THE OSPREY

Issue 1 — January 1987

A newsletter published by the Steelhead Committee, Northwest Regional Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

This is the first issue of THE OSPREY, a newsletter prepared by the Steelhead Committee for the purpose of helping Northwest steelhead flyfishers keep up to date on the happenings in their sport. The Steelhead Committee was formed early in 1986 to advise the Northwest Regional Council of the Federation on steelhead policy and to marshal a strong voice for the steelhead resource. At the present time the Steelhead Committee includes steelhead flyfishers only from Washington, and its efforts have been confined to Washington. One objective is to broaden the scope of the committee so that it is a truly regional effort with additional membership from Oregon, British Columbia, and Alaska. This first issue of THE OSPREY is being mailed to all steelhead flyfishers in the United States and Canada for whom the editor has names and addresses. Mailings of future issues will be expanded as additional names and addresses are received. Anyone interested in receiving copies should inform Stan Young, 1411 - 86th Avenue NE, Bellevue, Washington 98004 (telephone 206/454-6676) or Bob Arnold, 2916 NE 60th Street, Seattle, Washington 98115 (telephone 206/523-4112).

Stan Young

FFF STEELHEAD COMMITTEE

In September 1985, Starr Thurston asked me to serve as chairman of the Northwest Regional Council's steelhead committee, the council of which I was president. I was hesitant to agree because the territory includes Oregon, British Columbia, and Alaska, as well as Washington, and I seldom fish outside Washington. Washington, however, I know fairly well, especially the Puget Sound streams. And, yearly, I fish the Eastern Washington streams more and more. So I agreed. The fact that George Johnson was asked to be the national chairman was a determining factor; George being in Pullman and I in Seattle, we cover the state pretty well.

I didn't do what Starr asked of me. Instead, I formed a Washington Steelhead Committee and we promptly aligned (aligned?) ourselves with the Washington Sub-Council and Dave Round. I invited a handful of steelhead flyfishermen I regularly encountered on the Still, Skykomish, Sauk, Skagit, and Wenatchee to be charter members. Others were invited because they represented strong clubs or key geographical areas. These guys fish all the time and, subtracting 50 percent for exaggeration, still catch a lot of fish. What else they have in common is a long-term dedication to fishing with the fly and a deep concern for the health of the fish and the future of the sport. To a varying degree all can be called environmentalists. Long ago, they had formed the habit of releasing nearly all the steelhead they caught. Whenever they kept one for the table, you could bet it was a hatchery fish. Each person I asked to be a charter member looked doubtful, started to protest, then agreed when I promised it would not cut into his fishing time.

Okay, so I lied.

Maybe I had better name the committee. It's a group with whom I'm proud to be associated: Bob Barnes, John Farrar, Fred Joss, Alec Jackson, George Johnson, Bill Matthaei, Bill McMillan, Steve Raymond, Bob Strobel, and Stan Young. Later we added Scott Noble, Bill Ewing, and Bob McLaughlin. We're cautiously accepting new members. Naturally, there will be some attrition. I expect this to be an ongoing process. Stan Young is vice chairman; Alec Jackson, treasurer.

My concept of what we are and what we ought to be is this. Each is a mature individual who has reached a high level of fishing expertise; each has gotten a lot out of the sport—I mean, aside from hooking and landing steelhead. It's time to give something back to the resource. It is up to each of us to figure out the area in which his effort is to be expended and the time he can afford to give. I will only say it ought to be considerable. The very different commitments of Bill McMillan and Alec Jackson come quickly to mind, but few of us are capable of such sustained dedication. Still, it is a noble goal.

The committee began meeting at the start of 1986 and at first met monthly in order to begin to define itself, its goals, and its objectives. We hammered out a policy on wild fish and hotly argued over whether there were any conditions when wild fish could be killed. Some said yes; others said no. We learned from both sides and concluded that, yes, there were some such conditions, but they were rarely met.

