

Walla Walla Bull Trout SMU

ESA Designation:
Threatened 1998

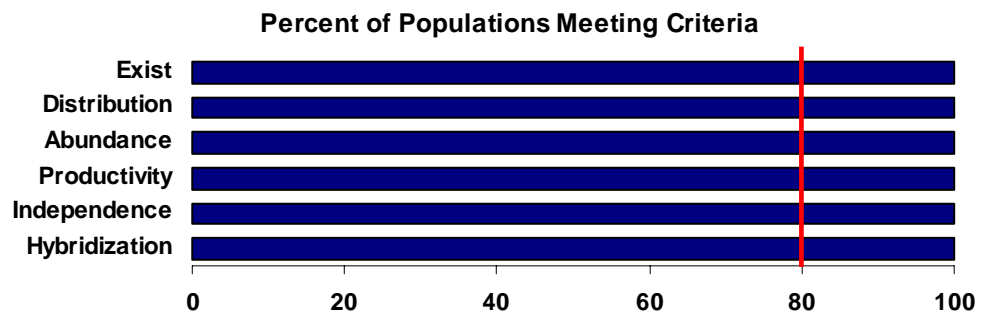
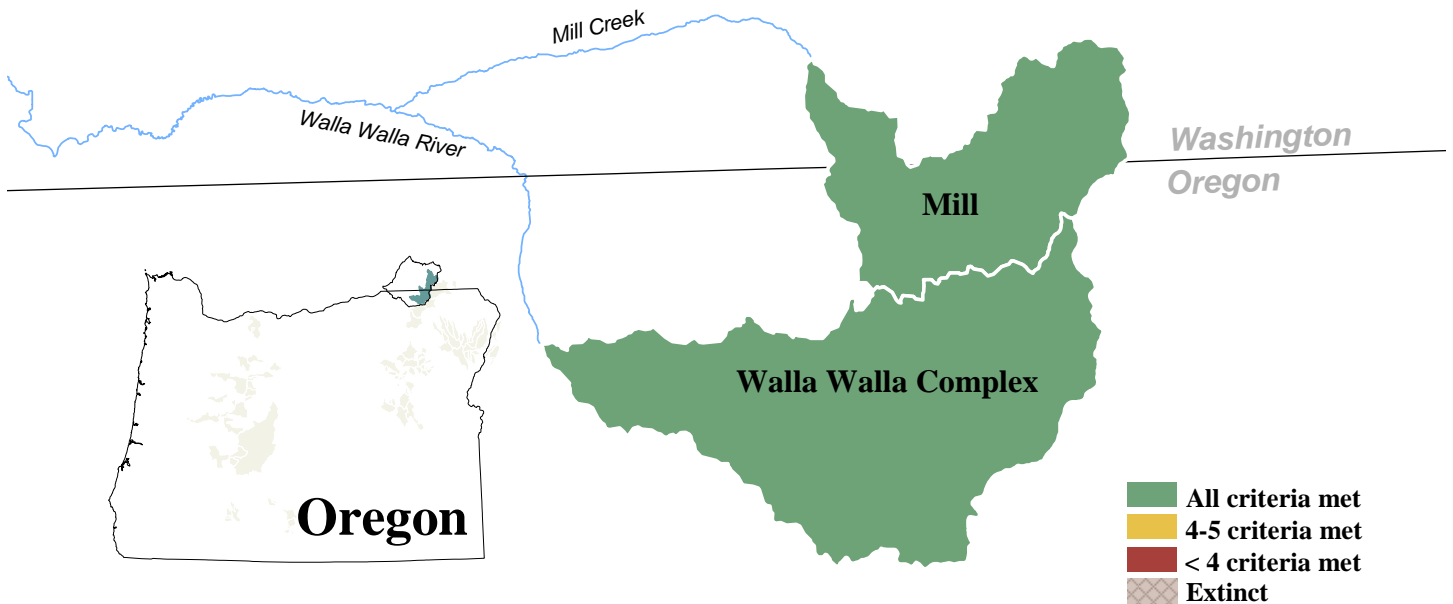
State Status:
Critical

