

# The Seattle Times

Letter to the Editor

January 27, 2010

## Salmon runs

The premise in “Getting past the dams” is simply wrong [Opinion, Jan. 24]. Salmon and steelhead trout survival is far more complex than mandating spills at dams.

According to the latest NOAA Science Center research, fish survivals since 2006 have varied dramatically even though the spill program has remained static. Nor can NOAA correlate spill with increased adult returns.

As correctly noted, there are many elements affecting fish throughout their complex life-cycle including ocean conditions, which can swamp human actions taken at the dams. These fish live for four to five years, travel thousands of miles, face predators everywhere, face an often hostile ocean environment, and run a gauntlet of nets and hooks to spawn and sustain their genetic legacy.

But, spilling water does not affect survival of fish passing through turbines and doesn't change water temperatures because it neither warms nor cools water being spilled. Spill does interfere with barging that benefits fish when water temperatures are warm and predation is high and has kept returning adult fish from being able to use the fish ladders.

The Fish Passage Center information you relied on in your editorial does not provide a complete or accurate picture of factors affecting healthy salmon-runs.

— Terry Flores, executive director Northwest RiverPartners, Portland