

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Fall 2024 Root River Weir Summary

By: LAURA SCHMIDT

DNR Lake Michigan Fisheries Biologist

The Root River Steelhead Facility in Racine County was in operation for thirteen processing days during the fall 2024 migration. Between Sept. 23 and Nov. 11, 5,821 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 2024 Root River effort is summarized below.

	CAPTURED	SPAWNED	EGGS TAKEN	PASSED UPSTREAM
Chinook Salmon	1,899	0	0	1,854
Coho Salmon	3,839	1,999	1,115,335	3,704
Steelhead	60	0	0	15
Brown Trout	23	0	0	23
Totals	5,821	1,999	1,115,335	5,596

Although water levels in the Root River were low for much of the fall season due to a lack of precipitation, fish moved upstream in large numbers throughout October. The 3,839 coho captured in fall 2024 was the second-highest return to the facility in the past 10 years.

Steelhead were sampled throughout the fall season 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 45 fish at the Root River Steelhead Facility. Analysis of the tags will provide fish managers with more information on the 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 Root River Open House was held on Saturday, Oct. 12, and 734 people attended. DNR Fisheries staff gave tours of the facility and conducted fish processing and spawning demonstrations. Volunteers from Salmon Unlimited of Wisconsin welcomed visitors and displayed a Lake Michigan fishing boat. The Kenosha Sportfishing & Conservation Association, Trout Unlimited, and the Root River Council also attended to promote their work and the Root River. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided activities for kids, and all attendees were able to tour the Touch of the Wild trailer sponsored by the Wisconsin Conservation Congress and the Outdoor Heritage Education Center. Thank you to all who participated and helped make the day a success!

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 the daily opening and closing of the viewing window at the facility.

Operations at the weir will resume in spring 2025.

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.