



Lamprey Conservation Plan Updates March 20, 2026

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TOPIC

Informational Updates Regarding Two Lamprey Conservation Plans:

- 1) Miller Lake Lamprey Conservation Plan, and
- 2) the Coastal, Columbia, and Snake Conservation Plan for Lampreys in Oregon

BACKGROUND

The Miller Lake Lamprey Conservation Plan, adopted by the Commission in 2005, and the Coastal, Columbia, and Snake Conservation Plan for Lampreys in Oregon, adopted in 2019, guide the department's management of five native lamprey species. This informational update is intended to provide the Commission with an overview of progress implementing these plans to date.

Miller Lake Lamprey Conservation Plan (MCP; OAR 635-500-3885). This was the first conservation plan that was developed by ODFW under the Native Fish Conservation Policy. The Miller Lake lamprey only occurs in the upper Klamath River Basin, specifically in the upper Williamson and Sycan river drainages, and the Miller Lake basin. The MCP identifies limiting factors to the Miller Lake lamprey, the management and conservation strategies necessary to improve the species' status, and research, monitoring, and evaluation needed to inform adaptive management. A goal of the MCP is to re-establish the species back into Miller Lake. After observing wounding and mortality on stocked rainbow trout in Miller Lake caused by the parasitic Miller Lake lamprey, the Oregon Game Commission undertook a series of actions in the 1940s and 1950s to eradicate this lamprey from the upper Miller Lake basin.

Coastal, Columbia, and Snake Conservation Plan for Lampreys in Oregon (CPL; OAR 635-500-6780). The CPL provides the framework and roadmap for increasing knowledge and improving the status of four lamprey species that occur in the Oregon Coast, and Columbia and Snake river basins. Specifically, the CPL states that it:

is intended to increase awareness and understanding of the biology of lampreys, their statuses, limiting factors, management needs, and information gaps...The CPL will be a living document that evolves as more is learned about lampreys and the effectiveness of management strategies are assessed and adapted. Improved status of lampreys can increase their social and cultural benefits for Oregonians, and strengthen the ecological connections that lampreys provide to ecosystems.

Although the CPL does not call for a formal status assessment until the year 2040, ODFW staff think that this five-year informational reporting is valuable for updating the Commission, other staff, and partners, and encouraging new and continued interest in these non-game fishes. ODFW has completed a five-year implementation report, from 2020 to 2025 (Attachment 3).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

To track progress towards MCP goals and to inform adaptive management, the MCP calls for periodic evaluation and reporting on the status of the Miller Lake lamprey, and the success of the management strategies outlined in the plan. Working with partners, ODFW has written five semi-annual progress reports (available on a [public-facing website](#)) that include cumulative results from 2017 to 2025, including the most recent progress report (Attachment 2).

The CPL was developed by ODFW staff through a multi-year process, with reviews and input provided by other ODFW staff and numerous stakeholders, Tribes, other partners, and public and science reviewers. Attachment 3 is the first report on implementation progress to-date, including cumulative results from 2020 to 2025. This report will be posted and available on a [public-facing website](#).

Both reports being presented to the Commission for the MCP (Attachment 2) and CPL (Attachment 3) are informational. The Commission meeting notification process and the aforementioned websites are how these reports are being provided to the public.

ASSESSMENT

Miller Lake Lamprey Conservation Plan (MCP)

The Miller Lake lamprey is listed as a Native Migratory Fish under OAR 635-412-0005. Furthermore, the Miller Lake lamprey is on the state of Oregon's Sensitive Species List (OAR 635-100-0040), and it is a "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" for the State Wildlife Action Plan.

The desired status of the Miller Lake lamprey in the MCP is achieved when the species is "distributed widely throughout its historic range, with populations robust enough to withstand stochastic environmental events, and with both the populations and their habitat secure from anthropogenic threats."

The MCP also called for a Technical Management Team to "promote investigation, management and conservation of the Miller Lake Lamprey." This Miller Lake lamprey Technical Management Team has been in place since 2005 and through its collaborative efforts, numerous management actions and fish surveys have been completed (Attachment 2). The team is composed of individuals from ODFW (District staff and Statewide Lamprey Coordinator); Western Fishes; the U.S. Forest Service; Klamath Tribes; Oregon State University; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and retired individuals from some of these entities.

The MCP indicated that a key management strategy for Miller Lake lamprey would be the re-establishment of connectivity between Miller Creek and Miller Lake, and this has been successfully accomplished (Attachment 2). Starting in 2015 and confirmed in 2021-2024, surveys and reports from anglers have indicated that the Miller Lake lamprey has successfully

recolonized the upper Miller Lake basin for the first time in nearly six decades, which is a major milestone in the conservation status of the species (Attachment 2). This increased distribution of the Miller Lake lamprey was accomplished through two management actions that have been implemented since 2005. The first action was to remove the permanent barrier in upper Miller Creek in 2005. The second management action was to reintroduce the species to the upper Miller Lake basin by translocating a few hundred individuals each year from lower Miller Creek to the upper basin during 2010 to 2021. Overall, the improving status of Miller Lake lamprey represents a significant conservation success story on a very positive trajectory, as envisioned and guided by the MCP.

Coastal, Columbia, and Snake Conservation Plan for Lampreys in Oregon (CPL)

The four lamprey species in the CPL (Pacific lamprey, western river lamprey, western brook lamprey, and Pacific brook lamprey) are also listed as Native Migratory Fish under OAR 635-412-0005. Furthermore, these four lamprey species are on the state of Oregon's Sensitive Species List (OAR 635-100-0040) and are "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" for the State Wildlife Action Plan.

The implementation report (2020-2025) for the CPL indicates that significant progress has been made by ODFW and its partners in:

- (1) learning more about the four lampreys via research, which informs adaptive management,
- (2) education and outreach to make the public and natural resource professionals more aware of lampreys and conservation needs for them, and
- (3) continuing and improving upon core actions undertaken by ODFW staff in passage and screening needs for lampreys; protection and restoration of freshwater habitats; water conservation; establishment of best management guidelines for inwater work; modifications to angling regulations to remove size and bag limits for non-native, warmwater fish predators that have been documented to consume lampreys; pinniped management to reduce predation on adult Pacific lamprey (in addition to salmon and steelhead), and other management strategies.

The management strategies and research, monitoring, and evaluation outlined in the CPL are ambitious. Therefore, the CPL notes that "identifying, acknowledging, and supporting actions already being undertaken by Tribes and other partners interested in conservation of lampreys, and fostering continued and improved collaborations with them, will be essential to implementing the management strategies and [research, monitoring, and evaluation] called for in this plan." ODFW actively partners with Tribes, federal and state agencies, academics, and non-governmental organizations to implement this plan. ODFW and its partners look forward to continuing to implement research, monitoring and evaluation and management actions to adaptively manage the four species.