

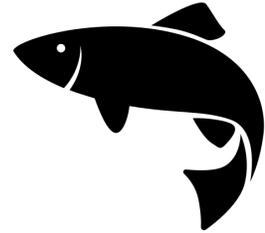
March 31, 2026

Oregon's Updated Essential Salmonid Habitat Map Available Now!

The map identifies streams where removing or adding materials likely requires a state permit to help protect critical habitat for salmon species

The Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) has published an [updated essential salmonid habitat map for 2026](#). The new map includes:

Changes to streams designated as essential habitat. Statewide, about 45 additional stream miles are now designated as essential habitat. Approximately 4 stream miles are no longer essential habitat due to changes in habitat barriers or improved accuracy and detail in GIS data. This change from 2025 to 2026 represents less than a 1% change to the overall 22,000+ stream miles of essential habitat.



Updates to fish data. Data about which fish species inhabit streams has been updated.

Why is the map important?

Created with scientific data from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the "essential salmonid habitat" map identifies streams where fish like Chinook salmon and steelhead trout lay eggs and where young fish grow. To help protect this habitat, a removal-fill permit is usually required to remove or add any materials in these waters when placing riprap, installing culverts, building a dock, and other activities.

By checking the map and applying for a removal-fill permit if required, property owners help avoid or minimize impacts to essential habitat. [Learn more about essential salmonid habitat and removal-fill permits.](#)

Are any activities exempt from needing a removal-fill permit?

Yes, exemptions include non-motorized activities involving less than one cubic yard, many fish passage and fish screening structures, some agricultural projects, and several others. [See the list of exempt activities in chapter three of the DSL guide to removal-fill permits.](#)

When will the next update happen?

Map updates occur as often as yearly and include a public review and comment period. [Subscribe to "essential salmonid habitat updates" to get on the email list.](#) Throughout the year, edits can be proposed at any time for consideration in future updates [using this form here.](#) Proposed edits should correct map inaccuracies – for example, if the mapping does not reflect current on-the-ground conditions, or if there is a new barrier that prevents fish from reaching an area.

How will the removal of the Klamath River dams impact what is designated as essential habitat in the map?

This year's update is unusual due to the historic removal of the four lower Klamath River dams in 2023-2024 and the rapid, ongoing changes to fish distribution that followed. This unprecedented action to reopen more than 400 miles of historic fish habitat and spawning grounds supports salmon and steelhead recovery, improves river health, and advances Tribal cultural and subsistence priorities.

Fish re-population is happening faster in some areas and slower in others.

Below Keno Dam, conditions allowed for earlier confirmation of observed anadromous fish use, supporting designation for some Klamath Basin areas in the 2026 Essential Salmonid Habitat map.

Other observations occurred late in the 2025 field season or during periods when fish distribution was rapidly expanding and could not be included in the proposed 2026 map. These late-season observations occurred outside of the annual project timeline, after the point at which ODFW can reasonably collect, quality-check, verify, and supply data to DSL. Given both the timing and limited data on whether the observed habitat use reflects long-term, repeatable patterns, it was determined that these observations did not support designation as ESH for 2026 and that stronger data and adequate time for coordination are needed.

Monitoring will continue, and as fish habitat use becomes more consistent and data are finalized, additional Klamath Basin stream miles may be designated in future updates. Any such updates would be brought forward with sufficient time to coordinate, consistent with the State of Oregon's commitments under the Klamath Power and Facilities Agreement.

Questions?

For questions about essential salmonid habitat, annual map update, and requested edits: contact Wetland Ecology Specialist Daniel Evans at Daniel.Evans@dsl.oregon.gov

For questions about the online map and GIS resources: contact GIS Program Analyst CJ Kunowski at Caryn.Kunowski@dsl.oregon.gov