



Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
Post Office Box 151, Fort Road, Toppenish, WA 98948

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
911 NE 11th Ave, 4th Floor East, Portland, OR 97232



News Release

For Immediate Release

August 7, 2012

Virtual Lamprey Arrives in Yakima Valley

Toppenish, Wash. - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Yakama Nation announce the virtual arrival of Asúm the Lamprey to the Yakima Valley. Asúm (Ah-soom), the Yakama word for eel-like lamprey, is a member of virtual fish across Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

Luna the Lamprey Campaign uses social media to help one of the oldest fish species on earth connect with the younger generation.

Asúm the Lamprey, which returned to freshwater in lower Washington last year, will be the only virtual member to meet his mate and spawn. Unlike salmon, lamprey take two years to migrate from the ocean to their spawning grounds, using pheromones from other lamprey to guide their journey.

“The timing of the virtual lamprey parallel our data that shows our Pacific lamprey are in Yakima River tributaries at this real moment,” confirms Patrick Luke, lamprey biologist with the Yakama Nation.

Lamprey returning to the Yakima have challenges ranging from predators to poor fish passage, declines in water quality.

“We are trying to make the Luna the Lamprey campaign informative and interactive by having the public vote on the name of the female lamprey,” said Sean Connolly, Fisheries Information Coordinator, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “Our virtual lamprey in Washington, Asúm and his mate, will settle, start building a nest, reproduce, and have children.”

They bring ecological importance to healthy rivers and salmon populations. Lamprey are an important food source for the Yakama people. In the last 50 years, the Pacific Lamprey has nearly died out in the Yakima River, and other Columbia River tributaries. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Yakama Nation, the Bonneville Power Administration and other stakeholders are leading efforts to recover lamprey.

Follow the posts at facebook.com/PacificLamprey or follow our tweets at [@LunatheLamprey](https://twitter.com/LunatheLamprey)

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Fact Sheet

LUNA THE LAMPREY CAMPAIGN

OVERVIEW: Beginning August 2012, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Yakama Nation are leading a social media campaign in the Yakima Valley. We are working to raise awareness about the Western lamprey species. We approximate Asúm, our virtual Pacific lamprey from his migration up the Columbia River, to the Yakima River, and ultimately to spawn in a tributary.

LUNA THE LAMPREY: Luna is the main character who launched in May 2012. Other virtual lamprey across the Northwest were created and are at various sites listed below.

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| 1. Luna, Columbia Mainstem | 6. Leonardo, Deschutes River |
| 2. Asúm, Yakima River | 7. Lulu, Eaten by walleye 6/13/12 |
| 3. He'esu, Nez Perce Holding Facility | 8. Latcher, Eaten by Sea lion 5/30/12 |
| 4. Lucy, John Day Basin | 9. Lucinda, White Salmon River |
| 5. Louie, Died of exhaustion 6/18/12 | 10. Lollipop, Willamette River |

LAMPREY:

- Pacific Lamprey (*Lampetra tridentata*) or “asúm” are a native species of fish widely distributed in rivers along the Pacific coast of North America, including the Yakima River in the Columbia River basin.
- This species of lamprey is anadromous, spending parts of its life cycle in both freshwater rivers and the ocean and migrating between these habitats.
- Fossil records date back to 450-million years ago, which means lamprey are older than the dinosaurs.
- Federal Agencies, tribes, and other stakeholders are working to improve passage and conditions for lamprey.

CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP: In June 2012, a broad partnership including five Western states, Pacific Northwest tribes and federal agencies signed a Pacific Lamprey Conservation Agreement to guide restoration and monitoring efforts.

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