

Netboy, Anthony, *The Salmon: Their Fight for Survival*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1974 [© 1973]
(Reviewed by Charles Bosse)

This book covers salmon and salmon habitat throughout the world. One section, however, focuses specifically on the Willamette River, and two other sections discuss the coastal streams of Oregon and the Columbia, both of which help to understand the habitat and diversity and challenges for salmon and fish in general. The chapter on the Willamette itself covers the history of sewage in the Willamette and relates it directly to the welfare of the fish, especially the salmon, which live or migrate through parts of the river. The book is pretty graphic in its description of pollution in the Willamette, but it also does a good job of explaining how extensive cleanup and solutions to migration problems have made the river cleaner and more livable for fish. In addition, the discussion of pollution from early paper mills provides a good parallel for some of modern industry, where a few large polluters put out much of the problem waste of an area. The book talks a lot about waste treatment making the river have higher DO levels and stay less disgusting, and the forward motion of restocking and fishery programs, but it balances by mentioning people who have swum in the river and died of meningitis.

The chapter on the Willamette also provides a picture of the habitat provided by the Willamette from the settlement of the valley to the date of publication, and an interesting outlook on the future of the river.

Critique

The Salmon: Their Fight for Survival is well organized and relatively easy to find information in, but maintains a narrative style. It is not very scientific, though it talks about biology and evolution of salmon in more general terms early in the book, and discusses the problems caused by a number of pollutants in ecological terms. Also, having been published in the late 1970's, it lacks information about advancements and new problems from the last thirty years, though the book also provides a good perspective for the amount that things have not really changed, and perhaps for the predictability of the problems in the Willamette today.

The real winning point of this book is the manner with which it ties the small picture to larger ones, both biologically speaking, and geographically speaking. The book ties in political motions into what was actually accomplished, as far as allowing fish to survive in the stream and migrate throughout the stream. The book also contains an extensive bibliography, data tables and a glossary, useful for the comparison of the situation of the Willamette to that of other similar rivers throughout the world. Also, the book has excellent pictures of rivers and salmon habitat in the Northwest, in addition to discussion of industry surrounding salmon and the commercial and public motivations for environmental concern.

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