

This is Lake Ewauna located by the small city of Klamath Falls, Oregon. The lake is a short distance downriver from Upper Klamath Lake which is the largest body of water in the state. Both lakes provide water for the Bureau of Reclamation's Klamath Project.

It's early spring now and the thermometer is hovering around the 29 degree mark. The park area, usually crowded in nicer weather, is empty today. There are however, two hardy individuals in the area preparing to set out on a boat and do some fishing. But these aren't your normal anglers. They are Reclamation Biologists on a mission to catch the endangered short nose and Lost River suckers. They're not using a pole, line and hook either. They use a net which provides better results in less time and is designed to prevent injury to the catch.

Once captured the fish are placed in a holding tank until the net is empty and reset in place. Then a process begins that is very similar to a physical exam.

(Missy Braham's Comments)

Then we'll also look for any kind of damage to the fins to the fish. Parasites, fungus whatever we can find. We also look to see what kind of spawning condition they have. Whether they're ripe, male or female. Whether they have tubercles. We look to see if they're pre-spawn and filled with eggs, if they're spawned out or if they're non apparent.

Narrator:

In addition, the fish are checked with two electrical devices that check to see if the fish have received a pit tag. The tag is a miniature device that will register the fish's presence when it comes near a pit tag detector. It is placed in a needle and inserted just under the skin. The detector records the number from the tag and biologists download the information on a regular basis.

(Darin Taylor's Comments)

Today we're tagging endangered suckers with PIT Tags. (Passive Integrated Transponders) It's just like the technology veterinarians use to find lost cats, dogs and other animals. The PIT Tag has like

a Social Security Number so it's unique to each individual fish.

We have six PIT Tag array antennas that are up at the Link River Dam. When they pass over that it will download to a computer and tell what time the fish passed over the ladder. We're trying to determine if the suckers here are using Lake Ewauna and going through the ladder to Upper Klamath Lake.

Narrator:

Once all the fish have been examined and released, it's on to the next net for the Biologists. Hopefully, their hard work and dedication will provide information to help improve the lakes the suckers call home. After that, it's all up to them.