

As an issue, the environment and, in particular, the salmon/fishery issue would thus seem best presented as a regional, rather than a national issue.

### **Perception of the Salmon Issue**

Most participants, especially the college-educated group, were aware that salmon stocks are declining and that it is a serious problem. One participant noted that,

"I don't go salmon fishing any more - it's just a waste of time".

There was a consensus that the problem needs to be addressed immediately. There was relatively high awareness that the economies of Washington, B.C., and Alaska are somewhat dependent on the fishery and that as the fish stocks decline, the livelihood of many people is at stake. The aesthetic and recreational value of salmon was also voiced.

Participants were also clearly worried about the questionable ethics of depleting a natural resource at the expense of future generations. The term "greed" arose to express the concept that those who fish the resource give no consideration to anything (the future, the environment, or a sense of responsibility to the ecology) other than their own financial well-being or personal gratification.

When the groups were asked what they believed were responsible for the decline in salmon stocks, the most often mentioned causes were:

- fishing by Indians (although one participant raised the fact that the Indians have successfully managed many resources for centuries);
- overfishing by Russian and Japanese trawlers in international waters;
- pollution of Puget Sound;
- loss of spawning grounds due to erosion (due to clear-cutting), due to pollution, and due to development;
- excessive number of fishing boats.