We also offered early input to the WDG on statewide regulations for 1987-88. We asked that selective fishery catch-and-release regulations be extended to the North Fork of the Stillaguamish in March and April and the Skagit in March, rivers whose wild fish populations are not adequately protected in our opinion. We followed these and other requests through informal discussions with WDG, the formal hearing process, and the Game Commission. We were not
successful, but have vague assurances for future improvements. We held an emergency meeting after learning about the loss of three million steelhead juveniles to IHN disease. Curt Kraemer and Chuck Phillips gave us a comprehensive briefing on characteristics of the disease and efforts underway to halt its spread and recoup its losses. Brian Phinney, TU steelhead state chairman, joined us at this meeting. We have agreed to keep each other informed and to work together whenever we can.

During late summer and fall we met as a group infrequently, but encountered each other often because nearly everyone was fishing in Eastern Washington. This is how it ought to be, I think. This winter we plan to commence meeting more or less regularly. All meetings are open.

Both the Northwest Council and the Washington Sub-Council have supplied funds for the Steelhead Committee and for the Deer Creek Restoration Fund. I'd like to thank them and urge all steelhead flyfishers to become members and participate in their myriad activities.

Bob Arnold

1986 WASHINGTON AND IDAHO STEELHEAD REPORT

Mid-Snake, Clearwater, and Grande Ronde. Over 120,000 steelhead were counted over Lower Granite Dam by mid-October. The anticipation of a record year was high in every steelheader's mind. However, the catch rate was significantly lower than recent years. The Clearwater was reported to require over 150 hours to catch a steelhead by the Idaho Fish and Game Department during one week in October. The Grande Ronde had a similar catch rate, with a single strike per day being the rule. The Snake was better to the boaters, but still required about 20 hours per fish.

What happened? First was that the water in the lower Snake and the Columbia was warm enough in September so that the fish encountered a thermal block. This resulted in lower numbers in the rivers in September. When the thermal block ceased the water remained warm enough that the fish moved through the usual fishing areas rapidly and they did not take flies well. And last, but most importantly, many of the fish that came over the last dam did not continue to move up. Many thousands of steelhead remained in the lake behind Lower Granite Dam. Those fish seem to winter in the reservoir and then move up to the spawning areas in the spring. They were not available to the fly angler. During late winter, this year, the fish were notably smaller. Many fish were between 5 and 8 pounds. When the tributary fishery in Zone Six took fewer steelhead than the previous year, the fish were largely bound for the Clearwater and were the large two- and three-salt fish. The larger escapement over Lower Granite Dam was due to the treaty Indians agreeing to increase the mesh size to 8 inches. The result was a larger number of one-salt fish and many wild fish getting through the nets. We hope to find a way of gaining passage for the larger fish in Zone Six.

Lastly, a dismal note is that the hatchery at Dwarsnak Dam had a double loss of steelhead smolts to IHN virus while some are surviving, we expect about a third or more less smolts to be released this spring.

George Johnson

Southwest Washington. Catch-and-release regulations were implemented on 11 rivers in Southwest Washington for all or part of their steelhead seasons. There was some scrambling and some abuses, but on the whole the regulations were complied with. Increases in wild summer run steelhead escapement were documented by snorkel counts of the Wind, Washougal, and East Fork Lewis Rivers by the Clark-Skamania Flyfishers in 1986. Increases in numbers of wild fish caught were noticeable on those rivers with wild release regulations—although the full impact will not be realized, of course, for 5 to 6 more years (a full spawn/return cycle). It's a sound beginning. The hatchery returns of summer steelhead continued the trend toward earlier and later entry that presently provides very little in the way of spring/early summer angling that Southwest Washington was once noted for. Summer steelhead fishing is now primarily a late summer/fall show on Southwest Washington rivers. The 1985-86 winter return was down from 1984-85 regarding hatchery returns. However, the Grays and Washougal are benefiting from wild release—although the Grays is hampered by massive habitat damage from logging.

Prospects for the coming year in Southwest Washington are looking up. WDG is responding to complaints toward Skamania Hatchery summer steelhead selection and is going to take wild summer steelhead at the Salmon Hatchery traps from the main Washougal River and work them into the Skamania Hatchery stock on an annual basis. WDG has also ceased to select for the so-called high grades (big three-salt steelhead) due to the detrimental genetic impacts thatthis hatchery selection has had on Skamania stock steelhead (and on wild stocks where they have been outplanted). Plans are also being made by WDG to use wild Wind River brood (taken each year) for hatchery plants that are to go into the Wind River.

