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Montana

May 9, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Kendall Farley

SUBJECT: Sea Lion tour briefing

BACKGROUND:

Presenter: Council Member Norman

Summary: On April 20, 2017 Council Member Norman and staff convened a site tour of the sea lion predation operation facilities at Bonneville Dam. The tour was hosted by staff from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, The Army Corps of Engineers, and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Tour attendees included Council Members Karier, Booth and Lorenzen, as well as staff from Washington Governor Inslee's office, Congressman Kurt Schrader's office, Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici's office, CRITFC, BPA, and Council state and central staff.

The purpose of the tour was to learn about management of this species at the dam including extensive observation, monitoring and documentation work, to see trapping facilities, and to witness predation events in action.

Relevance: The 2014 Fish and Wildlife Program's list of emerging priorities includes priority #3: Preserve program effectiveness by supporting: (1) expanded management of predators; (2) mapping and determining hotspots for toxic contaminants; and (3) aggressively addressing non-native and invasive species.



BONNEVILLE DAM SEA LION TOUR RECAP

April 20, 2017

Participation:

Council members and staff

Governor's offices

Congressional offices

BPA

CRITFC

USACE

ODFW

WDFW

Sea Lion Predation on Columbia River Salmon

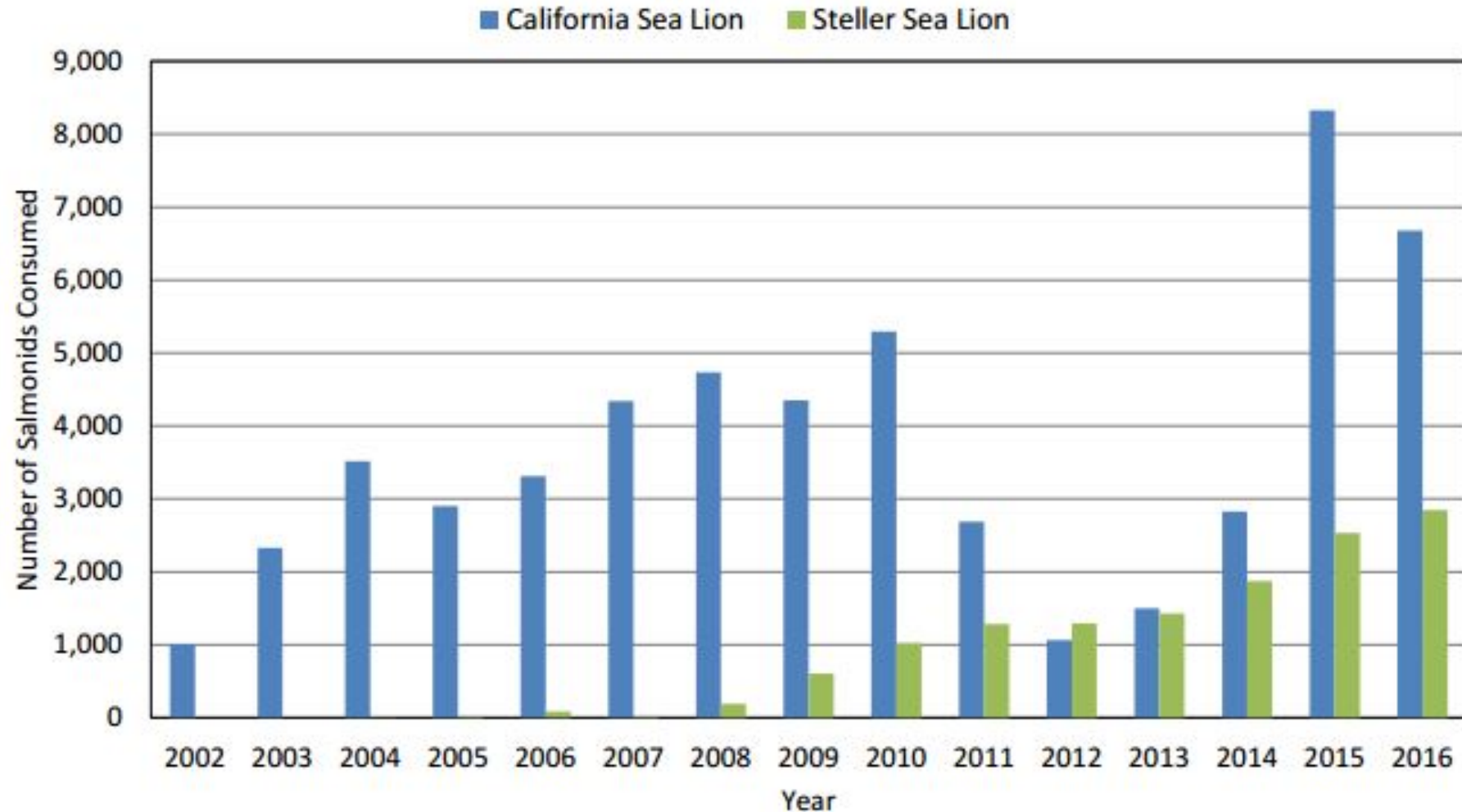
Populations are booming

- California Sea Lion (CSL) population has grown to a current level of ~ 300,000 rebounding from a low of ~ 10,000 in the 1950s
 - CSL population is at carrying capacity
- CSL have fed at the mouth of the Columbia in the past, only recently began moving further up river.
 - Sea Lion numbers entering the Columbia River have increased to 3,000 in recent years
