

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Focal Areas



Oregon Coast Coho Salmon Recovery

Background

Oregon Coast (OC) Coho salmon were listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) as threatened in 1998. Subsequently, hatchery and harvest management were modified to address the risk they posed to the conservation of the species. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries status reviews conducted since then have found continued uncertainty for the OC Coho salmon evolutionarily significant unit (ESU) because of the degraded freshwater habitat condition. Though some strata are doing better than others, ESA-listing occurs at the ESU level, not the strata or population level.

Recovery is within reach. OC Coho salmon have shown resilience during recent challenges in ocean and freshwater conditions. After decades of monitoring, research, and analysis, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and partners have identified what priority habitat restoration actions are needed to recover this species. Prioritization processes and tools are in place to guide priority freshwater habitat actions where they are needed. IIJA funding would allow the effort to gain significant progress toward achieving the goal of OC Coho salmon recovery and ESA-delisting.



Based on recent assessments, ODFW has identified the: 1) Nehalem, 2) Nestucca, 3) Alsea, 4) South Umpqua, 5) Middle Umpqua, and 6) the Coos OC Coho salmon populations as needing an increase in the pace and scale of priority actions being implemented to maintain or achieve their population viability and/or sustainability goals. The factors limiting recovery for these populations are stream complexity, water quantity, and water quality. Implementing priority actions to address these limiting factors will also increase the species resiliency to adverse impacts from climate change.



Priority actions include:

- Increase stream complexity
- Restore incised channels
- Increase floodplain connectivity
- Restore shade enhancing riparian vegetation
- Remove artificial barriers to access cooler water
- Protect and restore access to cold water refuges
- Promote beaver and beaver-related pond habitat





ODFW Implementation Strategies

The Coast Coho Partnership (NOAA Restoration Center, Wild Salmon Center and ODFW), in coordination with local partners, have completed strategic action plans for the Nehalem and Coos populations that identify priority locations and actions to address limiting factors and restore watershed processes to move these populations toward recovery. ODFW supports the Wild Salmon Center’s efforts in pursuing funding to implement these priority actions and continues to coordinate with restoration partners and provide technical support for project development and implementation.

ODFW is working with federal land managers and watershed restoration partners in the Nestucca and Alsea basins to develop projects that will increase stream complexity and will work with restoration partners to apply for IIJA funding for project implementation. Additionally, ODFW is leading the effort with federal and state partners, tribes, and non-governmental organizations in the Umpqua to identify priority areas, strategies, and actions to support the South Umpqua population. This information will go into a short-term work plan that ODFW and restoration partners will use to apply for IIJA funds to implement. Once the short-term work plan for the South Umpqua population is completed, ODFW will shift efforts with local partners to develop a short-term work plan to support the Middle Umpqua OC Coho population and apply for IIJA funds to implement that plan.

Potential IIJA Funding Opportunities

The IIJA identifies potential grant opportunities that may provide funding to increase the pace and scale of OC Coho salmon restoration priorities, including:

- *USFWS National Fish Passage Program* provides \$200 million for fish passage and barrier removal projects.
- *NOAA Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal Grants* provide \$400 million for fish passage by removal of dams and other in-stream barriers for native migratory fish.
- *BOR WaterSmart Program* has multiple grant opportunities totaling approximately \$565 million for water management improvements that contribute to water supply sustainability, increase drought resilience, and have environmental benefits.
- *NFWF American the Beautiful Challenge* includes IIJA funds from the DOI, USFS, and USDOD totaling approximately \$85 million a year for projects that connect and restore lands, waters, and wildlife.
- *NOAA Coastal Zone Management Act* provides \$207 million in competitive and noncompetitive grants protect and restore ecologically significant habitats.

Keep checking ODFW’s IIJA website for updated information (<https://dfw.state.or.us/IIJA/>)

