

VII. The Future

1. Population-specific goals should be adopted for fish and wildlife affected by hydropower in the Columbia River Basin in order to improve the effectiveness of Bonneville's fish and wildlife expenditures and Council decision-making, and also to ensure that actions are more effectively monitored and evaluated for their success.

The Council is working to implement its fish and wildlife program which provides direction for developing quantitative production and harvest goals for fish and wildlife in the Columbia River Basin. The program articulates broad goals including 1) halting declining trends in salmon and steelhead populations above Bonneville Dam by 2005 and increasing runs to 5 million by 2025, 2) restoring native resident fish species to near historical abundance where feasible, and 3) fully mitigating the impact of hydropower on wildlife. The goals in the program are consistent with the statutory requirements of the Northwest Power Act, address the entire Columbia Basin ecosystem,

and focus on improving ecological conditions in individual subbasins and recovery of ESA listed fish.

Future subbasin plans will identify fish and wildlife populations, opportunities for enhancement, explicit population goals, strategies to protect and recover listed fish and, where appropriate, opportunities for artificial and natural production of fish and anticipated contributions to harvest. It is essential that the Council's subbasin plans not duplicate the plans of state, tribal or federal entities, and the program even recommends adopting these plans when warranted.

2. Collection and coordination of fish and wildlife data in the Columbia River Basin must improve.

In compiling this inaugural report on Bonneville's fish and wildlife expenditures we were hindered by the confusing state of data storage and availability in the basin. There was universal support among those we contacted

at Bonneville, fish and wildlife agencies and others involved in mitigation and recovery activities to improve data collection and management. In the last several years, Bonneville has vastly improved its own fish and wildlife data collection and management. It goes without saying that improving data management will improve the public accountability of the Council's program and Bonneville's expenditures by making results accessible not only to specialists, but also to the public at large.

In its May 2000 report to the Council regarding regional databases, the Independent Scientific Review Panel made a number of general and specific recommendations for improving data collection, assembly, reporting and archiving. The Panel concluded, in part, that no organization currently is taking responsibility for comprehensive design of data collection in the basin. The ISRP found that among the region's fish and wildlife agencies and others involved in recovery efforts, data often are requested that is not being collected and that some collected data are not useful to other researchers because of inconsistent protocols used in its collection.¹⁶ We will not repeat all of the conclusions here, but we will highlight two that are key, and

which we addressed in our recent fish and wildlife program revision:

- A comprehensive monitoring program should be designed to provide the data needed to ensure progress in meeting the goals of the amended fish and wildlife program, and also the needs identified by federal agencies to meet their ESA obligations.
- The Columbia Basin states (Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington) and other entities, such as tribes and federal agencies, need to standardize their methods for collecting data.

Bonneville funds continue to protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife of the Columbia River Basin impacted by the hydrosystem. During the past 20 years, spending levels have changed, project review has become more scientifically based and financial accounting has been refined. With improvements in data management and more locally based planning processes, we anticipate that Bonneville's fish and wildlife expenditures will become even more efficient and effective in the coming years.

NOTES

— Tables in the Appendix are numbered to correspond with the figures in the text.

- 1 Public Law 96-501, 16 United States Code (USC) Sections 839-839h
- 2 16 USC 839b(h)(5)
- 3 16 USC 839b(h)(10)(A)
- 4 The Council adopted revisions to the resident fish and wildlife sections of the program on September 13, 1995 (Council Document 95-20).
The anadromous fish chapters of the program were amended on Dec. 14, 1994 (Council Document 94-13).
- 5 The Authority is an association of state and federal fish and wildlife agencies and the 13 Indian tribes in the Columbia River Basin. The Authority coordinates planning and implementation of fish and wildlife management issues among its members.
- 6 The Independent Scientific Review Panel was created by the Council in response to a 1996 amendment to the Northwest Power Act that called for greater scientific scrutiny and public accountability of expenditures through the Council's program. The 11 members of the Panel are nominated by the National Academy of Sciences and appointed by the Council.
- 7 Bonneville reports its fish and wildlife expenses in two formats: 1) money that is obligated to a particular purpose in a particular year, and 2) actual accruals year by year. Thus, an amount obligated in one year may be spent in installments over several years. For the figures in this report, Bonneville provided obligations for some expenses and accruals for others, and we note which format is being used in each figure.
- 8 The exceptions would include the cost of Libby Dam operations on the Kootenai River to benefit endangered white sturgeon, and Albeni Falls Dam operations on the Pend Oreille River as part of an experiment to improve the survival of kokanee in Lake Pend Oreille, both in northern Idaho.
- 9 1994-95 Fish and Wildlife Program, Section 2.2F, Page 2-4.
- 10 As noted earlier, a portion of the reimbursable expenses and capital investment fixed costs are for fish hatcheries and other activities, but primarily these expenses are for fish passage and survival improvements at Columbia and Snake river dams.
- 11 16 USC 839(6)
- 12 1982 Fish and Wildlife Program, Page 2-2.
- 13 Appendix D of the 1987 Fish and Wildlife Program, Page 22.
- 14 1987 Fish and Wildlife Program, Page 34.
- 15 See, "Report and Recommendations of the NW Power Planning Council upon Review of the Corps of Engineer's Columbia River Fish Mitigation Program
"ISAB report 99-5, April 28, 1999 and NMFS White Paper entitled "Passage of Juvenile and Adult Salmonids Past Columbia and Snake River Dams," April 2000.
- 16 "Review of Databases Funded through the Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program," Council Document ISRP 2000-3, May 2000.