

# Western river lamprey (*Lampetra ayresii*)



OREGON  
CONSERVATION



**WESTERN RIVER LAMPREY** rear to adult size in the nearshore ocean and large estuaries before returning to freshwater to spawn and die, completing their lifecycle. Like all lampreys, this species hatches from tiny eggs and develop as eyeless, filter-feeding larvae that burrow into soft river bottom sediment. As juveniles, the western river lamprey is a predator of various fish species.

**Size:** about 12 inches long.

**Weight:** less than 1 pound.

**Lifespan:** up to 10 years.

**Diet:** Larvae filter-feed on algae and micro-organisms, and juveniles are parasitic feeders of fishes. Adults do not feed.

**Habitat:** Larval lamprey burrow into soft sediment of slow-moving freshwater streams that lead to the ocean. Recently transformed juveniles may be found in larger substrate. Juveniles feed in surface waters of the estuary and nearshore ocean waters. Adults return to freshwater to spawn, completing their lifecycle.

## Limiting factors and threats:

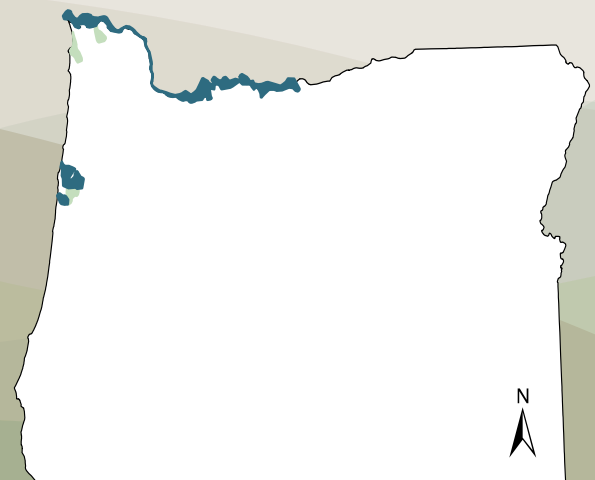
- Artificial barriers to migration routes.
- Water quality and quantity and land use changes.
- Degraded habitat.
- Predation.
- Climate change.
- Poor ocean conditions.

## Conservation actions:

- Provide education and outreach to natural resource managers, practitioners, and Oregonians.
- Provide passage and screening at artificial obstructions and water diversions.
- Protect and restore habitat.
- Conserve water
- Prohibited harvest.

## Conservation plans:

- [\*ODFW's Conservation Plan for Lampreys in Oregon\*](#)
- [\*The Oregon Conservation Strategy\*](#)



■ Current distribution based on observation  
■ Historical distribution based on observation