends or family members who share your interest in the Clackamas basin. To unsubscribe from this mailing list, please email clackamas.passage@pgn.com.

Featured Study: Tracking Upstream Spawning

In 2013, PGE began a multi-year evaluation of upstream fish passage through the Clackamas Hydroproject and into the upper basin. This ongoing study allows our biologists to monitor the migration of winter steelhead, spring Chinook, coho, and Pacific lamprey, helping us understand how our facilities and dams may be affecting fish behavior.

How does the study work?

Each year, biologists collect a small percentage of adult fish at the North Fork Sorting Facility and carefully implant radio transmitters into the animals' throats. The fish are released below the Project so that their movement can be monitored through our facilities and beyond. Radio tags emit continuous signals which are detected when fish pass by a receiver. We have 29 receivers in fixed locations throughout the hydroproject and the upper basin, and we also track fish manually by foot, vehicle, and even helicopter. Using multiple tracking methods allows our biologists to access remote locations and gather a more complete picture of where, when, and how fish move throughout the river.



What have we learned?

The study has helped us understand how long it takes fish to navigate various stretches of the river and our fish ladders. Additionally, the study has shown that our improvements to fish passage infrastructure have shortened the amount of time fish spend traveling through our project, enabling them to reach historic spawning grounds in the upper river earlier. Fish also have a higher chance of survival, likely caused by a reduction in stress during their migration through our sorting facility. In fact, we've seen an 80% reduction in pre-spawning mortality for Chinook!



Discover PGE Parks!



- Feeling the winter blues? Think ahead to summer! [Reserve](#) your spot at Timothy Lake, Lake Harriet, or another Forest Service campground up to six months in advance.
- Promontory and Pelton Campgrounds will be open for [reservations](#) starting January 2 for all 2019 dates.
- The renovation of **Gone Creek Campground** at Timothy Lake is nearly complete. Campers can look forward to an improved boat ramp and trailer parking, enhanced picnic areas, longer and leveled site pads, new restrooms, tables and fire rings, restored native vegetation and a designated day use area for registered campers.





Join our Environmental Community on Facebook!

We'd love to welcome you as a member of our new Facebook group, dedicated to sharing the latest information on PGE's environmental programs.

Whether you're passionate about parks or fascinated by fish, seeking the science or curious about conservation, this group is for you. We look forward to highlighting our work and hearing more from you.

Become a group member: [facebook.com/groups/EnviroCommunityPGE](https://www.facebook.com/groups/EnviroCommunityPGE)



Juvenile Fish Update

Juvenile Species	2018 Run Year Total (Oct 1, 2017—Sep 30, 2018)	Run Relative to 10-Year Average
Spring Chinook	207,750	481% (N=43,194)
Winter Steelhead	54,246	177% (N=30,589)
Coho	185,987	177% (N=105,098)
Pacific Lamprey	25,728	281% (N=9,147)

- Numbers represent total outmigration for all facilities combined
- This past year, we witnessed an all-time record (since 1958) for juvenile Chinook collected and bypassed through our facilities.
- We also collected and bypassed the second largest number of juvenile Pacific lamprey since 1958.



Adult Fish Update

Adult Species	Run Total (to date)	Run Relative to 10-Year Average
Spring Chinook	2,313	114% (N=2,028)
Summer Steelhead	997	150% (N=665)
Early Run Coho	2,611	102% (N=2,565)

- Wild spring Chinook are returning to the Clackamas in large numbers; currently 114% of their 10-year average. This percentage is more than double the same measure for spring Chinook on the Willamette River. Both groups have similar migratory paths, suggesting that the discrepancy is a result of PGE's improvements to juvenile passage facilities.

- High returns of early run coho to the Clackamas are an anomaly in the region, which is otherwise experiencing a poor season of coho returns. This is the second year in a row that coho returns have outflanked regional trends. These are the first two returns of adults that passed through the new North Fork surface collector as juveniles, thus experiencing the benefits associated with improved fish collection infrastructure.
- In 2018, hatchery summer steelhead were recycled to the lower Clackamas River rather than Faraday Lake. Many fish are still available for harvest in the lower river.
- Complete daily fish counts can be [found online](#).





Announcements, News, and Resources

- Unprecedented numbers of adult fish are returning to the Clackamas River, thanks to PGE's improvements to fish passage infrastructure. Read about these positive changes in the [Estacada News](#).
- PGE's downstream fish passage efforts on the Clackamas were featured in the summer issue of Northwest Steelheader magazine, produced by the Association of Northwest Steelheaders. Read the [article](#) and the [full magazine issue](#).
- PGE is rebuilding the Faraday Powerhouse, celebrating the building's historic value while paving the way for increased safety and efficiency. Watch [this video](#) to learn more about the project.
- The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Recreation Report for the Willamette Zone, including the Clackamas River, can be found on [their website](#).
- Fish counts and other information about the Eagle Creek National Fish Hatchery can be found on the [US Fish and Wildlife Service website](#).
- Interested in learning more about our fish passage efforts on the Deschutes River? Subscribe to our monthly Deschutes fisheries newsletter by sending an email to Deschutes.Passage@pgn.com with the subject line "subscribe."

Shade our Streams: Restoration Powered by Partnership



Clackamas River
Basin Council

30 miles of streamside habitat in the Clackamas basin have been restored thanks to the [Shade our Streams](#) program, powered by a partnership between PGE and the Clackamas River Basin Council (CRBC). Staff from PGE, CRBC, and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) recently

toured several of these sites, witnessing their amazing transformation. At each site, invasive species like Japanese knotweed and reed canarygrass were

removed, beneficial native plants were installed, and in some areas, logs and boulders were placed instream to enhance aquatic habitat. Healthy riparian areas like these reduce erosion, enhance water quality, and support fish and wildlife. During the tour, a [pair of coho salmon](#) even showed up to express their gratitude!



Thank you for reading our Fall 2018 newsletter!

Visit our website to find more information about the Clackamas, including informative videos, fact sheets, and reports: PortlandGeneral.com/Clackamas. The most recent updates can be found at: PortlandGeneral.com/ClackamasUpdates.

- ◇ Have suggestions for what you'd like to see in the next newsletter? Please contact us at clackamas.passage@pgn.com.
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