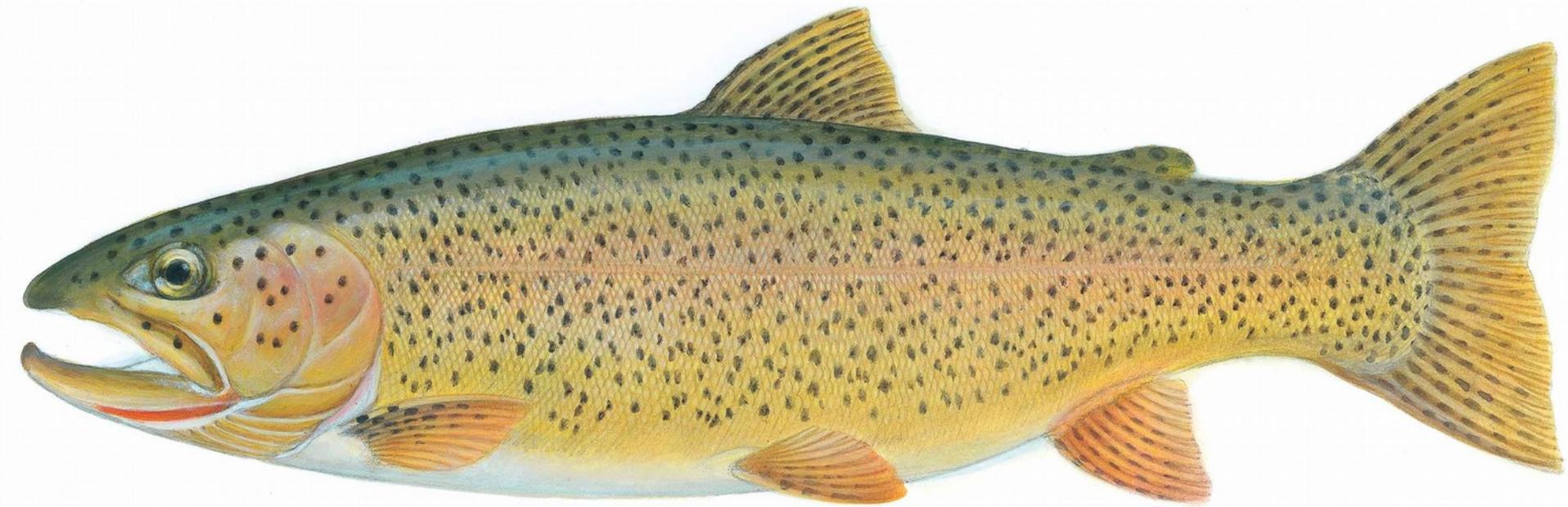




**SEA RUN CUTTHROAT  
TO ENJOY AND PROTECT**

**ONCORHYNCHUS CLARKI CLARKI**



**COASTAL CUTTHROAT TROUT**

# TO ENJOY



# FIND EM TO FISH EM

## HABITAT

### CONVENTIONAL WISDOM:

In Puget Sound “ SRC’s are *typically* found along the shorelines in water 3-10 feet in relative proximity to their natal streams”

Tides create currents in which the trout assume holding and feeding stations as in streams and rivers, using structure for cover and the current to deliver food

# PSHAW!

- SRC seldom range more than 10 miles from their natal stream.
- SRCs rarely cross bodies of water more than 1-2 miles in width
- SRCs are found within 50' from shore, and you have to see bottom to find them.
- SRC are selective feeders, so patterns must closely resemble natural food.

# KEEP AN OPEN MIND

- Scientists have seined sea run cutthroat 35 miles off WA coast along the continental shelf
- Radio tagged SRC in the south sound have traveled more than 50 miles in a matter of days
- We regularly encounter SRC in the middle of major passages
- On a given day, SRC will eat anything that fits in their mouth. If it doesn't fit, they'll chew off a hunk

