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## No Easy Answers

June 17, 2010 in [news](#), [sustainability](#) by [rameloche](#) | [No comments](#)

As children, we see the world in black and white: people are either heroes or “the bad guys.” If you (the hero) vanquish “the bad guy” then the world goes back to normal, you have saved the girl (or the boy), and although you may have lost something (think Spiderman), all is well – until the next “bad guy” comes along.

Applied to salmon, the above logic would go as follows: the salmon are the ones in distress, they have been “kidnapped” by one force, and all scientists (the good guys) need to do is stop that one force. Unfortunately, it isn’t nearly that simple. Not all salmon are in distress, as we told you [here](http://gulfofgeorgiacannery.com/archives/2803) (<http://gulfofgeorgiacannery.com/archives/2803>) and [here](http://gulfofgeorgiacannery.com/archives/2799) (<http://gulfofgeorgiacannery.com/archives/2799>), the good guys don’t agree on exactly what the cause of the distress is, and although Captain Kirk may [stand up for the distressed victims](http://gulfofgeorgiacannery.com/archives/2793) (<http://gulfofgeorgiacannery.com/archives/2793>), he may not be able to single-handedly save them.

Okay, so it doesn’t exactly fit into the plot of the average super-hero comic book – maybe it looks more like The Watchmen than Spiderman. And that’s exactly what a new video by Dr. Daniel Pauly explains.

In [the video](http://thecanadian.org/k2-video/Item/140-daniel-pauly-sockeye-collapse), (<http://thecanadian.org/k2-video/Item/140-daniel-pauly-sockeye-collapse>) from the [Common Sense Canadian](http://thecanadian.org/) (<http://thecanadian.org/>), Dr. Pauly notes that there are multiple potential causes for the salmon’s demise: global warming, seals eating the fish, parasites eating the fish, just to name a few. Other scientists have suggested more causes: mining and logging operations in watersheds, paving over creeks and streams in which salmon once spawned, and the insatiable human appetite for fish. This makes it impossible to pinpoint exactly what is responsible for “kidnapping” our fish.

As Dr. Pauly and others have explained, this does not mean that we (as the superheroes, if you’re still following my increasingly convoluted metaphor) can sit on our hands and say, “we don’t know who the bad guy is so we aren’t going to do anything.” What we have to do is eliminate all of the other factors around the one that we can’t solve, says Dr. Pauly. This includes protecting watersheds, not allowing farms on salmon pathways, and not using the fact that we don’t know what the exact cause is as an excuse to not do anything.

Most importantly, we should be “precautionary” and mitigate human-caused factors so we are not adding pressure to a system which is already suffering from the effects of factors we either don’t know about or cannot change.

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