

TROUBLE AT SEA

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Introduction

Alaska leads the world in salmon hatchery production, and these fish have become part of the lives of livelihoods of many Alaskans. But hatchery production comes at a cost.

Hatchery salmon weaken wild fish genetics through interbreeding and compete with wild salmon for food. There is evidence they are playing a role in reshaping ocean food webs from plankton to whales.

Trouble at Sea is a short science documentary that explores the ecological ripple effects of salmon hatcheries in Alaska and beyond. This project was produced with support from Alaska Public Media, the Food & Environment Reporting Network, the Pulitzer Center, Alaska Center for Excellence in Journalism, Salmon-Net and the

Purpose of the Guide

While salmon are a powerful common denominator in Alaska, salmon management and salmon hatcheries can spark division. This discussion guide is a resource for Alaskans seeking to have conversations about salmon, salmon hatcheries, and our changing ocean resources with the goal of advancing our common understanding of science and of each other's points of view.

Guiding Question

When it comes to salmon hatcheries, what do we want as Alaskans?

How to Use the Discussion Guide

This guide can be used to help foster conversation after individuals have watched *Trouble at Sea*.

Guidelines can help keep conversations productive and respectful but should be tailored to your specific community. Some examples are:

- Be present.
- Listen to understand each other, not to think of a response.
- Honor vulnerability.
- Embrace complexity.

This guide can be used with two people and in groups. Duration is estimated at one to one and a half hours. Adjust it to fit your needs.

The guide assumes that someone will serve as the discussion facilitator. The role of the facilitator is to keep track of time and keep the discussion moving, not to serve as an expert or explainer. A suggested script for the facilitator is in italics.

Facilitator tips: Remember to tailor this guide to your community and your culture. Try to ensure the space feels safe and open. If possible, after the film, move chairs into a circle so participants can see each other. Encourage them to sit by people they don't know as well, if they feel comfortable doing so. Offering light refreshments before or after the conversation may help people feel more at ease. Some of the questions assume that the participants do not know each other well and may not be suitable in your community. If this is an especially contentious issue in your area, remind people that this is not a space for personal attacks.

The group should watch the 13-minute documentary together. The facilitator should make pens and paper available to participants during the screening and ask people to record anything they find striking or memorable in the film. There will be time during the conversation to share these if participants wish.

1. WELCOME (about 5 minutes)

Facilitator welcomes everyone and thanks them for coming. Asks everyone to turn off phones and reviews logistical information (bathrooms, water, etc.)

The facilitator reviews the purpose of the event:

We are here is to have a guided, open conversation about salmon, salmon hatcheries, and our changing ocean resources. The goal is to further our shared understanding of the risks and rewards of salmon hatcheries and to foster dialogue that embraces a diversity of perspectives and the complexities inherent fisheries management.

The facilitator reviews the guiding question:

When it comes to salmon hatcheries, what do we want as Alaskans?

The facilitator asks participants to agree to basic guidelines. The wording of these should be tailored to the community. Some examples include: Engage with respect. Be present. Listen hard. Honor vulnerability. Embrace complexity.

The facilitator asks participants to add any agreements they think are important.

2. CONNECT (about 10 – 20 minutes, depending on group size)

Go around the room and introduce yourself to the group. If you feel comfortable, briefly share what brought you here today.

Now turn to your neighbor, and share a memory—big or small—that captures your connection to salmon or the places they swim through. We have about six minutes, and I'll let you know when it's time to switch. (About 6 minutes, 3 minutes per person. The facilitator should announce the halfway mark.)

Would anyone like to highlight a word or phrase they heard from their partner's story? Or something striking to them? Please remember not to share personal details – this isn't your story to share.

The facilitator thanks participants for sharing.

3. DISCUSS (about 15 – 20 minutes, depends on group size)

Facilitator reviews the guiding question:

When it comes to salmon hatcheries, what do we want as Alaskans?

Facilitator reviews the localized guidelines: Be present. Listen hard. Honor vulnerability. Embrace complexity. Before launching into discussion, the facilitator asks participants to talk to each other, not just to the facilitator. The facilitator lets participants know that it's OK for them to throw out questions and no one needs to raise their hands before they speak. This is meant to be a conversation.

The facilitator starts by asking whether anyone wants to share what stuck with them from *Trouble at Sea*. The following is a list of potential follow-up questions. Use the ones that seem to fit best with your setting or to help the conversation when it feels stuck.

Why did it resonate with you?

Did anyone else have a similar reaction?

How might where you live in Alaska affect your perspectives on salmon hatcheries?

What are considerations of different kinds of salmon harvesters when it comes to hatcheries-- subsistence, commercial, sport, personal use?

How should climate change be taken into considerations in discussions about salmon hatcheries?

What risks are worth the rewards of salmon hatcheries?

Given the risks, which benefits of salmon hatcheries can we live without?

What makes these conversations hard for Alaskans to have?

The facilitator asks participants to consider the guiding question one last time: When it comes to salmon hatcheries, what do we want as Alaskans?

4. CLOSE (about 10 – 15 minutes)

Facilitator summarizes the purpose of the gathering:

We came together to explore our perspective about salmon hatcheries. Before we end the conversation, please take a minute to reflect on what has happened over the last hour or so. What is one thing you'll take away from this conversation?

The facilitator gives participants a minute or so and then asks them to go around and share their takeaway.

The facilitator thanks participants for attending and invites them to linger and continue the conversation. If possible, offer attendees more resources to learn more or get more involved with the issue.