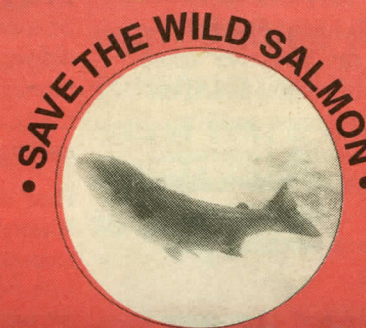
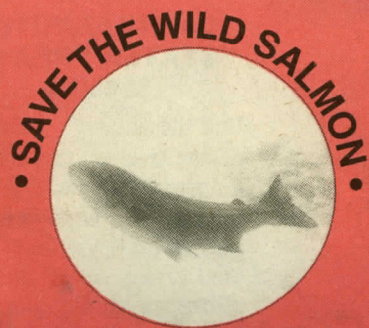




**EVERYONE'S HELP
NEEDED TO SAVE
WILD COHO
AND PRESERVE
BRITISH COLUMBIA'S
WILD SALMON
MIRACLE**



Save the Coho - Prize Gamefish - "Fighting Trout of the Sea"



Well known journalist and sports fishermen Tony Eberts, author of this Educational Report holds up a coho he caught just before he released it alive back into the Fraser River in 1995. In 1998 such "catch and release" must not be allowed because the mortality rate of the "released" fish (even though it's very low) is unacceptable. Every last coho is needed for survival.

There is no saltwater gamefish to match the silvery coho, known to anglers as the trout of the sea for its magnificent, leaping fights to be free.

Today it faces a fight for its very survival on our coast. There is a tragic irony in the possibility that coho transplanted to the Great Lakes some 30 years ago may soon become the last significant stock of the species in Canada.

I met my first coho just under 50 years ago, near the entrance to Saltspring Island's Ganges Harbour. Raised in the B.C. Interior, I was used to casting and trolling for Kamloops trout. The sea was a wonderful novelty to me.

I took a rowboat out into the harbour on a late summer day, trolling two small Tom Mac spoons--one behind an old cane rod and the other on a thin

hand-line, half-hitched around one of my ankles. I soon saw coho jumping and when we got among them, one struck the handline.

It straightened out my leg, burned my ankle, danced on the water, broke the leader and gave me a thrill I will never forget. Few sports fishermen are likely to forget the first time a coho tried to break their tackle.

Chinook salmon are bigger, of course, but the wild coho has a kind of aura about it, and the mature ones--known to reach 30 pounds and more--are such splendid game that fishermen will travel halfway around the world just in the hope of hooking one.

Are the people of this province prepared to face the loss of the gallant and beautiful coho? For a million of us in B.C., going fishing is an important part of our lives. Can you put a price tag on the whole experience of a family fishing trip? Can our vital tourism industry survive the loss of our best gamefish?

There must be some things, some parts of nature and our heritage that have to be preserved at any cost. Even some vote-hungry politicians must believe this.

One of the best things about living in this part of the world has always been the fact that a relatively small human population has easy access to a

vast, natural ocean playground. This includes some 4,500 miles of coastline, hundreds of rivers, and waters that once held bright hordes of salmon that we thought would be there forever.

How could we possibly have been so careless, so stupid, so badly led that we have let this living treasure dwindle far below the danger line?

Surely the crisis is important

enough to justify the unhappy prospect of calling off all fishing for coho salmon until the stocks have had a chance to recover. Surely we want our children, and their children, to know the joy of a day out fishing, with a good chance of a catch.

What ever it takes, we must save the coho.

FULL STOP TO ALL NON-SELECTIVE FISHERIES ONLY WAY TO SAVE WILD COHO

A Beefed-up Department of Fisheries Enforcement Effort Only Way to Ensure Compliance with Drastic Conservation Measures

On May 21, 1998 Federal Fisheries Minister David Anderson made an historic, far-reaching decision. He put conservation first for B.C.'s endangered coho salmon, announcing that 1998 fisheries would be based on "zero fishing mortality for upper Skeena and Thompson coho stocks" (where the coho are most endangered). Other fishing will be allowed only where "coho bycatch mortality will be minimal."

Anderson's decision was necessary because B.C.'s coho are on the brink of extinction. Even with no fishing in 1998 some runs will likely go extinct.

Unfortunately, in the past, the massive fishery closures needed to keep stocks from going extinct were considered to be "too drastic" by career-conscious politicians and senior DFO (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) bureaucrats.

Our Pacific fisheries have in fact been so badly managed by the federal DFO that many stocks of wild fish have already been lost forever. A study by the American Fisheries Society identified that 142 stocks of Pacific salmon have already gone extinct and another 624 stocks are at "high risk"--in

continued on page 2

FULL STOP cont. from p. 1
danger of going extinct.

