For the first time that I can remember, we enjoyed spring and summer fisheries without gillnets in the lower mainstem Columbia River. This is a huge victory for conservation and should not be overlooked. But as I sit on the deck of my lodge, I can’t help thinking about how the ODFW Commission betrayed anglers and conservationists with their efforts to abandon the Gillnet Reforms and allowed mainstem gillnet fisheries to take place this August -- despite one of the lowest returns of summer steelhead on record.

You see, summer steelhead have earned a special place in my heart. Those elusive summer steelhead on the Kalama River got me addicted to sport fishing. Decades later, I still fondly remember my summer steelhead experiences on the Kalama River, but I’m scared that my children and grandchildren won’t have the same experience on rivers across the Northwest. I get upset when I see any fish species being affected by non-selective gillnets, but steelhead being threatened really earns my ire and my continued dedication to seeing an end to the use of gillnets.

The biggest issue with gillnets? They are not selective. Period. End of story. They cannot tell the difference between wild fish and hatchery fish. They cannot differentiate between species of fish. We are exposing ESA-listed steelhead and salmon to intensive gillnets, just so an outdated and shrinking industry can stay afloat. It doesn’t make sense. **Gillnets do not belong in mixed stock fisheries anywhere!**

With above average water temperatures the situation went from bad to worse on the Columbia. We had 70 plus degree water temperatures and our fisheries managers allowed a mainstem gillnet fishery in late August despite steelhead returns that were downgraded to the catastrophic levels. Some of these steelhead are ESA-listed and migrate alongside the more abundant salmon, yet fishery managers often look the other way as gillnets consume a growing proportion of the allowable impacts to these “indirect” species.

Even though recreational anglers are capable of fishing selectively, in recent weeks we have seen significant fishery reductions implemented across the Columbia River basin as a result of the poor steelhead returns – including the eventual closure of all steelhead harvest in Idaho. These were big conservation measures on the part of the recreational community, which has always been willing to do the right thing for the fish. However, the reduced steelhead forecasts resulted in little in the way of “adaptive management” for the non-selective mainstem gillnet fisheries.

Instead, gillnetters were given five days of fishing in the Columbia River’s Zones 4-5 (above the Lewis River) with limited observation (not the extensive and random monitoring CCA advocated for) despite being allowed a bycatch impact of just 6.6 wild B run steelhead which is 30% of the non-tribal impacts. The decision to allow the gillnet fishery to take place was made many months ago despite the dismal forecast for B run fish. The season was not adjusted when the A run was determined to be less than half the size of its initial projection. On the first day of the gillnet fishery - August 22 - the number of steelhead passing Bonneville Dam exceeded the number of target fall Chinook by nearly 70 percent!
Despite the continued efforts of CCA, PSA, and other concerned anglers, managers have once again brushed aside a set of common sense policy changes that would drastically improve recreational halibut fishing, angler safety, and management of the halibut population. WDFW along with the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) and the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) manage the halibut fisheries off Washington’s coast and Puget Sound, and they all have rejected the proposals set forth in the past year.

Sport fishing representatives and conservationists recommended three main changes to the management of sport fishing for halibut in Washington. The most logical change would be reversing the current commercial sablefish fleet’s halibut bycatch being applied to the recreational fishing quota. The bycatch quota in question was a whopping 70,000 pounds in 2017! The proposal to move the sablefish fleet bycatch quota to the commercial sector was rejected by all of the management agencies. Continued subsidization of the commercial sector bycatch by the recreational fleet is frankly unacceptable.

The other proposals that have been thus far dismissed included a six-fish annual bag limit and a longer season. In Puget Sound, the halibut season has been steadily reduced going from 26 days in 2012 to just 9 open days in 2017. The current limited opening seasons have encouraged a derby mentality with anglers risking dangerous conditions in order to fish. Anglers in smaller sport fishing vessels are especially vulnerable in rough seas.

