



Forest Facts

OREGON COHO SALMON

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Oregon's Coho Salmon

Coastal Coho Salmon, also known as silver salmon, have been the cause of much concern for Oregon conservationists during the last decade. Since 1996 wildlife experts have been experiencing apprehension about the diminishing numbers of salmon found in Oregon lakes and streams. Many years of fishing, human population growth, and land development have contributed to the large decline in the number of coho.

Coho thrive in streams with cool water, plenty of gravel in which to lay eggs, and calm pools with an abundance of nooks, crannies, and wood where young coho can find shelter and food. A variety of organizations and landowners are working together to bring coho back to the streams and rivers where they once were plentiful; their efforts often include projects to improve coho habitat.

Contributing Causes to Coho Decline

There are several factors that have contributed to the decline of salmon and trout populations over the last several years. Among other things, causes are

generally attributed to dams, salvage logging in streams, stream cleaning (thought to actually improve fish passage at the time), logging without leaving trees in riparian zones, railroad logging, legacy road building, equipment in streamside areas, and draining wetlands.

In addition, poor ocean conditions have reduced the number of coho returning to spawn in coastal streams.

The Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds

The Oregon Plan, launched in 1996 at the direction of former Governor Kitzhaber, seeks to restore salmon runs, improve water quality and achieve healthy watersheds and strong communities throughout the state. The plan relies on voluntary actions to achieve its goals.

Helping fish provides other benefits as well. Coho habitat restoration projects help landowners by reducing erosion, stabilizing streambanks, and improving land productivity and livestock management.

Many organizations provide assistance and funding for restoration projects. The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board administers a grant program using Oregon Lottery funds to support a large number of these projects.

Partnerships are Key

Under the Oregon Plan, the Oregon Department of Forestry works closely with other agencies, communities, landowners and watershed councils. Oregon has completed thousands of restoration projects in coastal watersheds, including placement of wood in streams to increase habitat complexity, streamside tree planting, and removal of impassable culverts to improve access to aquatic habitat. The

Oregon Forest Resources Institute, Oregon Forest Industries Council, Associated Oregon Loggers, oSU Extension Service, and private forest landowners and operators are all partners in the development and implementation of Oregon Plan activities.

For information about the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds and work on coastal coho issues, contact OWEB in Salem at (503) 986-0178 or www.oregon.gov/OWEB , or visit www.oregon.gov/OPSW.