Regarding wild stocks, the wild catch-and-release regulations seem to be working during the seasonal span of implementation on those rivers so designated. As an example, CSSF snorkel counts found only 89 summer steelhead on the upper Washougal River in October 1985 (prior to wild release regulations), while in August 1986, 335 summer steelhead were counted (with the fall return yet to enter). WDG indicates that all rivers in Southwest Washington will be wild steelhead release throughout their open seasons in the near future—perhaps as early as the next regulation discussions, if pressure is applied. Of course, this means that Southwest Washington can afford to be optimistic toward its steelhead fishery future—although any dramatic changes in numbers of wild steelhead will not be felt until the 1990's.

Bill McMillian

Pegat Sound Rivers. The winter season was deemed about average by Region 4 biologist Curt Kraemer. Fish entered many rivers early and provided anglers with good fishing by mid-December. Most of those were hatchery fish, but both the Skykomish and the north Stillaguamish showed surprising numbers of early wild steelhead, some of large size. January was not as good and by February kelts were showing up, as usual. March and half of April on the Skykomish provided an exceptional catch-and-release selective fishery, though just before close many gravid fish were reported. This was the first year of late catch-and-release and portends well.

March on the Skagit was, as was the first half and picked up as the season progressed. Consensus was that it was not as good as the past two years. The Sauk, too, was spotty, but some good days and good catches resulted. Angling pressure is up on both streams, testifying to the increased popularity of catch-and-release fishing. Powerboats on the Skagit continued to be a big problem; while bank anglers complain about the drift boats on the Sauk, the problem they pose is not as critical. Generally, fly anglers can cooperate with drift boats that do not hog the water. And when a drift boat is past, it is gone for the day.

The summer season did not open until June 1, a full week later than usual. Anglers were greeted by high water, carryover late winter and spring fish (some nicely recovered from spawning and strong), and a paucity of fresh summerruns. Immediately the bottom dropped out of the rivers and they were approaching August levels by early June. By July a
few summers runs trickled in, but fishing on the Skykomish and North Stillaguamish remained slow. The first two weeks of July are traditionally the best time, with runs of both wild fish and hatchery adults arriving together. Many anglers quit the season early, convinced it was a bum year. But in August strong runs of steelhead appeared, most of them hatchery fish. On the Stillaguamish, anglers got a shot at those bright fish below Deer Creek, which was still murky. (Wild steelhead swam down to about 22 percent of the catch, as opposed to 85 to 90 percent a year ago.)

Hatchery fish piled into the necks of what remained of the key upstream pools and were easily spotted and pounced. Pools reluctantly gave up fish throughout late summer and fall, mostly early in morning and on cloudy days. Anglers complained about the large percentage of unclipped fish that had to be released, according to the regulations. Many were large Skamania stock and probably of hatchery origin. Flyfishers resented that they would be caught and legally killed by gear fishermen on December 1.

In November, when the rains came, the Stillaguamish filled with coho and chum. Many steelhead poured into the Fortuna area. The catch was down about 50 percent, and many salmon and steelhead were foul-hooked. Because of loss of eggs and fry to IHN, the WDFG opened the hatchery weir and at season's end 246 hatchery adults were trapped in a holding trough. These fish will be killed for their eggs and melt in January; they will be incubated at Bernaby Slough and later planted as smolts in various Puget Sound streams.

We're told the Skykomish paralleled the Stillaguamish most of the season. The Snoqualmie was slow, and the Green was better late in the season after the river rose.

The Wenatchee during September and October was spotty. Of the usually dependable drifts, some produced while others didn't. For a change the sink-tip line got more fish than the floating line. This may be because the river was higher and colder than normal, and caddis production was down. The Methow was very slow during the fall months. Fish apparently stayed in the Columbia and are in a hurry to move up and spawn.

Stan Young and Bob Arnold

1988 Oregon Steelhead Report

Oregon rivers experienced the largest steelhead returns in history for the second year in a row. The reasons are varied. First, ocean rearing conditions must have been good. Second, reduced ocean commercial fishing got more steelhead back into the rivers. (No one really knows how many steelhead have been harvested in the ocean in past years.) A third reason is improved downstream migration of smolts. The Deschutes was that so many "non-keepers" were caught. Catch-and-release regulations have resulted in a strong run of wild fish. I used to fish the Deschutes from July through October, but with the increase in angling pressure it causes me too much emotional stress. Jet boat traffic was so heavy that Randy Stelzer and the other guides from Kaufmann's refer to floating through the Lookit area as "gurgling downtown Lookit." My boss, Frank Amato, a more sedate fellow than I, hooked over 200 steelhead on the Deschutes. However, Frank fishes Wednesday through Saturday, July through September.

