

**From:** [Jacob Thomas](#)  
**To:** [Species Conservation](#)  
**Subject:** Salmon/Steelhead migration solutions  
**Date:** Saturday, December 7, 2019 11:04:21 PM

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To the fine folks with Governor Little's Workgroup:

As an interested sportsman and lifelong resident of our fine state, I wanted to inquire as to the progress that is being made towards a solution that would help return the salmon and steelhead runs to some semblance of their former glory. I understand that as far as ideas go, the breaching of the dams is currently untenable, although I for one would be in support of that idea generally. What other ideas appear to have the most merit at this time?

I have one thought, and I would not doubt if it has already been tried or suggested. As much money has been applied towards various solutions over the years, I wonder if a little more could be set aside to create a sort of "prize" that could be offered for a "winning" idea that brings a true and innovative solution to the table. Something not unlike prizes that are offered for intellectual competitions between colleges, or the Nobel Prize for example. Something of a sum great enough that it would motivate the pecuniary interests of the best minds in our fair nation to extreme action. Imagine putting every engineering and biologically based colleges on notice, that for coming up with a solution, they would receive recognition and a sizable cash prize. I would bet that when properly motivated, there is some creative mind out there who could come up with a solution.

For example, take the old migratory channel idea that was meant to create a sort of river within the reservoir or around it to funnel the returning juveniles through the slower water of the reservoirs, past the predation issues, and beyond the bypass systems. It was too complex and eventually scrapped due to other unforeseen biological impacts. But what if, now, a couple of decades later, with the advances in computer modeling, enhanced ability to monitor the biological impact of various factors, etc, perhaps some old ideas could be reevaluated and redesigned in a way that they could be made into a plausible solution to the issue? While I respect that there are already many public and private persons and entities already hard at work considering these ideas and applying the best that technology has to offer... if in addition we were to find a way (like the aforementioned prize) to properly motivate a host of other contributors into the research that will ultimately be necessary to solve the problem, then I believe we would come to that solution all the more quickly and efficiently.

Thank you for your time,

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**Governor's Salmon Workgroup  
Public Comment Form**

Comments to the Governor's Salmon Workgroup will be accepted in-person or by email submitted to [species@osc.idaho.gov](mailto:species@osc.idaho.gov)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

**From:** [ken\\_joy](#)  
**To:** [Species Conservation](#)  
**Subject:** Bring our fish Back!!  
**Date:** Monday, December 9, 2019 10:00:32 AM

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## Good Morning,

I have been researching a once again dismal salmon and steelhead return to our home state of Idaho. IDFG was forced to close the season and reduce retention numbers on the snake and the clearwater rivers due to the shallow returns. I cannot figure out what the problem is and why we cant seem to get definitive thorough information for the poor numbers. Through research I have done my best to understand what is impacting our populations the most, to include the following:

1. The blob – a vast area of unusually warm water in the pacific that persisted for several years until 2015. I struggle with this theory as the fish stay in the ocean for 3-4 years and then return to their home waters. This means that we should have seen some increase in returns in recent years, or at least within the next couple of years as my research (although significantly limited) has shown that the Blob is gone. Is it really gone?
2. Native American Netting. Although this has an impact on the available fish for sportsmen, it does not explain low returns. As far as I can tell the hatchery quotas are all being met and have been year after year. Hatchery fish account for 80 percent of our population, which means that if the native American netting was capturing 100 percent of the native fish, we should be seeing a minimum return of 50 percent and we are not. Each year they spiral down. For instance, the 10 year average for steelhead returns at Bonneville damn (as of August) has been historically around 330,000 fish. In 2017 it was 12% of that number. The sockeye run is about a third of the 10 year average, yet the chinook return is within 10% of the historical 10 year average. Furthermore, the Nez Perce hatchery on the clearwater has aided in establishing a Coho salmon season. For these reasons, I don't believe this theory.
3. Water temperatures in the Columbia river are rising. Sometimes averaging around 75 degrees. This most definitely is a problem, but I do not know and cannot find out why this is happening. Is it due to the lack of rainfall in recent years? Is it because of the hydro electric power damns heating up water as it passes through for electrical generation process? How do we figure this out? I have phoned the Bonneville damn and asked for temperature readings above and below the damn and tried to determine if this is something that is even being monitored and no one will help me. Can you?
4. Seal Lion. They have recently allowed fish and game to harvest and relocate the predatory animals, but there is little science to support the impact that they have on these populations. That said, I am a firm believer that if we are going to manage one species of population (fish) we need to manage all other species that impact them (sea lions), but to what extent? How do we know if we are doing enough?
5. Orca populations are increasing and as a result are impacting our fish populations. I don't believe that this is the case. Orca populations are decreasing.
6. Existing fish traps and ladders are not sufficient to support the migratory fish in their current state. I know that the state (primarily Washington) has spent tons of money related to this topic in reconstructing various ladders in many tributaries, but are they really working? What about Whoosh and/or the salmon cannons. Are they a cheaper yet more beneficial option. Would love to know your thoughts on this. And possibly how to get the information in front of the wildlife commission to allow it/them to become a staple. Only if it works!

7. Hatcheries. This one I have the most problem with. Mostly because i have not been educated enough on the success and processes within IDFG. For instance, as of 12/5/2019 0 returns of steelhead have been recorded at the clearwater hatchery, Dworshak has only seen 2,209, Lower Granit has only seen 327, Kooskia has seen 182, Oxbow has seen 799, yet the Pahsimeroi has seen 2,238. Why? Pahsimeroi is the furthest hatchery from the ocean? Is it that our biologists don't talk among themselves and determine why this hatchery is doing so much better and then implement those practices for the others? Will it even help?
8. Fish Farms. There is a ton of information out there that states the fish farms are breeding disease. Disease that is destroying our populations due to the fact that their locations in the PNW are located in places where the adrominous fish have to pass by them to get to their spawning grounds. As they swim by, they are getting sick and die. Never making it to spawn.

I am reaching out to you for help. You are the voice and a great example for sportsmen and women. People listen to you and they know that you have a true conservation heart. Can you please help unite sportsmen to get involved and push legislation, laws, regulations, anything that will help restore our fish numbers. No one else seems to care and I don't know what to do about it. I am proposing that we determine through cooperation with IDFG, WDFG, ODFG, Sportsmen and Legislature what the essential causes of fish mortality's are and then put a plan together to address them. For instance, we cannot address the Blob theory as it is a global issue, so lets not deem it as essential. Lets continue to let NOAA monitor and learn about it. Conversely, water temperature increase is something that we can have more control over. When the damns are holding back water causing the temperatures to rise, lets scientifically and biologically determine what impact it has on populations and then mandate minimum flows through the damn which will help better control the water temps. If we continue to go down this path without determining solutions, we are not going to have any fish left. Any insight or advice you can offer would be greatly appreciated. I am ready and willing to take an active role in the preservation of these resources, just don't know where or how to start. Please help in anyway possible.

Thank You

Ken Joy

Rathdrum Idaho

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Ken Joy

**Governor's Salmon Workgroup  
Public Comment Form**

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Date: December 9, 2019

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Email: epfuerst@frontier.com

**Comments:**

I deeply appreciate that such a diverse group is meeting to discuss our common problem: restoring Salmon and Steelhead in Idaho. I know at times your views must seem polar opposites. But you are sitting at the same table. That is the only way forward. Please listen respectfully to each other. Together we will find a solution.