

IT'S ALL ABOUT SPRING/SUMMER 2006 salmon



seafood
choices
ALLIANCE

King Salmon Fishing Cut Back

An icon of the U.S. West Coast, Pacific wild salmon is a pillar of the region's cuisine that supports contemporary fine dining. Today, however, some salmon runs are in trouble. Habitat destruction and dams on two of the West Coast's most important salmon river systems—the Columbia-Snake and the Klamath—are driving healthy salmon runs, fisheries, and coastal communities toward ruin. In April, federal fisheries managers approved an emergency measure that will significantly cut the commercial salmon season off Northern California and Oregon to protect wild chinook (king) salmon in the Klamath River.

NOAA Fisheries says the reduced seasons will produce about 40 percent of the fish normally caught by salmon trollers on the West Coast. Salmon fishermen maintain that, in the 700-mile stretch of Oregon and Northern California most severely affected, the catch will be 10 percent of a traditional season. Recreational fishing was also reduced, but not as severely.

This is the third straight year that returns of wild chinook salmon to the Klamath have been projected below the minimum set in management plans. The Bush Administration contends that fishing is the cause of the declines in the Columbia and Klamath rivers, while conservationists, fishermen and tribes blame the repeated mismanagement of federal salmon plans, which fail to send cool, clean water down the rivers or address the impacts of dams.

The Klamath is beset by battles over sharing scarce water (diversions to irrigate farms vs. elevated flows to benefit the fish) and whether to remove four hydroelectric dams that block off 300 miles of spawning habitat. The impact of two serious fish kills in 2002 (both juveniles and adults), caused when the Bureau of Reclamation greatly reduced that river's flows in spite of a drought, have severely affected the 2005 and 2006 fishing seasons. The reduced flows resulted in the deaths of 70,000 adult chinook and perhaps as many as 200,000 juveniles. Those juveniles were the 2005 season's salmon "missing in action" who would have grown into the adult spawners needed to replace their generation in 2005.

Save Our Wild Salmon—a nationwide coalition to restore Pacific Northwest wild salmon and the communities that depend on them—notes the economic losses to the West Coast commercial salmon fishery alone this year are projected to exceed \$100 million dollars, much of it in small rural, coastal fishing communities.

The Bush Administration's fiscal year 2007 budget cuts funding to recovery efforts. Of particular concern to salmon advocates is the President's request of \$67 million for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, which provides assistance to states, tribes, and local governments to protect salmon runs. They say this request reflects a \$23 million drop from the previous year and falls at least \$130 million short of what the federal government needs to contribute to help ensure the success of local and regional salmon recovery plans.

Save Our Wild Salmon urges leaders in the food sector to tell their Congressional representatives to restore healthy habitat. You can read the letter and add your name online at www.wildsalmon.org/action-center/chefsletter.cfm. ●



Joseph Bogaard

For further reading, please visit the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations at www.pcffa.org and Save Our Wild Salmon at www.wildsalmon.org.

STANDARDS FOR FARMED SALMON UNVEILED AT BOSTON SEAFOOD SHOW

Wegmans Food Markets is one of the country's most successful food retailers. **Bon Appétit Management Company** is a food service company known for its sustainable sourcing practices. Together with the advocacy organization **Environmental Defense**, the two companies announced in March new farmed-salmon-purchasing policies to ensure that the fish they sell meets health and environmental criteria.

According to Environmental Defense, the new farmed-salmon standards will offer consumers another choice, and one they can feel good about enjoying.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium supports the new standards, which are the first to cover the most significant environmental and health issues facing the industry—including PCBs and other contaminants, potential impacts on wild salmon populations, water pollution, and the amount of wild fish required to produce salmon feed. The policies set performance targets for suppliers in each area and require regular third-party auditing and reporting. The policy is expected to have minimal impacts on production costs.

"Environmental Defense applauds Wegmans and Bon Appétit for adopting these new standards and for demonstrating that significant environmental progress is technically achievable and affordable," said Environmental Defense Director of Corporate Partnerships Gwen Ruta. "The seafood choices movement built the corporate and consumer awareness that makes this progress possible, and working together we can continue the progress in the industry."

Project participants emphasize that the standards are an important first step in eliminating the farmed salmon industry's most critical environmental impacts, noting that Marine Stewardship Council-certified wild Alaskan salmon remains the best environmental choice. The new farmed-salmon standards are just one example of the many efforts currently underway to address the sustainability of the aquaculture industry (see Conservation Corner, page 5). ●

For more information, visit www.environmentaldefense.org/corporate_innovation.cfm.

PURE SALMON CAMPAIGN— RAISING THE STANDARDS FOR FARM RAISED FISH

Launched this past winter by the National Environmental Trust, the **Pure Salmon Campaign** developed in response to growing concerns that farming salmon in coastal net pens is harmful to the health of the ocean, local communities and consumers. Global in reach, Pure Salmon Campaign is a partnership of groups in the United States, Canada, the European Union, and Chile all working to improve the methods of producing farmed salmon.



According to PureSalmon.org, the campaign seeks nothing less than to transform the salmon farming industry, not merely for it to adopt marginally better practices. The campaign is calling on the salmon aquaculture industry to adopt such principles as: eliminating disease transfer and salmon escapes; eliminating the use of antibiotics, biocides, and harmful chemicals; and prohibiting the use of genetically engineered fish, feed, and other genetic modification.

Pure Salmon is beginning to take these concerns to top salmon producers (such as PanFish, Cermaq, and Fjord Seafood), leading retailers and distributors (such as Albertsons, Costco, and Sysco), and also government decision-makers in salmon producing and consuming regions. ●

To partner with the Pure Salmon Campaign, please contact Staci Stevens, Pure Salmon Campaign, 202/887 8800 or sstevens@puresalmon.org. To learn more, log on to www.puresalmon.org.