North Umpqua. I was in Roseburg the end of October and visited with a couple of the local biologists at the fish-viewing window at Winchester Dam. They told me that the fishing started there in late June and that the North Umpqua had a record run. Friends confirmed that there were plenty of fish in the North Umpqua. They had good success with the fly. They said the river below the fly-only water was very crowded.

Willamette System. A new run of summer steelhead was introduced in the Molalla River a couple of years ago, with the first adults returning this year. They were fairly early fish, but not much is known about them as yet. I could not hook one on a fly. The Santiam had plenty of fish, too; they started to show in April. An early June trip provided plenty of fish viewing, but only one fish that moved to the fly. Later in the month and during July, flyfishing was better. The Cleetlaks had good numbers of fish this past summer and they were not fly shy. Hearsay has it the run started when some sick Skamania summerrun smolts were dumped in to get rid of them. To everyone's surprise they survived and thrived and many are now wild spawning fish. The McKenzie is a clear, swift-flowing stream that several years back was stocked with steelhead. Its reputation has been based on its wild rainbow trout, known locally as redside. For the past eight or nine years, steelhead have been sharing riffles with the resident redside. But the McKenzie has not caught on as a steelhead flyfishing river. Perhaps the long flyfishing success of rivers like the Deschutes, Umpqua, and Rogue overshadow the McKenzie. But access is too difficult. Whatever the reason, seldom are there any reports about steelhead flyfishing on the McKenzie. Yet I hear stories each year about trout fishermen who have had steelhead snatch away their busy bucktail caddis dry flies.

Winter of 1985-86. I can't gauge the winter runs of steelhead by my flyfishing success. I am reduced to glancing into the bottoms of pug and drift fishermen's boats to see how the fishing has been. Many times this is not an accurate account. Early last season the weather was dry and few fish showed up in December until the first substantial rain. Our state fisheries biologists said the runs went straight on through to the spawning tributaries on the high water. Stronger runs would probably spread out the timing of returns. I caught four or five winter steelhead on the fly in the late part of the season. They were all either steel or dark fish. I caught them all on 5/0 or 6/0 flies and floating lines with the fly fished near the surface. Maybe this year I'll hook a bright one.

Late winter/early spring can provide some of the season's best fishing. Like Washington's Skagit, Sauk, and Skykomish, Oregon rivers also have native fish returning in March and April and even into May. I am told the Wilson and Trask can be quite good at that time and I plan to give them a try this year. The Sandy and Clackamas also have runs of late winter natives. I wish that Oregon law protected them. As it is now, their survival is in the hands of the angler. My plea to fishermen who land fish at this time of year is to please check them carefully and if you even suspect they are wild, let them go. The introduction of early (March, April, May) summerruns has had a negative impact on these late winter natives.

There are too many rivers in Oregon to attempt to give a listing here for winter steelhead. My advice to the flyfishermen who wish to pursue winter steelhead is to pick a stream and concentrate on it. I believe an intimate knowledge of one particular river will result in more angling success.

Marty Sherman

DEER CREEK NEGOTIATIONS AT CRITICAL STAGE

The Federation (in cooperation with other environmental groups, fisheries organizations, timber managers, Indian tribes, and landowners) is planning for the future well-being of Deer Creek and her fish. Fish population surveys made
In September 1986 by Washington’s Department of Game show that Dolly Varden and otoe have virtually disappeared from the Deer Creek system and that summer steelhead are at critically low levels. On September 24, 1986, the Game Department in conjunction with the Fisheries Department requested an emergency closure to all road building and timber harvesting activities in Deer Creek’s drainage. On October 1, 1986, the Federation and the Washington Environmental Council joined Game and Fisheries in the request for emergency action. Since then Trout Unlimited, the Audubon Society, the Stillaguamish Tribe, and others have expressed support for emergency action. The U.S. Forest Service agreed to defer proposed timber sales in Deer Creek’s watershed until fish populations recover. Recently, Washington’s Department of Natural Resources deferred or modified three timber sales and agreed to hold off future sales for three years. Detailed review of the one proposed timber sale by Scott Paper Company is scheduled to start January 20, 1987. At the October 8, 1986, meeting of Deer Creek’s Policy Group representatives of the Federation’s Steelhead Committee made clear to timberland owners the Federation’s position on emergency action. The Federation prefers to gain the requested emergency closure of road building and timber harvesting by negotiation, but will not hesitate to use stronger means to prevent extinction of Deer Creek’s unique strain of summer steelhead.