Limited seasons also have a negative effect on the economies of several coastal towns that rely on sport fishermen to fill hotels, eat at restaurants, and purchase fuel and food from local stores. This was further demonstrated by letters submitted by local communities and business groups to fisheries managers illustrating their frustration with the current season management format and the consequences for the local economy.

While the sablefish bycatch quota was not reallocated to the commercial sector, there is still hope that in the coming months a more liberal season will be adopted by fisheries managers for 2018. Should they adopt a longer season, a smaller annual bag limit would likely be imposed. We will continue to work with others to find a solution that ensures we have sustainable and healthy halibut populations and fisheries for years to come.
King of the Reach Derby Checks All Of The Boxes

By Don McBride

What’s left when you start with a guilty pleasure and remove all the guilt? The King of the Reach Live Capture Salmon Derby!

Many Northwest anglers know that the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River is the breadbasket of Chinook salmon sport and commercial fisheries from Alaska to eastern Washington and everywhere in between, notably the popular Buoy 10 fishery. The locals also know that as these bruisers get closer to spawning, they get mean and aggressive. Sadly, the meat quality degrades to the point that angling late in the season, though fun, is often viewed with some guilt for bothering these near spawning fish. But what if we could set up a late-season fishery that actually benefits the fish and our fisheries?

Rewind the calendar to 2012 when WDFW biologist Paul Hoffarth approached Nathan Grimm of CCA Tri-Cities Chapter with a proposal to test sport angler capability to conduct live capture harvest of wild Chinook for use as hatchery broodstock. After a pilot test the first year, CCA Tri-Cities developed the King of the Reach Derby in partnership with WDFW and the Grant County PUD as a way to boost angler participation while providing as many wild Chinook as possible for the hatchery. This year’s Fifth Annual derby will be held October 27-29 at White Bluffs and Vernita Bridge.

Why is it important to provide wild broodstock for the hatchery? The Hatchery Scientific Review Group has recommended that hatcheries operating in areas with naturally occurring salmon populations maintain a certain infusion of wild salmon genetics each year to minimize adverse effects from hatchery fish spawning in the wild. Failure to meet HSRG recommendations, in addition to potentially harming the fish, also leaves hatcheries vulnerable to the kind of lawsuits that have led to hatchery closures and reduced angling opportunity.

The derby is already making a difference. Hoffarth shared these statistics: “15% of all hatchery egg takes (Priest Rapids & Ringold Springs) in 2016 (2017 release) had at least one natural origin parent as a result of the Angler Broodstock Program. 29% of the Grant County production had natural origin parentage in 2016 (1,788,000 natural origin eggs/ 6,222,222 egg take). Keep in mind the hatchery goal is 30% natural origin parentage for Hanford Reach Fall Chinook so the program gets us half way there for both hatcheries and puts the Grant County production right on track. No small task.”

At the same time, the derby has demonstrated spectacularly low sport angling mortality for the fish, both short term (1-2%) and in the long term. The sport-caught fish have comparable mortality during the month-long cycle of repeated handling pre-spawning to fish that voluntarily swim into the hatchery.

Let’s review... We get to fish for the biggest, baddest kings in the world when they’re at their most aggressive. Check. We get to do it the week after the regular season closes, so there’s not much pressure. Check. We do it on the Hanford Reach, one of the most beautiful places on earth. Check. We get refreshments and prizes. Check. We benefit the fish by doing all this. Check. Now it’s up to us as sport anglers to take up the challenge and find out who will be the next King of the Reach!
Summer Derbies Successful in 2017

CCA Washington hosted three fishing derbies in July and one in August, and despite tougher fishing than in years past, the numbers of participants was very impressive. With events spanning the state, our volunteers put in countless hours of work to make each event special for participants. Thousands of dollars in prizes were awarded thanks to generous derby sponsors, and many memories were made.

A special thank you goes out to the volunteers who gave their time to the derbies, the sponsors who provided prizes, and to the anglers who signed up and fished for a great cause. We anticipate a great derby year in 2018 and we look forward to working with the organizers of our CCA chapter derbies to continue to expand their events as part of the new CCA Washington STAR Tournament series.

