



Pacific Lamprey

March 2012

Conservation Initiative



Credit: USFWS

Pacific Lamprey in Decline

Pacific Lamprey are a native anadromous species that like salmon historically returned to spawn in large numbers into watersheds along the West Coast of the United States, but populations have declined in abundance and become restricted in distribution throughout Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and California. Threats to Pacific Lamprey occur in much of the range of the species and include restricted mainstem and tributary passage, reduced flows and dewatering of streams, stream and floodplain degradation, degraded water quality, and changing marine and climate conditions. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recognizes the need for a comprehensive plan to conserve and restore Pacific Lamprey in collaboration with Native American tribes, Federal, State, and local agencies, and other entities. The Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's strategy to improve the status of Pacific Lamprey throughout their range by helping implement research and conservation actions.

Conservation Initiative Approach

The approach of the Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative is a three part process: an Assessment and Template for Conservation Measures (Assessment); a Conservation Agreement; and Regional Implementation Plans. The Assessment was completed in October 2011. The next steps in the Conservation Initiative are to work with partners to:

- Develop a Conservation Agreement;
- Convene the Pacific Lamprey Summit III;
- Develop regional plans for implementing conservation actions.

Assessment

The Assessment tracks the current knowledge of Pacific Lamprey habitat requirements; abundance; historic and current distribution; describes threats and factors for decline; and identifies conservation actions and research, monitoring, and evaluation needs. To systematically characterize the conservation risk of Pacific Lamprey across its range, an assessment was conducted with a diagnostic tool adapted from NatureServe by using existing demographic and threat information. This information was collected through a series of regional meetings attended by our partners. Individual watersheds were analyzed to rank the relative risk to extirpation, and these risks were summarized by region. Pacific Lamprey populations are declining in abundance and becoming restricted in distribution throughout Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and California due to key threats such as mainstem and tributary obstacles to passage, reduced flows and dewatering, stream and floodplain degradation, and water quality. The majority of watersheds are at relatively high risk, with very few that are relatively secure.

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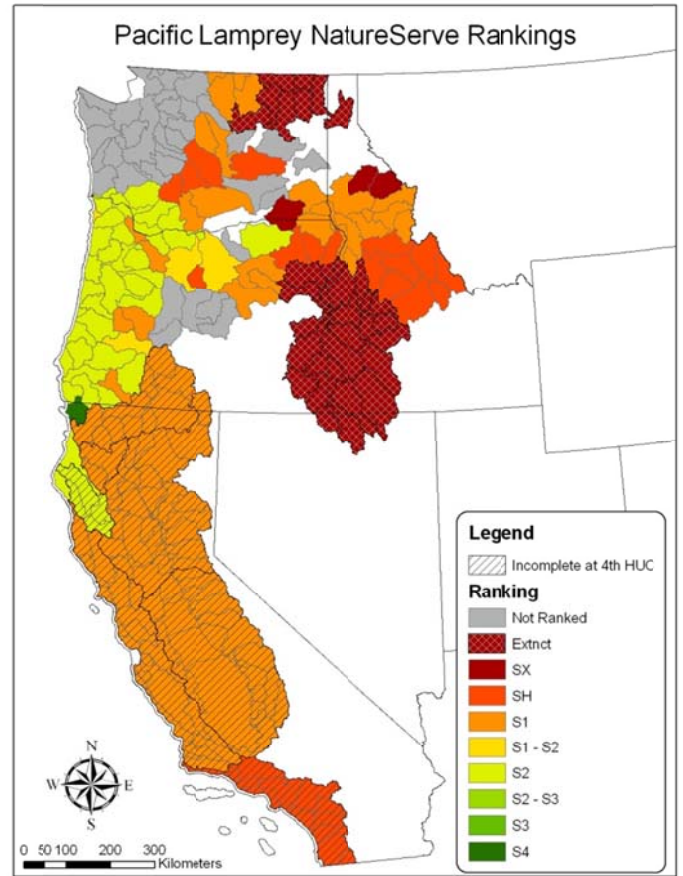


Conservation Agreement

The Conservation Agreement (Agreement) is a voluntary commitment by the parties to collaborate on efforts that reduce or eliminate threats to Pacific Lamprey to the greatest extent possible. The goal of this Agreement is to achieve long term persistence and support traditional tribal cultural use of Pacific Lamprey throughout their range. This Agreement will provide a mechanism for the involved parties to collaborate and pool available resources to expeditiously and effectively implement conservation actions.

Regional Implementation Plans

Through the Agreement conservation will be advanced by the development of Regional Implementation Plans which will prioritize and implement conservation actions and evaluate their effectiveness. The Regional Implementation Plans will build upon existing restoration plans that include conservation actions such as: modifying fish ladders and entranceways at dams, constructing lamprey passage structures at tributary barriers, restoring lamprey habitat, and consideration of lamprey during in-stream work. However, gaps in addressing threats to Pacific Lamprey remain and the Regional Implementation plans will identify additional conservation actions to address these gaps.



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Pacific Lamprey Summit III

The Pacific Lamprey Summit III will build upon the progress made at the first two Summits, which identified the importance of Pacific Lamprey and called for implementing conservation actions. The Summit will recognize the importance of Pacific Lamprey by partners' commitment to the Conservation Agreement and answer the call for restoration actions through the development of Regional Implementation Plans. The Summit will be held in Portland, Oregon on June 20th and 21st, 2012.



Juvenile Pacific Lamprey

Credit: USFWS

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