We will keep you informed on the progress we make. In the meantime, if you would like more detailed information or if you would like to help, please do not hesitate to contact us. The Federation has opened a special bank account and anyone wishing to make a donation can send his check to Deer Creek Restoration Fund, Box 386, Kenmore, Washington 98028. Expenditures from the fund will be overseen by Bob Arnold, Steve Raymond, and me.

Alec Jackson

ETIQUETTE

As more and more flyfishermen take to the waters, it becomes important that they exhibit good streamside manners and respect the rights of the other fishermen, river users, and property owners. Nothing will demean the sport faster than if fishermen fail to respect the rights of the others. Don’t hog the best spots. Don’t wade in ahead of someone already fishing. Don’t crowd. Don’t trespass on lands where you are not welcome. Treat the others you come in contact with along a river as you would wish to be treated yourself, and we will all enjoy the sport more.

WASHINGTON’S 1987 REGULATIONS

The Steelhead Committee met several times early in 1986 to formulate its recommendations for the 1987 regulations and then followed up by testifying at the game department public meetings and the commission meeting in Spokane, as well as submitting a written statement. The Steelhead Committee is satisfied with the direction the game department is moving in its steelhead management. It commended its “wild steelhead release” and “selective fishery” initiatives on some of Washington’s rivers, and notes that the department is seeking to expand them to additional rivers in 1987. The committee believes that in the future virtually all rivers having anadromous fish should be managed for their wild fish populations, with increased reliance on natural reproduction and less dependence on hatcheries. Most recommendations sought to have the game department move further and faster in that direction. Specifically:

Columbia River. Extend wild release throughout the upper basin and to include the lower Columbia, too.

Grande Ronde. Make the Washington portion wild release and selective fishery for the entire steelhead season.

Methow. Endorse wild release as the department proposed and also selective fishery with the bait ban not ending September 30 as proposed.

Wenatchee. As well as being catch-and-release, it should also be selective fishery.

Green. As well as being catch-and-release or wild release, it should also be selective fishery.

Skagit. Make it wild release and selective fishery during March as well as April thus ruling out fishing from boats with motors, delay opening the general season until June 15 to protect late spawners, and extend the wild release and selective fishery an additional 25 miles downstream during March and April or as far as Sedro-Woolley.

Skykomish. Make it wild release and selective fishery during all of March and April from its mouth to the forks, and its North and South forks wild release and selective fishery all season.

Snoqualmie. Make it wild release and selective fishery from opening to November 30.

Stillaguamish. North Fork. Extend the season from the mouth to Swede Haven Road Bridge until April 30 and make it wild release and selective fishery during March and April.

Kalama. Make it wild release the entire season and selective fishery through November 30.

Klickitat. Continue wild release indefinitely and make it selective fishery through November 30.

East Lewis and Washougal. Make them wild release and selective fishery the entire season and close the season March 1 through May 30 to protect badly depleted runs of springers.

Toutle. Rather than opening to a limited kill in 1987 as the game department proposes, it should be catch-and-release indefinitely, until the environment builds back more and the wild runs are better reestablished.

Quillayute, Bogachiel, Solenduck, Quilcene, Hob, and Wynoochee. Make them all wild release and selective fishery the entire season.

We believed these recommendations were reasonable and in the best interest of the sport. Nevertheless, none of them was adopted this year by the Game Commission. There are indications, however, that some may be in years to come and we plan to continue pushing for them.

