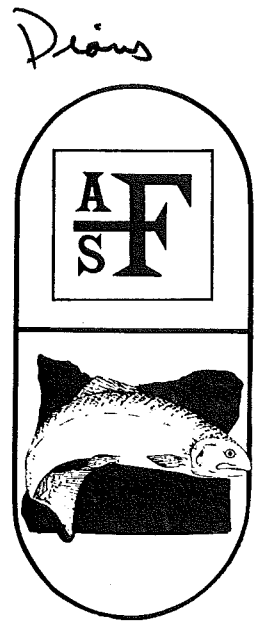


American Fisheries Society

Oregon Chapter
P.O. Box 722
Corvallis, Oregon 97339



8 April 1996

OREGON FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION
C/O OREGON DEPT FISH & WILDLIFE
PO BOX 59
PORTLAND OR 97207

RECEIVED

APR 12 1996

AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY


Dear Commissioners:

The Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) is sending the enclosed Resolution concerning the introduction of nonnative species in Oregon to you for your consideration. The resolution was passed by unanimous vote of the membership at our most recent annual meeting.

In a sweeping review of nonindigenous (nonnative) species issues, the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) likened the movement of plants and animals beyond their natural range to a game of biological roulette. When we have been lucky, the nonnative species have proven beneficial. Unfortunately, OTA also found that the consequences of losing in this game of roulette have greatly affected native species and the ecosystems in which they evolved. OTA also found that many State and Federal statutes, policies, and programs are not keeping pace with the spread of nonnative species and emphasized the need for improved awareness and accountability. Therefore, the AFS Oregon Chapter commends the State of Oregon for recognizing the risks and initiating steps to address them. Through your insight, Oregon can again prove why it is considered a leader in the management of its natural resources.

The enclosed resolution offers, in addition to our endorsement of the State's forward thinking, a professional perspective on how Oregon might proceed in its consideration of nonnative species introductions -- adherence to the approved protocol of the American Fisheries Society. The AFS Oregon Chapter is vitally interested in the protection of Oregon's biological heritage and would welcome any further questions you may have.

Sincerely,


Kirk Schroeder, President
for the Executive Committee

Enclosure

C - Governor John Kitzhaber
Rudy Rosen, OR Dept Fish & Wildlife
Paul Brouha, Executive Director, AFS

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING
INTRODUCTIONS OF AQUATIC SPECIES IN OREGON WATERS**

OREGON CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

WHEREAS the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has fishery management responsibility in the waters of the State of Oregon, and

WHEREAS ODFW has acknowledged a "major concern" with the introduction of nonnative species into the State of Oregon, and

WHEREAS it is the policy of the State of Oregon (State Law ORS 496.012) to prevent the serious depletion of any indigenous (native) species, and

WHEREAS the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) has directed ODFW to draft administrative rules designed to protect natives species, and

WHEREAS the effects of introduced species are second only to habitat degradation as a factor cited in the endangerment and extinction of North American fishes, and

WHEREAS the majority of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) listings for threatened or endangered fish species in the State of Oregon, and throughout the United States, have cited the detrimental impacts or continuing threats of nonnative species introduced for purposes of sport fishing (e.g., bait, forage, game) as a factor in the determination to list, and

WHEREAS the published position of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) on introduced aquatic species (copy appended) provides a professionally endorsed research, public review, and interjurisdictional consultation protocol (hereafter, AFS protocol).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Oregon Chapter of the AFS commend the Commission and ODFW for publicly recognizing and acting upon a major threat to the biological integrity of Oregon's aquatic ecosystems, and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Oregon Chapter of the AFS recommend that ODFW abide by standards for all species introductions that are at least as rigorous as the administrative rules that are adopted by the Commission for application to the public, and finally

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT for introductions of aquatic species, the Oregon Chapter of the AFS recommends that ODFW adheres to the AFS protocol in its entirety.

