

Zoetic Research

The aquaculture industry in Washington state has proven to be a total failure from the perspective of ecosystem management and conservation of native species. The latest proposal to use "native" steelhead means that genetically-modified "domesticated" individuals will, with 100% certainty, escape at some point in time. These inevitable escapees will contaminate native endangered runs of unique steelhead strains and threaten their survival. Steelhead have already been suffering from a reduction in genetic diversity and this will only accelerate the problem.

While the threat of domesticated strains of native fish escaping and damaging endangered runs of steelhead is a new threat, the old problems of high fecal bacteria pollution and low-oxygen benthic zones remains. Worse still, aquaculture fish pens are proven reservoirs of deadly disease and parasites that quickly jump to wild fry, smolt, and adults that pass too close to the pens.

Apart from the glaring biological problems, players such as Cooke Aquaculture have proven to be bad faith actors. They have a long history of failing to perform basic maintenance and preventing escapee. They should be prohibited from participating in any aquaculture activities in Washington state.