

# Oregon

## Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

### Lower Columbia River & Northern Coast Range Habitat Priorities

#### **Biological Description**

Historically, the Columbia River produced more wild salmon than any river in the world. Fall Chinook, coho, steelhead, chum and sea run cutthroat all moved from the estuary into the surrounding rivers to spawn. Today less than 1% of the historic numbers of salmon return to natal waters and twelve stocks of Columbia and Snake River salmon are protected under the Endangered Species Act. The Columbia River Estuary is still a nationally significant estuary. It is rich in natural resources and supports some of the most productive remaining anadromous fish runs in the Northwest. It provides key refugia and feeding habitat for juvenile salmon to transition from freshwater to saltwater.

Strategic restoration of wetland, riparian, and instream habitats in the lower portions of the Columbia River Watershed and the north coast tributaries is essential to improve ecosystem functions and sensitive fish populations. Targeted resources include estuaries, key spawning habitats in tributaries and off channel and winter refugia habitats for juveniles. Wetland and riparian enhancements provide benefits to migratory bird habitats and help restore landscape-scale migration corridors.

#### **Priority Habitats/Key Resources**

Coastal Cutthroat Trout Key DPS  
Fish Passage  
In-Stream and Off Channel Habitats

Migratory Bird Habitat  
Riparian & Floodplain Habitats  
Freshwater and Tidal Wetlands

*Focus species:* listed: winter steelhead, coho salmon, chinook salmon, chum salmon, Columbian white-tailed deer; species of concern: coastal cutthroat trout, Pacific, brook & river lamprey, northern red-legged frog, northwest pond turtle, migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, and neotropical birds.

#### **Important Factors**

The existing Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) program is part of a well developed restoration partnership which has broad support from local landowners and excellent local leadership by non-profit groups, watershed councils, and local communities. Partners include: private landowners, North Coast Lands Conservancy, Lower Nehalem Watershed Council, Northwest Ecological Research Institute, Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, Upper & Lower Nehalem Watershed Councils, Clatsop Soil and Water Conservation District, Young's Bay Watershed Council, Clatsop County Diking District 12, Ducks Unlimited, Rainland Flycasters, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, OWEB, and federal agencies. The PFW trust resources and partnership goals are fully captured within this focus area. Abundant restoration opportunity exists as most of the habitats are on private lands, many of which have undergone land use shifts from agriculture and dairy uses to lower intensity hobby farms. Partnering opportunities are excellent with requests for technical and financial assistance far exceeding the current level of program funding and staff time.