

Patterns of Nature-cultures: The Spatial Redistribution of Pacific Salmon

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If one reads a newspaper story about salmon in Idaho or California or Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula, it will almost invariably convey the following message: "Salmon are threatened species in need of urgent protection." Yet if one reads an article about salmon in Alaska or Hokkaido, Japan, one will most often see headlines boasting of record fish runs.

In and of themselves, both kinds of stories tell important truths about salmon in specific areas - about the construction of dams and the impact of poaching and illegal trade, or the successful protection of watersheds and the use of improved hatchery technology. Yet put together, these stories come to tell an even more critical story about the /overall/ /redistribution/ of salmon in the North Pacific over the course of the past 200 years - a story about how fish bodies and financial wealth have come to migrate differently both within watersheds and across oceans.

Tracing such changes, this paper makes visible the patterned ways in which processes such as frontier encounters and the displacement of indigenous peoples, the rise of the global canned salmon trade, the development of new hatchery technologies, and the territorialization of ocean waters have impacted the people and fish of the North Pacific in varied and geographically uneven ways, ultimately producing a radically new map of fish populations.

Although salmon management successes and failures are still typically understood as relatively "local" phenomena, this paper demonstrates that increases and decreases of salmon populations are also profoundly intertwined with pan-North Pacific socio-political changes.