By Gary Loomis

It’s hard to believe, but nearly a decade ago we brought CCA to the Pacific Northwest. During those short few years, I’ve built North Fork Composites/EDGE Rods and I’ve spread the word about CCA to anglers around the globe. Boy has it been an adventure! While I’ve always been passionate about CCA, and the conservation of our resources, several recent experiences have reinforced why we need CCA and why we need more members to help protect our fisheries.

On one of my recent fishing expeditions to Chile, I encountered some incredible Chinook salmon that opened my eyes to the past and future of fisheries in the Pacific Northwest. You see, these Chilean salmon aren’t native to South America. Much like salmon and steelhead in the Great Lakes, these salmon are transplants that were introduced to Chile’s southern rivers from a few hatchery plants in the 1950s. They have successfully established healthy populations of wild spawning fish that ironically have genetic origins from the Columbia River.

I am fortunate, because throughout my career in the fishing rod industry, I have fished for many species of fish around the world, and let me tell you something; without a doubt the Chinook salmon in Chile are the biggest salmon on average that I have ever encountered. That’s saying something; especially considering I fished the Kenai during the glory years of trophy sized fish and consistent numbers.

Alongside a few good friends and guide Clancy Holt, we caught 112 Chinook during a week of exploratory fishing, with the average fish between 30-50 pounds and the largest well over 70 pounds! Out of those 112 fish, less than 10% of them weighed less than 35 pounds on the scale. It was incredible, and to think that these are Columbia River fish! It led me to ask the question; why the size difference between these Chilean salmon and those in their natal streams around my home in Woodland, Washington?

The simple answer to the size difference is human-influenced selection. On the Columbia and rivers around the Northwest, our
fish have became selectively bred by gillnetting! You can’t run a big fish through a gillnet. These intensive gillnet practices over the last 140 years have meant that we now see smaller fish in the Northwest. Big fish make more big fish and small fish produce more small fish.

Sure, you may get an outlier, but since gillnets target larger sized fish then you can’t expect to get many more of those back in the future, until we get rid of gillnets. Ironically enough, the minimum gillnet sizes today are much smaller (8”) than they were even fifty years ago. If you’re wondering why, it’s because the fish we have left are so much smaller than in the past!

Fortunately for Chilean salmon, they do not encounter in-river gillnets like most salmon species in the Pacific Northwest. In fact, the Chilean government doesn’t want commercial fisheries on these salmon that would compete with their valuable salmon farm industry. These fish are able to fully utilize their genetic background and bigger fish are coming back each year into the rivers of Chile’s southern coast. While I love to visit Chile and catch those monster salmon, I am further inspired to continue my efforts to grow CCA back home so we can once again have those bigger fish return to our rivers.

This isn’t rocket science…it’s common sense! We need to continue to grow CCA and fight for our future generations. The CCA model works because of members like you who get involved and make a difference. While CCA gives us professional backing, staff and resources, it is up to each one of us to help in our own way. We’ve made progress and the tide is changing, but we still need every member and every voice to spread our message of common sense conservation across the region. For some of you that means signing up your friends and fishing partners, for others it means getting more heavily involved with the chapter leadership team and for others it means supporting your chapter’s annual fundraising banquet. Heck, I don’t fish with anyone who isn’t a CCA member, so you know that I am always doing my part. Anything you can do will make a difference in our fight, and remember that...

“A Reminder of Why We Fight
continued from page 1...

“it’s for the fish”
CCA Washington has been, and will continue to be, heavily involved in the North of Falcon (NOF) fishery season-setting negotiations.

After last year’s NOF debacle—where central Puget Sound’s Area 10 Chinook fishery was shut down solely to satisfy demands of a single tribe—Tom Nelson, host of the popular Seattle radio show, The Outdoor Line, very appropriately stated that the outcome was “south of expectations.” This year, CCA has joined with several other groups to retain the services of former Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) official Pat Pattillo. “He has the knowledge, experience and technical capabilities necessary to complement the efforts of recreational community in these negotiations,” says Andrew Marks, the Government Relations Chairman for CCA Washington.

