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Subject: 2nd sea lion report for 2014 (UNCLASSIFIED)

All,

Nothing newsworthy to mention. Still very few sea lions at the dam and the lowest predation seen since we started in 2002.

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STATUS REPORT - PINNIPED PREDATION AND DETERRENT ACTIVITIES AT BONNEVILLE DAM, 2014

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This is the second bi-weekly status report for 2014 and summarizes all pinniped predation monitoring and deterrent activities at Bonneville Dam from January 1 through March 19, 2014 (unless otherwise noted). Regular daylight observations began January 9 and will continue through the end of May, five days per week excluding holidays. Final predation estimates will be expanded for hours and days not observed, adjusted for “unknown” prey species take, and a night time predation factor applies at the end of the observation season and those updated figures will be presented in our annual field report. This report can be found at: <http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/documents/fish/>.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

All data presented here are preliminary as of the status report date. Predation figures are unexpanded (unless otherwise noted) and sea lion abundance estimates will likely change as the season progresses and data are proofed and analyzed, so please use these estimates with appropriate caution. A final report summarizing the results of the 2014 evaluation will be available in the fall of this year.

PINNIPED ABUNDANCE

Two California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus* – CSL) have been seen at Bonneville so far this year (Figure 1), although only briefly on three separate days. Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus* - SSL) are much less abundant than the past five years (figures 1 and 2) averaging half of what were seen the past three years. The maximum number of SSL seen any day so far this year was 12 (Figure 1). We have documented approximately 21 different SSL’s visiting the dam so far. All but 2 of the SSL have been confirmed as seen in past years, although there may be some new individuals we have not confirmed yet.

Few SSL have been observed hauling out anywhere on the project so far this winter.

PREDATION DATA

Unexpanded numbers for fish observed taken in the Bonneville Dam tailrace for 2014 (through March 19) are:

<i>Prey</i>	<i>California Sea Lions</i>	<i>Steller Sea Lions</i>	<i>Total</i>
Chinook	0	1	1
Steelhead	0	24	24
Sturgeon	0	48	48
Lamprey	0	0	0
Shad	0	2	2
Smolt	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Unknown	0	18	18

Most sturgeon were caught in the powerhouse 2 tailrace, followed by the spillway, while relatively few are caught at powerhouse 1 (Figure 3). Estimated sturgeon catch (expanded for weekends only) is the lowest seen since we began recording in 2006 (Figure 4). Most sturgeon taken have been in the 2 to 4 foot range. Few fish are passing the count stations (1,568 steelhead and 11 Chinook) from January 1 through March 18. This is lower than the last three years. Total salmonid catch through March 19 (42 expanded by interpolating for weekends) is fewer than all previous years (2013 – 85, 2012 – 189, 2011 – 230, 2010 – 329, 2009 – 307, 2008 – 338, 2007 – 335, 2006 - 256), all by Steller sea lions. Prior to 2006, almost no salmonids were observed caught before March.

DETERRENTS/TRAPPING

Hazing by USDA (land) began on March 1 and will continue until the end of May, seven days a week. CRITFC will begin hazing from boats March 10.

The states have not conducted any trapping at Bonneville Dam and do not plan to until California sea lions show up in bigger numbers.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Matt Tennis of PSMFC reported over 800 California sea lions in the east mooring basin at Astoria on one day last week, and over 300 on several other days. They are primarily made up of smaller young and unbranded males that appear to be feeding heavily on smelt (based on the extra slippery and oily mess left on the docks). There were also reports of hundreds of sea lions feeding on smelt in the Cowlitz River.

Figure 1. Daily pinniped abundance, by species, at Bonneville Dam, 2014.

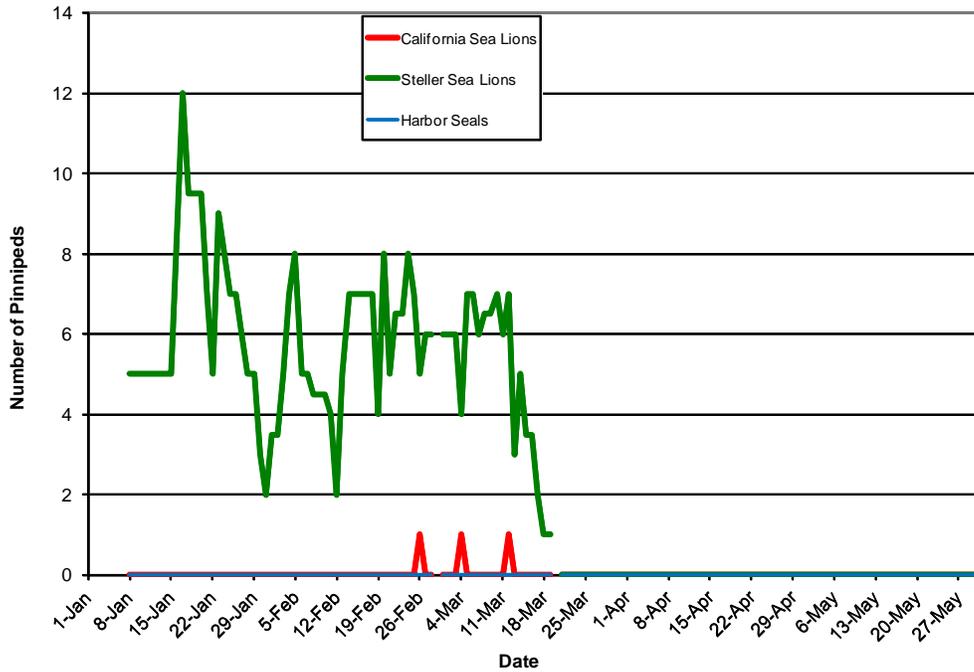


Figure 2. Average daily presence of pinnipeds, by species, to date (March 19) for each year at Bonneville Dam.

