



SALMON TALES

A Publication of the Nez Perce Tribe
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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Adult Coho Spawned at Dworshak

By Aaron Penney

In 1999, the Nez Perce Tribe welcomed the return of 271 adult coho salmon past Lower Granite Dam on their way upstream to spawn. The coho return is the result of the Tribe's efforts to restore coho back into the 1855 treaty area in Idaho. In the middle 1980's, coho were declared extinct in Idaho, and in 1995 the Tribe began to reintroduce juvenile coho fingerlings into Meadow Creek on the Selway River and several other tributary streams on the Clearwater River. Since 1995, releases of juvenile coho smolts and fingerlings have occurred every spring and summer.

As a result of these outplants, returning adult coho were spawned and will be used to establish a brood stock that will re-establish coho to the Clearwater system. To capture the returning adults, adult trapping weirs were set-up, and captured adults were transported to Dworshak Hatchery in Orofino, Idaho, where they were held until spawning. Out of the 271 coho that returned, 208 adults were captured. While a majority of the fish were taken for spawning purposes, some unmarked adults were passed upstream of the weirs to spawn naturally.

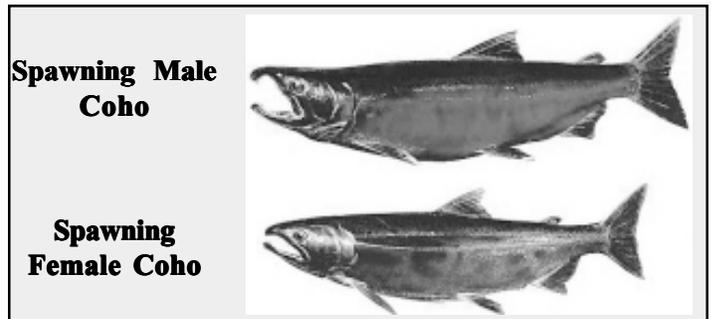
A total of 88 adult coho females were spawned over an eight week period. From these 88 females, 212,482 fertilized eggs will be raised at Dworshak and released in the spring of 2001 at Kooskia National Fish Hatchery in Kooskia, Idaho. An additional 630,000 eggs were brought up from Eagle Creek Hatchery on the Lower Columbia and an additional 560,000 smolts will be released this year, as well as in the spring of 2001.



Eggs are being extracted from an adult female coho salmon. There are approximately 2600 eggs per female.



After fertilization and rinsing, eggs are placed in an iodine disinfectant bath and allowed to water harden.



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CLEARWATER RIVER REGION

Orofino, Idaho

Orofino Field Office Project Summaries

RESEARCH PROJECT:

Assessing Summer and Fall Chinook Salmon Restoration in the Snake River Basin

Bill Arnsberg, Project Leader is assisted by Mike Key, Assistant Project Leader, and Mark Pishl, Lead Technician to assess potential restoration in the basin and evaluate current restoration efforts. Current spawning habitat availability for chinook salmon has been physically measured in the entire mainstem Clearwater River above the North Fork Clearwater River, Middle Fork Clearwater River, and in the lower reaches of the South Fork Clearwater, Selway and Lochsa rivers with an estimated total spawning capacity of about 3,000 redds or at least 10,000 spawning adults.

Currently, a true October spawning summer (early-fall) chinook salmon that once thrived in these reaches is extinct. However, natural selection may create an October spawner once again with fall chinook that are currently rebuilding in the Clearwater River subbasin. In fact, our first 1999 fall chinook aerial spawning survey found 12 redds al-



Mike Key, Assistant Project Leader, measures a wild fall chinook salmon carcass.

ready constructed in the Clearwater by October 5th. Since initiating annual chinook salmon redd surveys in the Clearwater River in 1988, spawning timing seems to be progressively earlier and earlier. The typical spawning timing usually is initiated around the first part of November in the Snake and Clearwater rivers. Spawning timing of chinook salmon is driven mainly by water temperature and cooler water in the upper Clearwater River subbasin. This may be naturally triggering early arriving fall chinook to start spawning in early October.

