



## Don't Dam Salmon (or Orcas)

Between 1962 and 1975, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built four dams on the Lower Snake River, creating tiers of slack water reservoirs with no free-flow for over 140 river miles. These dams were to provide hydropower, an inland freight transportation waterway, and “regional prosperity.” However, by 1985 sockeye salmon runs (historically in the thousands) had begun a decline.

By 2007, their return to spawning waters averaged a mere 18 fish—functionally extinct. By 1997, all three other Snake River salmon and steelhead runs had been ESA-listed as threatened or endangered. In 2005, the Salish Sea’s southern resident orcas, whose diet is Chinook salmon, were listed as endangered and today are down to a count of just 75 whales.

Over 20 years, federal judges have declared five consecutive biological opinions on how the Columbia-Snake hydropower system should be operated in order to protect steelhead and salmon **illegal and inadequate**. Taxpayers and electricity ratepayers, meanwhile, have spent at least \$17 billion dollars on fish recovery. Yet these species continue to decline.

The Great Old Broads for Wilderness and our partners are speaking up against the demise of these critically endangered species and supporting restoration of free-flow and a natural ecosystem on the Lower Snake.

### Salmon, Steelhead, and Orcas

- Wild Snake River salmon populations, primarily chinook, have been reduced from a once annual return of 5–8 million adults to less than 12,000 in 2019.
- Dam and reservoir passage kills 50% of migrating Snake River juvenile salmon. Of those juveniles that survive all eight dams and reach the Columbia’s lowest stretches, delayed mortality, the result of accrued stresses and harms, kills an additional 30–40%. Adult salmon returning to natal streams are killed by the thousands due to a lack of a free-flowing river and lethally warm water temperatures (exacerbated by global warming).
- As indicated by the Fish Passage Center, breaching the Lower Snake dams in combination with improved spill for juvenile fish passage at the 4 lower Columbia River dams could lead to a fourfold increase in Snake River salmon and steelhead numbers.



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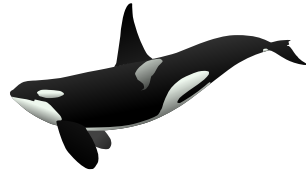
## Energy and Freight Transportation

- The Lower Snake River dams provide only 4% of the region's power.
- An abundance of renewable wind, solar, and natural gas thermal energy has reconfigured west coast power markets, so that these sources can cost-effectively replace Lower Snake hydropower.
- All Lower Snake dam-produced power is surplus and not needed by the Bonneville Power Administration to meet contracted customer needs. For surplus energy, the spot market price has declined to one-third its former level.
- Freight transport on the Lower Snake has been in decline for 20 years. Barges no longer carry paper, pulp, logs, lumber, petroleum, or agricultural products. The waterway has been abandoned in favor of truck and rail. Concurrently, costs of maintaining commercial navigation on the Lower Snake continues to rise.

## Benefits of Dam Removal and a Restored, Resilient Lower Snake River:

- Enables protection of endangered wild salmon and steelhead facing extinction.
- Saves American taxpayer and Northwest energy consumer dollars.
- Recovers and reinvigorates 15,000 acres of prime riverine habitat and agricultural land.
- Creates thousands of jobs regionally with further development of wind and solar infrastructure.
- Helps sustain and support endangered Southern Resident Orcas.
- Helps ensure we meet Treaty obligations to Native American Tribes in the Columbia-Snake Basin.

**Summary:** For decades, eight lower Snake and Columbia river dams and reservoirs have hampered, harmed, and killed — indeed, rendered threatened and endangered — four anadromous fish species. The lack of Snake River chinook salmon, a primary food source for the Salish Seas' southern resident orcas, has concurrently brought these orcas to the brink of extinction. Scientists state that removal of the four old, costly, and no longer needed lower Snake dams is the surest, quickest means of enabling species' recoveries. Over 5000 miles of rivers and streams, Pacific Northwest indigenous and non-indigenous lifestyles, and local economies are being negatively affected by the ongoing declines and potential extinctions of wild Snake River salmon, steelhead, and Salish Sea southern resident orcas.



**TAKE ACTION!** Contact your governor and congressional representatives and ask them to support restoration of free flow on the Lower Snake River. Please share this information widely.

Learn more at [www.greatoldbroads.org/dont-dam-salmon/](http://www.greatoldbroads.org/dont-dam-salmon/)

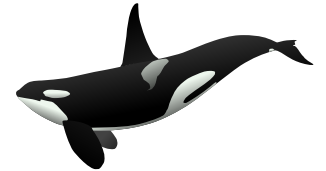
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