



Pacific Northwest Region's Fish Viewing Glasses

Viewing fish in their natural habitats is problematic for both children and adults alike. Water surface reflections impair clear viewing, making interpretation efforts or self-education ineffective and difficult. Children have an especially difficult time imagining fish in their natural habitats without seeing them. To remedy the problem, polarized glasses were designed, developed and distributed on a trial basis at the two "salmon festivals" to assess their utility and success. A total of 1200 glasses were produced. The glasses proved extremely effective aiding children's understanding of fish and their habitats. Simply, children loved the glasses and were excited by the fact they could see fish. Within a few hours, all glasses were distributed, followed by demand for more.

Fish viewing glasses are not a toy. Rather, they are an interpretive tool that motivates and excites children (and adults) to understand fish and aquatic ecosystems. The glasses received full endorsement of Regional Interpretation leader, Jim Pollock, and Public Affairs specialist Sandy Berger. Pacific Northwest Fisheries intends to develop future partnerships to cooperatively fund fish viewing glasses.

Aquatic education/interpretation and recreational fishing receive high priority within the Pacific Northwest Fisheries Regional program. Each year, the Region hosts a variety of activities attracting over 50,000 children and adults to improve their understanding of aquatic ecosystems. The Wenatchee River "Return of the Salmon Festival" and the Oxbow Park Salmon Festival are specific events that receive full Regional and Forest support. The key element in both of these events is the viewing of naturally reproducing salmon and interpretation of aquatic ecosystems.

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