

## SEATTLE ANGLER VOTE DEFEATS SKAGIT PLEA

**State Council Declines To  
Back Reopening Of River  
In April-May Period**

Opposition of Seattle anglers swung the Washington Sports Council against supporting the newly-formed Skagit Sportsmen's association demand for keeping the Skagit river open to fishing during the next two months, Acting President Floyd McKeon reported following his return from the Council's week-end session at Yakima.

The local association, organized Friday night in Mount Vernon, had applied for membership in the Council and authorized McKeon to present a resolution calling upon the state game commission to rescind its recent order closing the Skagit from April 1 to May 28.

Thirteen Council members, 12 from Seattle and one from Everett, voted against support of the resolution, while nine favored it. Eastern Washington delegates, saying they were uninformed and uninstructed declined to vote.

McKeon said this was the first Council meeting he had attended in five years at which the group had failed to go on record favoring that at least one major stream in each county be kept open the year around. He quoted Bernard T. McCauley, state game director, as giving as the reason for the Skagit closure that the commission had established a precedent of closing streams in which there were cut-throat or flipper runs at this time of year.

"The best we can do is prepare for action toward next year's spring fishing," McKeon declared. "It would have required a special meeting of the game commission to get action this year anyway."

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## Closing Skagit Not Enough

It may be beneficial to the Victory gardens at home, these weekends between now and May 28, with fishing on the Skagit river forbidden by the state game commission, but the county's thwarted anglers won't be very happy at their gardening. And why, we wonder, should they be happy about this sudden, unforecast closure of the river?

The commission's closure order may have been ill-advised, or at least unnecessary in itself; certainly, the manner of its making was ill-advised and most unfair. Testimony from representative fishermen in the county indicates that the commission didn't bother to talk the Skagit problem over with the people it affects most. And little was said or heard of the decision to close the river for two months until the commission issued its 1944 season regulations in printed form a short time ago.

Skagit county fishermen feel they should have had something to say about what was done to their river fishing grounds. They feel, too, that, granted the river's fish population does need some attention, there are factors other than the take of the anglers that may be diminishing the steelhead runs. Why doesn't the game commission do something about the seal herds that are reported to be invading the delta in increasing numbers—they're voracious when it comes to fish—and why doesn't the commission take some steps toward wiping out some of the birds that continually prey on small fish up and down the river? Not to mention a stronger fish hatching and planting program? These are some of the questions Skagit fishermen are asking.

Our local fishermen have fallen down on one major point. They haven't banded together before to put these questions directly to the game commission in such a forceful way that the commission would not dare to give evasive or half-way answers. The game department should have to answer more fully than just to say, "We have set a precedent for closing streams that have flipper or cut-throat runs at this time of year."

If Skagit sportsmen will just get together and work together, the game commission will find it has to pay some heed to them and justify its actions; local pheasant hunters hope the commission will soon have to justify its apparent inactivity in the bird field, too.