Interim Assessment:
Not At Risk

The Walla Walla Bull Trout SMU consists of two populations, one in each of Upper Walla Walla River and Mill Creek. Three additional populations not considered in this assessment are present in Touchet River, a tributary of the Walla Walla River in Washington. Bull trout in both Oregon populations express a fluvial life history strategy and are relatively abundant and productive. High quality spawning habitat is extensive in the upper reaches of Mill Creek and Walla Walla River, however connectivity between populations is poor from late spring to fall. Both populations pass all six interim criteria and the SMU is classified as ‘not at risk’. Limited data sets and inferences from other information for populations in this SMU provide a qualified level of confidence in the assessment of the interim criteria.

Population	Exist	Dist.	Abund.	Prod.	Ind.	Hybrid
Walla Walla Complex	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass*	Pass	Pass
Mill	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass*	Pass	Pass

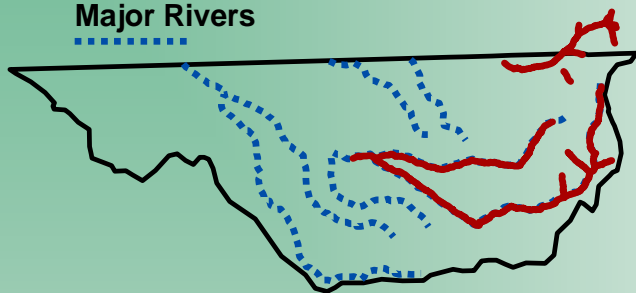
**Inferred*



Distribution – Pass

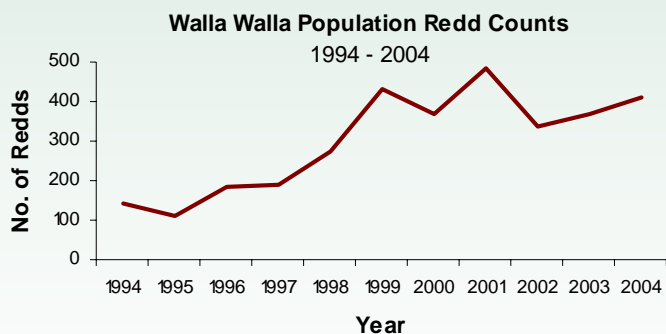
Bull Trout Spawning /Rearing

Major Rivers



- Extensive spawning, juvenile rearing, and resident adult bull trout distribution occurs in the upper reaches of South Fork and North Fork Walla Walla rivers and Mill Creek.
- Bull trout in both populations have access to larger rivers and migratory corridors; however connectivity between populations is poor. Low flow conditions, poor water quality and diversion dams hinder the ability of bull trout to move between populations from late spring through fall.
- Both populations pass the distribution criterion.
- Adult migratory bull trout rear and over winter in the mainstem of the Walla Walla River, upstream of the state border. Occasional sightings exist downstream of the Mill Creek confluence and at Bennington Dam.

Productivity - Pass



- Annual redd counts exhibit an increasing population trend in the Walla Walla Complex and a stable trend in Mill Creek. Both populations pass the productivity criterion.

Additional Information

- Populations in the Walla Walla Bull Trout SMU are native fish sustained by natural production, and pass the reproductive independence criterion.
- Habitat degradation due to dams, timber harvest, road development, and agricultural and grazing practices is considered the most significant threat to bull trout in the Walla Walla SMU.

Abundance - Pass

- Both populations exceed 100 spawning adults, are not considered at risk of inbreeding depression, and pass the criterion. The Walla Walla complex averaged 989 adults over the past five years. The Mill Creek population averaged 480 spawning adults.
- The total number of adults within the SMU exceeds 1,000, minimizing the occurrence of genetic drift. However, connectivity between populations must improve in order to fully avoid these genetic risks.

Hybridization - Pass

- Brook trout are not present in the Walla Walla River Basin and not a threat for bull trout.