# TACTICS

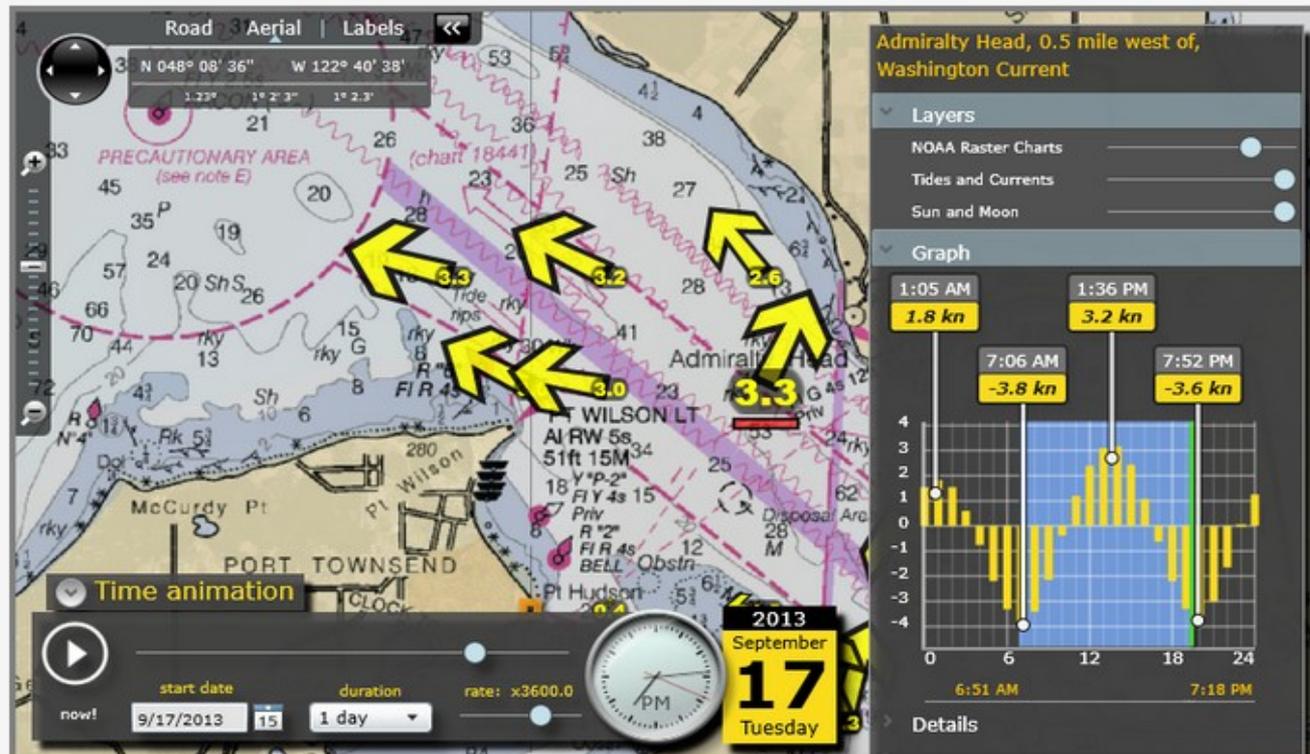
## NO FLOW – NO GO!

- Puget Sound is a river, which changes direction and rate of flow every six hours
- Biggest factor is current speed, then direction
- Tidal exchange is an indicator of current speed
- In the South Sound, I prefer an exchange of around 10'
- Current table is the best tool
- The Estuary Flyfisher by Steve Raymond

# Nautical Charts

Online

Silverlight viewer with animated tides and currents.



Try it online

# BEACH FISHING

- **RODS:** Single hand 5-7 weight 9' to 9 1/2'  
Switch rods 4-7 weight  
Fast action preferred
- **LINES** Integrated shooting heads, i.e.  
intermediate Outbound Short
- **WADERS** Don't get caught short
- **BOOTS** Barnacles and rocks = tough wading
- \*STRIPPING Not absolutely necessary but highly  
BASKETuseful and can save lines from damage

**\*RELEASE TOOL OR NET**

# TERMINAL GEAR

- Use stout tippet. Premium fluorocarbon 2x = 12lb test
- UV knot glue reduces fouling
- Recommend *tinned* saltwater hooks i.e. Gamakatsu SC 15. Size 4 a good choice
- Tube flies: Less harmful, long lasting, high hook-up ratio,
- Find patterns in bibliography

