

BPA NEWS

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BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION
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CONTACT: Michelle Helms, 503-230-5272
or 503-858-8881

When the predator becomes the prey

Sport fishing reward program helps save millions of migrating juvenile salmon

Portland, Ore. – Anglers earned nearly \$1,162,000 in 2019 through participation in the Northern Pikeminnow Sport Reward Program. In all, they removed more than 146,000 northern pikeminnow from the Columbia and Snake rivers, which means fewer big fish preying on juvenile endangered salmon.

Each year millions of juvenile salmon and steelhead in the Columbia and Snake rivers make their way downstream toward the Pacific Ocean. These young fish face numerous predators along the way, including the ravenous northern pikeminnow. The native fish is responsible for depleting the numbers of out-migrating juveniles.

For nearly 30 years the Bonneville Power Administration has funded the Northern Pikeminnow Sport Reward Program, paying fishing enthusiasts to remove pikeminnow from the river, reducing the number of predators that prey on juvenile endangered salmon. Registered anglers who removed pikeminnow more than 9 inches long earned \$5 to \$8 per fish. Specially tagged northern pikeminnow were each worth \$500.

The 2019 northern pikeminnow sport reward season wrapped up Sept. 30, and based on some of the numbers below BPA continues to meet its annual goal to remove 10-20% of the predators:

○ Fish removed	146,225
○ Registered anglers	2,700
○ Average angler catch	7.2 fish/day
○ Total paid to anglers	\$1,161,421
○ Top angler	
▪ Total earnings	\$53,107
▪ Fish removed	6,482

The program's goal is not to eliminate northern pikeminnow, but rather to reduce the average size and number of larger, predatory fish.

“Large northern pikeminnow are responsible for eating the most salmon and steelhead smolts,” said Eric McOmie, BPA program manager. “Reducing the number of large pikeminnow can help



more young salmon make their way to the ocean, which means more of them will return to their home streams as adults.”

The program’s effectiveness may even go beyond saving juvenile salmon and steelhead.

“Lamprey are often found in the diets of the northern pikeminnow,” said Mac Barr, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Predation Studies project leader. “In 2019, we began exploring ways to better estimate how many juvenile lamprey in the Columbia and Snake rivers are eaten by the northern pikeminnow. Understanding the predation rates on lamprey is important because they are a state sensitive species as well as a federal species of concern and are culturally important to many Columbia Basin tribes.”

The Sport Reward Program has removed more than 5 million northern pikeminnow from the Columbia and Snake rivers since 1990, reducing predation on young salmon and steelhead by up to 40%. BPA funds the Northern Pikeminnow Sport Reward Program as part of its mitigation for the construction and operation of the dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers. The program operates each year from May 1 to Sept. 30 and is managed by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

The PSMFC works with the Oregon and Washington fish and wildlife departments to offer information and seminars at events throughout the year. Learn more about the program at <http://www.pikeminnow.org>.

About BPA

The Bonneville Power Administration, headquartered in Portland, Oregon, is a nonprofit federal power marketer that sells wholesale, carbon-free hydropower from 31 federal dams in the Columbia River Basin. It also markets the output of the region’s only nuclear plant. BPA delivers this power to more than 140 Northwest electric utilities, serving millions of consumers and businesses in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, western Montana and parts of California, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming. BPA also owns and operates more than 15,000 circuit miles of high-voltage power lines and 262 substations, and provides transmission service to more than 500 customers. In all, BPA provides nearly a third of the power generated in the Northwest. To mitigate the impacts of the federal dams, BPA implements a fish and wildlife program that includes working with its partners to make the federal dams safer for fish passage. It also pursues cost-effective energy savings and operational solutions that help maintain safe, affordable, reliable electric power for the Northwest. www.bpa.gov

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