Complicating current fisheries management is the great mystery of what has happened to salmon out in the ocean—including such factors as El Nino. The ocean survival rate of coho has dropped from about 13 percent in the 1980s to two percent now.

The results of some sport fishery surveys in the Georgia Strait area are even more stark, with average coho catch totals dropping from many thousands just a few years ago to only dozens of fish in 1997.

Despite the grim coho statistics, a few scientists and some bureaucrats in the politically-directed DFO still favour allowing a sports fishery for hatchery-marked (adipose fin clipped off) coho instead of a complete coho fishing ban in 1998. Thankfully, Minister Anderson nixed that idea.

But a sound fishing strategy for 1998 to meet Minister Anderson's coho conservation objectives has still to be developed and adopted. We should be wary that some fishers will likely forward proposals for "selective" seine and gillnet fisheries based on observer programs and live-release measures. Experience has shown that these measures are poorly controlled and ineffective in stopping coho mortalities.

The only logical, long-range

fisheries. These alternative fishing methods include river mouth trapping systems that could be completely selective and guarantee each species' escapement for spawning. Minister Anderson's announcement opens the door to such a fundamental shift in fisheries methods.

But there is a great deal of fear and suspicion that the powerful DFO, with its abysmal record in management and its tragic failure to save the cod fishery of the East Coast, may repeat its errors here. Scary rumours are also circulating that some big commercial fishing companies actually want to be rid of the coho (and some other species like steelhead) so that a simplified industry could be based on ever-larger runs of industrially-valuable sockeye.

...as the B.C. coho teeters on the brink of extinction, the killing must be stopped before it is too late."

DFO's 1998 fishing plan cannot be a compromise. It must truly deliver on Minister Anderson's promise of "zero fishing mortality" of the critically endangered stocks.

How do we achieve this? The Western Canada Wilderness Committee and The Fish for Life Foundation believe that the pressing need is to put in place

Here are the key points of our proposed save-the-coho plan:

SPORTS FISHERY

- We totally back federal Fisheries Minister Anderson's announced "no directed sports fishery for coho". But the catch-and-release fishery now being practised will still lead to coho mortalities. Observers are needed immediately in the sport fishery to save the coho. There are no scientific data to show that coho released repeatedly from sports tackle can be successful spawners. In fact many scientific studies show that the DFO estimates of the survival rate of fish "caught and released" are far too optimistic.
- All sport fishers should be made aware of the crime they are committing if they secretly catch-and-release coho in 1998. True sport fishermen in the Roderick Haig-Brown conservation tradition are not going fishing anywhere where there is any chance of by-catching coho in 1998.
- At a minimum, we need a scientifically defensible observer program for at least 25 per cent of charter boat vessels over 20 feet long in every major fishing area plus extensive dockside surveys in all major sportfishing regions, including rivers

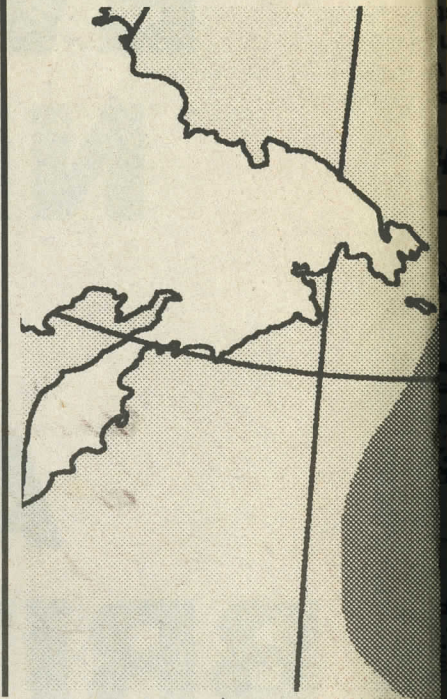
catching coho.

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

We recommend:

- Closure of Juan de Fuca and Skeena approaches to all fishing during coho in-migration times, and a total closure of all fishing for Skeena-bound salmon in 1998—including in Alaska.
- A new fish boat buy-back program exclusively directed at eliminating all seine boats over 45 feet in length.
- The maximum allowable seine net size and gillnet net length be cut in half to make selection catch and release survival higher.
- Establish an observer program for all troll, gillnet and seine operations, with daily delivery and overnight turnaround analysis of data on coho bycatch so closures can be made rapidly.
- Development of "catch insurance" schemes funded by a percentage hold-back of the catch dollar value to pay fishermen not to fish when conservation demands it.
- All seine-caught fish brailled (lifted by dip nets into the boat to reduce the mortality of bycatch released fish).
- Research programs to determine coho mortality following repeated catch and releases from seine, gillnet and troll fisheries.
- No night fishing.
- All commercially caught salmon sold must be

Large Overlapping US and Canada Cooperation and for



corporate processing companies) first option on terminal selective fisheries licences and jobs that will be replacing existing non-selective fishing efforts.