# WHY I USE 12LB TIPPETS



# WHICH BEACH?

- Cutthroat *prefer* rocky, pebbly bottoms with good flow
- Rich habitat is found in and around oyster and clam beds
- Tide height is important for access & backcasts

# BOAT FISHING

## SAFETY FIRST

- Know: Your craft, the conditions, your limits, the area, the rules. WA State boating certification is highly recommended
- PFDs: The best flotation device is the one you ***WILL WEAR***
- \*BEST To have: cell phone VHF, GPS, 1<sup>st</sup> aid

# WATERCRAFT

## IDEAL BOAT

- 12' to 17'
- Enough HP to plane and cruise easily
- Wider beam is better
- *Lowish* freeboard
- Bow anchor system
- Back up motor – Electric can be very useful
- Line management provision: stripping deck, basket, barrel or just a wet towel
- Sonar and a good GPS\*

# BOAT FISHING TECHNIQUES

- Fast sinking lines; full sink OK, but 30'- 40' integrated heads work best from anchor
- Methods include drifting shorelines and anchoring along channels or seams
- Cast to quarter current using irregular twitches and strips to mimic live bait
- Experiment with line bellies to govern speed and depth
- Strip set
- Anchor at top of run, drift by pulling anchor

# HANDLING

## Always use:

- Knotless nets
- Barbless hooks of light wire
- Strong tippetts
- Hook remover tool

## Avoid:

- SS hooks
- Over handling (needless time for photos)
- Over playing
- Dragging fish on beach
- Removing from water

# DE-HOOKING AIDS



# KEEP FISH IN WATER



# FACE INTO CURRENT



# EXPOSE HOOK



**REVIVE IF NEEDED**



# UNTOUCHED & RELEASED



# AND PROTECT



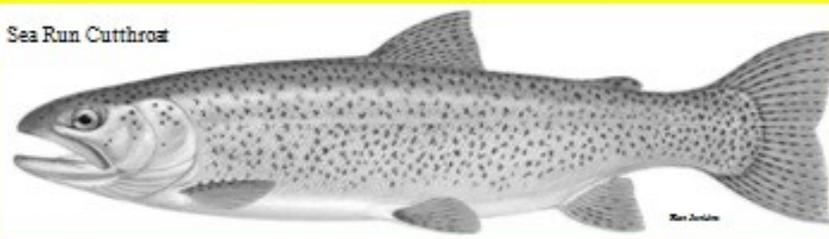
**A typical day of fishing for coastal cutthroat on the Puget Sound begins pre-launch at the boat ramp, where the first concern is making sure that there is a current copy of the coastal cutthroat conservation sign on site**



# ATTENTION ANGLERS

COASTAL CUTTHROAT TROUT CATCH & RELEASE REGULATIONS  
APPLY IN ALL WASHINGTON MARINE AREAS.

Sea Run Cutthroat



*Individual fish may vary in color and appearance at different locations and by season. When positive identification is in doubt, always release your catch.*

- Anglers are reminded that barbless hooks are required when fishing Puget Sound waters.
- Single barbless hooks, knotless nets and keeping fish to be released in the water while unhooking increase survival of all species.

By complying with regulations and ethics anglers will improve quality fishing opportunities.

The "Fishing in Washington" pamphlet published by WDFW addresses regulations and availability of fishing opportunities. Emergency changes may also apply.

**POACHERS HOTLINE!** (877) 933-9847 or contact Washington State Patrol. Don't confront violators; record vehicle or boat registration numbers, photograph violation if possible without jeopardizing self.

**For more information contact:**  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Fish Program  
600 Capitol Way North  
Olympia, WA 98501-1091  
(360) 902-2700 or the WDFW office nearest you

# History of Sea-run Cutthroat Mgmt in Puget Sound by WDFW

1955; 15 fish not to exceed 7.5lbs plus 1 fish

1973; 6 lbs plus 1 fish, not to exceed 12 fish



1980; Two fish over 10''

1986; Two fish over 12''

1987; Two fish over 14''

1999; C&R

1955 1960 1965 1970 1975 1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005

# BACK FROM THE BRINK

- By the early 1980s, the abundant stocks of coastal cutthroat that we had been accustomed to for generations had crashed. Hatchery supplementation programs were attempted to maintain a sport fishery, but like many programs dependant on artificial production, success was limited, and the costs too high.

