

Science Time

Program Content for September 23, 2015

Read the article “Killing cormorants to save salmon” on page B1 of the Sunday, September 20, 2015 edition of The Seattle Times.

Pre-reading and Vocabulary: Define each term and then use it in a sentence to demonstrate your understanding.

1. juvenile
2. culling
3. guano
4. dredge
5. endangered

Comprehension Questions

1. What are government agents hunting for around East Sand Island, Columbia River estuary?
2. What methods have government agents used against their target?
3. Why are government agents hunting double-crested cormorants?
4. How many cormorants could be killed and how long will the culling program last?
5. Besides cormorants, what other species of birds live near East Sand Island?
6. How and why was East Sand Island constructed?
7. Why have cormorant populations grown so large in recent years?
8. What do cormorants eat?
9. Besides cormorants, what other animals have been targeted to help protect salmon and steelhead populations?
10. What human created problems continue to cause problems for salmon survival in the Columbia and Snake River?
11. Which human problem do critics of the culling program feel is the most harmful to salmon populations?

Prompts and Extensions

1. **Watch:** This [news stories](#) provides a synopsis of the cormorant culling plan.
2. **Write/Discuss:** Within the article the author describes a moment when she approached government agents in the process of shooting cormorants to ask them a question. Instead of answering the question the agents shook their head no and moved their boat to a different location. Why do you think the agents refused to talk with the reporter?
3. **Create:** Using the organisms in this article create a food web representing the East Sand Island estuary. While it is suggested you use the organisms listed in the article you may also have to complete outside research to construct a complete food web.
4. **Debate:** Split your class into the various stakeholders that have an interest in salmon and steelhead populations. Have them complete outside research in preparation for a debate about whether or not the culling program should continue. Stakeholders could include; local residents, Audubon society members, biologists, politicians, dam operators/workers, federal Wildlife Services agents, and more.

Science Time is posted to the Web on Wednesdays. Please share this NIE Science Time program with other teachers. To sign-up for the electronic edition for your class, please register

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