

# DIPNETTER

## NEWSLETTER

### Comment on sea lions

*How you can weigh in on the government's decision on what to do with problem sea lions.*

**Page 2**

### The Biggest Gainer

*Sea lion C265's explosive weight gain and its toll on dwindling salmon runs.*

**Page 3**

### Salmon Marketing

*Meet CRITFC's newest employee, Les Brown, director of the salmon marketing effort.*

**Page 3**

### The Dipnetter

*What do you want in a CRITFC publication geared specifically to tribal fishers?*

**Page 4**

## SEA LION RECOMMENDATION COMMENT PERIOD OPEN

Leaders of the Yakama, Umatilla, Warm Springs, and Nez Perce tribes expressed strong support for a federal recommendation to authorize limited lethal removal of California sea lions whose impact on endangered Columbia River salmon has reached crisis levels.



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service, in a draft Environmental Assessment released on January 18, recommended approval of a three-state application seeking lethal removal authority. Tribal, state and federal fisheries managers have documented an exploding population of California Sea Lions coast-wide and a growing sub-population that has become adept at exploiting endangered salmon seeking to enter the fish ladder at Bonneville Dam.

“Today NOAA took an important step toward giving fisheries managers a critically needed tool to protect the salmon,” said Fidelia Andy, Chair of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. “Lack of action toward the real and immediate threat of sea lion predation is unacceptable. We don’t want another Ballard Locks-like debacle. We refuse to allow Columbia



*The Dipnetter is a publication of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, the fishery management agency overseen by the Yakama, Umatilla, Warm Springs, and Nez Perce tribes.*

CRITFC  
729 NE Oregon St.  
Suite 200  
Portland, OR 97232  
(503) 238-0667  
[www.critfc.org](http://www.critfc.org)

# DIPNETTER

River Spring Chinook to be driven into extinction as the Lake Washington steelhead were in the 1990's.”

“Salmon has always been the lifeblood to our tribal culture,” said Andy. “Our tribes have, and always will be here to fight for their survival. We remain committed to working with the state and federal management agencies, scientists, and NGO’s to adequately address the significant negative impact that sea lions are having on migrating salmon at Bonneville Dam.”

## Growing numbers

In the early 1970's, California sea lion population numbered only around 50,000 animals. NOAA now estimates the sea lions population of over 300,000 animals and approaching carrying capacity.

Sea lion-caused salmon mortalities have grown exponentially since 2001 based upon visible observations at Bonneville dam by US Army Corps of Engineers biologists. State and tribal managers estimate the lower Columbia River sea lion population to be approaching 2,000 animals.

## Online resources

For more information on sea lion predation at Bonneville Dam visit the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Commission’s website at [www.critfc.org](http://www.critfc.org). This site provides a fact sheet, links to video of predation, hazing activity, as well as photos of sea lion damage done to migrating salmon.

## Let your voice be heard



*Tribal members have the opportunity to share their thoughts on the proposed action by submitting comments to NOAA by February 19th. Comments can be submitted on-line at NOAA’s website:*

*[www.nwr.noaa.gov/Marine-Mammals/Seals-and-Sea-Lions/Sec-120-Draft-EA.cfm](http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Marine-Mammals/Seals-and-Sea-Lions/Sec-120-Draft-EA.cfm), via e-mail:*

*[sea.lion.comments@noaa.gov](mailto:sea.lion.comments@noaa.gov), or by contacting Garth Griffin at 503-231-2005. The agency plans to release its final decision on the issue in late March.*

## Your representatives at CRITFC

The commissioners of CRITFC are made up of elected or tribal council-appointed individuals. Contact your representative on the commission with concerns, suggestions, and comments regarding salmon and the salmon fishery.