CANADA/UNITED STATES TREATY ISSUES

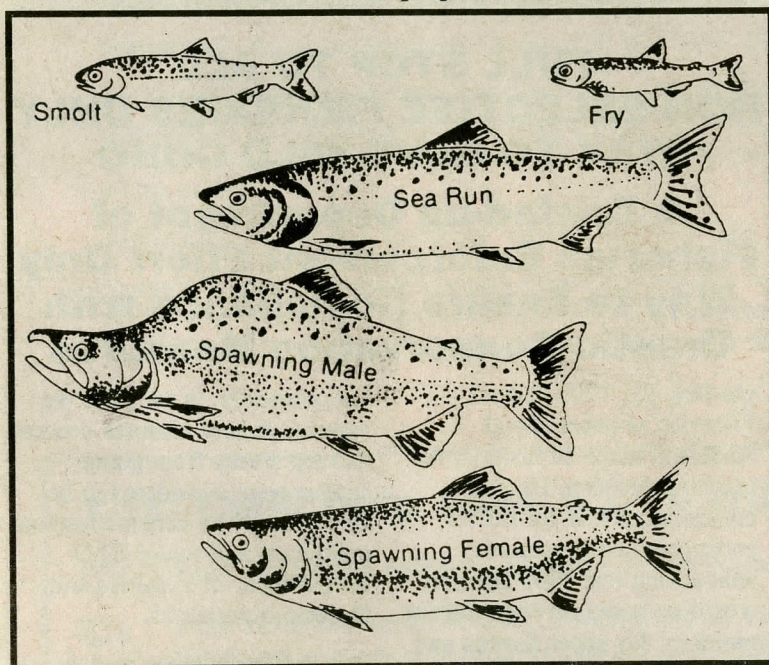
- End the abrasive, nationalistic debate over allocations of industrial catches and focus international negotiations instead on developing a biodiversity treaty and joint efforts to rebuild coho stocks.

any real hope for salmon survival necessitates a drastic increase in the number of fish allowed to return to spawn. This means moving from current non-selective open-ocean fishing methods to selective terminal fisheries. Currently an average of 70 percent of all salmon caught annually are caught on the high seas. In the future only 25-30 percent should be caught in the open ocean...and caught as selectively as possible.

The rest of the fish caught should be taken in terminal

saving the coho and an other endangered stocks. The plan can allow very limited fishing for other salmon to continue.

DFO must also see that their refusal to adequately fund an effective monitoring and observer program would be false economy of the worst kind. How much has the inadequate monitoring and management and consequent collapse of the Eastern cod fishery cost the Canadian taxpayers--to say nothing of the suffering of the people of the Maritimes?



Pink - *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*

The smallest of the Pacific salmon, the pink lives only two years. They have the simplest and least varied life cycle. Pink salmon always spawn as two-year-olds in the fall. They utilize both large and small river systems. When the young hatch and emerge from the gravel the following spring, they immediately proceed downstream to the sea. Their growth is rapid during their year-and-a-half in the ocean. Mature pink average 2 kg.

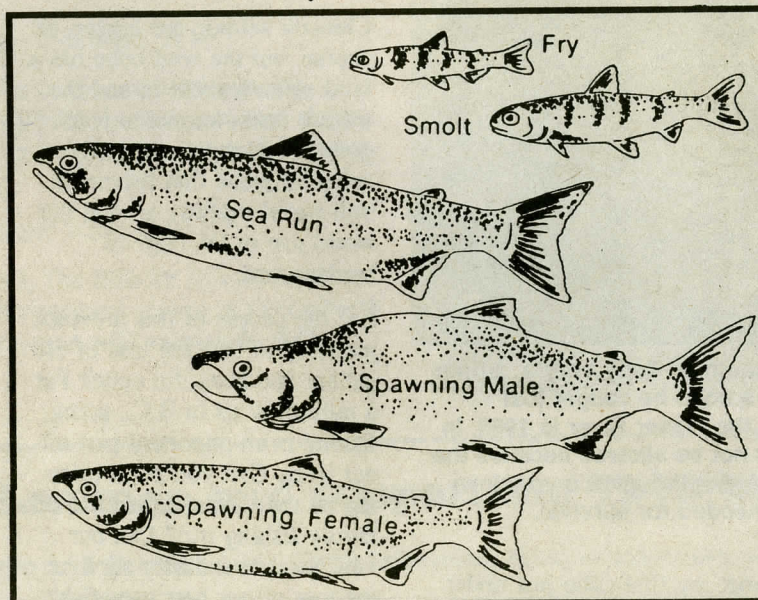
surveys must be expanded to all parts of the coast, especially to the unsurveyed west coast of Vancouver Island.

- Juan de Fuca and Skeena approaches should be closed during 1998 to protect areas of relative coho abundance.
- We support full sportfishing access to healthy runs of sockeye, pink and chum salmon in areas and at times when there's the least likelihood of incidentally

prices for the fish.

