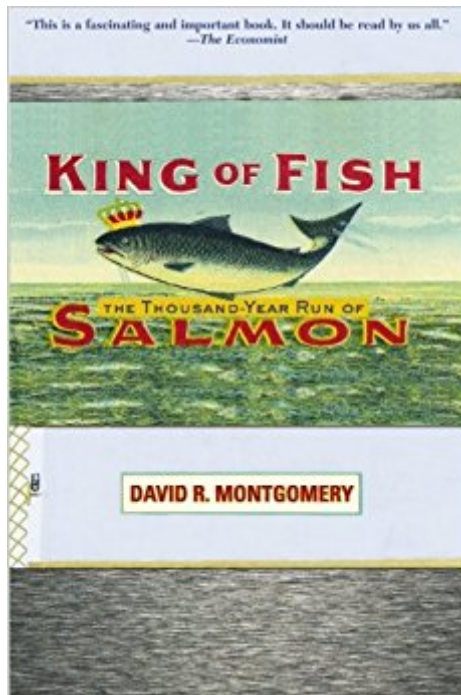


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# King Of Fish: The Thousand-Year Run Of Salmon



## Synopsis

The salmon that symbolize the Pacific Northwest's natural splendor are now threatened with extinction across much of their ancestral range. In studying the natural and human forces that shape the rivers and mountains of that region, geologist David Montgomery has learned to see the evolution and near-extinction of the salmon as a story of changing landscapes. Montgomery shows how a succession of historical experiences -first in the United Kingdom, then in New England, and now in the Pacific Northwest -repeat a disheartening story in which overfishing and sweeping changes to rivers and seas render the world inhospitable to salmon. In *King of Fish*, Montgomery traces the human impacts on salmon over the last thousand years and examines the implications both for salmon recovery efforts and for the more general problem of human impacts on the natural world. What does it say for the long-term prospects of the world's many endangered species if one of the most prosperous regions of the richest country on earth cannot accommodate its icon species? All too aware of the possible bleak outcome for the salmon, *King of Fish* concludes with provocative recommendations for reinventing the ways in which we make environmental decisions about land, water, and fish.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Drawing on a combination of scientific, historical, sociological and political research, Montgomery, a professor of geomorphology at the University of Washington, traces the tragic and steady decline in salmon populations in Europe, New England, Eastern Canada and the Pacific Northwest. Using his detailed analysis of the destruction of native salmon runs at each site, Montgomery demonstrates

that the decline has been caused by the same four actions: polluting rivers in the name of technology, changing the natural environment by damming rivers and clear-cutting forests, overfishing, and ignoring regulations and laws imposed to help salmon populations recover. Montgomery's history of salmon moves from awe inspiring (their ancestors go back some 40 million years) to heartbreaking ("Lonesome Larry was the only sockeye [salmon] that made it back [to Redfish Lake] in 1992"). But when the book's focus changes from fish to the likes of Queen Anne, King George, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, who were all unsuccessful in stopping the salmon's slide toward extinction, Montgomery's tone becomes decidedly bleaker. Though the nature of the salmon's struggle to survive against these recurring threats to its life and habitat causes the book to be somewhat repetitive, Montgomery saves his best writing for the last chapter, where he courageously outlines the scientific evidence surrounding the salmon's plight and presents a no-nonsense plan for the fish's tenuous hope for survival. Photos and maps not seen by PW. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"A sorry, scary future for salmon and their ecosystem if this author's warnings go unheeded." -- Kirkus  
"Montgomery's history of salmon moves from awe inspiring... to heartbreaking." -- Publishers Weekly  
"This is a fascinating and important book. It should be read by us all." -- The Economist  
"[An] engaging new study." -- OnEarth

Great, accessible history and analysis of British and North American human interaction with salmon. In many ways the story is an excellent puzzle piece, connecting various other historical narratives spanning time from the Middle Ages through present with a focus on post 18th century events. The book is not about pointing fingers but rather about understanding the decisions and actions that have led to the current state of salmon fishing and lay out options for the future. While it lagged a bit for me in the middle, it is pretty short and the beginning and end move rather quickly. While not prize winning prose, the author makes a discernible attempt (successfully) to liven up what could otherwise have been a dry timeline of legislative history and interpretation of social factors affecting salmon fishing.

This was a fascinating book on the history of salmon. It is the age old story of history repeating itself. I had no idea that Europe's rivers were full of salmon throughout the centuries until misuse and neglect of the rivers, as well as overfishing, destroyed most of the runs. Same story on the east

and west coast of the United States. Overfishing on the high seas is addressed to some extent. Salmon history in Alaska is still being written, so information is limited in the book, but from what I've seen, we have not yet learned our lesson. Not being of a scientific mind, for me the book got a little tedious towards the end, but still a great book with valuable information.

If you have any interest at all in the preservation of salmon, this book is a must-read. The history of our abuse of this magnificent family of fish is more than scary. Read this and take action!

well written description of why we NW Salmon stocks are deteriorating. Looking through the lens of this book being written in 2003 it is proving to be accurate.

Easy to read. A history book. Gives you a flavor of the debate. Cons: biased. Does not tell you that salmon stocks are resilient, if you give them a chance. Filters the positive. For example, that hatcherys are not all bad, though it's true historically they started out as a way to supplement commercial fisheries. For example, that roughly as many salmon stock (a river by river analysis) surveyed in Alaska are increasing as are declining (about 6% each) while the rest is stable. True, that is Alaska and the book is primarily about the Pacific NW, with digressions about Atlantic salmon and the salmon formerly found in Europe. Prose is well done, conversational. Perhaps a bit of the author's ego can be seen when he talks about his interaction with his beloved dog a lot. But this is not a dry, scientific tome, and most readers are better for it. You can also get hard info on salmon off the web, just by searching the web, but this book packages this info, filters it somewhat to give a weepy, sad conclusion, and is more interesting to read than a dry report. Book has an excellent illustrated family tree of Salmon too, which is worth the price of the book. Recommended as a dreary but not entirely inaccurate portrait of salmon.

Great addition to my Alaska salmon library. Thank you.

An intensely researched book presenting an eye opening history of the decline of one of our most important resources. The author clearly shows how we unknowingly can destroy a valuable food source and what can be done about it.

excellent book. Pretty good review of the history and present of salmon.

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