

## **Our Story [salmonprotectiondevice.com](http://salmonprotectiondevice.com)**

I knew Steve Cramer since the early 1990's. Steve was working on salmon research as Cramer Fish Sciences. Through the years Steve and I had talked about the idea of Salmon Protection Devices (SPD) to prevent the sea lions from attacking the salmon as they enter the fish ladders at Bonneville Dam. Unfortunately, Steve passed away of cancer in the Spring of 2023. In January, that year I talked with Steve and he said he wasn't going to live much longer and he asked me to make the SPD a reality. I told him I'd do everything I could, but my resources were limited.

Then in December 2023 I saw ODFW funding available for such projects and with Steve in mind went ahead and applied. The application process asked how this idea will be promoted. I post it on twitter every day and have 300 followers who repost it. Also on the nextdoor app. In the process I contacted the Army Corp of Engineers. They liked the idea and rushed the Section 408 and Joint application. This application normally takes a year, but they finished in one month. We also received the fish ladder drawings from the Corp.

If we receive the funding in early April, we'll move heaven and earth to get the first of five SPD's installed in December 2024 barely a year and a half after Steve Cramer's dying request. It will include a memorial name plate in his honor.

I Salmon fished on Sauv  Island many times between January and March each year. Our group of about 25 would walk back a few miles to our favorite spot. Salmon are much faster than Sea Lions and can normally out run them, but not on the end of a fish line. Almost every other catch a sea lion would take the Salmon off our line and eat it. We ended up with a salmon head and that's all.

As part of the follow-up protocol, we're asking for a three-year moratorium on Salmon Fishing below the Bonneville Dam on both banks. This, along with the SPD will remove easy access to food for the Sea Lions in the river. This should be adequate time to train the Sea Lions to return to the ocean where they belong and give the Salmon population time to recover, free from sea lions and fishermen.

As noted in the table below, the increase in Sea Lions correlates almost one-to-one with the declining fish counts at Bonneville dam. It's a well-known fact that the Sea Lions wait at the fish

ladders on the downstream side of the Dam for Salmon going upstream to enter the ladder. One Sea Lion eats its fill and another Sea Lion takes its place in a round robin style.

See Figures one and two for virtual proof that the major issue with the decline in salmon population on the Columbia is the Sea Lions, not the dams. The two lines are almost parallel, indicating correlation of the two variables.

<https://www.columbian.com/news/2015/oct/21/sea-lions-now-a-year-round-issue-in-columbia/>



The problem is a bit different on the Green Peter Dam in Western Oregon, where water turbidity has been killing the fish. A judge ordered draining the reservoir on the assumption that that would allow it to refill with clean water from upstream. However, that made turbidity much worse as dirt sloughed off the newly exposed banks and the water level went down. This was done on the advice of a radical environmental group that stands to profit from removal of the dam after the fish are “protected.” Their idea of “protection” has killed orders-of-magnitude more fish than would get the rest of us thrown in jail probably for life.

They made no effort to consult with Dam operators or local residents before making their extreme draw-down, and dam removal proposal. When I visited the dam with my sister to take some pictures, I spoke with the Dam operator. He said that he emphatically did not agree with the judge’s ruling and that the protocol had resulted in far more fish being killed by additional turbidity. He recommended dredging behind the dam to save both the dam and the fish. This will get the fish ladder working again. That fish ladder has not been operational since the late 1980’s because of silt buildup behind the dam.

On the way home, I spoke with a member of the university team who had prepared the scientific assessment for the court. After a brief discussion with myself and my sister he agreed that dredging behind the dam would be the best solution.

[This article was edited by Oliver Woods, Head-of-School at [www.hymarkacademy.us](http://www.hymarkacademy.us), an online classical school for grades 7-12. Keys to the Classics: A History of the Decline and Fall of Western Civilization]

