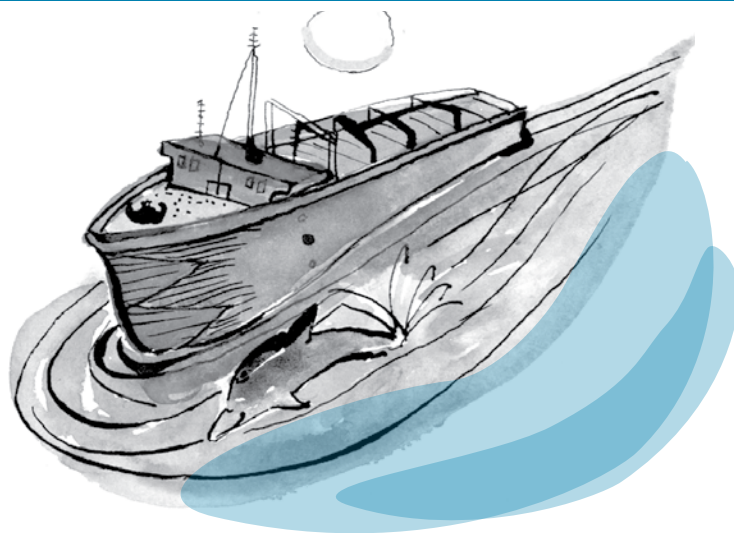




Fishing for a Living

Fishing for a living in Puget Sound has been a way of life for thousands of years. The Native Americans took much of their food from the sea. When white people came to the Pacific Northwest, they also fished for food and for profit as well. Today many people continue to make their living harvesting seafood from Puget Sound. They trap crabs, dig clams and oysters, and catch fish. Many people also use the waters of Puget Sound to grow clams, oysters, and salmon in hatcheries.



A Fisherman's Viewpoint

Although harvesting sealife has always been hard work, it has never been more difficult than now. The once abundant Puget Sound marine life has been depleted by overharvesting, pollution, and habitat destruction. Wild salmon populations have decreased dramatically. Recently, wild Chinook salmon were placed on the Endangered Species List by the United States government. Other species such as rockfish and lingcod are showing signs of decline and may become endangered. Many shellfish-growing areas have been closed to harvesting because of contamination problems.

The people who depend on Puget Sound for harvests of fish and shellfish say it is getting hard to make a living. Every year they pay high expenses for boats, crew, licenses, and fuel, but their catch is often small.

Sport fishermen also say that the catch is scarce. They also pay for licenses, but their other costs are not as those of great as the commercial fishermen.

Treaties made long ago with Native Americans entitle them to half of the salmon resource. They are also concerned about the decline of salmon in the Pacific Northwest. Sometimes there is conflict between sport, commercial, and tribal fishermen as each group believes strongly in their right to fish for salmon.

There are many harvest regulations for both sport and commercial fishermen. These rules limit where, when, what, and how much they may catch. Sometimes salmon harvest is closed altogether. Salmon are also affected by problems on land such as dams, timber harvest, and land development.

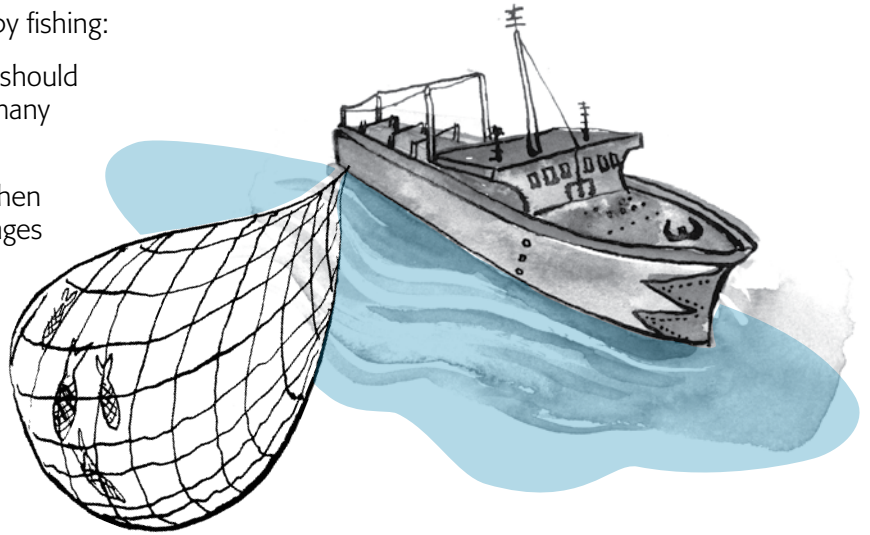




Fishermen Can Contribute to Puget Sound's Problems

Here are some problems that may be created by fishing:

- Not everyone agrees about how much salmon should be caught. It is hard to predict accurately how many salmon are available for harvest each year.
- Salmon hatcheries may not be a good thing. When they grow and release many salmon, it encourages heavy harvesting which damages wild fish populations.
- Fishermen, like all of us, live on land. They produce garbage and sewage, drive cars and boats, and create pollutants that affect the Sound.



How Can Fishermen Help Puget Sound?

Here are some things fishermen can do to help Puget Sound:

- Some people believe that stopping all harvest of salmon, other fish, and shellfish would help the populations rebuild. This seems to have worked when we have stopped salmon harvest in some areas. But what will you and fishermen do while they wait for salmon and other fish populations to recover?
- Fishermen know the waters and creatures of Puget Sound very well. By sharing your knowledge and working cooperatively with scientists, you can help find solutions to the decrease in marine life.
- Fishermen can help elect officials who will work to protect Puget Sound.
- Fishermen must be sure to obey regulations about dumping sewage and garbage from boats, spilling oil or gas, and overharvesting sealife.



Changes and Tradeoffs

How do you think these solutions might help improve Puget Sound?

What are the tradeoffs for these solutions?



SEATTLE AQUARIUM

