



A Common Fate: Endangered Salmon And The People Of The Pacific Northwest

Joseph Cone

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Though life on earth is the history of dynamic interactions between living things and their surroundings, certain powerful groups would have us believe that nature exists only for our convenience. One consequence of such thinking is the apparent fate of the Pacific salmon--a key resource and preeminent symbol of America's wildlife--which is today threatened with extinction.

Drawing on abundant data from natural science, Pacific coast culture, and a long association with key individuals on all sides of the issue, Joseph Cone's *A Common Fate* employs a clear narrative voice to tell the human and natural history of an environmental crisis in its final chapter.

As inevitable as the November rains, countless millions of wild salmon returned from the ocean to spawn in the streams of their birth. In the wake of an orgy of dam building and habitat destruction, the salmon's majestic abundance has been reduced to a fleeting shadow. *Neglect* is the word the author uses to describe more recent losses, "by exactly the ones--state and federal fish managers--who should have acted."

To signal a new awareness that action is needed, scientists charged with restocking the Columbia River Basin are receiving significant support, while ordinary citizens are beginning to recognize the relationship between cheap power and the absences of chinook, coho, sockeye, and other species from the coasts of Oregon and Washington and from Idaho's Snake River.

As desperate as the salmon's future appears, the book is not an elegy for a lost resource. Instead, it bears witness to hope. In addition to concrete plans for the wild salmon's renewal, the reader will hear a growing chorus of informed individuals of *differing* values and beliefs who recognize that our fate is inextricably bound to the salmon's; for many it is a new understanding.



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