In 1999, we observed a record number of fall chinook salmon returning to the Clearwater River subbasin for the second year in a row, and we saw fish spawning in previously unused habitat in these upper areas. Through our helicopter redd surveys, we documented 179 fall chinook salmon redds in the lower Clearwater River below the North Fork Clearwater River. In the upper Clearwater River, we observed two redds near Lolo Creek and two redds in the South Fork Clearwater River. These upper river areas will be supplemented for the first time since the removal of Lewiston Dam with the earlier spawning fall chinook when the Nez Perce Tribal Hatchery is up and running.

Through our fall chinook salmon carcass collections, we have documented the increase from 78 redds in the Clearwater river subbasin in 1998 to almost 200 in 1999. This increase is directly attributed to the supplementation program at Big Canyon Creek which started releasing yearling fall chinook in 1997. Not surprisingly, almost all hatchery carcasses found were spawned out. We believe supplementation projects reduce the rate of decline and aid in the recovery of salmon stocks.

Our summer seining activities on the lower Clearwater River continues to document naturally produced fall chinook salmon emergence from spawning nests and their growth. This data becomes increasingly important in July when Dworshak Reservoir is heavily called upon to release flows and cool the Snake River and to meet the unnaturally high flow target set by NMFS at Lower Granite Dam. Data suggest that fall chinook salmon growth and subyearling smoltification are affected when excess cold water releases are made before fish are ready to emigrate to the ocean. By providing this data, we were successful in keeping Dworshak Reservoir about full until mid-July and had some

water left over to extend releases during the first part of September in 1999.

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The Orofino Field Office is located at 3404 Highway 12, Orofino, ID 83544. This office houses Projects from two Fisheries Divisions:
-Resident Fish
-Research
For more information, please call 1-208-476-7417.

Tribal Fisheries Biologists Experience “Rough Ride”

Safety concerns with the multitude of the Fisheries field activities came to the forefront when Bill Arnsberg, Project Leader and Mike Key, Assistant Project Leader along with helicopter pilot Jim Pope hit the ground fairly hard in Stites, Idaho on November 2, 1999, while conducting a fall chinook spawning survey. A main rotor stabilizer flew off the craft at about 500' elevation which created a violent vibration. Luckily, Jim was able to bring the helicopter down right side up after first taking out a utility line. The three received mainly back injuries and were very fortunate.



Helicopter crash in Stites, ID.

SALMON RIVER REGION

McCall, Idaho

McCall Field Office Project Summaries

RESIDENT FISH PROJECT: Oxbow Hells Canyon Reservoir Sturgeon Fishery

The Nez Perce Tribe has proposed to develop and implement a fishery augmentation program to restore subsistence harvest of white sturgeon in Hells Canyon and Oxbow Reservoirs to partially mitigate for losses of white sturgeon in other reaches of the Snake River. Currently the focus of the project is an evaluation and feasibility study of a “put, grow, and take” consumptive white sturgeon fishery in these two reservoirs. The evaluation is being conducted by the Fisheries Department of the Nez Perce Tribe with cooperation from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). The project and personnel are currently located at the McCall Field office and include Project Leader Rick Orme and Technician Carl East.

Currently the project includes the development of a master plan, risk assessment and risk modeling, and a pilot study using 50 sonic tagged juvenile white sturgeon in Hells Canyon Reservoir. The purpose of the pilot study is to assess habitat use and entrainment potential of stocked white sturgeon. Entrainment of a large number of stocked white sturgeon increases the potential genetic risks to sturgeon populations in Hells Canyon as well as counteracting efforts to establish a sturgeon fishery in Hells Canyon and Oxbow Reservoirs.

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The McCall Field Office is located at 125 S. Mission St., P.O. Box 1942, McCall, ID 83638. This office houses Projects from two Fisheries Divisions:

- Production*
- Research*
- Resident Fish*

For more information, please call 1-208-634-5290.

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Mitch Daniel releasing a sonic tagged sturgeon into Hells Canyon Reservoir. Tagged sturgeon will be tracked to assess reservoir habitat use.

