

Salmon and Trout Found in Local Streams

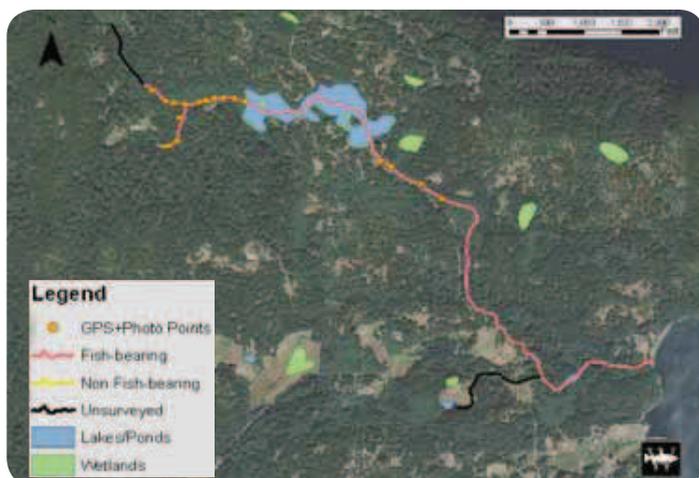
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Detailed information on habitat and fish use is an essential component of protecting freshwater systems and the shoreline habitats they nourish. Until recently, very little information was available regarding streams and the fish that rely on them in San Juan County. Wild Fish Conservancy (WFC) is performing systematic on-the-ground surveys to map streams and the distribution of fish habitat throughout much of the county.

To date, where landowners granted permission to access their property, WFC has collected over 1,500 photographs, GPS points, and notes characterizing the fish and habitats in each studied stream. WFC has documented nine different fish species, including cutthroat and rainbow trout, juvenile coho and chum salmon, and non-native brook trout in the streams

WFC watershed map showing the groundtruthed distribution of fish habitat within Eagle Lake Creek on the north east side of Orcas Island. Eagle Lake Creek is one of dozens of watersheds mapped on Orcas and San Juan Islands.

Critical
Areas:
Best
Available
Science



WFC staff collect data on Island streams to ensure that critical areas receive the protection they warrant.

of Orcas and San Juan Islands. Preliminary analyses indicate that over twelve miles of streams on Orcas and San Juan Islands were previously undocumented on the official regulatory maps maintained by the Washington Department of Natural Resources. Additional stream surveys on Lopez, Shaw and Waldron Islands are in progress.

WFC has incorporated data collected during the surveys into an interactive web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) that enables visitors, the general public and public agency staff to tour the watersheds and view detailed information about each watershed. Project partner Kwiáht is further characterizing stream habitat conditions where WFC documented native cutthroat trout populations. WFC will update maps as more data are collected throughout the San Juans, and will submit the project results to San Juan County as best available science to guide the drafting of an effective critical areas ordinance.

Project Partners: Wild Fish Conservancy, Kwiáht and WSU Beachwatchers. Funding is through the WA Salmon Recovery Funding Board. Wild Fish Conservancy is a non-profit dedicated to the recovery and conservation of the region's wild-fish ecosystems. For more information visit www.wildfishconservancy.org