Along with several representatives from CCA Washington, Mr. Pattillo and a few other groups have already held a series of meetings with WDFW Director Jim Unsworth and his senior staff to better understand WDFW’s progress in meetings with tribal officials and also to outline the expectations of the recreational community for the 2016 NOF process. This level of pre-NOF engagement with WDFW is unprecedented, and we hope will result in an outcome with greater equity for the recreational community and the restoration of angling opportunities that were lost in 2015. The historical allocation of Chinook is weighted heavily towards the tribes, with nearly 70% of the overall impacts and large majorities in 10 of the 12 individual stocks going to tribal fisheries.

This will not be a painless process. Predictions for Chinook and Coho returns are both down, but Coho predictions are dire. There are options being discussed that reflect zero Coho take in Washington—including the ocean and Columbia River—and mark selective Coho fishing will be considered throughout Puget Sound to help protect wild fish. Results of these discussions will be known at a later date, but these are some of the realities we are facing in 2016.

Chinook forecasts are similar to recent years. For ESA-listed Puget Sound Chinook, the most constraining stocks will likely be the wild runs in mid Hood Canal and in the Dungeness River. Protecting those stocks might result in reduced opportunity in marine areas 5 and 6, and a mark selective fishery during the summer in marine area 7.

Mark your calendars for April 8-14. That is when the final NOF meetings will take place in Vancouver, WA and final decisions will be made.
CCA Washington has joined the Twin Harbors Fish & Wildlife Advocacy (THFWA) in filing a motion to intervene in a lawsuit brought by the Willapa Bay Gillnetters Association (WBGA) challenging the Willapa Bay fishery reforms adopted by the Commission and WDFW. Although the WBGA asked the court to reject CCA’s and THFWA’s motion to intervene, the judge quickly rejected their request.

By intervening in defense of the reforms, CCA can provide a voice for the interests of recreational anglers, and the resource, as the gillnetter lawsuit proceeds. The lawsuit will be heard by the Thurston County Superior Court. CCA Washington is being represented by Phil Talmadge, a former state Supreme Court Justice and long-time state Senator, who also represented CCA Washington in our successful legal defense of the bi-state Columbia River gillnet reform plan.

Willapa Bay Update

CCA Washington has joined the Twin Harbors Fish & Wildlife Advocacy (THFWA) in filing a motion to intervene in a lawsuit brought by the Willapa Bay Gillnetters Association (WBGA) challenging the Willapa Bay fishery reforms adopted by the Commission and WDFW. Although the WBGA asked the court to reject CCA’s and THFWA’s motion to intervene, the judge quickly rejected their request.

By intervening in defense of the reforms, CCA can provide a voice for the interests of recreational anglers, and the resource, as the gillnetter lawsuit proceeds. The lawsuit will be heard by the Thurston County Superior Court. CCA Washington is being represented by Phil Talmadge, a former state Supreme Court Justice and long-time state Senator, who also represented CCA Washington in our successful legal defense of the bi-state Columbia River gillnet reform plan.

This past summer, there was a great article in The Columbian highlighting the 25th anniversary of the Columbia River northern pikeminnow reward program. Why offer a reward for pikeminnows? Because it is believed they can eat up to 15 smolts per day, which is bad news for salmon recovery. The reward program removes around 170,000 pikeminnows annually, welcome news for those of us trying to save our iconic salmon species in the Pacific Northwest.

As we all know, gillnets are bad news for salmon too; the conservation damage from gillnets is well documented. But we have been lead to believe that the Columbia River gillnet fleet, only a few dozen of whom reside in Washington, are a boon to our economy. Interestingly enough, the facts tell us that pikeminnow anglers earn more than gillnetters!

In 2012, the most recent year which we have Columbia River data broken out by license, the top 20 gillnet license holders in Washington combined to earn $456,000 in landings (gross income), whereas the top 20 pikeminnow anglers combined to earn $503,000! Additionally, the top gillnet license holder earned less than $40,000, while the top pikeminnow angler earned more than $77,000. It is probably safe to assume the expenses are much less for pikeminnow angling (using hook and line) than gillnetting, resulting in an even greater disparity in net income.

In 2014, tribal and non-tribal gillnets harvested nearly three-quarters of a million salmon from the Columbia River, on average earning less per pound than a recreational angler pays for herring...but that's another story. Needless to say, chalk this up as another example of the superior conservation and economic benefits of sportfishing.