Communications Committee Needs You

We have grown dramatically as an organization over the past several years, increasing in membership, making gains in advocacy efforts, and adding new chapters across the state. All of these are exciting accomplishments, but we could use your help telling our members and supporters about them! A grassroots organization like CCA Washington has several vibrant and active state sub-Committees, but our Communications Committee has been dormant for some time. Let’s change that!

We’re in search of individuals who can help write and layout content, take photos, work with CCA social media properties, understand grassroots marketing, have experience with graphic design, and consider themselves passionate about fishing and conservation. The CCA Communications Committee will have bi-monthly conference calls and the time commitment involved is up to the individual. Help us spread the word about CCA by joining the Communications Committee today. For more information, call us at 877-255-8772.

Advertising Opportunities with CCA

Featuring thoughtful articles, professional layout, and distribution to many thousands of anglers and conservationists in Washington and Idaho, the Ripple Effect newsletter is a great place to showcase your business. Every active CCA Washington member receives a copy of the Ripple Effect which gives your business the ability to market directly to dedicated anglers in the region. Whether you run a tackle company, guide service, or a hotel in a popular fishing area, the Ripple Effect can help you grow your business.

For a rate sheet or to discuss pricing options, please contact our CCA Washington Communications Director, Tyler Comeau at 877-255-8772 or info@ccapnw.org. Statewide sponsors enjoy special advertising privileges and we’re always looking for new sponsors.
Sea Lion Predation Concerns Continue to Grow

With increasing predation on ESA-listed salmon and steelhead, fisheries managers in Oregon are asking the Federal government to allow them to begin reducing numbers of California sea lions on the lower Willamette River. In 2017, ODFW estimates that 25% of the wild winter steelhead run was eaten by sea lions, and they have recently announced that there is an 89% chance of the run going extinct should no action be taken to remove the marine predators. That figure drops to 6% if sea lion predation is addressed at Willamette Falls. At Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River, nearly 10,000 spring Chinook were taken by sea lions in 2016. Meanwhile, California sea lion populations have recovered to nearly 300,000 animals up from a low of 10,000 in 1972.

Like other issues we face in fisheries management, there are differing opinions on how to control sea lion predation. We remain hopeful that our federal officials will heed the warnings of the most up-to-date scientific information and act soon before Willamette River wild winter steelhead suffer the same fate as the now extinct Lake Washington winter steelhead.

If left unchecked, in-river sea lion predation can be a major deciding factor for the survival of threatened fish runs. This happened at the Ballard Locks fish ladders from 1986-1992 when California sea lions consumed between 42-65% of the Lake Washington winter steelhead return. Non-lethal hazing techniques were used during this timeframe with little to no success. Sea lion predation is considered by fisheries managers as a primary contributor to the extinction of the Lake Washington winter steelhead population.

“Unless Congress finally acts to protect our wild and endangered Columbia River basin salmon and steelhead from extensive, unnatural sea lion predation we will likely lose species to extinction,” said Gary Loomis, Chairman Emeritus of Coastal Conservation Association Washington.

Two Northwest legislators, Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-Oregon) and Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-Washington), are working to provide Oregon and Washington greater ability to remove sea lions on the Columbia River as well in tributaries. They have introduced a bi-partisan supported bill called the Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act which has gained traction in the House. Idaho Senator Jim Risch (R) has introduced a companion bill in the Senate.
By Scott Sigmon

The 2017 legislative session will go down as the longest and arguably most contentious session in Washington State history. With the Democrats controlling the House by one seat and the Republicans controlling the Senate by one seat it was no surprise that the session went well beyond the scheduled 105 days. All bills introduced in the 2017 Legislative Session that did not pass will automatically carryover to the 2018 Session for consideration, which is scheduled to start in January and last 60 days. Here are some of the key conservation and fisheries related issues that CCA Washington engaged in and monitored.

