



The International Game Fish Association

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Secretary Gina M. Raimondo
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo,

Salmon and steelhead in the Columbia Basin are at a fraction of their historical populations and are at risk of extinction. The Snake River has historically produced half of the summer steelhead and spring/summer Chinook within the Columbia Basin. A movement toward more natural flow within the Snake River represents the best opportunity for recovery of wild populations of salmon and steelhead within the basin and upstream into Idaho where habitat is prime for a return to healthy, harvestable population abundances.

The IGFA would like to express our support for the removal of the four lower Snake River dams to as a critical step in the conservation and recovery of these imperiled species. With dwindling populations and consistently low Smolt-to-Adult Ratios (SARs), despite a number of fishery restrictions and habitat investments, more must be done before the point of no return is reached for these iconic species.

Although hatchery releases within the Snake River are at an all time high, natural production within the basin is low. Natural production is highly preferred as a wild salmon or steelhead produces more offspring, has lower mortality, and is more resilient. The most healthy populations of salmon and steelhead, such as in Bristol Bay, Alaska, are wild and naturally produced. Hatcheries are not the answer for the future of salmon and steelhead.

Given the dire outlook of these species in the Columbia Basin and the new infrastructure investments available to solve shipping, water delivery, and other challenges, now is the time to take the next step to actively protect and restore salmon and steelhead for the next generation of Americans.

Sincerely,

Jason Schratwieser
IGFA President

The International Game Fish Association is a nonprofit organization committed to the conservation of game fish and the promotion of responsible, ethical angling practices through science, education, rule making, record keeping and recognition of outstanding accomplishments in the field of angling.

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