

Wild steelhead once ranged over much of central and southwestern Idaho. Today, not only is their population greatly reduced, but only 62% of their historic habitat remains accessible.

While returns of wild steelhead have rebounded from the lows in the 1990s, Snake River stocks are still depressed compared to historic levels.



IDAHO FISH AND GAME MISSION

(Idaho Code Section 36-103)

“All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. It shall only be captured or taken at such times or places, under such conditions, or by such means, or in such manner as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of the state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.”

Working under the guidance of the Commission, the Department manages the Fish and Wildlife of the state.

For more information on steelhead stocks returning to Idaho, see:

idfg.idaho.gov

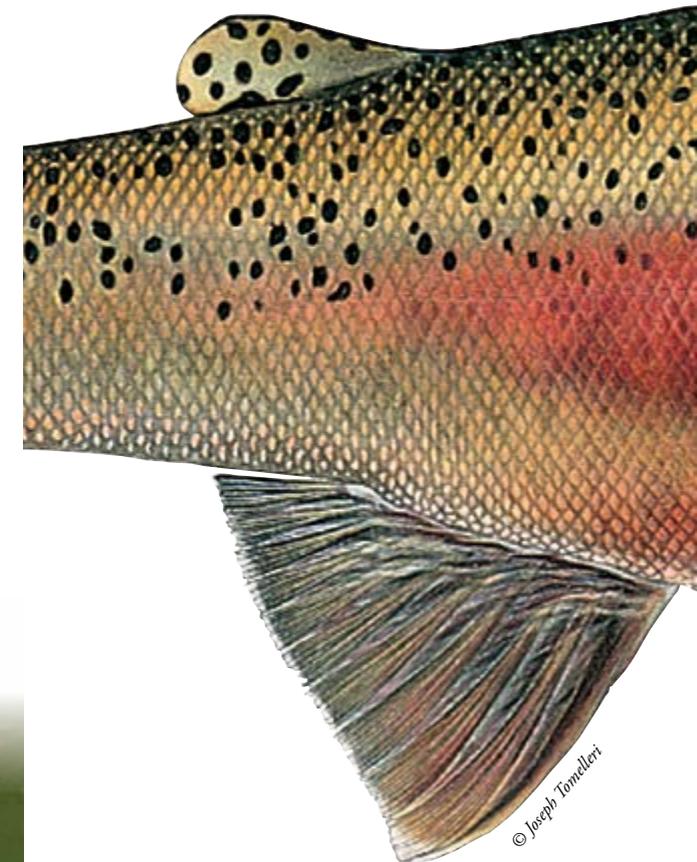


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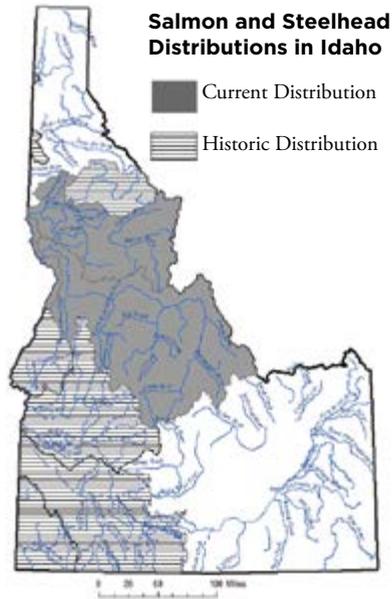
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Wild Steelhead Monitoring in Idaho



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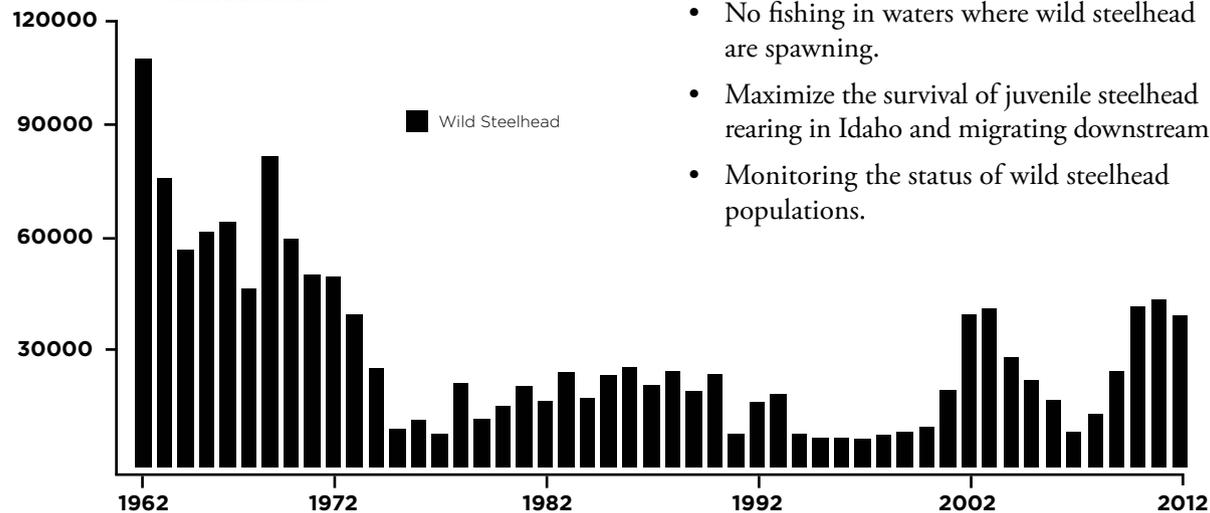
Why Are Wild Steelhead Important?

