



EXTINCTION IS NOT AN OPTION.



2017 saw record low returns of
ESA-listed Willamette wild winter steelhead.

ODFW observed **sea lions**, targeting Willamette Falls, consuming over **25%** of the run. The future of Willamette winter steelhead is now dependent on a mere **512 fish!**



In 1972, the year the MMPA was passed, the California sea lion population hovered at **30,000 animals**. In 2016, the population was **300,000**.

Wild Willamette winter steelhead are in trouble.

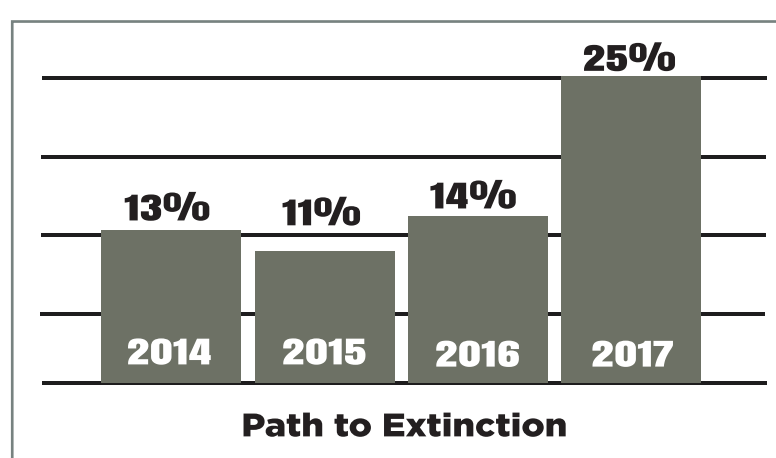
Situation Summary

- At the current sea lion predation rate, there is a nearly 90% chance that at least one of the three major Willamette populations will become extinct.
- Record low runs of winter steelhead in 2017 were further impacted by sea lion predation at Willamette Falls- leaving only 512 fish to move up river to their natal streams.
- Sea lions consumed over 25% of the record low winter steelhead run at Willamette Falls in 2017.
- The problem is worsening. Sea lion predation has increased from a few sea lions in the 1990's to more than 40 this year, and they are staying longer each year.
- The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) is a conservation success! Sea lion population is now very healthy with @300,000 animals coastwide.
- A very small proportion of the male population moves up into rivers where migrating salmon and steelhead are especially vulnerable.
- Section 120 of the MMPA specifies processes and steps that require such a long amount of time that managers can not react to problems before they become a crisis for at-risk fish populations.
- Experience over the last 20 years, and the recent science demonstrates that decade long delays place fish in danger of extinction, and they result in the need to remove far more sea lions than if managers had the ability to act quicker.

Solution

- Revisions are needed to Section 120 of the MMPA to give managers the tools they need to protect critical fish populations before sea lions become habituated to an area - while ensuring that sea lion populations continue at healthy levels.
- There can be a common-sense approach to ensure the recovery of ESA-listed salmon and steelhead populations and the ongoing successful conservation of sea lions.

Sea lion consumption of Wild Winter Steelhead at Willamette Falls



Call to Action:

We need a bipartisan coalition to develop an approach to address this issue -- NOW-- before we lose wild winter steelhead in the Willamette.

Contact Senators Merkley, Murray, Wyden and Cantwell TODAY. Ask them to adjust the MMPA to provide managers with the tools they need to protect critical fish populations AND maintain healthy sea lion populations.

Direct links to Senator's emails below.



Bonneville Residents

Astoria Residents

The adult males eating salmon below Bonneville dam are roughly **twice the size of normal adult** male sea lions in the estuary.