Approved unanimously by the membership.
1996 Annual Meeting, Sunriver, Oregon
February 22, 1996

Sources

The second, third and fourth WHEREAS clauses are quoted from, or directly based on, information presented in the "Backgrounder" flyer entitled "Protecting the integrity of Oregon's Native Species" that was provided by ODFW at a public informational meeting.

The final three WHEREAS clauses reflect information abstracted from:

Lassuy, R.R. 1995. Introduced species as a factor in extinction and endangerment of native fish species. Pages 391-396 in H.L. Schramm and R.G. Piper. Uses and effects of cultured fishes in aquatic ecosystems. AFS Symposium Number 15.

Miller, R.R., J.D. Williams, and J.E. Williams. 1989. Extinctions of North American fishes during the last century. *Fishes* 14(6):22-38.

U.S. Congressional Office of Technology Assessment. 1993. Harmful nonindigenous species in the United States. OTA-F-565.

The one-page summary of AFS Protocol is from:

Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. 1994. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the intentional introductions policy review. Report to Congress. 53 p.

For a complete copy of AFS Protocol, see:

Kohler, C.C., and W.R. Courtenay, Jr. 1986. American Fisheries Society position on introductions of aquatic species. *Fisheries* 11(2):34-38.

POSITION OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY ON INTRODUCED AQUATIC SPECIES*

1. Encourage fish importers, farmers, dealers, and hobbyists to prevent and discourage the accidental or purposeful introduction of aquatic species into their local ecosystems.
2. Urge that no city, county, state, province, or federal agency introduce, or allow to be introduced, any species into any waters within its jurisdiction which might contaminate any waters outside its jurisdiction without official sanction of the exposed jurisdiction.
3. Urge that only ornamental aquarium fish dealers be permitted to import such fishes for sale or distribution to hobbyists. The "dealer" would be defined as a firm or person whose income derives from live ornamental aquarium fishes.
4. Urge that the importation of fishes for purposes of research not involving introduction into a natural ecosystem, or for display in public aquaria by individuals or organizations, be made under agreement with responsible government agencies. Such importers will be subject to investigatory procedures currently existing and/or to be developed, and species so imported shall be kept under condition preventing escape or accidental introduction. Aquarium hobbyists should be encouraged to import rare ornamental fishes through such importers. No fishes shall be released into any natural ecosystem upon termination of research or display.
5. Urge that all species considered for release be prohibited and considered undesirable for any purposes of introduction into any ecosystem unless that species shall have been evaluated upon the following basis and found to be desirable:
 - (a) Rationale: Reasons for seeking an import should be clearly stated and demonstrated. It should be clearly noted what qualities are sought that would make the import more desirable than native forms.
 - (b) Search: Within the qualifications set forth under "Rationale," a search of possible contenders should be made, with a list prepared of those that appear most likely to succeed, and the favorable and unfavorable aspects of each species noted.
 - (c) Preliminary Assessment of the Impact: This should go beyond the area of rationale to consider impact on target aquatic ecosystems, general effect on game and food fishes or waterfowl, on aquatic plants and public health. The published information on the species should be reviewed and the species should be studied in preliminary fashion in its biotope.
 - (d) Publicity and Review: The subject should be entirely open and expert advice should be sought. It is at this point that thoroughness is in order. No importation is so urgent that it should not be subject to careful evaluation.
 - (e) Experimental Research: If a prospective import passes the first four steps, a research program should be initiated by an appropriate agency or organization to test the import in confined waters (experimental ponds, etc.).
 - (f) Evaluation or Recommendation: Again publicity is in order and complete reports should be circulated among interested scientists and presented for publication.
 - (g) Introduction: With favorable evaluation, the release should be effected and monitored, with results published or circulated.

Because animals do not respect political boundaries, it would seem that an international, national, and regional agency should be involved at the start and have the veto power at the end. Under this procedure there is no doubt that fewer introductions would be accomplished, but quality and not quantity is desired and many mistakes might be avoided.

** For further details see Kohler & Courtenay (1986).*