Stan Young

VOLUNTEER ANGLER CREEK INFORMATION FORM

The game department has devised a new management tool it hopes will strengthen the department’s fishery program on particular waters. It’s a small form anglers or clubs voluntarily fill out after fishing a river or lake. The form asks detailed information about angling results, including number of hours fished, method of angling, species taken, numbers kept, numbers released, and length. Once the department targets on waters of special concern, fishermen will be asked to fill cards out and then turn them in to the department. The information will be used to help solve problems and improve fishing.

Copies are now available at your regional WDF office. The FFF requests you return your report cards through Doug Schad, 501B - 38th Avenue NE, Seattle, Washington 98115. He will enter them on his home computer so we will have our own accessibility to the data base. Then he will forward them on to the WDF.
HIN (INFECTIONOUS HEMATOMATOCYTIC NECROSIS)

The year 1988 saw one of the worst outbreaks in history of the deadly fish disease HIN in western Washington hatcheries. Most of the steelhead eggs and fry on hand had to be destroyed. Although the game department took steps to obtain additional eggs from other sources, there will be an estimated 75 percent fewer returning summer run and 25 percent less winter run hatchery-reared steelhead in 1989. Many western Washington rivers heavily dependent on hatchery plants, especially on the Olympic Peninsula and in the Puget Sound area, will feel the pinch. The disease, a virus, affects the kidneys and livers of salmonids, and is especially serious among hatchery fish. Although present in wild populations, they appear much less vulnerable. The game department believes that by disinfecting future water sources, hatcheries, and eggs, the disease can be controlled and the main impact confined to 1989. Fortunately, with the increased reliance on wild populations and natural reproduction in recent years, the impact should be significantly less than if the program were more hatchery oriented. Thriving populations of wild fish in many Olympic Peninsula and Puget Sound streams should help ease the effects of HIN on fishing in 1989.

OREGON STEELHEAD PLAN

In a number of ways, Oregon seems to be well ahead of Washington regarding promulgating a comprehensive plan to enhance steelhead stocks, with special emphasis accorded wild fish. In 1982, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted an anadromous fish program that addressed itself to four major concerns: steelhead stocks, stock recruitment, and habitat. As the plan developed, public workshops were held around the state and a steelhead program coordinator was hired. Harvest inequities and enforcement were two key additional concerns. The completed plan is due in mid-1987, but already some important provisions have been codified, protecting and enhancing wild fish. One of the strategies is "management exclusively for wild fish." Harvest will be regulated to maintain production potential, genetic integrity, and genetic and size diversity of the fish populations. Extra protection may be provided depressed stocks that are being revived. Other strategies include management for mixed stocks and for hatchery ones. Additional guidelines include (1) protection, rehabilitation, and enhancement of the aquatic and riparian habitat, (2) written management plans for each major watershed, (3) public hearings to explain management impacts on wild fish, and (4) periodic reviews by the Fish and Wildlife Commission in implementing the wild fish policy.

Congratulations, Oregon, on your head start.

TRIBAL MATTERS

The aftermath of the Boldt Decision and its long journey to the Supreme Court and, lately, its confirmation in court of the hatchery fish ruling and habitat matters have dictated that both WDGL and fisherman's organizations find some way to work together with the tribes or be outmaneuvered at every turn. In spite of the passage of Initiative 456 in Washington State demanding an end to commercial sales of steelhead and the denial of special or treaty rights to treaty tribes, nothing has changed Indians still net the streams in which they have historically fished. You can visit the Pike Place Market, or your local supermarket, and find steelhead on lee, right alongside sole and halibut.

The good news is, some time ago the tribes agreed not to fish commercially for summer run steelhead in Puget Sound and some areas of the Olympic Peninsula, though not renouncing their right to do so. Instead, they will take their half of the fish, that is, their quota, off the toe of the winter run, which in most streams is largely hatchery fish. In streams like the Skykomish, where there is an early wild run mixed in with the hatchery returns, the Tulalip say they carefully monitor the wild fish percentage of their catch and stop netting if it gets too high. This is a figure agreed to with WDGL. WDGL spends a lot of its manpower and money establishing the maximum sustained harvest goals for tribes and sportfishers, and ensuring they are met for both parties.

