



Fall 2019 Root River Weir Summary

The Root River Steelhead Facility (RRSF) was in operation for fifteen processing dates during the Fall 2019 migration. We captured and processed 2,677 fish between September 16th and November 7th. 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 2019 Root River effort is summarized below.

	Captured	Spawned	Eggs taken	Passed Upstream
Chinook	1,432	202	549,000	818
Coho	1,215	728	1,017,000	1,117
Rainbow	21	0	0	13
Brown	9	0	0	9
Totals	2,677	930	1,566,000	1,957

Water levels in the Root River were high for much of this fall season due to heavy precipitation, meaning some fish were able to move past the facility. Due to poor Chinook returns in Michigan tributaries, we assisted Illinois DNR with their egg collection efforts. They sent staff to spawn Chinooks at the Root, and took fertilized eggs back for their hatchery system.

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 533 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. Fish sacrificed for health checks and for the coded wire tag sampling effort were donated to the Racine County Food Bank for local distribution.

The 11th Annual Open House was held at RRSF on Saturday, October 12th, and 763 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, provided food, displayed a Lake Michigan fishing boat, and instructed kids on how to cast a fishing rod and tie fishing knots. Trout Unlimited and the Kenosha Sport Fishing and Conservation Association also provided volunteers to teach fly casting and fly tying. 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 to the volunteers from Salmon Unlimited for daily opening and closing of the viewing window at the facility, and for the fileting of fish that were donated to the food bank.

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

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