

Willamette steelhead face extinction due to sea lions

By **ANDREW THEEN**
The Oregonian

If California sea lions continue their underwater buffet below Willamette Falls, they could push winter steelhead trout to the brink of extinction, state officials warned Monday.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife highlighted the threat in a population feasibility study. Without federal intervention, they said, there's an 89 percent probability that least one population of the iconic fish species will go extinct in the near future.

"It's pretty dire," Shaun Clements, the agency's senior fish policy adviser said in an interview from a Clackamas County park just down river from the state's largest waterfall, where sea lions have been setting up shop around the time the trout try to make their trek to spawning grounds up river. "If we don't deal with this near-term risk, there might not be fish," he said.

The state's report comes as two Pacific Northwest congressional leaders are trying to give Oregon and Washington broader authority to kill sea lions at Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River. The bill would also apply to the sea lion logjam at Willamette Falls in Oregon City.

But the state's dire warning doesn't reflect the true scope

of the problem, according to the Native Fish Society, a non-profit advocacy group based in Oregon City.

Conrad Gowell, the non-profit's river steward program director, said in a statement that the problems facing steelhead and chinook protected under the Endangered Species Act go far beyond sea lion predation. "River Stewards in the upper Willamette Basins have been calling on fisheries managers to shut down harvest on these ESA-listed fish, reform hatchery practices, restore access to historical habitat, and invest in solutions to the systemic problems of wild fish decline," he said. "Finger pointing at a singular cause is counter-productive to addressing the underlying problems and are just temporary and emergency measures."

For years, lawmakers have pushed for more latitude to intervene at Bonneville and prevent sea lions from snacking on spring Chinook salmon there. But state officials say the threat to steelhead on the Willamette River now poses a much greater risk.

In 2017, just 512 native steelhead made it past Willamette Falls on their journey to spawning grounds on the North and South Santiam, Molalla and Calapooia Rivers. That's the lowest winter steelhead run ever recorded,

according to Clements.

In the early 2000s, the winter steelhead run was close to 15,000.

They believe sea lions have consumed one-quarter of the 2017 steelhead run.

If fewer than 100 fish make it past the falls for four consecutive years, a run will be deemed extinct.

The population study in Oregon incorporated fish counts dating back decades, and projected two scenarios over the next century: One with sea lions remaining on site and one with them gone.

Without sea lions, the risk of extinction was negligible, at just 6 percent. But if the marine mammals continued eating 25 percent of the run, the risk of extinction would rise to 89 percent.

According to Clements' analysis, the Willamette River populations have trended down while the Clackamas River's steelhead run rebounded.

The big difference? Sea lions.

In the past decade, sea lions have increasingly chosen to swim the 128 miles from the mouth of the Columbia River to the falls. Thousands congregate in Astoria for months at a time, but others swim up river for food.

According to an ODFW report, the state started monitoring sea lions at the falls in

1995. Through 2003, the population numbered fewer than one dozen. But the numbers soon ballooned, and in 2010, the state briefly started hazing the animals by shooting non-lethal rounds and other tactics. Today, Clements said, the population is around 40 animals when the sea lions swim up river.

Under the current exemp-

tion carved out under the 1974 Marine Mammal Protection Act, Oregon can legally kill up to 92 animals at Bonneville. In 2016, the states removed and euthanized 59 sea lions at Bonneville, the most in any single year since the program began in 2008 (two additional sea lions were accidentally killed).

Clements said Oregon

recently filed a permit seeking the ability to kill sea lions at the Willamette Falls site for the first time.

The bill introduced by Reps. Jaime Herrera-Beutler, R-Washington, and Kurt Schrader, D-Oregon -- would allow removal of up to 920 sea lions at Willamette Falls or Bonneville.

