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NEWS RELEASE:
BPA adopts spreading risk policy for endangered fish

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
THURSDAY, May 14, 1998
PR 33 98

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PORTLAND, Ore. — The Bonneville Power Administration today announced its acceptance of juvenile migration policies described in the 1998 supplement to the [National Marine Fisheries Service's](#) 1995 Biological Opinion for endangered Snake River chinook salmon and steelhead.

"In keeping with the recommendations of the Independent Scientific Advisory Board, BPA will continue a 'spread the risk policy,'" said BPA fish and wildlife manager Bob Lohn. "And, concerning the Independent Scientific Advisory Board's comments on transporting juvenile salmon by truck, we will fund and work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to review the role of trucking."

The 1998 supplements to the Biological Opinion were announced in a NMFS press release earlier today. This year's supplements to the BiOp, among other things, call for increased spill at federal projects compared to last year.

The Independent Scientific Advisory Board recommended spreading the risk in a Feb. 27, 1998 report to the NMFS Implementation Team. In the same report, the ISAB also recommended against using trucks as a means of transporting juvenile fish, citing a lack of information about its effects on salmon and historical indications that truck transport could be detrimental.

Referring to a Biological Assessment submitted to NMFS in January by the Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation and BPA that recommended maximum use of transportation to help migrating juvenile steelhead, Lohn said, "While the 'spread the risk' approach puts less emphasis on transportation than BPA and the other two action agencies had recommended, it should result in transporting about 50 percent of all juvenile migrants. At the most, maximum transportation would have resulted in barging about 70 percent of all migrants. It's a difference of degree rather than kind. We are, however, supporting this change to reflect the advice of the scientists."

The vast majority of juvenile salmon that are transported around the dams are placed in barges with special holding tanks that constantly circulate water from the river so that the fish can smell and taste the river as they move down through it. Trucks are used only when barges are unavailable or very small numbers of juveniles need to be transported. BPA and the Corps will work to evaluate small-scale in-river transportation alternatives.

Under the Endangered Species Act, BPA along with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation are designated as action agencies responsible for implementing the operational measures identified in the BiOp working in cooperation with NMFS as well as state and tribal agencies.

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