### Yakama commissioners • (509) 865-5121

Fidelia Andy (*CRITFC chair*), Richard George, Sam Jim, Sr., Athena Sanchez-Yallup

### Umatilla commissioners • (541) 276-3165

Rapheal Bill, Kathryn Brigham (*CRITFC vice chair*), Ken Hall, Jay Minthorn, Mitchell L. Pond

### Warm Springs commissioners • (541) 553-3257

Leslie Bill, Harold Blackwolf, Sr., Bruce Jim, Ryan Smith (*CRITFC treasurer*)

### Nez Perce commissioners • (208) 843-2253

Brooklyn D. Baptiste, Gary E. Greene (*CRITFC secretary*), Larry M. Greene, Virgil Holt, Sr., Joanna F. Marek, Rebecca A. Miles, Joel T. Moffett, John E. Strombeck, Herbert Jackson, Joseph Y. Oatman, Wilfred A. Scott, Julia Davis-Wheeler



*A tribal fisher exercising his treaty fishing rights on the Klickitat River.*

# DIPNETTER

## Quality handling efforts continue to pay off

Fishers' efforts to increase the value of the catch are paying off with the best prices from buyers in years. Buyers continue to comment about the quality of fish, which is a result of the way fish are harvested, iced, and handled. The HACCP training provided by CRITFC has helped by providing information to the tribal fishers about the processes associated with ensuring food safety and quality handling. "Once buyers became aware that tribal fishers have been involved in HACCP training it made the choice of coming to the river to buy fish at a good price an easier one," said Les Brown, CRITFC's

Field Marketing Specialist. "Buyer's, processors and distributors are all involved in the HACCP process as part of their businesses and know that top quality fish adds value and demand from their customers, which in turn keeps them coming back to the river."

Tribal Fisher Handbooks, which highlight quality handling techniques, will be available at the spring fishers meeting or by calling Les Brown at 1-888-289-1855.

*Les Brown has been recently hired as CRITFC's new field marketing specialist. Les has over 25 years of sales and marketing experience and over 9 years experience promoting tribally caught salmon.*

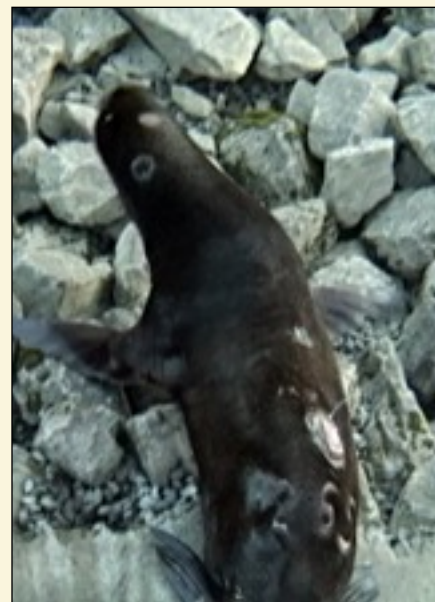


### C265: Indicator of a Problem

Seen annually at Bonneville since 2002, sea lion C265's explosive growth is fed by his ingenuity and plenty of Columbia River salmon.

► In March 2007, C265 was a relatively trim and fit 556 lbs. He was captured at Bonneville and released in Astoria—a trip he has experienced many times since his first back in 2002.

▲ When he was captured at Bonneville again at the end of May, his weight had exploded to over 1,000 lbs.—doubling in weight in only 72 days!



# DIPNETTER



## Dipnetter: The Tribal Fishers' Newsletter

**The Dipnetter** is a test publication of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission designed to get information pertinent to the needs and interests of tribal salmon fishers. This is the initial issue, and we are planning on sending out new episodes before major fisheries and other important events. Look for future issues to include fishery information, selling tips, boat maintenance help, and much more. We welcome your comments

and suggestions on how to make this a useful publication geared specifically to your needs as a tribal fisher. Contact us at (503) 238-0667 or at [croj@critfc.org](mailto:croj@critfc.org) and let us know what we could add or improve. CRITFC is also in the process of creating an email newsletter. If you would like to receive an electronic newsletter, send your name and email to [croj@critfc.org](mailto:croj@critfc.org).

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*Tribal fishers drawing in their nets from the Bonneville pool.*



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729 NE Oregon, Suite 200

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