NATIVE FISHERY

- Closure of all in-river gillnetting once the coho in-migration has begun.
- Encouragement of traditional fishing methods, such as partial weirs and dip nets.
- More research into and development of selective fisheries using beach seines and fish wheels.
- Allow the existing small fishers and First Nations (not

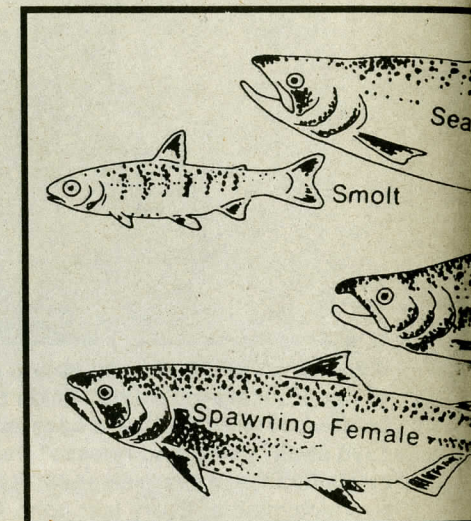


Sockeye - *Oncorhynchus nerka*

Historically sockeye is the most valued salmon because of its dark red, oil-rich flesh and its retention of good colour and flavour under most storage conditions. Sockeye spawn in streams with lakes in their watersheds. The young fry spend from one to three years in a lake before migrating to sea. In their third year at sea sockeye begin to sexually mature and between this year and three years later, they return to their birth stream to spawn. Four-year-old sockeye average 3 kg. Older ones often reach 5.5 kg.

country catching the other's endangered salmon as a negotiating pressure tactic will wipe out wild salmon.

- Increase community level meetings and co-operation, especially between sport, commercial and native fishers from Canada and the U.S.
- Vigorous enforcement of the Fisheries Act by the Canadian government to show the U.S. that we are seriously committed to protecting salmon habitat.

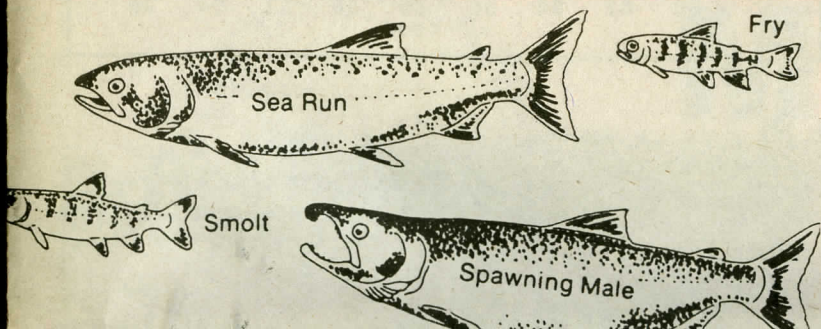
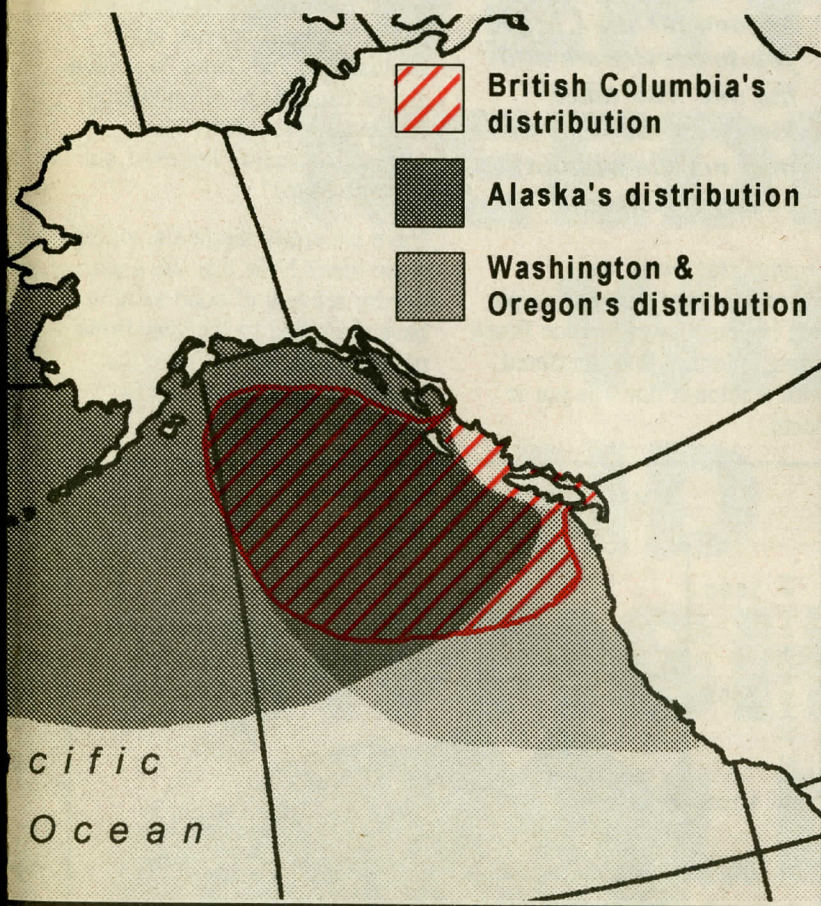


