

# Fish Screening Program

## 2019-2021 Report to the Oregon Legislature Executive Summary

The 2019-2021 Report to the Legislature describes the activities of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Fish Screening Program.

The full report includes additional information on cost share grants, tax credits, budget, projects installed, and other activities and is available at [http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/screening/docs/19-21\\_Screens\\_Legislative\\_Report.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/screening/docs/19-21_Screens_Legislative_Report.pdf).

### What is a Fish Screen?

Fish screens are fish friendly devices that allow water to pass through while preventing fish from entering a diversion. There are over 55,000 diversions in the state that redirect water from streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes for irrigation, power, drinking water, recreation, and other uses. Fish screens come in a wide range of types and sizes including pump, rotary drum, traveling belt, and panel screens. Diversions without fish screens can pull fish into pumps, irrigation canals, and fields – reducing survival and preventing migration. Installing fish screens is one of the quickest, simplest, and cost effective ways to save fish, while also allowing for efficient water delivery for important agricultural and economic resources.



### Fish Screen Benefits:

- ◆ Screens prevent fish from entering diversions, allowing both juvenile and adult fish to continue their migrations. More than 98% of young salmon survive an encounter with a properly designed and operated screen.
- ◆ Improves the protection, survival, and restoration of native fish, leading to increased populations benefitting anglers and the environment.
- ◆ Achieves sustainable agriculture and fisheries. Screens allow for effective and efficient delivery of fish friendly water for important agricultural and municipal uses.

### Program Success:

This biennium, 30 fish screens have been installed protecting 105.66 cfs of water. An additional 11 projects are planned for installation by the end of June 2021. These projects are located throughout the state, benefitting both small and large water users, farmers, and municipalities. Valuable partnerships have been forged with water users who volunteered to take advantage of the Program's cost share and tax credit incentives. These incentives assist water users with the expense of installing a fish screen.

*Throughout Oregon, over 1,400 fish screens have been installed through the Program since 2000.*

### Program Challenges

- ◆ Funding for the Program has decreased while costs for personnel, materials, and transportation have increased substantially. Additional positions were cut from the program this biennium. This reduces the amount of work that can be completed to address the remaining ~53,000 unscreened diversions.
- ◆ The Program's primary funding source for new construction and replacement screens is from the National Marine Fisheries Service, which limits use of those funds to areas occupied by fish that migrate to the ocean. Little funding is available to install and maintain screens in areas outside Salmon and Steelhead distribution.
- ◆ Maintenance of fish screens is an important part of the Screens Program. ODFW performs major maintenance on all screens installed through the cost-share program diverting less than 30 cfs, while water users are responsible for day-to-day minor maintenance. If screens are not properly maintained, major maintenance costs increase and the effective lifespan of the screen decreases. As more fish screens are installed, the financial investment for maintenance also increases. ODFW utilizes a variety of funding sources for maintenance, but more funding is needed. ODFW is no longer able to fully fund maintenance activities.



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