

# Non-native fish status and trend monitoring project

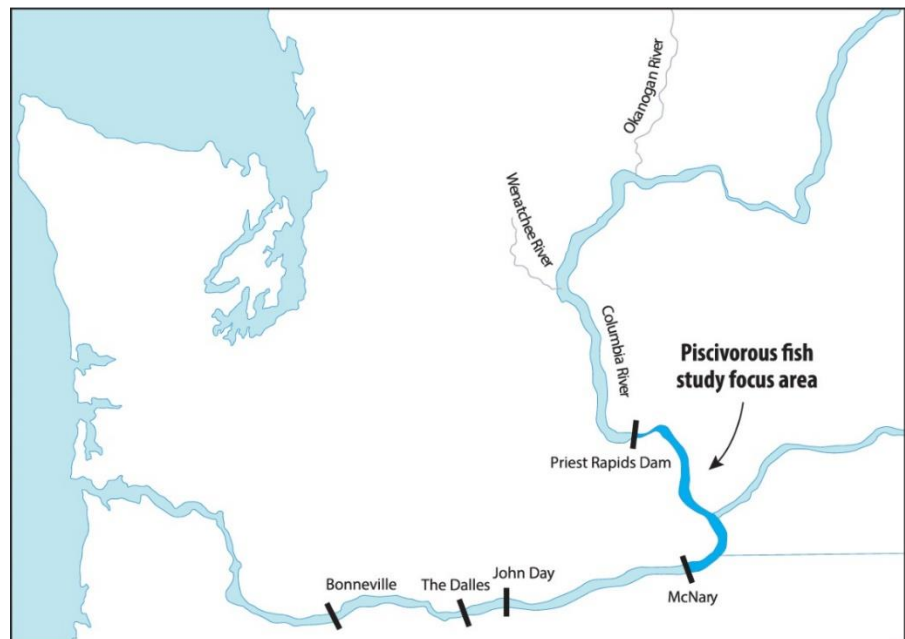


While smallmouth bass and walleye are popular targets for many anglers in Washington, these non-native species may be one of several factors impacting salmon and steelhead recovery in the Columbia River basin.

To better understand the impact of these fish on native stocks, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) scientists are studying non-native fish that prey on salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River. This five-year study will estimate the number and overall condition of walleye and smallmouth bass in specific river reaches and help scientists better understand where the fish are located.

The study will look at changes over the course of the study timeline in abundance and distribution of the fish and estimate how much they prey on juvenile salmon and steelhead to provide fishery managers data to assess the impact to juvenile salmonids.

For more information, scan the QR code or go to [wdfw.wa.gov/Columbia-River-Research](http://wdfw.wa.gov/Columbia-River-Research)



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John Grubenhoff shows off a walleye caught at Lake Wallula, a reservoir of the Columbia River.

## Study area

The initial study area is between Priest Rapids and McNary dams on the Columbia River, within the migration corridor of dozens of salmon and steelhead populations, including many listed for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Researchers will focus on other stretches of the Columbia River in successive years of the study.

## Upstream status and trends

While predatory fish studies already are conducted downstream of McNary Dam and in the lower Snake River, there is less data and knowledge about the status and trends of predatory fish upstream of McNary Dam. No estimates of fish predation-related mortality exist for Upper Columbia River salmon and steelhead populations that migrate through the study area.

For this study, crews will catch fish from different habitats along the river using an electro-fishing boat, which uses electricity in the water to temporarily stun fish, allowing them to be safely handled. Information on species, length, weight and more will be collected from each fish before it is released back into the water. Some of this sampling will occur at night along four reaches within the study area, including slow-flowing reservoirs, the confluences with Burbank Slough and the Yakima, Snake, and Walla Walla rivers, reservoir transition areas, and flowing river habitats, such as the Hanford Reach.

## What's next?

This study is not designed for population control; it is being conducted to gather data. Once data is analyzed from the five years of the study, the next step will be to consider what actions, if any, should be taken to protect salmon and steelhead recovery in the Columbia River.

Electrofishing boat  
photo courtesy  
Washington State  
Department of Ecology

