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## A FISH WITHOUT A COUNTRY

How the Pacific Coast Salmon Has been Following the

Trail of the Dodo

(These Wildlife Articles Are Written by  
William L. Finley, Sc. D. and Ed F. Averill)

For many years the story of the Frazer River sockeye or red salmon has resembled the old narrative of the man without a country. Since the question of his citizenship has never been settled, this valuable run of fish has been following the trail of the dodo.

The schools of salmon come in from the Pacific Ocean, but before ascending the Frazer River to spawn they play back and forth across the border waters of Puget Sound without regard to immigration authorities. A blockade of seines, nets and traps meets them on both sides of the international boundary. They play between the devil and the deep sea because as residents of no particular country, no uniform laws protect them.

The figures tell the story of the destruction of one of the world's most important fisheries. In 1913, the pack on both sides of the line totaled 2,401,488 cases. Twenty years later in 1933, due to the intensive commercial pursuit of these fish, the pack had dropped to 273,481 cases, which is a shrinkage of full ninety percent. For the past thirty years conservationists have fought to save these fish, but facts prove that a poor fish that plays in two countries can't be safe in either. In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt recommended an international treaty to protect the Frazer River runs. One was drawn up and finally presented to Congress, but was killed in 1913.

These sockeyes spawn in the lakes of the Frazer Basin



of British Columbia. They migrate to and from the sea through American waters where American fishermen get the first chance and catch most of the salmon. The Canadians say, why should we spend our money to guard and propagate the sockeyes. So as a result this species has been headed straight down the grade.

About six years ago a new International Sockeye Salmon Treaty was drawn up and approved by Canadian authorities. It was passed upon by the late Henry O'Malley, Commissioner of Fisheries. After personal consideration by President Hoover, it was laid before the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the Senate. But a fish without a country has a long swim before it can reach a safe sanctuary.

The commercial fishing interests of the State of Washington took the selfish viewpoint of grabbing all the fish possible even though this meant their extermination. In this case, they were backed by Governor Hartley, who on December 4, 1930, gave a radio talk in which he said: "After wide and thorough investigation, I am convinced that this Treaty is not only highly objectionable, but a real menace to one of the State of Washington's greatest industries." With the help of Senator Dill this sockeye treaty was defeated, and the real menace is sockeye extermination.

During the last session of Congress this Treaty was finally brought up again in the United States Senate and was ratified. So, after many years there is a promising chance of this Treaty being adopted by both nations, in which case an International Commission would be appointed to study and protect these fish that have been so long without a country.



The salmon runs all along the Pacific Coast have been in much the same position without adequate care and protection. Many people have come to believe that as the Pacific Coast increases in population, develops and fills up with industrial plants, the salmon runs of our western rivers are as sure to fade out as the migratory fish runs did on the Atlantic Coast. It is true that we are traveling much the same road, yet today people are more awake to conserving our natural resources.

There are many resources of land and water. Some of the most important studies being made today are by the State Planning Boards which are taking into consideration not one, but all of the resources of land and water. In the past it was largely through selfishness and carelessness that the use of one resource was permitted to destroy the utilization of other natural assets of even greater value. The attempt to conserve the salmon runs of the western rivers is by no means a fight against the development of the country. It is a logical awakening of the public mind to determine which is the most important service that a river, a forest, or any section of land can render to present and future generations.

It is common knowledge that the valuable salmon runs in some of our western streams have been destroyed or greatly depleted. The Sacramento River in California formerly produced a large supply of salmon for the market. At Baird, seventeen miles north of Redding, was a federal hatchery where the annual take of Chinook salmon eggs used to run from 20,000,000 to 30,000,000. Later as the waters of the Sacramento and its tributaries were used for power and irrigation, these industries paid no attention



whatever to the needs of the salmon, and the Chinook runs gradually disappeared. The federal hatchery at Baird no longer operates as a Chinook egg-taking station. The government once operated a successful egg-taking station at Baker, Washington. When a two hundred and fifty-foot dam was built on Baker River, the Bureau of Fisheries had to abandon the station as far as the salmon work was concerned. For years the Bureau secured from 5,000,000 to 10,000,000 eggs at a hatchery at Salmon, Idaho, taken from spring Chinooks that went up the Columbia. This is now just another tombstone marking the extinction of salmon runs.

Everyone knows the needs we have for electricity and that dams have to be built for the development of power and to use storage reservoirs to irrigate arid lands for the production of crops. There are many rivers not inhabited by salmon that could be used for such purposes. The point is, the engineering profession has promulgated dams without any regard to the value of certain streams from the fish standpoint.

Some people may take the stand that no one should retard the natural development of the country, and that our salmon resources are not as important as the production of electricity. About twelve years ago the California-Oregon Power Company got a permit from the Federal Power Commission and completed plans to erect a two hundred and fifty-foot dam on the lower reaches of the Klamath River in northern California. The State Fish and Game Commission of California claimed this as one of the few remaining salmon streams and that it was worth more for fish conservation than for power. A bill was initiated to stop the



building of the dam. The people of California supported it by a majority of nearly two hundred thousand votes. Saving the Klamath salmon has not in any way stopped the development of this part of the country, since all the power that is needed is produced.