

Title: 2004 Steelhead Spawning Surveys, Naches River System Tributaries

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Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 3 Fisheries Program conducted steelhead spawning surveys in 2004.

The purpose of these surveys was to increase our knowledge about where and when steelhead spawn in tributaries of the Naches and Tieton Rivers. Except for Satus/Toppenish Creeks (Yakama Nation) and Hockersmith et al (1995) radio telemetry study steelhead spawning has not been monitored in the Yakima Subbasin.

Foot surveys were conducted on slightly more than 47 miles of stream from March 25 through May 17. Our intent was to conduct approximately 4 surveys per stream reach but high turbid water flows resulted in numerous schedule changes and less than 4 surveys on some streams. Redds were marked with survey flagging during each redd count.

A total of 94 redds and 15 live adult steelhead were observed (Table attached). Nile Creek (33 redds), the Little Naches and tributaries (27 redds), and Oak Creek (18 redds) supported the highest number of spawning steelhead. Bumping River results (2 redds) are not a true reflection of steelhead spawning because high water flows prevented surveys after April 15 when most fish probably spawned. Overall, 2.1 redds per mile were enumerated. Redds were generally scattered throughout the length of survey reaches.

A major challenge is distinguishing steelhead redds from trout redds and dealing with high flows and turbidity. A flexible schedule is required to conduct surveys between high water events.

Although no funding is dedicated to this project, we hope to continue and expand spawning surveys in 2005.

The following individuals participated in steelhead spawning surveys: Garry Torretta, Karen Lindhorst, Yuki Reiss, Brad Wilson (volunteer), USFS and Jim Cummins, Eric Anderson, John Easterbrooks, WDFW, and Jeff Thomas, and Ryan McGinnis, USFWS. Gary Torretta was the project leader.

This abstract was written and submitted by Jim Cummins, Special Projects Biologist, WDFW Region 3 Fisheries Program, Yakima WA., June 11, 2004.