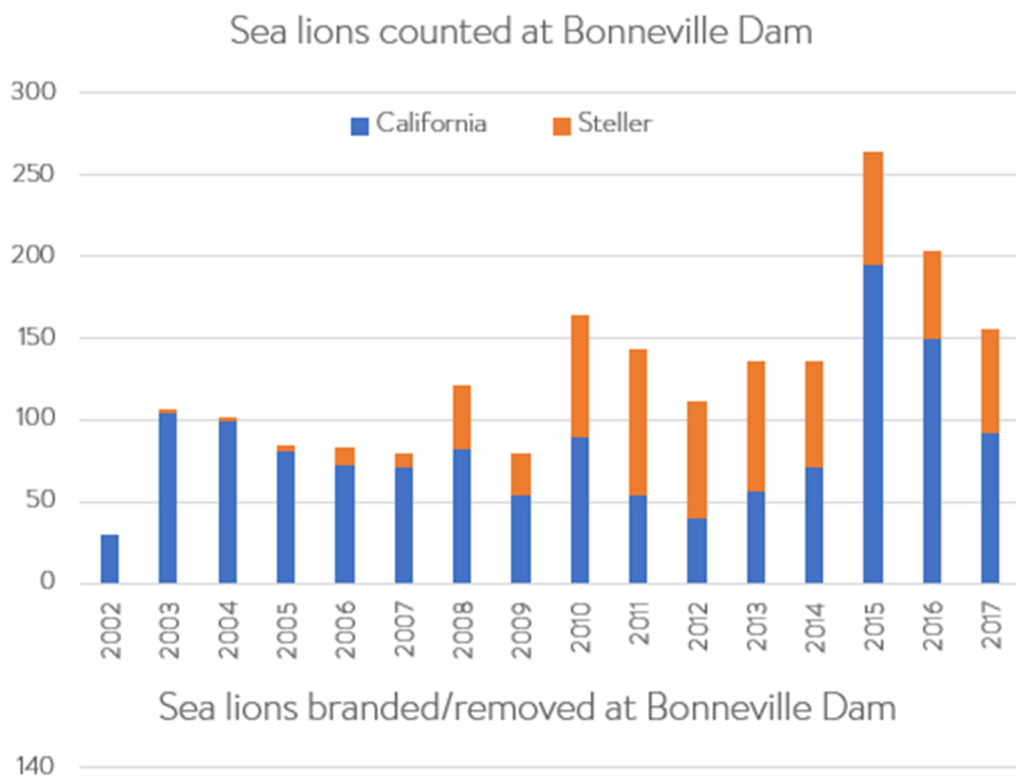
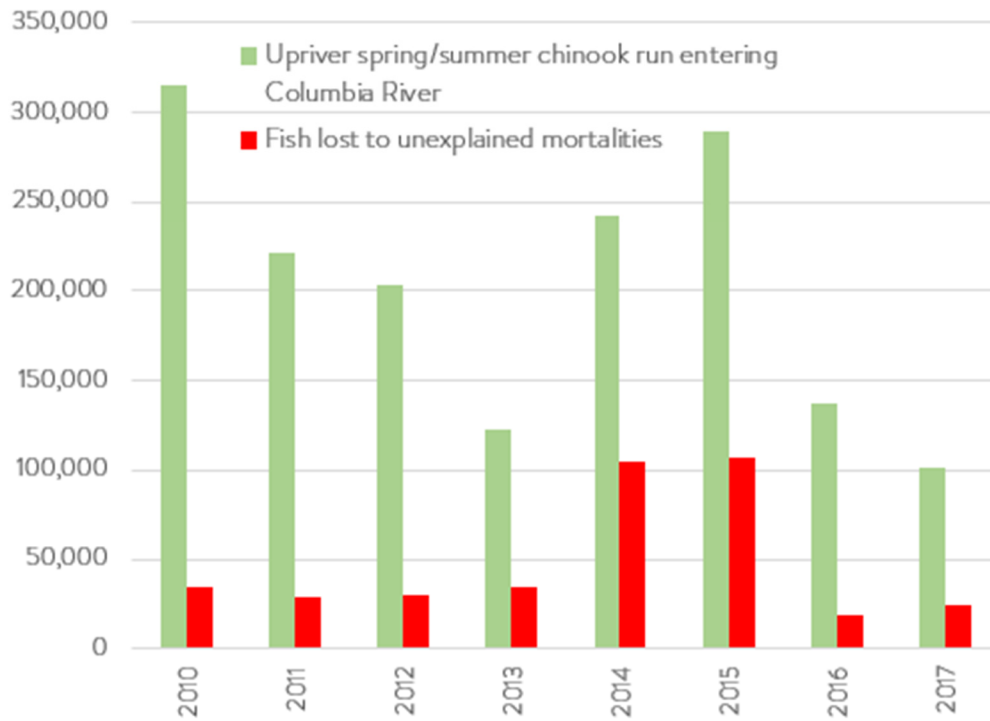


Figure 1. Sea Lion Increase in Columbia River

### Spring chinook run and unknown mortality



### Salmonids eaten by sea lions at Bonneville Dam

Figure two salmon counts decrease almost mirrors the Sea Lion Increase, making it a direct correlation.