Penobscot Salmon Habitat Recovery Unit

Report on 2020 Activities Atlantic Salmon Collaborative Management Strategy Public Meeting

April 15, 2021

<u>Penobscot SHRU Coordinating Committee</u> Meredith Bartron & Oliver Cox (USFWS, co-chairs) Dan Kircheis (NOAA) Mitch Simpson & Peter Ruksznis (MDMR) Dan McCaw & Jan Paul (Penobscot Nation)



Abundance



Return Year	Number hatchery reared	Number of naturally reared
2010	1239	88
2011	2878	247
2012	547	77
2013	334	54
2014	239	29
2015	670	61
2016	429	78
2017	761	105
2018	711	61
2019	1028	177
2020	1196	243

Replacement Rate

The 10-year mean replacement rate of naturally reared fish is **1.12** between 2010 and 2020



Spatial Distribution

River	Life stage	Number
Penobscot	Smolts	648,000
Penobscot	Fry	614,000
Penobscot	Parr	70,000
Penobscot	Eggs	498,000
Penobscot	Adults (pre-spawn)	2*
Penobscot	Adults (Post-spawn)	953

* Non-pathogenic ISAv sea-run adults



Habitat Access

Currently accessible habitat at the Hydrologic Unit 10 level within the Penobscot SHRU based on the definitions of accessible in the final recovery plan.

18,600 units currently suitable and accessible



Connectivity-related projects

- 20 connectivity/restoration projects by watershed:
 - 10 in Lower Penobscot River
 - 8 in Piscataquis River
 - 1 in Passadumkeag River
 - 1 in East Branch Penobscot River
- Over 55.4 stream miles were made accessible, equaling 618.8 additional habitat units opened and now accessible





Challenges in 2020

- Covid-19 related impacts to operations for health and human safety
 - Milford Trap operations and broodstock collection limited for staff safety
 - Stocking: parr, smolts and fry
 - Smolt stocking in 2020 was about 3 weeks earlier
 - Smolts were not stocked in the Piscataquis River
 - Fry stocking used only point stocking for distribution methods
- Fry production decreased to 250,000 (due to fewer broodstock)



Emerging Issues and Priorities

- Conduct a feasibility assessment to implement a basin-wide marking program
- Evaluate opportunities to increase escapement and natural reproduction in the Piscataquis River
- Support the Salmon for Maine's Rivers project in the East Branch Penobscot River
- Encourage planning associated with the potential for the West Branch Penobscot to contribute to recovery
- Complete a stocking plan for the Penobscot SHRU

Additional plans for 2021

- Marking of smolts for stocking in the Piscataquis River
- At least 9 barrier improvements/removals planned
- Transferring of Penobscot smolts from GLNFH to CCAR facility for Salmon for Maine's Rivers project