The legislature passed a 2017-2019 Biennial Operating Budget (SSB 5883) on June 30th, narrowly avoiding a partial shutdown of state services. The budget contained $11 million in additional General Fund Revenue for the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). CCA’s lobbying efforts were instrumental in helping to secure this much-needed revenue for the Department. The new revenue will be used to help fund the Fish Program, hatchery production, inflationary personnel costs, and an internal performance audit.

WDFW went into the 2017 legislative session experiencing a significant budget shortfall, largely due to drastic cuts in General Fund Revenue. The Department had proposed an ambitious recreational fishing and hunting license fee increase to address their funding problem, but their proposal was met with resistance from lawmakers, anglers and hunters alike. The Department did manage to pass a commercial license fee bill (ESHB 1597) in the final days of the session that is expected to generate minimal additional revenue. Most of this would come from an increase in the excise landing tax paid to the state for salmon.

At this point it appears that the Department will find a way to manage within the appropriated funding levels without any significant cuts – at least for FY 18. CCA will continue working with the legislature and WDFW on future funding needs and policy issues.

CCA Washington continues to be in strong support of capital and operating budget funding for our hatcheries.

One of the major failures of this past session was the legislature’s inability to pass a 2017-2019 Capital Budget (ESSB 5086). While the legislature did pass a “Re-Appropriation” Capital Budget (ESB 5965) for projects currently in the works, including many CCA supported projects, there will not be additional revenue for new projects. This would have included funding for several hatchery projects at Clarks Creek, Naselle, Hoodsport and Ells Spring. The legislature will most likely take up the Capital Budget when they reconvene in January.

There was also a proposed amendment on the floor of the House of Representatives that would have required WDFW to increase hatchery production in two coastal counties. This proposal was eventually withdrawn by the sponsor since it did not include any new revenue to fund the additional production and likely conflicted with federal law. Without new revenue, any additional hatchery production for the coast would have caused hatchery reductions elsewhere in the state. The Operating Budget for 2017-2019, did include one-time funding for production at the Mayr Brothers Hatchery in Aberdeen.
WDFW Recreational License Fees (Not Adopted)
There was little-to-no legislative support for any license fee increase this session. A recreational fishing and hunting license fee bill was introduced in the House (HB 1647), but never moved out of Committee. WDFW was unable to find a Senator to sponsor a Senate version of the fee bill. The Senate Majority Coalition Caucus indicated early on that they would not support a license fee increase. The hunting community expressed their opposition to a license fee increase throughout the session as well. CCA Washington remains committed to working with the Legislature to ensure WDFW has the funding and management policies it needs to promote conservation and to maintain and increase recreational fishing opportunity.

Hydraulic Permits / Habitat (Not Adopted)
Both SB 5466 & HB 1428 were introduced at the request of WDFW. These bills would have expedited the HPA review and approval for fish habitat enhancement projects, provided for additional criteria that must be met before WDFW may issue a HPA permit, changed the fee structure for HPA permits and increased the penalties for noncompliance from $100 per day, to $10,000 per violation. Both bills were opposed by the Association of Washington Business, Building Industry Association, Washington State Association of Counties and the Washington Farm Bureau.

Columbia River Endorsement - SB 5947 (Adopted)
The approximately $3 million in biennial revenue generated from the Columbia River (CR) Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement is used to maintain and enhance recreational fisheries in the Columbia River basin and was adopted following the deep General Fund cuts to WDFW budget during the recession. The CR Endorsement enjoys its strongest support in Eastern Washington, where new fishing opportunities came online during the early years of the endorsement. The recreational fishing lobby supported the reauthorization of the CR Endorsement for two more years, which aligns with the next key phase of implementation for the Columbia River gillnet reforms.

