

Lessons Learned and Adaptive Management



The Coastal Coho ESU Assessment represents one example of Oregon's long-standing effort to learn and adapt management programs through time. Implementation of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds represents a continuation of constructive departure from historic practices. Here are three key lessons learned from the Assessment and Oregon's intended action in response.

Assessment Lesson 1. Adequate resources have not been devoted to data analysis. Collaborative analysis is a difficult, resource-demanding process that does not occur as a routine part of agency workloads. Also, current systems for storage, inventory, and sharing of data collected by state and federal agencies hamper collaborative analysis.

Oregon's Commitment to Action. The Oregon Plan Core Team will direct state agencies to:

1. Oregon will update, as necessary, data and analysis related to the Oregon Coast Coho ESU to facilitate tracking of population status and implementation of conservation measures for adaptive management.
2. Determine if (monitoring) sampling designs should be modified to answer key questions related to species recovery and other Oregon Plan effectiveness issues, specifically at the fish population scale. Focus this evaluation first in the Coastal Coho ESU and complete prior to the 2006 field season.
3. Improve state agency capability to store, retrieve, and share data collected by all parties. Implement this action first in data systems that incorporate information related to the Coastal Coho ESU.

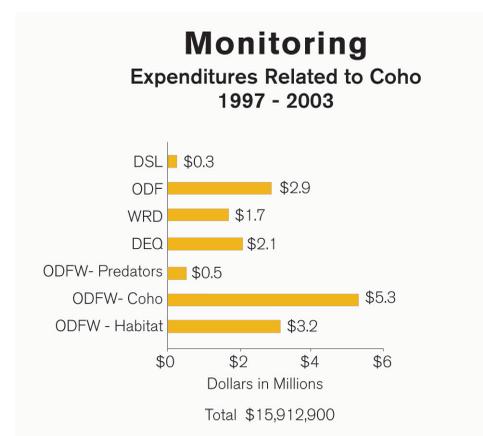
Assessment Lesson 2. An effort to improve the viability of a listed fish species is likely to be most effective if restoration is focused on *bottlenecks* identified for specific populations.

Oregon's Commitment to Action. Develop a draft conservation plan for the Oregon Coastal Coho ESU by December 2006. The conservation/recovery plan that is currently being developed for the Coastal Coho ESU will

consider the results of the viability analysis in context with population bottlenecks identified in the Assessment. This information will provide a basis for focusing future conservation, management, and restoration action to most effectively conserve viability of the ESU and meet Oregon Plan goals (that are being established through the conservation/recovery planning process) for the ESU.

Assessment Lesson 3. The resiliency observed in coastal coho is likely a combination of a strong density-dependent response in productivity at low spawner density and an increased importance of habitats that are of sufficiently high quality (especially over-wintering refuge habitats) to sustain populations during periods of extremely poor ocean survival. Therefore, it is important to define, map and track the status of these high quality habitats over time to ensure they are conserved or enhanced consistent with the conservation/recovery plan that is currently being developed.

Oregon's Commitment to Action: Ensure that high quality habitats are mapped. Adjust monitoring to increase sensitivity to measure potential deterioration in key habitat parameters. Restoration activities that provide increased access to high quality habitats or that maintain/enhance currently accessible high quality habitats will be given higher priority for implementation.



Monitoring expenditures by state agency programs in the Oregon Coastal Coho ESU, related to coho salmon, 1997-2003. These values do not include monitoring by federal agencies, private landowners, or watershed councils. (Source: Unpublished responses to inquiry posed to state agencies participating in the Oregon Coastal Coho ESU Assessment)