Chinook - *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*

The largest of the salmon, chinooks, are called, average between 14 and 18 kg. Chinooks weighing as much as 56 kg. are common and have the most varied life history. They spawn sometime between three and seven years after they return to spawn. Although they can be found in the spring or fall, they can be found spawning grounds almost any month of the year. For spawning, some migrate more than 100 km to sea soon after hatching, but some stay in rivers before swimming downstream.

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g Coho Ocean Habitats Cover both ian Waters, Making International a Must for Coho Conservation Recovery of Stocks on the Brink of Extinction



SCIENTISTS SAY the SALMON CRISIS is so SERIOUS that the ONLY WAY to SAVE COHO RUNS from EXTINCTION is to STOP CATCHING COHO NOW!

The latest West Coast studies by top DFO scientists provide shocking evidence of a decline in coho stocks that will lead to widespread extinctions unless all coho fishing stops...now!

The reports by members of the Pacific Stock Assessment Review Committee have given the Federal Fisheries Minister and his senior advisers all the expert testimony they need to substantiate a total 1998 coho fishing ban.

This scientific confirmation of conservationists' worst fears reads like a horror story. From the Thompson River to the Upper Skeena, through Georgia Strait and the mid-coast waters, the coho's survival is in jeopardy.

***extinction risk
increases
exponentially
(at an
accelerating
speed) with
decreasing
population size.***

"The Steering Committee

current marine survival conditions, and some individual spawning populations are at high risk of biological extinction.

***"...extreme
caution is
warranted for
this stock
aggregate."***

"The Steering Committee advises that the forecast of marine survival for 1998 for the Upper and Lower Skeena may be overly optimistic and caution is advised....The overall Skeena problem is made more serious by the evidence that Upper Skeena survivals in 1997 were even less than those associated with the indicator (the stream used as a model)."

The 46-page report says that the majority of coho streams in the Strait of Georgia and Lower Fraser River areas will not reach the minimum safe escapement of female spawners, and that the stocks are "deteriorating rapidly under current marine survival conditions."

The scientists point out that in the more critical areas where spawning populations are already greatly depressed

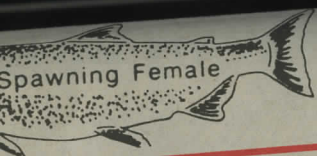
fishing--"exploitation rates of less than 30 per cent"--might be allowed with some assurance that minimum escapement of spawners can be expected.

While coho stocks of Georgia Strait and the Lower Fraser are not at the near extinction level of Thompson and Skeena fish, the report warns that any fishing mortality allowed would delay the badly depleted stocks' recovery.

"The Subcommittee emphasizes that the necessary corrective actions will become more stringent," the report says. "As populations decline, the likelihood of the success of these corrective actions will fall. The Subcommittee therefore advises that extreme caution is warranted for this stock aggregate."

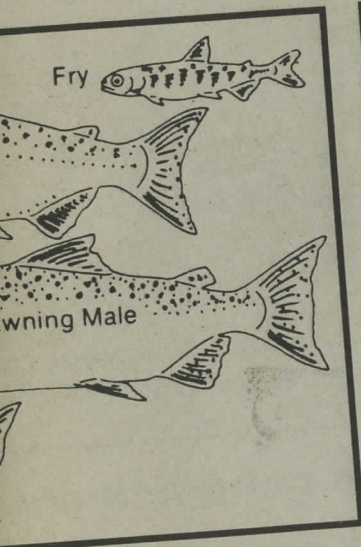
***"...scientific
confirmation of
conservationists'
worst fears...the
coho's survival is
in jeopardy."***