When is the iconic Columbia River Salmon worth less than a “trash fish?” When it’s caught by a gillnet.

This past summer, there was a great article in The Columbian highlighting the 25th anniversary of the Columbia River northern pikeminnow reward program. Why offer a reward for pikeminnows? Because it is believed they can eat up to 15 smolts per day, which is bad news for salmon recovery. The reward program removes around 170,000 pikeminnows annually, welcome news for those of us trying to save our iconic salmon species in the Pacific Northwest.

As we all know, gillnets are bad news for salmon too; the conservation damage from gillnets is well documented. But we have been lead to believe that the Columbia River gillnet fleet, only a few dozen of whom reside in Washington, are a boon to our economy. Interestingly enough, the facts tell us that pikeminnow anglers earn more than gillnetters!

In 2012, the most recent year which we have Columbia River data broken out by license, the top 20 gillnet license holders in Washington combined to earn $456,000 in landings (gross income), whereas the top 20 pikeminnow anglers combined to earn $503,000! Additionally, the top gillnet license holder earned less than $40,000, while the top pikeminnow angler earned more than $77,000. It is probably safe to assume the expenses are much less for pikeminnow angling (using hook and line) than gillnetting, resulting in an even greater disparity in net income.

In 2014, tribal and non-tribal gillnets harvested nearly three-quarters of a million salmon from the Columbia River, on average earning less per pound than a recreational angler pays for herring...but that's another story. Needless to say, chalk this up as another example of the superior conservation and economic benefits of sportfishing.
CCA Washington is taking an active role in the effort to push back on special interest lawsuits seeking to shut down hatcheries across the Northwest. These anti-hatchery special interest groups are exploiting the lack of required federal approvals for Hatchery Genetic Management Plans (HGMPs) for over 150 hatchery programs operating in Washington State.

The latest lawsuit threat is against the Columbia River Mitchell Act mitigation hatcheries. These hatcheries produce 60 million smolts annually, one-third of all Columbia River hatchery production. CCA is taking a strong stand in the defense of our hatcheries and efforts to get federal agencies to take action on the HGMPs, including:

- CCA spearheaded a letter sent by 20 Washington State Senators to the heads of the federal National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).
- CCA is working with the Legislature to secure nearly $500,000 in the supplemental budget to assist in obtaining the necessary HGMP approvals.

CCA Washington is asking anglers to reach out to federal officials, in Congress, and in the management agencies, to urge immediate action. Some are beginning to take notice, including Senator Maria Cantwell who was quoted in a recent press release, “…the lawsuits being brought to stop hatchery production would obviously bring havoc for the industry.” In addition to the efforts of CCA members, many anglers are being engaged through the www.saveourhatcheries.org campaign. If you have not yet visited that website, please do so today.
CCA Washington is pleased to announce the recipients of their 2015 Legislators of the Year award.

Representative Liz Pike (R), District 18 for her work on HB 1660: Prioritizing Recreational Fishing Opportunities. Representative Pike worked closely with her local CCA member constituents to craft and introduce this bill in the 2015 session. She worked hard to lobby this issue in the legislature, promoting a public hearing and the bill's passage with the Chair of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee (who refused to hold a public hearing on the legislation). She also brought the legislation to the floor of the House of Representatives as a budget proviso amendment in an effort to expose more of her colleagues to the issue. To help generate public awareness and support, Rep. Pike crafted newspaper editorials in the Vancouver and Aberdeen papers and appeared on the Outdoor GPS TV show promoting the legislation.

Senator Ann Rivers (R), District 18 for her work on SB 5844, the Senate Companion to HB 1660: Prioritizing Recreational Fishing Opportunities. Senator Rivers worked closely with the Chair of the Senate Natural Resources Committee, Senator Kirk Pearson, to secure a public hearing on SB 5844. Senator Rivers testified at the public hearing in favor of the bill where she was joined by over 60 recreational anglers, many of which also testified in favor of the bill. Senator Rivers stood tall when challenged by pro commercial fishing industry legislators on the merits of this bill. It was the first time a bill to prioritize recreational fishing was heard before a legislative committee.

