

John Day River

Under permanent regulations, the John Day River is open to hatchery steelhead fishing (3 per day) all year or in some sections, from Jan. 1-April 30 and Sept. 1-Dec. 31.

However the John Day is currently closed to all steelhead angling through at least May 31, 2022 and this closure may be extended. The focus of this fishery remains a targeted removal of hatchery strays from the system prior to spawning. Recreational fishing generally gets underway in mid-September to early October, dependent upon the timing of increased flows with the onset of fall precipitation. The recreational fishery is managed using three key metrics to trigger the opening of a season: 1) Wild A-Index summer steelhead returns over Bonneville 2) Estimations of hatchery strays correlated through percentage of smolts transported from the Snake River Basin, and 3) Smolt to adult ratios estimated at over 2% based on PIT tagged returned fish.

Table 2 demonstrates the matrix from our FMEP (Fisheries Management Evaluation Plan with NOAA) of possible management actions based on Wild A returns over Bonneville and estimated SAR (smolt to adult survival rates). Hatchery stray rates are examined separately and can either bolster the need for a fishery (if stray rates are predicted to be high) or can be a deciding factor to close the fishery if the other key metrics fall within the “potential action required” scenario.

A decision to hold a John Day recreational fishery is best done in late August, as the majority of returning adults have passed Bonneville Dam by then (Figure 1.4), and the majority of PIT tagged adults have been detected allowing us to formulate a SAR estimate.

Currently, the John Day River is closed to angling for steelhead until May 31, 2022 and several sections do not reopen under permanent regulations until Sept. 1. The steelhead fishing closure may continue through late summer and fall due to an anticipated low return of Wild A's during the summer of 2022 coupled with record low percentages of Snake River smolt transport in 2020 and 2021 (Figure 1). The recreational fishery may reopen in late August 2022 if Wild As over Bonneville Dam are above 40K and SARs are predicted to be at least 2% or greater.