In total, this statement from DFO scientists lays key cards



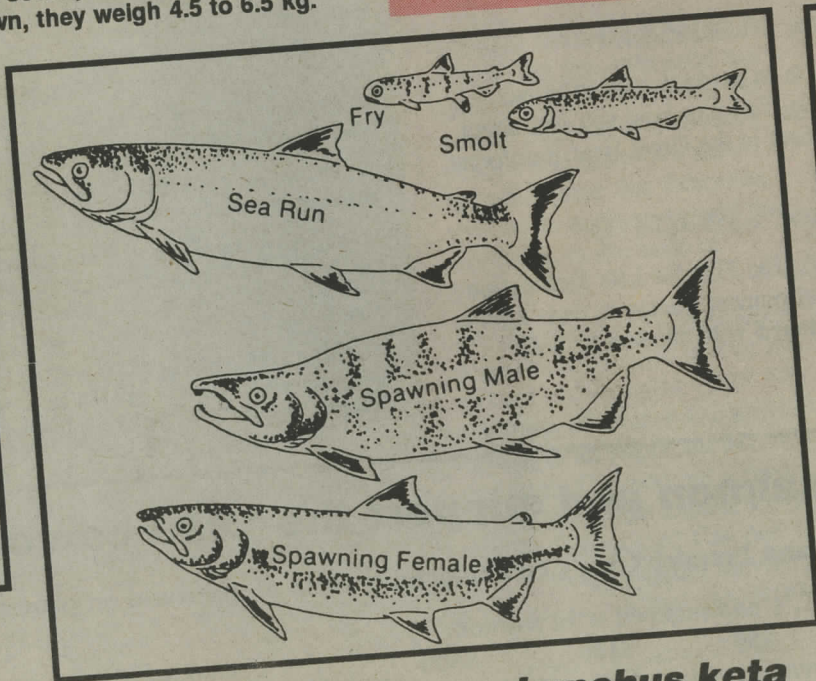
Coho - *Oncorhynchus kisutch*

ular "game fish" salmon, coho are fast, strong jumpers and fighters when caught on a hook. Like the pink and chum, travel far inland to spawn, preferring coastal creeks close to among the exceptions are those that spawn in the Skeena and headwaters. Next to the pink, the coho probably has the history: one year in the nursery stream, two years in salt coho spend three years in the ocean, but these are the By the time they return to spawn, they weigh 4.5 to 6.5 kg.



tschawytscha

ings as they are commonly eight. But there are record hooks are the longest living fry. They reach maturity Most are four to five years old t make their spawning migration ading for their upstream he year. Preferring major rivers 00 km. Most young chinook fry remain one or two years in lake o salt water.



Chum salmon - *Oncorhynchus keta*

The last of the Pacific salmon to enter fresh water each year, chum (sometimes called dog salmon) arrive in coastal streams in the late fall although there some runs in northern B.C. as early as July. Chum do not usually travel far inland to spawn, the exception being the Yukon River chum, which travel 3000 km upstream to spawn. Like pink salmon fry, chum start for the sea almost as soon as they emerge from the gravel. The chum reaches maturity in three or four years, weighing 3.5 to 4.5 kg.

extreme caution in applying forecasts of coho abundance in 1998," says the summary. "Recent trends in marine survival have been below forecasts and marine conditions during 1997 were exceptionally poor...

"The Upper Skeena and Thompson River coho stock aggregates are extremely depressed, will continue to decline (even) in the absence of any fishing mortality under

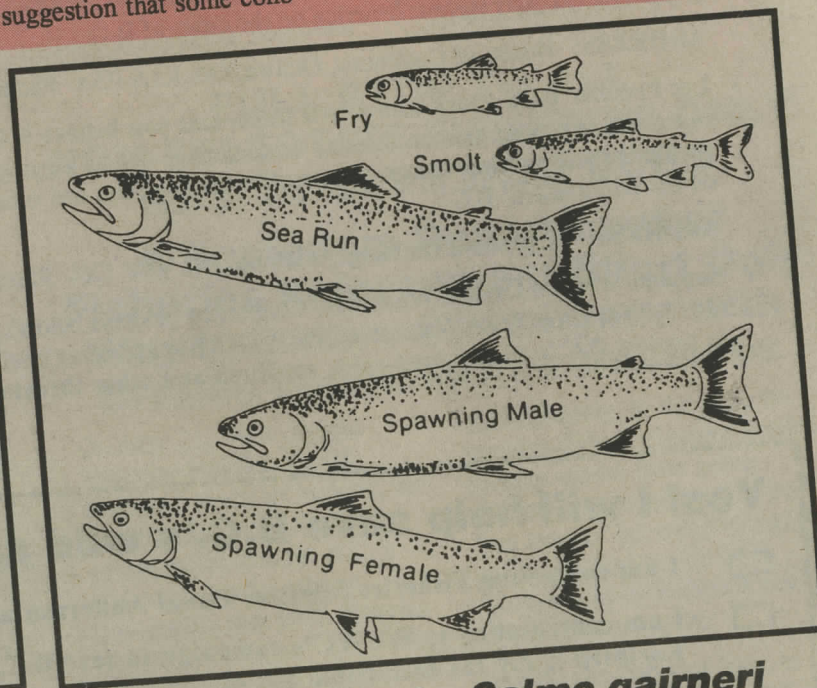
extinction risk increases exponentially (at an accelerating speed) with decreasing population size.

"The Subcommittee is certain both that the risk will increase as population sizes fall below their already very low levels, and that the need for corrective action will increase correspondingly."

