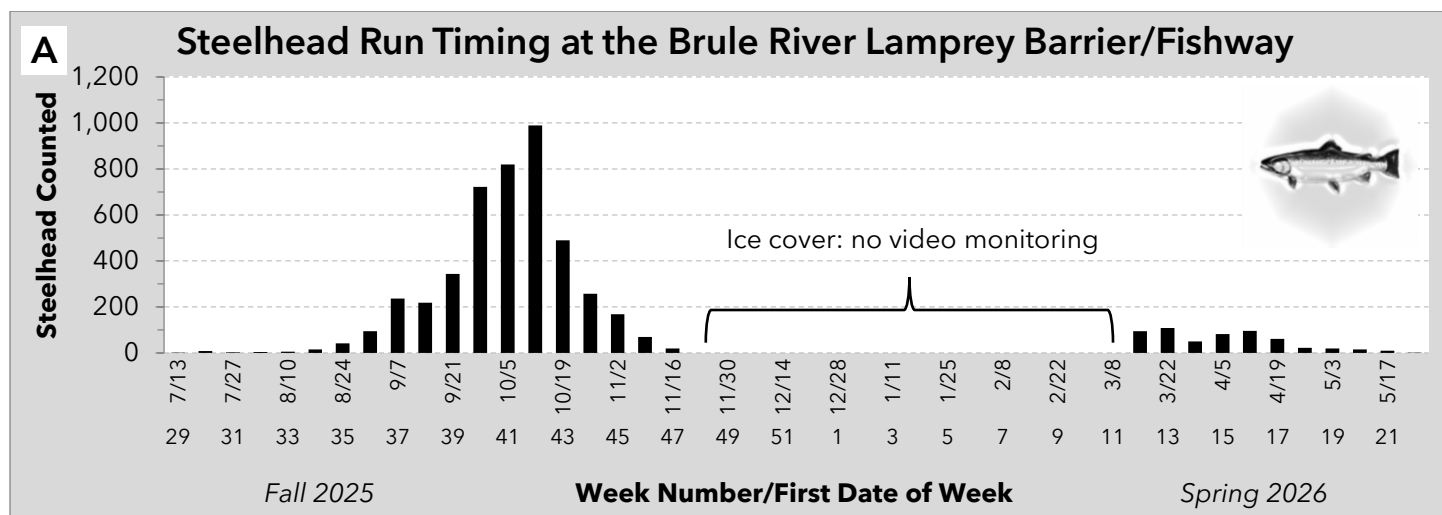


2025 - 2026 BOIS BRULE RIVER STEELHEAD RUN, DOUGLAS COUNTY

Fall 2025 Count	Spring 2026 Count	Total Wild Steelhead Run Count
4497	559	5056

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) monitored the steelhead run with digital video equipment at the fishway window during fall 2025 and spring 2026. Upstream steelhead migration timing (i.e. phenology) was consistent with previous years, when most of the run occurred in the fall compared to the spring (Figure A). Rain events were minimal during the fall migration period and therefore had little effect on run timing. The fall migration peaked in early October, which was common in many previous years. The spring run had two peaks coincidental with ice-out and the start of higher flows. After a winter of constant ice cover, snowmelt sustained moderate to high river flows from opening day through May. These conditions influenced the moderate spring run that was mostly finished before the highest river flows occurred in late April.



This year's 5,056 steelhead are displayed alongside counts from the last 30 years (Figure B). The 36-year average is 6,372, based on the year 1990 inception of the 24-hour per day, seven days per week video monitoring program. Though lower than average, the run reflects a balanced and self-sustaining population that supports a popular recreational fishery. The population's age structure in 2025-2026 is notably younger for a second consecutive year, which in the past has been an indicator of strong years to follow. This naturally reproducing, spring-spawning population typically fluctuates between 3,500 and 8,500 fish in response to the variable environments of the Bois Brule River and Lake Superior.

12-17 inches

- Age 3 "Jacks"
- Roughly 1-2 lbs.
- 14% of the run

20-25 inches

- Age 4-5
- Roughly 3-5 lbs.
- 55% of the run

26+ inches

- Age 6 or more
- Roughly 6-9 lbs.
- 21% of the run