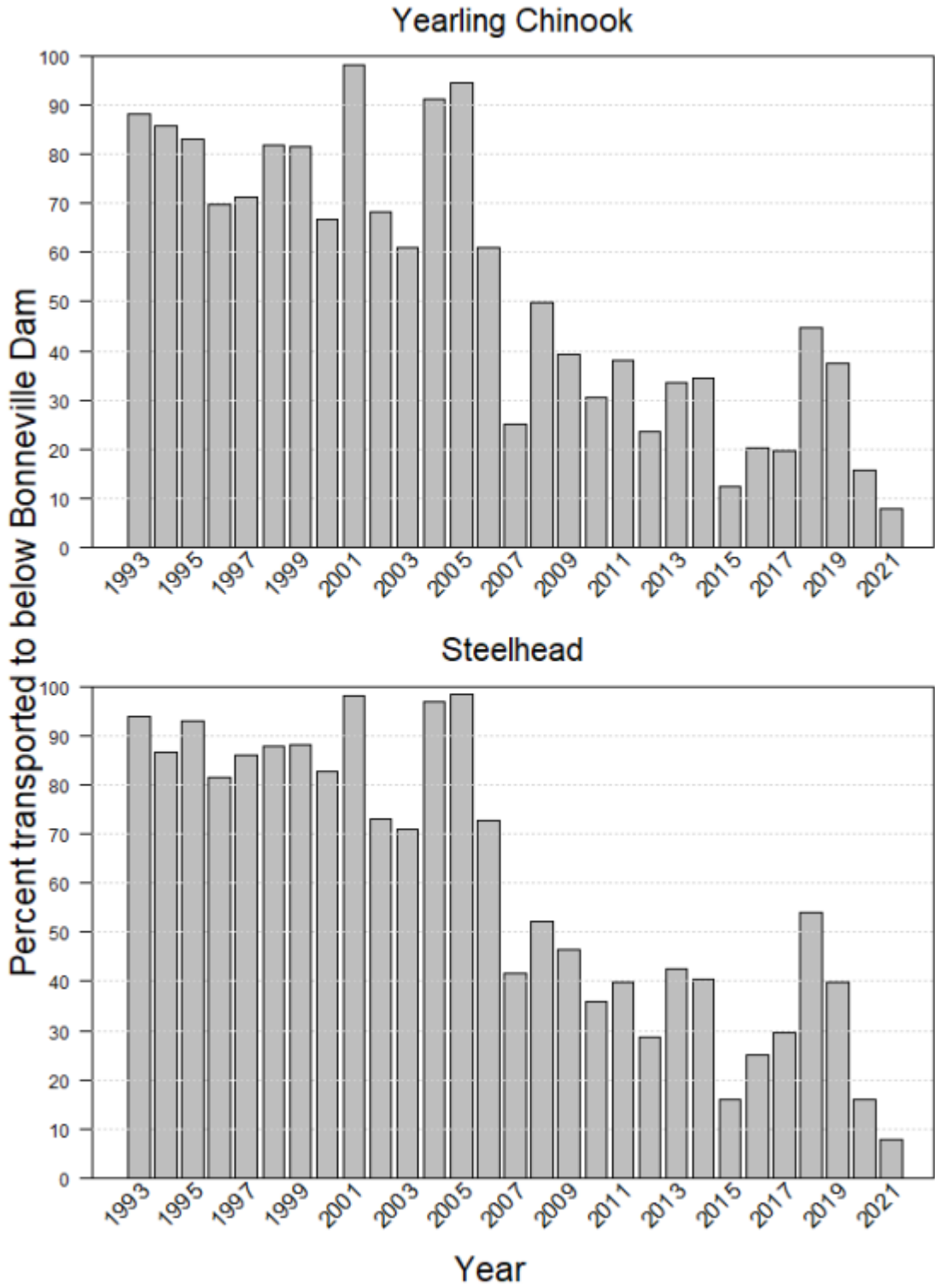


Figure 1. Barging percent of Snake River Smolts.

Table 2. Management action decision matrix based on returning Wild-A run steelhead over Bonneville correlated to SARs.

John Day Steelhead Recreational Fishery abundance matrix					
John Day or Mid-C SAR					
Bonneville Wild A Count	< 2%	2-4%	4-6%	6-8%	>8%
< 20,000	Fishery Management Actions Required	Potential Action Required	Potential Action Required	Minimum Threshold Met	No Action Required
20,001-50,000	Potential Action Required	Potential Action Required	Minimum Threshold Met	No Action Required	No Action Required
50,001-90,000	Potential Action Required	Minimum Threshold Met	Minimum Threshold Met	No Action Required	No Action Required
>90,000	Minimum Threshold Met	No Action Required	No Action Required	No Action Required	No Action Required

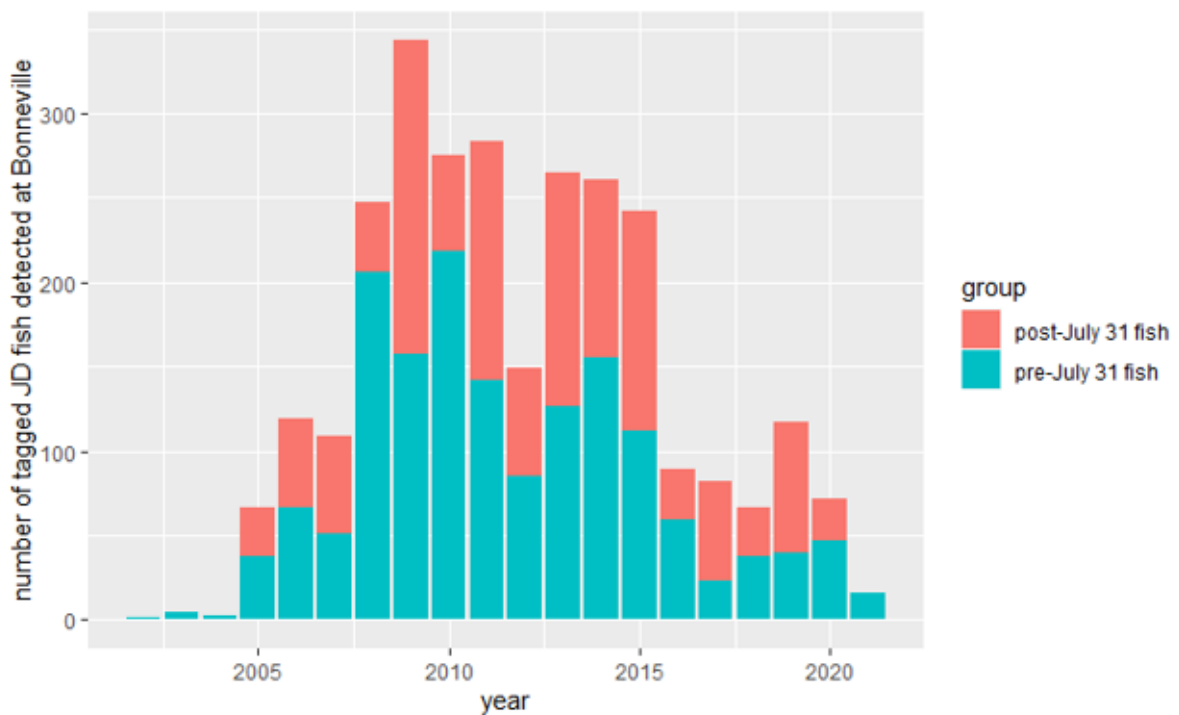


Fig 1.4 – Histogram of tagged adult JD steelhead detected at Bonneville for each return year.