Executive Summary

In July 1999, the Governors of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington asked the Northwest Power Planning Council to prepare an annual report that provides an ongoing accounting and assessment of the Bonneville Power Administration's fish and wildlife expenditures. Additionally in their letter, the Governors requested that the first report summarize, to the degree possible, historical documentation on past expenditures and program successes and failures, and that the Council devise a method of assessing the impact of funding decisions on the basin's fish and wildlife resources.

This report is the Council's response to the Governors. The report includes:

1. A brief history of the Northwest Power Act, the Power Planning Council and the Council's program;
2. An accounting of Bonneville's fish and wildlife expenditures, which are primarily for the purpose of implementing the Council's Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program and those Bonneville obligations that result from ESA requirements;
3. Information about fish and wildlife populations in the basin that are addressed by the program, including salmon and steelhead (anadromous fish), resident fish, and wildlife.
4. A brief discussion of the Council's current fish and wildlife program, which includes amendments for improving data collection and management to increase the public accountability for Bonneville's substantial investment in fish and wildlife.

Bonneville reports its fish and wildlife expenditures as the combined totals of spending on 1) the Council's direct program, 2) federal agency expenditures that are reimbursed by Bonneville, 3) the total repayment of capital investments for fish and wildlife projects, and 4) revenue impacts, which are the estimated net impacts on Bonneville's revenue from adjusting dam operations to benefit fish.

Since 1978, Bonneville's fish and wildlife expenditures total $3.48 billion. Of this total, approximately 39 percent was attributed to hydropower operations generally intended to support migrating fish. These costs are calculated based on changes in electricity generation caused by altering water flows or implementing increased spill at the dams. The direct program, for which the Council provides more oversight, constitutes approximately 23 percent of the total Bonneville expenditure. Most of the direct program budget is dedicated to habitat (42 percent) with significant amounts allocated to artificial production (32 percent) and mainstem passage (23 percent). Most of this money is directed toward anadromous fish (76 percent), especially salmon and steelhead, with the remainder benefiting resident fish (12 percent) and wildlife (12 percent).Bonneville Fish and Wildlife expenditures prior to 1978 are not included in this report.

While we report on Bonneville's fish and wildlife expenditures, our report also notes the confusing state of fish and wildlife data collection and reporting in the basin. This must improve. When it does, accountability to the public for the Council's program and Bonneville's expenditures also will improve by making results more accessible not only to specialists, but also to the public at large. Thus, this report is an important step in developing even higher levels of public understanding about the fish and wildlife program, on the one hand, and enhanced accountability to the public for Bonneville's expenditures, on the other.

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Bonneville's fish and wildlife staff in preparing this report, especially David Thomas, Kim Erdman and Rollie Sivyer. We also wish to thank Streamnet, fish and wildlife agencies and Indian tribes, the Fish Passage Center and the National Marine Fisheries Service for contributing data for the report.