Snake River Region

Lapwai, Idaho
Sweetwater, Idaho

Conservation Enforcement

Tribal Conservation Enforcement Officers

Complete Training

By Letitia Whitman

In August 1999, the Nez Perce Tribe sent two Tribal Conservation Enforcement Officers to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) Land Management Training Academy in Glynco, Georgia. Officer Lee Whiteplume and Officer April Skahan both successfully completed this course which kept them away from home from August through November. This course was attended by officers from various federal land management organizations, who primarily perform law enforcement related duties in rural or isolated areas. During training, they gained valuable experience in many areas. They learned



Left to Right: Officer April Skahan, Officer Lee Whiteplume, Tim Gould, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), John Boyer, NMFS, and Brent Priestas, NMFS, at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia.

how to obtain federal search warrants, arrest warrant procedures, court room testimony procedures, federal court procedures, and interviewing techniques. They also went through intense physical training, firearm tactics training, self defense training, and emergency vehicle response training.

Congratulations to Officer Whiteplume and Officer Skahan for your "Achievements" from the Fisheries Conservation Enforcement Staff and the entire Department of Fisheries Resource Management. Currently, Officer A.K. Scott and Officer Wayne White Eagle are attending the same Land Management Academy, in Georgia. Good Luck!

We would also like to recognize Officer A. K. Scott for his participation in the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society (NAFWS) Conservation Officer Shoot. This was the first competition shoot that Officer Scott had participated in and placed 6th out of 30 participants. The shoot was held on October 14, 1999 during the NAFWS Pacific Regional Conference at the Kah-Nee-Tah Resort in Warm Springs, OR. Placing 6th in the competition put Officer Scott on the NAFWS Pacific Regional Shooting Team as an alternate, and will in turn compete at the National NAFWS Conference in Reno, NV in May, 2000.



Officer A.K. Scott, competes against conservation officers throughout the northwest during the Pacific Region Native American Fish & Wildlife Conference in Warm Springs, OR.

Good Luck!

Good Luck!

SWEETWATER OFFICE

Fisheries New Office Location

The Fisheries Sweetwater Office in Sweetwater, ID is located 2 miles South of Lapwai, ID on U.S. Highway 95 across from Lewiston Grain Growers. In September 1999, Conservation Enforcement, Resident Fish Ponds, and Salmon Corps moved their offices to Sweetwater. The rest of the Lapwai Fisheries staff, trailers, and offices will be moved to Sweetwater sometime in the near future. For more information, please call Resident Fish Ponds at (208) 843-7144 or Conservation Enforcement (208) 843-7143.





The Restoration of Tunnel Pond



Tribe's Newest Trout Pond Fishery

By Elmer Crow

In January 1999, I took James Mauney, former Resident Fish Ponds Project Leader, to Tunnel Pond for the first time. He wasn't aware of pond sites in the Orofino area that were suitable for trout ponds. We found ourselves on Lower Fords Creek Road about 1/4 mile from Orofino and I showed him Tunnel Pond. I always laugh because of his reaction at his first sight of this pond, "where did that come from". He made it sound like it had just dropped out of the sky.

We were pleased with what we saw, and began to research the land availability and start the process of restoring this pond. The Land Operations Leasing Department informed us that this land was not currently being leased and later we received permission from NPTEC to develop the land and reconstruct the pond area.

Area wildlife, include, deer, turkey, beaver, muskrats, frogs, blue heron, osprey, and bald eagles. During our inspection, staff found approximately 500 discarded railroad ties. The removal of the railroad ties was a joint effort by Resident Fish Ponds Staff, Nez Perce Salmon Corps, Limestone Enterprises, Camas Prairie Railnet, and prisoners from the Department of Corrections. Upon receiving Project approval for construction from the Corps of Engineers, Tribal Agencies, and



Tunnel Pond after construction. Tod Sween, Project Leader, poses in the background.



View from Lower Fords Creek Road, 1/4 mile east of Orofino.

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), we then contacted the Camas Prairie Railroad. They provided 9 railroad cars to haul off the discarded railroad ties, and we provided the excavator and operator. The Idaho Department of Corrections provided 9 inmates to help with the cleanup. Bill Warden Logging and Construction of Kamiah, ID, began construction in September 1999 and excavated approximately 15,000 yards of material.

