

February 16, 2000

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Lower Snake River Study
Corps of Engineers

Dear Sir:

Certainly, these salmon issues are complex, but there is a mindless aspect to the salmon mitigation activities, which seem to call for the spending of more than \$450 million per year without much hope of benefiting the salmon. Instead, little has been produced, except for larger bureaucracies and questionable science and threatened salmon runs. The overwhelming bias of the fisheries agencies is that the dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers are the sole cause of the decline of the adult salmon runs.

It needs saying that these fish bureaucracies have never produced the defining document establishing this simple hypothesis. Instead, they continue to say, without any scientific support, that the dams kill 80 percent of the salmon. This is measurably untrue.

Larger threats are invariably downplayed or excluded from meaningful scientific discourse. To exclude these salmon threats from scientific discourses or from public scrutiny is one aspect of junk science. The unmentioned major threats to salmon include over fishing in the ocean, over fishing in the river systems and a major explosion in the predator population. None of these are given adequate consideration on the salmon life cycle problems.

There are many salmon runs in the northwest, and nearly all of them are in trouble. Only a fraction of them go over any dam. No one seems interested in the problems of these and other salmon runs. In fact, the National Marine Fishery Services opposed the study of salmon runs downstream from Bonneville Dam, the last dam on the Columbia River.

The endangered salmon is the only known animal that has been authorized for killing by the Federal judiciaries and fishing agencies. Unless good science is employed and fishery managers are required to conform their conduct to law, the Government cannot protect, let alone, increase the return of memorable salmon runs to the northwest streams. This is not a conservation issue: the powers to be are making this into a political issue.

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