

Why are Pacific lamprey populations declining?

Lamprey populations are declining for many of the same reasons as salmon. Habitat destruction, water pollution, forestry practices, and dam passage have made survival very difficult. Since lamprey larvae filter water and mud during the first 2 to 6 years of their life, they are very susceptible to pollutants from urban or agricultural runoff. Urban development, forestry, and agricultural practices have resulted in a loss of wetlands, side channels, and beaver ponds, which the Pacific lamprey ammocoetes prefer. Increases in stream temperature also may reduce the lamprey's food supply.

