



Fall 2020 Root River Weir Summary

The Root River Steelhead Facility (RRSF) was in operation for eleven processing dates during the Fall 2020 migration. We captured and processed 5,404 fish between September 21st and November 2nd. In conjunction with the Besadny Anadromous Fisheries Facility in Kewaunee, we met our egg collection and biological sampling goals, and fish health inspections were conducted on coho and chinook. The Fall 2020 Root River effort is summarized below.

	Captured	Spawned	Eggs taken	Passed Upstream
Chinook	3,845	601	2,289,731	2,887
Coho	1,547	422	501,835	1,508
Rainbow	10	0	0	2
Brown	2	0	0	2
Totals	5,404	1,023	2,791,566	4,399

Water levels in the Root River were very low for much of this fall season due to a lack of precipitation. Despite the low water levels, both coho and chinook salmon moved upstream in large numbers throughout October. The Fall 2020 return of 3,845 chinooks was the highest return at RRSF since 2006.

Throughout the fall season, chinooks were sampled as part of two ongoing studies: the multiagency mass marking program designated to evaluate salmonid wild production, movements, age, and stocking practices, and the WDNR's net pen study. Chinook salmon were adipose-clipped and tagged with CWTs lake-wide from 2011 through 2016, and analysis of these tags will provide fish managers with more information on movement patterns of chinooks in the lake, growth rates, and the occurrence of "straying", when a mature fish returns to a stream other than the one where it was originally stocked. Chinook salmon in the Kewaunee (BAFF) and Root (RRSF) Rivers were differentially marked with coded wire tags from 2015-2018. Chinook stocked directly into the rivers and into net pens received different CWT numbers, and analysis of these tags will help evaluate whether or not Wisconsin's collaborative net pen projects are having a positive impact on post stocking survival. Tags were recovered from 692 chinook salmon at RRSF this fall.

We plan to resume operations at the weir in the spring in compliance with all current health and safety guidelines.

For additional Lake Michigan fisheries information, please visit our website:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan>

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