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LISTINGS

Evening listings
WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY EVENING														SEPTEMBER 6	
A - Charter Astoria/ Seaside - L - Charter Long Beach															
A	L	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30		
2 KATU	2	KATU News at 6 (N)		Jeopardy!	Wheel of Fortune	The Goldbergs	Speechless	Modern Family	Amer. Housewife	Modern Family	The Goldbergs	KATU News (N)	(35) Jimmy Kimmel		
5 KOMO	4	KOMO 4 News (N)		Wheel of Fortune	Jeopardy!	The Goldbergs	Speechless	Modern Family	Amer. Housewife	Modern Family	The Goldbergs	KOMO 4 News (N)	(35) Jimmy Kimmel		
6 KING	5	NBC News (N)	KING 5 News	KING 5 News	Evening	America-Talent	"Live Results Four" (N)	Marlon (N)	Marlon (N)	Game Night "Keep It Unreal" (N)	KING 5 News	(35) Tonight Show			
6 KOIN	6	KOIN Local 6 (N)	Evening News (N)	Extra	Ent. Tonight	Big Brother (N)		Salvation "All In" (N)		Criminal Minds "Green Light"	KOIN 6 News (N)	(35) Colbert			
6 KIRO	7	KIRO 7 News (N)	Evening News (N)	The Insider	Ent. Tonight	Big Brother (N)		Salvation "All In" (N)		Criminal Minds "Green Light"	KIRO News (N)	(35) Colbert			
8 KGW	9	KGW News at 6:00 p.m. (N)		Live at 7 (N)	Inside Edition	America-Talent	"Live Results Four" (N)	Marlon (N)	Marlon (N)	Game Night "Keep It Unreal" (N)	KGW News (N)	(35) Tonight Show			
9 KRCW	3	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Modern Family	Modern Family	Arrow	"Underneath"	Supernatural		News at 10 (N)	Two and a Half	Two and a Half	Met Your Mother		
10 KOPB	10	Journeys in Japan	Business (N)	PBS NewsHour (N)		Nova	"Eclipse Over America"		Roy Orbison: Black & White Night 30		Financial Solutions				
12 KPTV	12	6 O'Clock News (N)		Family Feud	Family Feud	MasterChef "Chopsticks and Pasta" (N)		MasterChef "Pop-Up Restaurant" (N)		10 O'Clock News (N)	News (N)	Raising Hope			
13 KPDX	13	Mike & Molly	Mike & Molly	Family Feud	Family Feud	MasterChef "Chopsticks and Pasta" (N)		MasterChef "Pop-Up Restaurant" (N)		Family Guy	American Dad!	Cleveland Show			
13 KCQP	13	Modern Family	Modern Family	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	MasterChef "Chopsticks and Pasta" (N)		MasterChef "Pop-Up Restaurant" (N)		Q13 News at 10 (N)	Q13 News (N)	The Simpsons			
20 TBS	20	Seinfeld Pt. 1 of 2	Seinfeld Pt. 2 of 2	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Full Frontal	Conan "Comic-Con 2017"				
22 KZJO	22	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	Friends	Friends	Modern Family	Modern Family	Q13 News at 9 (N)		Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Two and a Half	Two and a Half		
29 ESPN	29	(4:00) ITF Tennis U.S. Open (L)				SportsCenter (N)		SportsCenter With Scott Van Pelt (N)		SportsCenter (N)	SportsCenter (N)				
30 ESPN2	30	30 for 30 "Four Falls of Buffalo"				E:60		The Fantasy Show		SportsCenter	Jalen & Jacoby (N)	Mano a Mano	Jalen & Jacoby		
31 NICK	31	The Loud House	Henry Danger	The Thundermans		The Thundermans	NickyRickyDicky	Full House	Full House	Full House	Friends	Friends			
32 DISN	32	Jessie	Bunk'd	K.C. Undercover	K.C. Undercover	Raven's Home	Stuck in Middle	Bizaardvark	Bizaardvark	Liv and Maddie	K.C. Undercover	Bizaardvark	Raven's Home		
34 FAM	34	(5:05) *** Grease ('78) Olivia Newton-John, John Travolta.	(45) *** Forrester	Gump (1994, Comedy/Drama) Sally Field, Gary Sinise, Tom Hanks.											
35 FMC	35	(5:00) The Maze Runner Dylan O'Brien.	(20) *** The Maze Runner (2014, Sci-Fi)	Thomas Brodie-Sangster, Will Poulter, Dylan O'Brien.		(35) FXM Presents		*** Shanghai Knights (2003, Adventure)	Owen Wilson, Donnie Yen, Jackie Chan.						
36 LIFE	36	Grey's A. "Tell Me Sweet Little Lies"	Couples Retreat "Busting Up"	C. Retreat (N)	(50) Women (N)	Couples Retreat "Flight or Fight" (N)		G. Up Supermodel "Mama Bears" (N)	Couples Retreat "Flight or Fight"						