 - Focus on salmon as target prey increases as sea lions move upstream
 - 32 populations of ESA listed spring Chinook harmed by CSL
 - NOAA research has shown 18-45% of upriver spring Chinook lost before reaching Bonneville Dam



Sea lion predation on the rise at Bonneville Dam

- Larger species than California Sea Lion
- Consume White Sturgeon in addition to salmon and steelhead



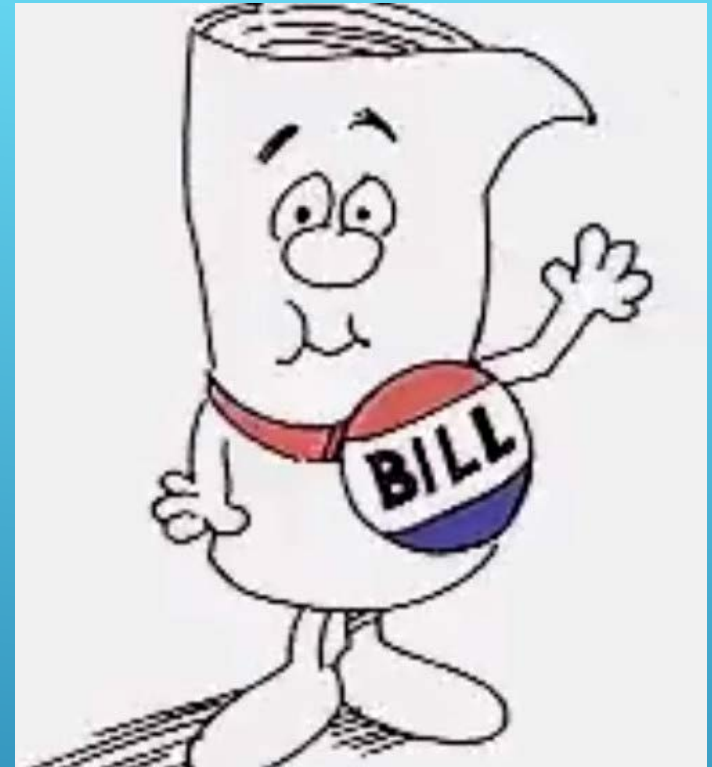
Marine Mammal Protection Act Section 120

- Amended in the 1990's in response to significant pinniped predation at Ballard Locks in Seattle
 - Not in time to save Lake WA steelhead
 - Permit applications to lethally remove individual predatory sea lions
- 2006: NW states apply for permits to lethally remove individual sea lions immediately below Bonneville Dam
 - Years of unsuccessful hazing, relocating CSL
 - Received Section 120 permit in 2008
 - Limited authorization, predation observation data needed
- Since 2008: states have trapped and removed 166 CSL who were documented "repeat offenders"
 - 15 CSL transported to zoos and aquariums
 - Care Committee ensures procedures are humane



The Endangered Salmon and Fisheries Predation Prevention Act H.R. 2083

- Bipartisan bill introduced by Congresswoman Herrera-Beutler (R-WA) and Congressman Kurt Schrader (D-OR) on April 8, 2017
- Previous bill introduced in 2011 received committee hearings but no further legislative action
 - State agency officials and CR Tribes testified in favor of former bill
- Would grant state and tribal managers more flexibility in addressing predatory sea lions in the Columbia River that are threatening ESA listed fish and sturgeon by:
 - Allow managers to address problems at locations other than Bonneville Dam
 - Change criteria for removal to include animals that migrate over 112 miles upriver and into tributaries.
 - Observation of repeat presence and salmon consumption not required
 - Would expand annual removal limits
 - Only healthy non-listed sea lion populations can be removed





QUESTIONS?