Only on the west coast of Vancouver Island is there any suggestion that some coho

played his first card right in his announcement on May 21 that there was to be zero fishing mortality of the most threatened stocks in 1998.

But the next card is even more critical. It is the actuation--the development and implementation of a plan--that will truly deliver this conservation mandate and actually save the coho. Playing the next cards wrong will result in the West Coast coho going the way of the Atlantic cod.



Steelhead trout - *Salmo gairdneri*

More closely related to the Atlantic salmon than to the five Pacific species, the steelhead, like their Atlantic relatives, do not always die immediately after spawning: some survive to return to the sea. Some steelhead individuals have been known to spawn three times. The fry live in the spawning stream for one or two years before migrating to the ocean. They return to spawn in their third, fourth or fifth year of life. The largest steelhead weigh as much as 17 kg.

GREED and WASTE--HALLMARKS of SALMON DEMISE

What does history say about the survival chances of the coho?

Over the last century and a half, a combination of "White Man" (Western European immigrant) greed and technology has wiped out run after run of salmon, from California to Alaska.

While the First Nations peoples of the coast called themselves *Salmon People* and treated the fish with reverence and respect, the European immigrants called themselves rulers of all other forms of life and treated the salmon with utilitarian contempt.

By the 1870s, the once mighty salmon runs of California's Sacramento River were destroyed by rampant over-fishing and the fouling of spawning grounds by hydraulic gold mining and logging. The canneries and the fishermen simply packed up and moved north to the next salmon stream, and on it went.

The destruction began at about the same time in B.C., and was almost as thorough. Even before the devastating era of chainsaws and bulldozers, B.C. logging companies despoiled salmon habitat with dams and log runs, ripped out spawning gravel for roads and deforested steep slopes to smother salmon streams with silt.

"It was a time of the independent, 'rational' man, the

Childerhose and Marj Trim in their book *Pacific Salmon* (Douglas & McIntyre, 1981). "Interests--in this case mining, logging and fishing--were allowed to conflict. The excuse was 'jobs and money.'"

"A century ago, salmon cannery operations on the Fraser River were scenes of appalling waste and horror."

Little has changed in the last hundred years. "Jobs and money" are still the excuse of politicians and industrialists who preside over the ravaging of our most vital natural resources for quick profits.

A century ago, salmon cannery operations on the Fraser River were scenes of appalling waste and horror. The red-fleshed sockeye was preferred, but the nets didn't discriminate--so untold thousands of dead chinook, coho, chum and pink salmon were dumped back to rot in the river.

There were so many fish that it was common to simply slice fillets from the sides of the sockeye and discard everything

keep up with what the fishermen brought in, whole boatloads of salmon were dumped at the docks.

Often the tides and westerly winds would keep the thousands of tons of rotting fish and entrails in the river. For some 30 km of its length, the Fraser's banks were sometimes lined with stinking windrows up to a metre deep and six metres wide during the major salmon runs. Farmers with strong stomachs picked up wagonloads of the mess and ploughed it into their fields.

A few years later, when the cannery operators and fishermen paused from their orgy of greed and death long enough to look around, they noticed that the runs of salmon--for some reason--were sharply declining.

Government, they whined, should do something. Government took 20 years to react, and then churned out a set of regulations that were largely ineffective. Doesn't that have a familiar ring to it?

In the times of plenty, before the "White Man", every fishing nation along the coast had some words akin to those of the Kwakiutl Nation's "First Salmon Ceremony":

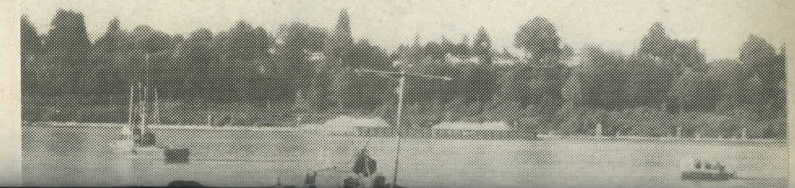
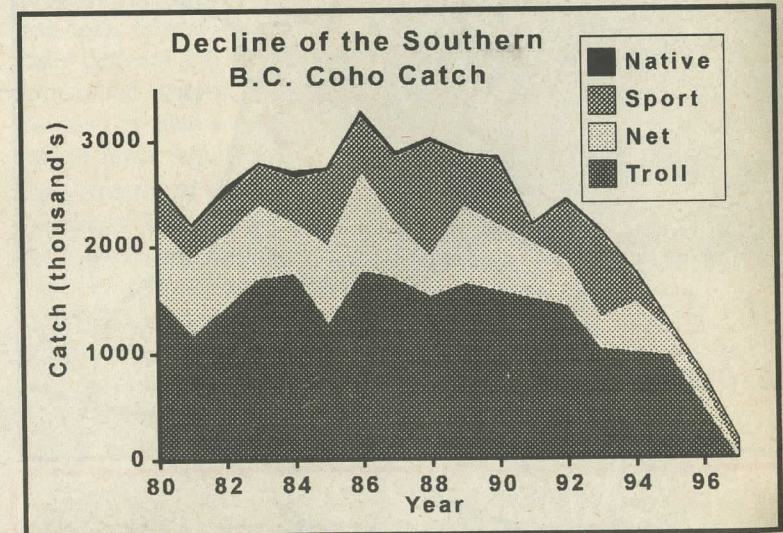
**"O Supernatural Ones,
O Swimmers,
I thank you that are**