Shortly after the General election, 55 legislators who support conservation and recreational angling sent letters to Director Unsworth and the WDFW Commission in support of the Columbia River gillnet reforms. A total of 15 Senators and 36 House members signed their name to a joint letter. There were four other House and Senate member who sent in their own letter expressing concerns about the efforts of the Oregon Commission to allow gillnets in the mainstem of the Columbia River beyond 2016. These letters proved to be extremely persuasive with the Washington Commission, which voted 7-2 in January to affirm the major provisions of the gillnet reforms.
Major Changes on Fish & Wildlife Commission

This year the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission has seen significant changes, including the departure of Miranda Wecker this summer. The loss of two strong fishery conservationists in Wecker and Conrad Mahnken—a hatchery and fishery expert who left the Commission in January—has many recreational anglers concerned. State law gives the all-volunteer, nine-member citizen Commission authority to set policy for WDFW and select and oversee the agency’s Director.

Following Wecker’s departure, Governor Jay Inslee announced the re-appointment of current Commission Vice-Chair Larry Carpenter to the 17-months remaining on Wecker’s term and appointed former Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) Executive Director Don McIsaac to a six-year term serving in the seat Carpenter held previously.

Wecker officially stepped down from the Commission following its August 4-5 meeting in Olympia. During her 12 years on the Commission (including six as Chair), Miranda was a driving force behind key pro-conservation reforms adopted by the Commission, including salmon management reform policies for the Columbia River and Willapa Bay, and policies to enhance recreational fishing opportunity for shrimp and Dungeness crab in Puget Sound.

A Lawyer by trade, Miranda was focused on ensuring that the Commission complied with all legal and procedural requirements. Her diligence undoubtedly contributed to policies that have survived several legal challenges from commercial interests, including lawsuits targeting the Puget Sound Crab, Columbia River salmon, and Willapa Bay salmon reforms.

Vice-Chair Carpenter has been a strong voice for recreational fishing and conservation efforts, as well as a member of the Fish Committee within the Commission. Carpenter also has extensive experience on U.S.-Canada salmon treaty issues due to his service on the Pacific Salmon Commission. Commissioner Carpenter had been serving in limbo since his term had expired at the end of 2016, and while his reappointment is a positive step, his continued service will once again be in question at the end of next year.

Incoming Commissioner McIsaac has extensive experience with the management of fisheries off the West Coast of the lower 48 as the long-time head of PFMC. He brings an experience in fisheries management to the Commission and also previously worked within the old Washington Department of Fisheries along with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

In January, Governor Inslee appointed Barbara Baker to Mahnken’s open position following the Commission’s vote to re-affirm the Columbia River gillnet reforms. Commissioner Baker is also an attorney who recently retired after spending 20 years working in the Washington State House of Representatives, including serving as the chamber’s Chief Clerk. Baker has extensive relationships in the Legislature, which will likely be an asset to the Commission and WDFW.

CCA greatly appreciates the efforts of former Commissioners Wecker and Mahnken over the years to promote conservation in fisheries management across the state. We are also pleased to see Vice-Chair Carpenter reappointed to the Commission. As we move into the future, we look forward to working with all of the members of the Commission to help shape policy that fosters sound conservation along with supporting recreational fishing and its vast social, economic, and conservation benefits to the state and region.
CCA Donor Spotlight: Batson Enterprises

Custom built fishing rods are truly something special. Not only are they built to an angler’s specifications, but a custom rod is most often among the most treasured rods an angler will own. Helping rod builders take their craft to the next level is Batson Enterprises, based in Sequim, Washington. Batson Enterprises started in 1979 as Phantom Custom Rods in Maui by the late Bob Batson.

In 2000 they opened what you see today in Batson Enterprises, makers of Rainshadow Rod Blanks as well as ALPS & ForeCast components. Longtime supporters of CCA, Batson Enterprises has donated a rod-building kit to each chapter for their annual banquets. We recently spoke to Bill Batson, CEO of Batson Enterprises, to learn more about the company, and his passion for angling.

What type of products does Batson sell and where are they available? Batson Enterprises is the largest wholesale supplier of rod blanks and rod building components in the fishing industry. Our products are available under our labels, such as Rainshadow/Forecast/ALPS. We sell over 750 different types of blanks and well over 5,000 different types of rod components and rod building tools. Our products are available through a network of distributors and we also supply OEM manufacturers.