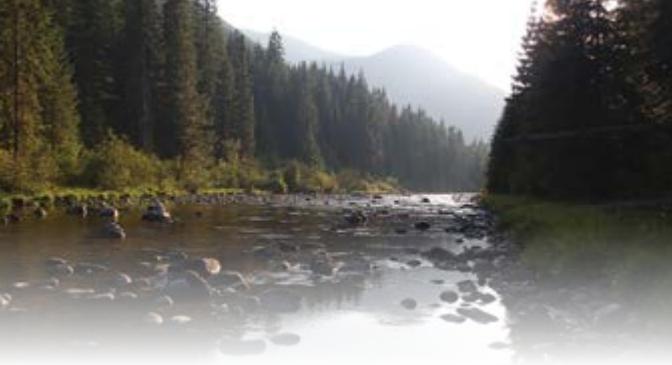
Wild populations of steelhead are vital to the species recovery. When wild steelhead are missing, an integral part of Idaho's aquatic ecosystem is missing. For anglers, wild steelhead are a valuable catch and release fishing opportunity.

What Management Strategies Benefit Wild Steelhead

Idaho Fish and Game strategies to benefit wild steelhead include:

- Maintain large core areas for wild steelhead and salmon production, no hatchery fish released.
- No fishing in waters where wild steelhead are spawning.
- Maximize the survival of juvenile steelhead rearing in Idaho and migrating downstream.
- Monitoring the status of wild steelhead populations.





How does Idaho Department of Fish and Game Monitor and Manage Wild Steelhead?

Idaho Fish and Game's anadromous program has long-range goals to recover and preserve Idaho's salmon and steelhead runs to provide benefits for all users. Five key management objectives are identified to achieve these goals:

Maintain genetic and life history diversity and integrity of both naturally and hatchery produced fish.

Rebuild naturally-producing populations of anadromous fish to levels that allow consumptive use, including harvest, by sport and treaty fishers.

Achieve equitable mitigation benefits for losses of anadromous fish caused by development of the hydroelectric system on the Snake and Columbia rivers.

Address key limiting factors identified in all "H's" of hydropower, habitat, harvest, and hatchery to improve the overall life cycle survival sufficient for delisting and recovery of salmon and steelhead.

Coordinate Pacific Northwest regional management with Idaho anadromous management to achieve Idaho's management objectives and long-range goals.



Monitor Abundance

Lower Granite Dam: Project estimates juvenile and adult steelhead abundance in large drainages (e.g., MFK Salmon, Upper Clearwater), by age, and sex. Also monitors wild steelhead life history diversity (age structure of juveniles and adults) and productivity.

High Precision Index Streams: Projects measure the number of juveniles produced per adult female spawner. PIT tagged juveniles estimate smolt survival in the hydrosystem and establish life history diversity in tributary populations.

Stream Surveys: Juveniles are counted using snorkel techniques to describe occupancy and density in spawning and rearing habitats.



Monitor Hydrosystem

Smolt Monitoring Program and Comparative Survival Study: Projects monitor the travel time and survival of smolts using various passage routes through the hydrosystem (e.g. barging vs. in-river). Provides data to make management decisions on hydrosystem operation to improve smolt survival.



Monitor Harvest

Creel Surveys: Surveys are fishery and year-specific. They help determine harvest rates of hatchery (adipose-clipped) fish and estimate catch and release of adipose-intact fish.

Phone surveys: These help estimate total harvest of steelhead in Idaho, as well as collect information on wild fish encountered in the fishery.



Manage Habitat

Stream Restoration and Reconnects: Projects restore degraded aquatic habitat and reconnect steelhead to historic habitats to increase wild fish populations. These projects are successful because of working relationships with various private landowners and governmental agencies.



Down River Management

Interagency Coordination: Steelhead belong to all of us. Idaho Fish and Game staff coordinate with Washington, Oregon, Tribal, and Federal partners to manage the hydrosystem and downriver harvest to ensure Idaho's steelhead fisheries remain world-class.



Related Research Projects

Steelhead Run Reconstruction: Project helps managers understand the fates of hatchery and wild steelhead that enter Idaho waters. Informs decisions on hatchery and wild fish interactions in Idaho fisheries and spawning areas.

Steelhead Telemetry Studies: Project improves managers' knowledge of adult steelhead movement patterns in steelhead fisheries and identifies spawning migration characteristics of various populations.



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