Looking ahead, we proposed to place 100 Adult Steelhead so we contacted Caroline Wren of Water Resources to investigate the water quality. Water samples were collected and sent to Anatek Laboratories in Moscow, ID for analysis. According to the lab, Tunnel Pond is a healthy habitat for Steelhead.

Our main objective was to create an ample body of water for a year around trout fishery. A channel on the northeast side of the Pond was cut to create hydrostatic flow from the Clearwater River and with flows from 5 springs. Salmon Corps assisted in planting the excavated area.

Trout was planted in Tunnel Pond on February 17, 2000. Tribal members will be able to begin fishing on March 1, 2000. The Pond will open April 1, 2000 for non-indian fishers. The gate will be opened from 8:00am to 4:30pm and Fisheries Conservation Enforcement Officers and monitors will be patrolling.

The Resident Fish Ponds staff includes: Tod Sween, Project Leader; Elmer Crow, Supervisor; Marc Whitman, Wendall Antell, and David Kane, technicians. For more information, please call (208) 843-7144.

Nez Perce Salmon Corps Provide Assistance

by Rachel Ellenwood

We were pleased to have met many new people while restoring Tunnel Pond near Orofino, Idaho. We worked along with all staff from the Resident Fish Ponds project, and Jennifer O'Riley, the Tribe's Wetland Biologist. We moved railroad ties from areas that were to be seeded. We planted four different types of seed to accommodate the diverse area. The types we planted were wetland, hard fescue, cottonwood and channel mix. Before we could seed, we had to rake the ground to loosen the soil so the seeds could take.

After we sowed the seed, we laid down hay which, protects the seed from the sunlight, and other weather related elements. We also helped lay down "erosion control" (EC) mats alongside the lake's banks. We had to roll the EC mats out and staple them down with 12 inch staples. In some places this was difficult because of the steep banks. Altogether we laid out about 8 EC mats. Two of our members also helped Marc Wilson, Fisheries Interim Technician/ Equipment Operator, redirect a few springs. The springs were eroding the banks severely. We could see the water level and quality improve from day to day. We are pleased to see the progress of our efforts.

NEZ PERCE SALMON CORPS

Sweetwater, Idaho

Salmon Corps Assists Sturgeon Research Team

By Tammy Loe, Nez Perce Salmon Corps

Between January 11, 2000 and January 14, 2000, three Salmon Corps Members helped the Sturgeon Research

team pull up bait lines on the Snake River while the rest of the Corps Members attended a four day workshop on job readiness. The three members were Tammy Loe, Jacob Snider and Leona Tsinajinnie. One member went out on a boat with Chuck Axtell, Scott Everett and Mike Tuell. The other two members went on the other boat with David Cunningham and Joe McCormack. After observing the duties of the sturgeon crew, we were eager to help take part in the project. We helped put a tag on one of the sturgeons while Mike Tuell took some pictures. We then took the tag back off and returned the large fish to it's tank. The last day, the rest of the members were able to get involved with the project and do something they had never done before. It was a great learning experience and were pleased with the opportunity and privilege to shadow a research project. We look forward to working with the Research team again in the future.



Salmon Corps Member Leona Tsinajinnie pulls in bait line hoping to surface a white sturgeon. Salmon Corps members assisted the Sturgeon Research team survey the Snake River.

Salmon Corps Members Attend Classes

By Rachel Ellenwood, Nez Perce Salmon Corps

Three Salmon Corps Members are taking a course in Environmental History offered by Portland State University. The 3 credit class is called "Salmon in the Columbia River Basin". Cain Allen is teaching the class and Professor Bill Lang is overseeing Mr. Allen and the class.

The class covers all the treaties made with the Columbia River Basin Tribes. It also covers the geological and commercial history of the river including Celilo Falls. Dam breaching and other alternatives to breaching are also part of the curriculum.

If the members complete this class with good grades, they will have the chance to take another course in the spring. This course will be a more in-depth look at this topic. They will be given the opportunity to interview elders for the class.

The three members are Tammy Loe, Cecil Oatman, and Rachel Ellenwood. They are all first year members of Salmon Corps.



Please, contact us if you have comments, questions or would like to be added to our mailing list.

SALMON TALES

c/o Brenda Axtell, Editor.

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SALMON TALES

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