

Deschutes River

The permanent rules for the Deschutes River area:

- I-84 to Northern Boundary of Warm Springs Reservation: Open all year to hatchery steelhead.
- Northern Boundary of Warm Springs Reservation to Pelton Dam: Open for hatchery steelhead April 22 to Dec. 31.

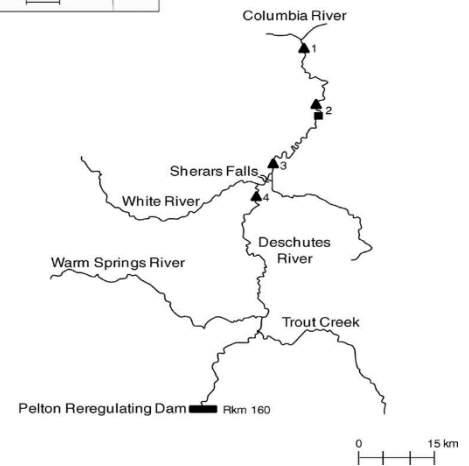
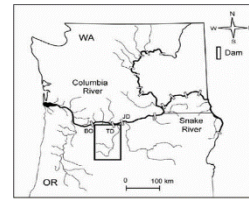
Currently the entire Deschutes River is closed to steelhead angling until at least May 31, 2022 by temporary rule.

The management focus of the lower Deschutes River sport fishery for summer steelhead is to allow sport anglers to target hatchery fish for harvest while mandating release of wild steelhead. This approach allows angling opportunity in a mixed stock fishery where hatchery steelhead and Federal Endangered Species Act listed wild steelhead co-mingle.

In times where low or critical abundance of wild steelhead occurs, restrictions to reduce encounter rates of wild steelhead by anglers may be necessary to help conserve stocks. Catch data from over 40 years of surveying has shown encounter rates of wild steelhead are high, especially in comparison to many other regional summer steelhead fisheries.

Steelhead enter the lower Deschutes River from mid-July to about November. The fishery is most popular with anglers from the mouth upstream to Sherars Falls. Peak catch of steelhead is generally in early September, however, quite a bit of fishing effort occurs in the Maupin area in October-November and Warm Springs to Trout Creek in November-December.

A decision to restrict or re-open steelhead fishing in the lower Deschutes can be made by the end of July with additional information to support decisions by the end of August. The best point of reference for early indication of run strength is at Bonneville Dam. A strong relationship exists between counts of wild steelhead at Bonneville Dam by time period (July 31 and August 31) and final run estimates of wild steelhead upstream of Sherars Falls (see Figure 1 and 2).



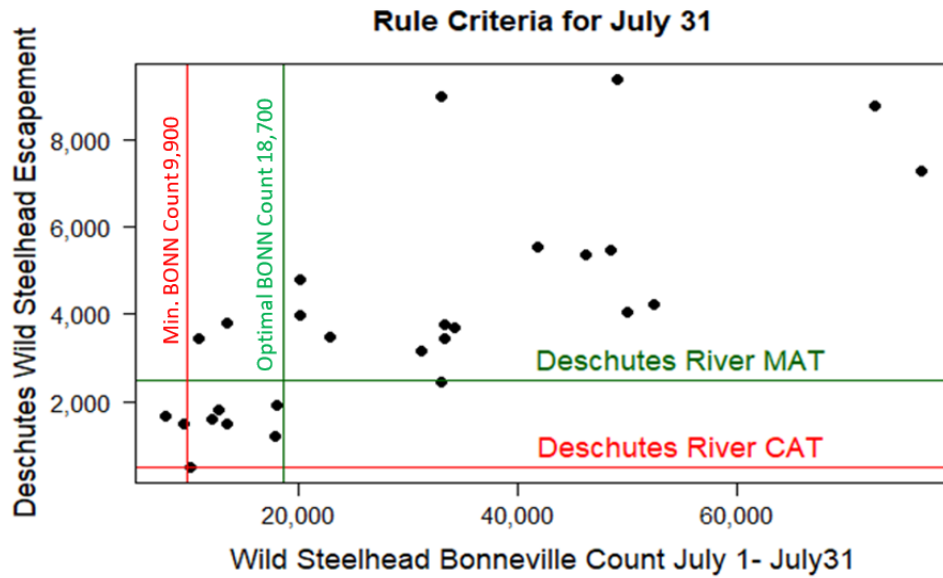


Figure 1: The relationship between wild steelhead counts over Bonneville Dam from July 1 to July 31 and wild steelhead escapement estimates on the Deschutes River. Minimum and optimal passage counts of wild steelhead over Bonneville (BONN) are included with vertical lines.

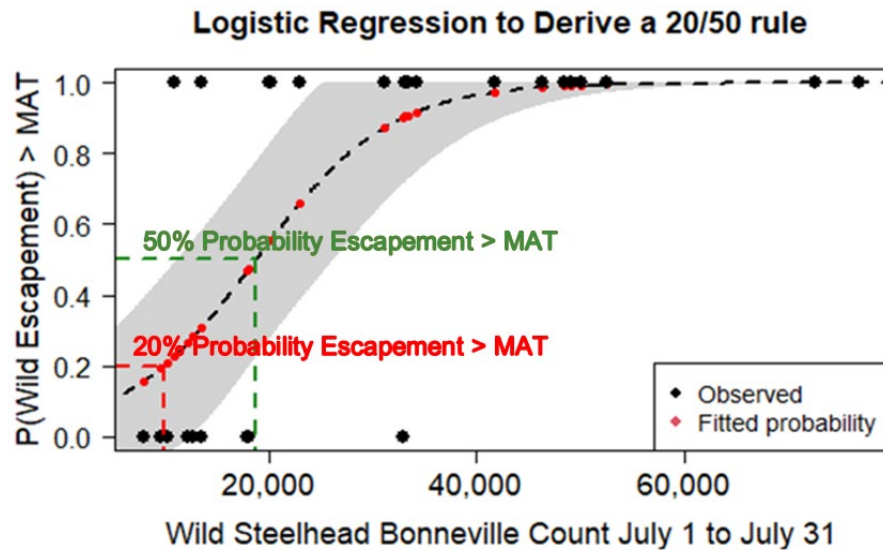


Figure 2: Logistic regression used to derive minimal and optimal Bonneville counts of wild steelhead from July 1 to July 31. The 20 and 50 percent probabilities thresholds reflect the likelihood that escapement of wild steelhead on the Deschutes River will be above or below MAT (2,500 fish) based on observed, in-season passage over Bonneville.