

Separation-by-Code Request for Lower Granite Dam in 2012

Project Leader: Steve Achord

Study: Migration timing, growth, and estimated parr-to-smolt survival for wild Snake River spring/summer Chinook salmon juveniles

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has been studying the migrational timing of wild Snake River spring/summer Chinook salmon smolts since the late 1980s. During this study, an important question has emerged regarding wild fish growth and how it relates to parr-to-smolt survival, natal stream productivity, and other aspects related to the fry-parr-smolt life stages. To address this question during the 2012 smolt migration, we intend to utilize the separation-by-code system at the Lower Granite Dam Fish Facility to separate PIT-tagged wild smolts for length and weight measurements. This will be the first year for these separation activities at this dam and the 12th overall year (previous work was at Little Goose Dam). We decided to move our separation-by-code operation to Lower Granite Dam in 2012, because standard operational procedures at Little Goose Dam in both 2010, 2011, and into the foreseeable future are "primary bypass" operations throughout the month of April. In both 2010 and 2011, an estimated 20% of PIT-tagged targeted wild smolts were unavailable for separation due to April migration at this dam. We have received our Washington State Collection Permit for handling these separated fish at Lower Granite Dam in 2012; and we have a current ESA Permit 13381 that covers this activity at the dam.

This work will continue to provide important baseline information to help protect these ESA-listed wild fish populations.

We will provide the PIT Tag Operations Center with the appropriate PIT-tag codes and actions for this study. These actions require 100 maximum diversions for fish from 14 streams or defined sites where we have PIT-tagged wild fish that will migrate in 2012 (with coordinator "SA"). In addition, we plan to obtain measurements on any age-2 wild smolts with migration year 2011. To accomplish this, we require separation of all wild fish with coordinator "SA" and migration year "2011". Operation of the separation-by-code system is needed from about 1 April 2012 through approximately 30 June 2012, depending on the numbers of fish diverted. In addition, no more than 20 diversions from any stream or defined site may occur in a day.

If you have any questions concerning the project please
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