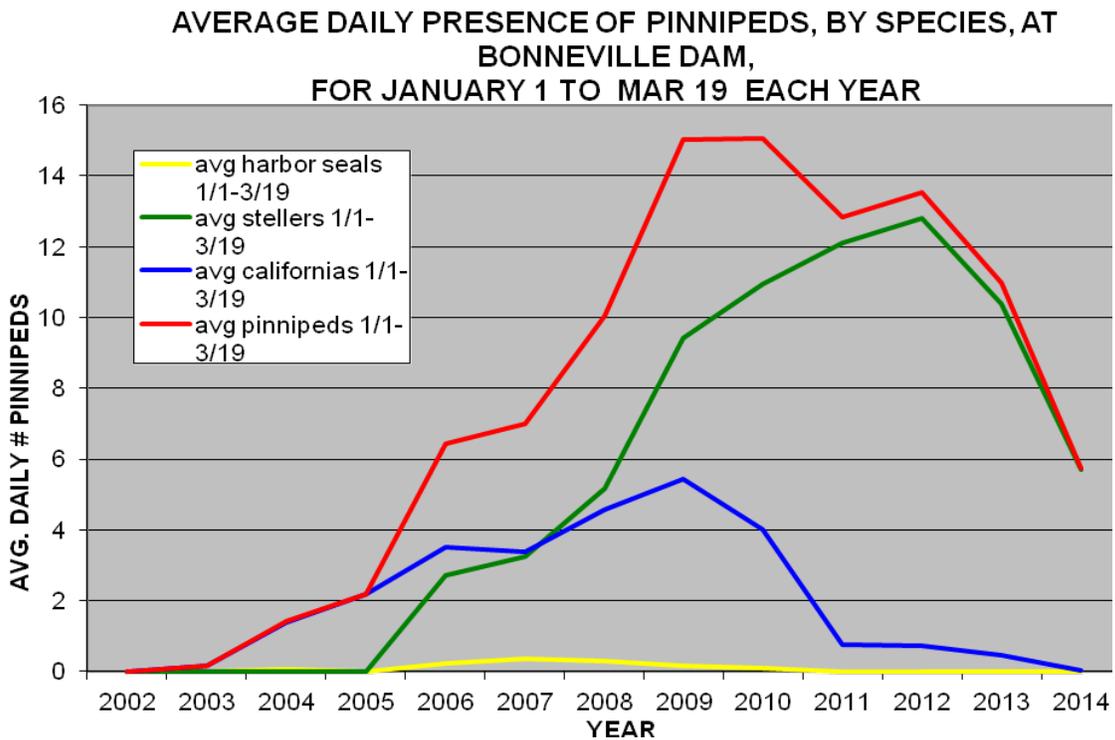


Figure 3. Distribution of prey taken by Pinnipeds by location at Bonneville Dam, through March 19, 2014.

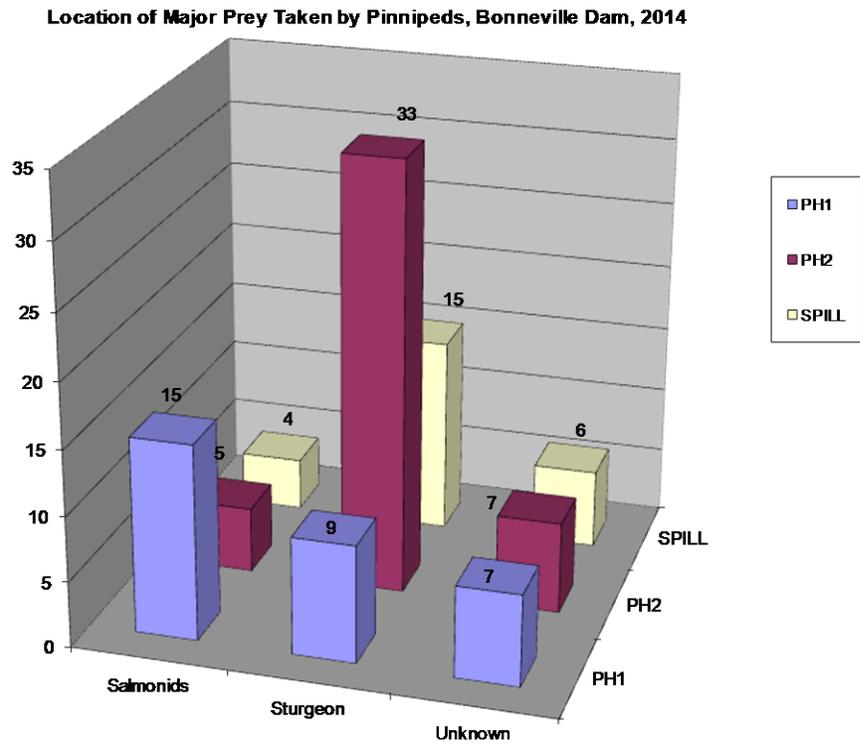


Figure 4. Daily cumulative sturgeon catch (interpolated for weekends) at Bonneville Dam, 2006-2014.