38 ROOT	38	Mariners Access	MarinersPre-game	MLB Baseball Houston Astros at Seattle Mariners Site: Safeco Field - Seattle, Wash. (L)		*** Superman Returns (2006, Action) Parker Posey, Kate Bosworth, Kevin Spacey.		Post-game	Press Pass (N)	MLB Baseball Houston vs Seattle					
39 FS1	39	(4:00) MLB Baseball Kan./Det. (L)	TUF: A New Champion "Fight!" (N)	TUF Talk (N)	MLB Whiparound (L)			UFC Top Ten		TUF: A New Champion "Fight!"	UFC Countdown				
43 SPIKE	43	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops	Cops		
44 COM	44	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	Broad City	The Daily Show (N)	The Daily Show			
45 HIST	45	(5:00) 9/11 State of Emergency	Road to 9/11 "The Bin Ladens (1995-2000)" 2/3			Road to 9/11 "The Days of Terror (2000-2003)" 3/3 (N)					(05) Road "The Bin Ladens (1995-2000)"				
46 A&E	46	Storage Wars	Storage Wars	Wahlburgers	Wahlburgers	Wahlburgers	Wahlburgers	Wahlburgers (N)	Wahlburgers (N)	The Lowe Files (N)	Wahlburgers	(05) Wahlburgers	(35) Wahlburgers		
47 TLC	47	Say Yes-Dress	Say Yes-Dress	NY ER	NY ER	NY ER	NY ER	NY ER	NY ER	NY ER	NY ER	NY ER	NY ER		
48 DISC	48	Misfit Garage	Misfit Garage	Misfit Garage	Misfit Garage	Misfit Garage "Spurred for a Ford" (N)		Misfit Garage "Boom or Bust" (N)		Garage Rehab "Westside Hotrods" (N)	Misfit Garage	"Boom or Bust"			
49 NGE0	49	Alaska Troopers "Asleep at the Wheel"	Bullets Over Boston: The Irish Mob	Tijuana Drug Lords		*** Superman Returns (2006, Action) Parker Posey, Kate Bosworth, Kevin Spacey.		Locked up "Masters of Disguise" (N)		Philly Mob		Battle Los Angeles			
50 TNT	50	(5:00) *** Eagle Eye ('08) Billy Bob Thornton, Michelle Monaghan, Shia LaBeouf.				*** Twister (1996, Action) Bill Paxton, Jami Gertz, Helen Hunt.		*** The Silence of the Lambs ('91) Jodie Foster.							
61 AMC	51	(5:00) *** Seven (1995, Thriller) Brad Pitt, Gwyneth Paltrow, Morgan Freeman.				Law&Order: SVU "Melancholy Pursuit"		Suits "Shame" (N)		The Sinner "Part VI" (N)	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Double Strands"				
62 USA	52	Law & Order: S.V.U. "Annihilated"	Law&Order: SVU "Transgender Bridge"	Worst Cooks in America "Timer's Up"		Worst Cooks "Celebrity: Shabby to Chic"		Worst Cooks in America (N)		Cooks vs. Cons "Spice and Ice" (N)	Cooks vs. Cons "Egg Fight"				
63 FOOD	53	WorstCooks "Eat, Pray, Love"	Property Bros. "Condo to Countryside"	Property Brothers		Buying/ Sell "No Horsing Around" (N)		House Hunters (N)	House Hunters (N)	Listed Sisters (N)					
64 HGTV	54	Property "Not Ready for the Suburbs"	*** Furious 7 (2015, Action) Paul Walker, Jason Statham, Vin Diesel.	CNN Tonight With Don Lemon		Anderson Cooper 360		Snowfall "The Rubicon" (SF) (N)		CNN Tonight With Don Lemon					
65 FX	56	(4:30) Guardians of the Galaxy	CNN Tonight With Don Lemon	Hannity		Anderson Cooper 360		Hannity		Tucker Carlson Tonight					
67 CNN	57	Anderson Cooper 360	Shark Tank	Shark Tank		Adventure Capitalists "Lake/ Mountain"		Adventure Capitalists "Desert"		Paid Program					
68 FNC	58	The Five	Vanderpump Rules	Vanderpump Rules		Vander-JaxBritt "Vander-JaxBritt"		Below Deck		WatchWhat					
61 CNBC	61	Shark Tank	Showfolk	(45) *** A Hole in the Head (1959, Comedy) Eddie Hodges, Eleanor Parker, Frank Sinatra.		*** On a Clear Day You Can See Forever (70) Yves Montand, Barbra Streisand.		Blood Drive		Game Face "Things Get Harry"					
63 BRAV	63	Little Annie Rooney	Cowboy TV	Cowboy Moments	Women's Rodeo	Equestrian Nation	Total Team Roping	Rural Eve. News	Racer's Edge	WesternSport	Cowboy TV	Cowboy Moments	Product Showcase		
64 TCM	64	(5:00) Little Annie Rooney													
65 SYFY	65	*** Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare ('91) Lisa Zane, Robert Englund.													
182 RFD	182	Cowboy TV	Cowboy Moments	Women's Rodeo	Equestrian Nation	Total Team Roping	Rural Eve. News	Racer's Edge	WesternSport	Cowboy TV	Cowboy Moments	Product Showcase			

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