# SOUND FAMILIAR?

- Wild coastal cutthroat populations have been subjected to: ***overharvest***, habitat degradation and a mixing of the gene pool with hatchery genes. In other words, they have suffered from the same damages that have decimated all of our anadromous stocks. Yet, cutthroat populations are recovering, while most other prized salmonids are not.
- Why?

# FIRST STEPS

- In 1999, legislation establishing a selective fishery allowing catch-and-release of cutthroat was passed. Angler success and fledgling stocking studies show that coastal cutthroat have rebounded amazingly well throughout the sound. This recovery is a direct result of implementing methods that minimize handling mortality and eliminate harvest.

# CURRENT PROTECTIONS FALL SHORT

- Freshwater regulations allow harvest of coastal cutthroat in natal streams
- Poaching persists in saltwater
- Vigilance is required to prevent reinstating harvest
- Funding for studies is scarce, while further evidence is crucial for extending protection

# Regional Coastal Cutthroat Trout Stock Status

- Status Review of Coastal Cutthroat Trout from Washington, Oregon, and California (NMFS 1999).
- Six ESU (Puget Sound, Olympic Peninsula, Southwestern Washington/Columbia River, upper Willamette River, Oregon Coast, and Southern Oregon/California Coasts).
- Puget Sound ESU includes all streams in Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.
- NMFS determined that Puget Sound ESU is not in danger of extinction (decision was based on relatively few data).
- *2000 Washington State, Salmon and Steelhead Inventory (SaSI), coastal cutthroat (WDFW 2000)*. Insufficient data were available to assess stock status for 32 of the 40 WA stocks.



# SPORT, STATE AND TRIBAL GROUPS COOPERATE FOR LOCAL STUDY

- Volunteer anglers fished Skookum Creek and Squaxin Passage for cutthroat stock in 2006/08
- WDFW staff collected the fish for transfer to a mobile lab.
- Squaxin Tribe provided a mother ship, a biologist and transponders.
- Transponders were surgically implanted, trout were monitored for recovery, and returned to areas they were caught
- Survival rate was well over 90%





