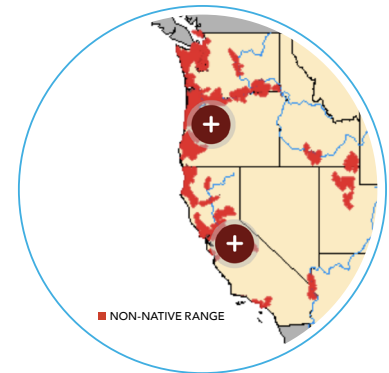


A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a large American Shad fish. The fish is silver with a yellowish-green tint on its head and back. Below the fish, a black ruler is visible, showing measurements in inches and centimeters. The ruler has the text 'Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission' and 'www.fish.com' printed on it.

American Shad is outcompeting Salmon in the Columbia River

Photo courtesy of FWC Fish & Wildlife Research Institute

Since their introduction, shad populations returning to the Columbia River have continued to grow, peaking at a count of over seven million shad at Bonneville Dam in 2019. Meanwhile, salmon populations have continued to struggle, with an average annual count of just over one million over the past five years.



THE SPREAD OF SHAD

In California, the Sacramento and American rivers are heavily populated. In Oregon and Washington, we see them in the Columbia, Willamette and Snake river, as well as Lake Washington, and Skagit Bay.

Top map: Shows the range of non-native shad. Courtesy of a 2021 US Geological Survey map.

American shad is a non-native, invasive species. It was introduced and planted in the Sacramento, Columbia, and Willamette Rivers repeatedly, starting in 1871 by the US Fish Commission. Today, this species causes harm to federally listed runs of threatened and endangered salmon, for example, by competing with salmon smolts for food and crowding salmon out of fish ladders during migration.

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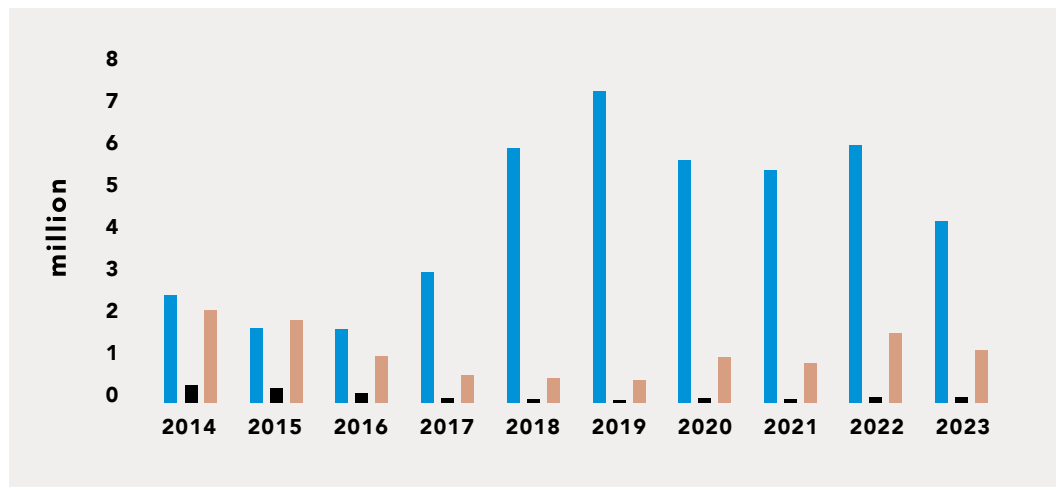
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

During the shad migration, tribal salmon fishermen on the Columbia River report that for every chinook or steelhead they catch, they also catch hundreds of pounds of American shad.

Something is severely out of order. But little action has been taken regarding American shad in terms of research, development of harvest programs, or development of market channels.

Annual Counts at Bonneville Dam

- Shad ●
- Steelhead ●
- Salmon ●



CONVENING AROUND A SOLUTION

A group of tribal fishers and fishery researchers and managers have been meeting with Ecotrust to explore how to begin a conversation with tribal, federal, and state agencies about managing the overpopulation of shad.

We seek to remove American shad from the Columbia River and to understand the severity with which shad are interfering with the recovery of threatened or endangered runs of salmon across the Northwest.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

This spring, Ecotrust will gather with partners to collaboratively plan for actions and activities to address the overabundance of American shad in the Columbia River. Interested in collaborating with us? [Fill out this partnership survey](#) or reach out to us at fisheries@ecotrust.org.

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Ecotrust's mission is to inspire fresh thinking that creates economic opportunity, social equity, and environmental well-being. Our staff of 60+ scientists, storytellers, subject matter experts, and emerging leaders work in partnership from California to Alaska in pursuit of radical, practical change. Join us. ecotrust.org