



Fall 2012 Root River Weir Summary

The Root River Steelhead Facility (RRSF) was in operation for 10 processing days during the Fall 2012 fish migration. We were able to capture and process 2,831 fish between September 17 and November 15. Due to extremely low flows in the Root River, the facility was run only sporadically until October 12 and was actively capturing fish for a total of 46 days during the fall season. Our egg-take and biological sampling goals were met, and coho health inspections were conducted. The Fall 2012 Root River effort is summarized below.

	Captured	Spawnd	Eggs taken	Passed Upstream
Chinook	1,830	0	0	1,462
Coho	849	452	402,000*	659
Rainbow	18	0	0	16
Brown	134	0	0	112
Totals	2,831	452	402,000	2,249

*An additional 729,000 coho eggs were obtained at the Kewaunee facility for a total of 1.13 million.

The number of fish captured at RRSF is a subset of the Fall 2012 migration in the Root River. With a later fall processing season, Chinooks and steelhead are able to migrate upriver past the facility before we start capturing fish, resulting in lower numbers handled at the facility. In addition, during the coho salmon spawning run, many coho are able to get past the dam by jumping over the stop logs. Therefore, any comparison to past year's processing numbers will not provide a meaningful measure of the overall return of salmonids back to the Root River.

Throughout the fall season, Chinooks were sampled as part of an ongoing multi-agency, lakewide study on natural reproduction. Stocked Chinooks were implanted with small coded wire tags prior to release, and tags were recovered from 195 fish at RRSF. Analysis of the 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.

The 4th Annual Open House was held at RRSF on Saturday, October 13, and despite being a cold and rainy day, 340 people attended the event. DNR staff gave tours of the facility and led discussions on aquatic invasive species and boating safety. Volunteers from Salmon Unlimited of Wisconsin served as greeters to welcome visitors, conducted fishing seminars, provided food, displayed a Lake Michigan fishing boat, and instructed kids on how to cast a fishing rod and tie fishing knots. Additional volunteers from Southeast Wisconsin and Gary Borger Chapters of Trout Unlimited and the Kenosha Sportfishing and Conservation Association demonstrated fly tying and fly casting. Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust and Root-Pike WIN provided a booth with information on water quality. Thank you to all those who participated and helped make the day a success!

Wisconsin DNR would like to acknowledge the support of Salmon Unlimited in keeping the Root River Steelhead Facility operational. Special thanks also go out to Paul Lohman for opening and closing the viewing window at the facility each day during the season.

We will resume operations at the weir in the spring. For the latest Lake Michigan sport and commercial fishing information, please visit our website at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan>.

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