**willing to come to us.
Don't let your coming
be bad, for you come to
be food for us. I beg
you to protect me and
the one who takes
mercy on me, that we
may not die without
cause, Swimmers."**

So important were the Swimmers to the native people that in some cases anyone found doing anything that interfered with a salmon run was put to death.

The white immigrants came to "tame the wilderness" and turn it into something resembling the tamed but depleted regions they had left behind. It was, say Childerhose and Trim, "a golden age of capitalism, of unfettered free enterprise. Profit was sacred. Did nature not exist but to serve Man?"

Have we really learned anything since then? Now that the great silvery schools of coho salmon have dwindled to the very brink of extinction, do we have the technical and moral tools to bring them back?



How YOU can Help Save the Wild Coho and Help Preserve B.C.'s Wild Salmon Miracle

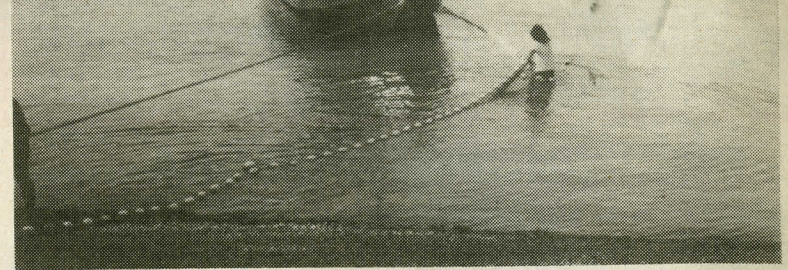
- **Thank the Federal Minister of Fisheries, David Anderson, for putting conservation first and choosing the zero mortality option for the critically-threatened, near-extinct runs of Thompson and Skeena River coho this year.**
- **Let Minister Anderson know how you feel about the need for further strong measures to protect salmon and enforce the ban on catching and killing coho. Do you support selective terminal fisheries (like fish wheels, fish weirs, beach seines and dip nets) so that threatened salmon species can be released without harm to continue their spawning mission? Ask him how far he will go to radically change fishing methods and enforce the Federal Fisheries Act to protect salmon habitat and sustain fisheries on the coast of B.C.**

ADDRESS: House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A4 Phone: 1-613-992-3474

- **Let Premier Glen Clark know how important you believe it is to protect wild salmon, especially to protect salmon habitats from damage due to logging. Tell him how you feel about saving the still-pristine salmon streams like the Johnston and others in the Great Bear Rainforest on the mid-coast of B.C.**

ADDRESS: Legislative Buildings, Victoria, BC V8V 1X4 Phone: 1-250-387-1715

- **Support Western Canada Wilderness Committee (address below), The Fish for Life Foundation (3872 Point Grey Road, Vancouver, BC V6R 1B4) and other environment groups in their efforts to protect B.C.'s endangered coho, steelhead and other threatened wild salmon in B.C.**



Experimental beach seine set-up to catch chum salmon in the Fraser River in 1997. The seine is drawn to shore and the non-target fish--including the endangered coho--are lifted out and returned to the river unharmed. This was a cooperative project involving the Katzie First Nation and some non-native commercial fishermen.

CREDITS

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Writing: Tony Eberts with assistance from David W. Ellis.

Editing: Paul George and Adriane Carr. Design and Layout: Sue Fox.

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Yes! I will help save B.C.'s wild salmon and support the 1998 ban on coho fishing!

☐ I am contacting Fisheries Minister David Anderson and Premier Glen Clark informing them of my stand on protecting endangered coho.

☐ I am contributing to WCWC's campaign to save B.C.'s endangered wild salmon.
Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of \$25 \$50 \$100 \$500 other to help WCWC win this campaign.

WCWC's Federal Registered Charitable Tax Number is 0587113-21-28

I want to ☐ renew my WCWC membership ☐ become a WCWC member. Enclosed is my \$30 annual membership fee.

☐ I would like to be a WCWC Sustaining-Family member. Here is \$52 (\$1 per week for wilderness preservation).

Note: Save time and trees! Call our toll-free number 1-800-661-9453 to donate and become a WCWC member.

Name (please print) _____ Address _____

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____ Phone _____

Please clip and send to the Western Canada Wilderness Committee (WCWC), 20 Water Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1A4.

