

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Fall 2021 Root River Weir Summary

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The Root River Steelhead Facility in Racine County was in operation for eleven processing days during the fall 2021 migration. Between Oct. 4 and Nov. 15, 4,581 fish were captured and processed. Biological sampling goals were met, and fish health inspections were conducted on Coho Salmon. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)'s fall 2021 Root River effort is summarized below.

	CAPTURED	SPAWNED	EGGS TAKEN	PASSED UPSTREAM
Chinook	2,174	0	0	1,634
Coho	2,340	608	325,000	2,263
Steelhead	55	0	0	15
Brown Trout	12	0	0	12
Totals	4,581	608	325,000	3,924

Due to a lack of precipitation, water levels in the Root River were low for much of the fall season. Despite the low water levels, both Coho and Chinook Salmon moved upstream in large numbers throughout October.

Chinooks were sampled throughout the fall season as part of the DNR's ongoing net pen study. Chinook Salmon in the Kewaunee and Root rivers were differentially marked with coded wire tags from 2015-2018. Chinook stocked directly into the rivers and net pens received different coded wire tag numbers. Analysis of these tags will help evaluate whether Wisconsin's collaborative net pen projects are having a positive impact on post stocking survival. Tags were recovered from 418 Chinook salmon at the Root River Steelhead Facility in 2021.

In addition, steelhead were sampled as part of an ongoing multi-agency, lake-wide study on natural reproduction and movement. Stocked steelhead were implanted with small coded wire tags before release, and tags were recovered from 40 fish at the Root River Steelhead Facility. Analysis of the tags will provide fish managers with more information on movement patterns of steelhead, growth rates and the occurrence of "straying," which is when a mature fish returns to a different stream than the one it was originally stocked in.

The DNR would like to acknowledge the support of Salmon Unlimited in keeping the Root River Steelhead Facility operational. In addition, a special thank you to the volunteers for daily opening and closing of the viewing window at the facility.

Operations at the weir will resume in spring 2022 in compliance with current health and safety guidelines.

For additional Lake Michigan fisheries information, please visit our website:
dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan.

For fishing information, please visit
dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/OutdoorReport.