Where are your products made? How are they developed? Our products are made in four different countries: USA, Portugal, Taiwan and China. We source the best facilities throughout the world to supply us with our high-quality products. We develop products with our inhouse Jaguar Design team, which we believe is the finest design team in the industry. We also use other professionals within the industry to help us create the best products available for intended purposes.

What sets Batson apart from others in the rod building and component business? Our passion, integrity and knowledge of the industry. We are the go-to team for anyone or any company looking to build the best fishing rods in the world.

Why does Batson support CCA? We believe in what CCA is trying to achieve: To make it possible for future generations to have the fisheries we all love and enjoy.

What’s your favorite Batson blank/rod? That is a tough one because I am a multi-species angler who travels and fishes all over the country. That being said, saltwater series rods are my favorite.

Why should people build their own rods or have custom rods built for them? When it comes to choosing custom rods, I ask “why not have exactly what you want in a fishing tool?” Finding something that is perfect can be tough off the shelf. Custom rods allow you to have species and technique specific rods built just for you. From the correct handle length to your favorite colors, custom rods allow an angler to express themselves and catch more fish.
Cover Story Continued: Betrayal on the Columbia

continued from page 1...
We must continue our efforts to hold the ODFW Commission accountable for its role in reversing key components of the Gillnet Reforms and trying to rewrite history. Time and time again they seem more interested in increasing the profits of an already heavily subsidized gillnet fleet than the conservation of our wild salmon and steelhead, a vital part of what defines us as Northwest residents. I can only imagine how infuriating it must be for the residents and anglers of Idaho and Eastern Washington, who often make the greatest sacrifices for these fisheries! And it’s not just about this season… we need to stop managing for maximum harvest and instead rebuild our salmon, steelhead and sturgeon populations for future generations.

This year, we took a big step forward on the lower mainstem Columbia River with no gillnets used during the spring and summer. CCA members and conservationists around the Northwest should be proud of this major accomplishment. But there is much work left to do in order to protect our salmon, steelhead and sturgeon from non-selective gillnet fisheries in our region. I ask that you continue to fight alongside me for the fish and to restore Washington as the salmon fishing capitol of the world!

Did you Know?

Every time you make a donation to CCA, we take great care to ensure that your donation dollars are used to support fisheries conservation along with strengthening the future of recreational angling. Here in Washington, every dollar raised at our banquets, derbies, and other events is used within the state to make a difference for our fisheries. We strive to operate CCA Washington efficiently and effectively and we thank you and all of our donors for your unwavering support.

Here’s a breakdown of how your support was utilized in the 2016 fiscal year:
Conservation - 82%
General and Administrative – 15.8%
Fundraising – 2.2%

Contact Us

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

Check out these great catches by CCA Washington members and supporting guides. Submit your best photos to info@ccapnw.org to share in the next edition of the Ripple Effect. Chosen submissions will receive a new CCA Simms hat.

CCA Sno King member Deana McGrew with a Buoy 10 Chinook

Opening day was very good to CCA SoDo member Winston McClanahan

CCA Kitsap member Kelly Hall with a keeper Puget Sound Chinook

CCA NCW member Brandt Cappell with an upriver summer Chinook

Jennifer Wutzke of CCA Tri Cities chapter with an upriver fall Chinook

A chromer spring Chinook landed by CCA Yakima’s Travis Folkerts

CCA Pierce County’s Brenda Schuman with a Drano Lake Springer

Kitsap member Richie Dinubilo with a great pair of Puget Sound salmon

Chris Tannahill from the Tri Cities chapter with Hanford fall Chinook
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$30 MEMBER: Membership card, window decal, 2 bumper stickers, TIDE magazine.

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$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.

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Quarterly payment option available.

$10 NEW TIDE: Rising Tide newsletter, three NEW TIDE logo decals, iron-on-T-shirt.

Complete this form and send to:
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Coastal Conservation Association Membership Application

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