Summerrun steelhead are especially important to fly fishermen because they take the fly well and often come to the surface for our presentations. The Indian harvest of fall steelhead in the Columbia and Snake systems distresses fishermen, especially in mixed fisheries when a threat to wild fish is perceived. Each year the Cowlitz is blessed with larger runs; some exceeding historic size. About 80 percent of these are hatchery fish. The tribes are exercising their treaty right to harvest their half of what is deemed surplus to spawning escapement. Still, these are very large numbers and nets do not discriminate between wild and hatchery fish. Our tentative conclusion is that, once wild fish escapement goals are met, adequate protection has been given to the wild fish.

Most tribes in the state have agreed that protection of wild steelhead and salmon runs are the top priority. Streams are to be managed for "natural production" and hatchery programs must yield in mixed fisheries if there is a threat to wild fish or their genetic integrity. Also, the tribes believe that the carrying capacity of most streams has been greatly reduced because of habitat or environmental degradation from a variety of sources: logging and associated road-building, industry, residential and commercial development, pollution, daisy farming and agriculture, septic tank failure, use of herbicides, etc. The tribes are demanding that these practices be controlled because their fishery is threatened and, therefore, their livelihood. They have the law behind them and industry knows it. At present, fisherman and organizations representing their needs (like the FFF) are forced to ride piggyback on the tribes because the tribes have the legal clout. Time after time we are not included in planning efforts such as Watershed Planning and TFW negotiations because we are splintered, quarreling among ourselves, and without legal authority or recourse. These, in my opinion, are some of the reasons why we must work together with government agencies and the various tribes in those areas where we have the same concerns. Not to do so can only continue to hurt us.

Bob Arnold

TIMBER, FISH, AND WILDLIFE NEGOTIATIONS

Fisherman often complain that a timber company "cuts right down to the edge" of a favorite stream, then ask, "How can they get away with this?" Well, current Washington State Forest Practice Rules and Regulations permit the removal of "all merchantable timber" within the streamside or riparian zone. This includes not only all conifers but any hardwoods for which there is a market and includes elder even a few inches in diameter. While timber companies are prohibited from felling fallen trees across all streams except the smallest, remaining "nonmerch" (willow, vine maple, salmonberry, etc.) get crushed and swept away during logging operations.

Take heart; this may change soon. Because of long litigation among timber companies, the state, Indian tribes, and a couple of environmental organizations, a comprehensive effort to change things to benefit fish and wildlife is underway. Representatives from the above groups have been meeting in semi-secret to work out major changes as to how timber
will be cut in the future and still permit the timber industry to stay in business and make a profit (and thereby employ many workers throughout the state). As a result of an agreement reached in early December (but not yet approved by all participants), a certain percentage of representative trees will be left standing along all but the smallest streams to provide cooling shade and long-term large debris recruitment for refuge of fish and wildlife. Rules will be strengthened and alternative basin plans for each major river system will be formed, with public participation.

The FFF has not been invited to participate in these negotiations, but is represented indirectly through the Washington Environmental Council, of which many clubs and individuals are members. (Audubon is the only other environmental organization included and, frankly, both were invited because in the past they have sued the state and industry over timber and wildlife matters.) I am a member of both the WEC forest practices and fisheries committees, and believe our interests are being quite well represented. I have hopes that situations like Deer Creek and Weyerhaeuser's rape of the upper Kalama won't happen in the future. It is possible that we will save the wild steelhead and salmon just in the nick of time, but I wouldn't bet my life on it. Still, it is a worthwhile goal and one well worth spending time on.

When the Timber/Fish/Wildlife Plan is completed and submitted to the FFF for its approval, it will be carefully reviewed by Alec Jackson, Dave Round, Bruce Ferguson, and me. Anybody wishing to see the proposed plan should contact any of the above and make arrangements about mid-January 1987.

Bob Arnold

ANOTHER THREAT TO THE COLUMBIA RIVER'S HANFORD REACH

Commercial interests in Wenatchee are at it again. Unable to have the last free-flowing reaches of the Columbia dammed so deep draught barges can navigate between Wenatchee and the ocean, they now seek to have it dredged. Ringold and other shallows would be gouged and scraped up to 14 feet deeper. Lost would be the only extensive spawning areas for salmon and steelhead still remaining. Of course, they promise to mitigate the destruction by creating new spawning beds elsewhere, but who do they think they are kidding? The Seattle District Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is in charge of studying the project and the study is well along. Indians, sportsmen, and environmentalists are uniting to protect this irreplaceable resource.