

Deborah Harrison

As a citizen of Washington state I urge you to take every action you can to save the wild salmon runs, especially the chinook salmon, upon which the Southern Resident Orcas depend upon for survival. They are starving to death, as evidenced by the death of the babies these past few years. The mothers are not nourished well enough to keep their babies alive. It is up to us humans to do what we can to save them. And the first thing would be to take down those dams and restore the fish runs.

Because SROs' diet consists of at least 80% chinook salmon, having an ample chinook salmon population is key for their survival, as well as that of many other species, and indeed, the entire PNW ecosystem. The Columbia/Snake chinook population is crashing this year, with fewer than 50,000 expected to return, about 1/10 of the 10 year average. Accordingly, I urge you to exercise Washington's authority under Clean Water Act section 401 to help ensure the Columbia Basin's federal dam operators take action to reduce rising water temperatures, protect salmon, and help save the Southern Resident orcas from extinction.

When river temperatures exceed 70F for several days at a time as happens with increasing frequency due to climate change salmon have difficulty migrating upstream and begin succumbing to stress and disease.

According to the Fish Passage Center, an independent government agency, "under a climate change scenario, the long-recognized and largely unaddressed problem of high water temperatures in the [Columbia and Snake rivers] becomes an ever-increasing threat to the survival of salmon."

It would be a disgrace if we allowed these beautiful animals to become extinct. You have the power to turn this around. Please move forward aggressively. The science is already here. It is time to act.