Thank you and congratulations Representative Pike and Senator Rivers!
The Kings of Spring

By Rick Estes

As we enter spring, days are growing longer, flowers are blooming, trees are budding and the Columbia River is filling with bright chrome Chinook. Better known as “Springers,” their savory flavor is what attracts both fisherman and food connoisseurs alike. The bright red meat, combined with layers of fat, melts like butter when cooked, giving the Columbia River Springer outstanding texture and flavor.

I start to target them around the middle of March, and continue through May. Springers are the hard-fighting linebackers of the river, making them as much of a thrill to catch as to eat.

When fishing from a boat, both trolling and anchoring can be very productive. Most of the lower Columbia between the mouth and Portland is tidally influenced. So trolling on slack or incoming tide, and anchor fishing with the outgoing tide, is best.

When trolling, most boats troll downstream and fish in depths between 20-35 feet. Very popular last fall, and in my opinion a sure producer of fish this spring, is the Pro Troll flasher combined with either a Brad’s Superbait or a Herring. This method is best when suspended off the bottom, with a short 6-inch dropper or in-line weight.

The most popular trolling technique is with a twirly flasher. Although there are several manufacturers on the market, I prefer Shortbus flashers. Use an 18-24 inch dropper with enough weight to keep your gear on the river’s bottom. Depending on the current and trolling speed, this can sometimes require as much as ten to twelve ounces of lead, although four to eight ounces is generally adequate for most situations. Check contact with the bottom often, as you want the weight tapping the sandy bottom on a consistent basis.

Running plugs while on anchor can be very productive with target depths of 15-30 feet. My “go to” setup is simple; a 36-60 inch weight dropper and 48-60 inch leader to the plug. You can fish plugs naked, with just scent, or wrapped with your favorite oily fish, but I prefer sardines or tuna wrapped on my plugs. No matter how you fish plugs, make sure they are tuned.

Whether on anchor or trolling, Springers can be very aggressive biters. So once that hook is set, hold on and hopefully you’ll find yourself enjoying some of the tastiest seafood on the planet.

Rick Estes runs Adriatic Outfitters, you can contact him at 360-270-9409, adriatic@cni.net or through Facebook.

Contact Us

Washington Office
1006 W. 11th Street
Vancouver, WA 98660
877-255-8772

Comments or questions?
Please contact: info@ccapnw.org

Layout By

Purple Sail CREATIVE LLC
www.purplesailcreative.com

A Legacy of Innovation Since 1969

Mack’s Lure®
## MEMBER INFORMATION

- **Renewal Dues**
  - Name ____________________________
  - Associate Member Name(s) (if applicable) ____________________________
  - Member ID# (if renewing) ____________________________
  - Address ____________________________
  - City-State ____________________________ Zip _______________
  - Phone ____________________________ Email ____________________________
  - Gift Membership From: ____________________________

- **New Membership**
  - $30 **MEMBER:** Membership card, window decal, 2 bumper stickers, TIDE magazine.
  - $100 **MEMBER:** All of the above plus CCA print of your choice
  - $15 **ASSOCIATE:** Per each family member. All member privileges except TIDE. Send names.
  - $200 **SPONSOR:** Bronze lapel pin, print, plus member gifts.
  - $500 **PATRON:** Silver lapel pin, print, plus member gifts.
  - $1,000 **LIFE MEMBER:** Life Member display piece, print, plus member gifts. Quarterly payment option available.
  - $10 **NEW TIDE:** Rising Tide newsletter, three NEW TIDE logo decals, iron-on T-shirt transfer, redfish & speckled trout sticker. For members 17 and younger.

## METHOD OF PAYMENT

- **Cash Enclosed**
- **Check or Money Order Enclosed**
- **Mastercard**
- **Amex**
- **Visa**
- **Discover**

- **Credit Card #** ____________________________
- **Exp. Date** ____________________________
- **Signature** ____________________________
- **Associate Member Name** ____________________________

**Complete this form and send to:**
**Coastal Conservation Association**
1006 W. 11th Street
Vancouver, WA 98660
Ph. 877-255-8772
Ph. 360-694-4300
www.ccawashington.org