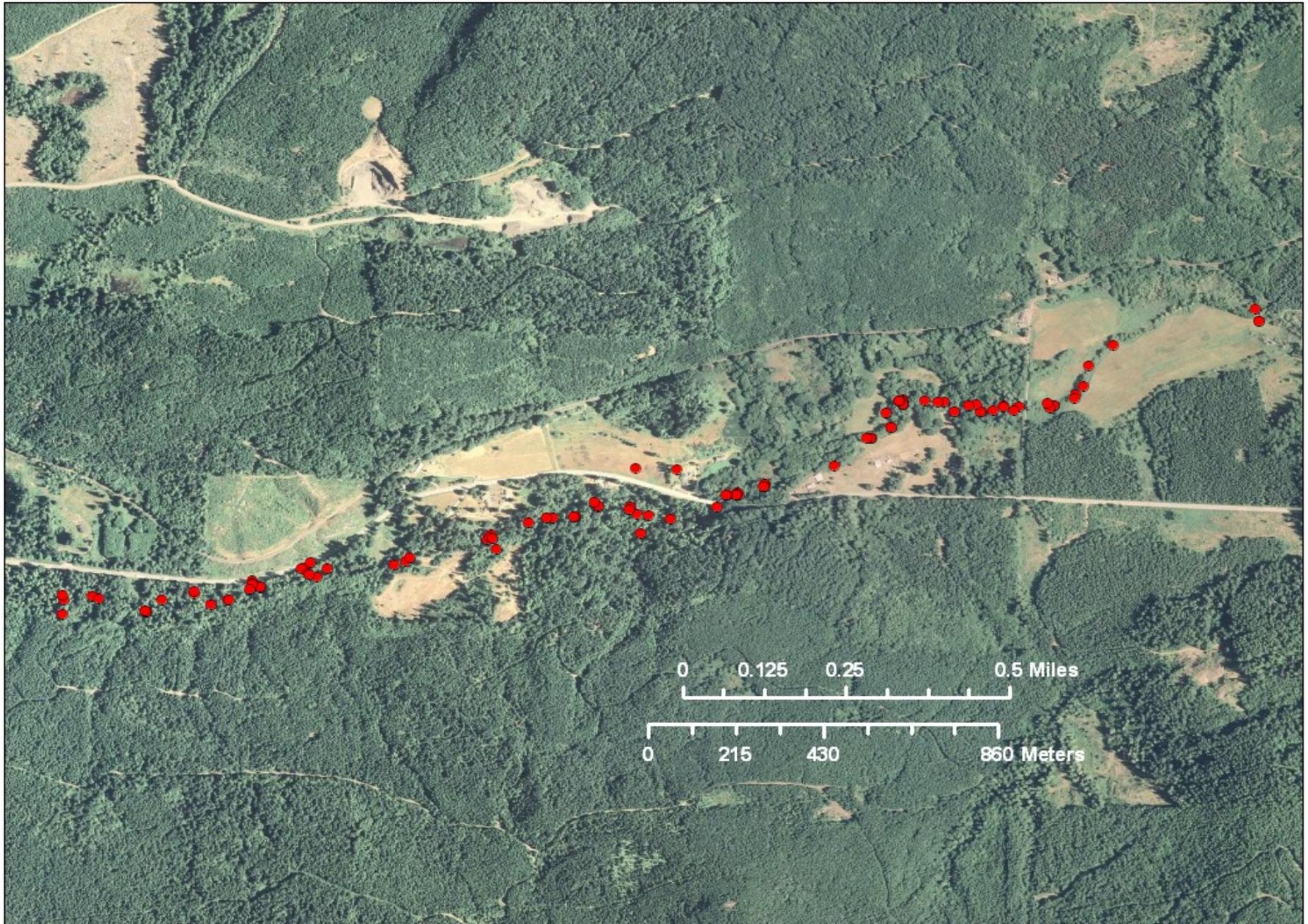


# ADDITIONAL DATA NEEDED

- The radio transponders provided data on fish migration habits – Sea Run Cutthroat proved surprisingly mobile
- More volunteers, cooperating with state and tribal scientists studied reproductive patterns

# Local Coastal Cutthroat Trout Stock Assessment

- 2006 WDFW staff began surveying South Puget Sound streams thought to support spawning coastal cutthroat.
- Objective was/is to develop a set of index surveys (similar to coho and chum stock assessment) to detect changes in relative abundance over time.
- Quickly identified Skookum Creek as supporting a “high density” spawning population of anadromous coastal cutthroat trout.
- Other index streams include Kennedy Creek (2009), Little Skookum Creek (2008), Swift Creek (2010) and Perry Creek (2010).



# FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

- Reproduction for a broad geographic area may be concentrated in certain, critical streams
- Identification can be accomplished economically, in terms of labor and funds
- Cooperative efforts are optimal, since fish from hatchery stocks, native spawning streams may cross private, county, state and tribal boundaries

# IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

- It is paramount to produce quality data and evidence to influence change
- An example is identification of primary spawning streams for protection
- Origin of harvested stock, seasonal migration of species and life stage habits are cornerstone elements for convincing managers of critical factors affecting survival and productivity of stocks

# WORK LOCALY

- Organize groups of like interest, fishing clubs, conservation groups, recreational equipment and service providers
- Meet and build bridges with others who share the resource, including commercial and tribal harvesters, state and federal wildlife agencies, wholesale and retail seafood outlets
- While we believe we put the best interests of anadromous fish ahead of other groups, we don't own the exclusive right to them. We must share the resource, and cooperate for recovery

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## FLY FISHING FOR SEA RUN CUTTHROAT

Chester Allen

## FLY FISHING FOR SEA RUN CUTHROAT TROUT IN SOUTH PUGET SOUND

Mel Hurd

## FLY FISHING COASTAL CUTTHROAT TROUT

Les Johnson

## THE ESTUARY FLY FISHER

Steve Raymond