

Addendum to the Skeena Independent Science Panel Report

Addendum to the Skeena Independent Science Panel Report

Dated May 15, 2008

June 13th, 2008

Overfishing

At the public meeting in Terrace on the 10th of June 2008, there was considerable misunderstanding about the use of the terms "overfishing" and "overfished" in our report. Here, we elaborate upon our original definition of those terms, which we provided on pages 6 and 28 of the report. A better way to describe a fish population that is "overfished" is that it is "depressed", that is, its spawner abundance is being held below the abundance that would be required to produce the maximum sustainable catch over the long term. Such low abundances can be maintained over the long term; they do NOT necessarily imply that extinction is imminent, but rather that the social and economic benefits are not being maximized. Appendix C shows many such cases of depressed populations.

Steelhead

At the Terrace meeting, Panel members mentioned the apparent inconsistency between (1) the numerous reports by anglers of low steelhead abundance and (2) the limited data on steelhead escapements that we had available, which did not indicate an imminent conservation crisis. We also stated in the report and at the meeting that the steelhead data we analysed were quite limited, which led to our Recommendation #2, that better quantitative information is sorely needed to determine the status of steelhead and its various components in the Skeena.

Tangle Nets

We heard that DFO as well as commercial harvesters have serious concerns about tangle nets, particularly the lack of selectivity and the possibility of high drop-out mortality. In view of these concerns, we think it best to amend our Recommendation #4, which had been to use such nets widely. Instead we recommend that a careful, large-scale experimental test of tangle nets and other options for selective fishing be conducted. This experiment needs to be done with careful experimental design (multiple vessels, fishing times, and fishing conditions like water depth), and with careful monitoring of specific concerns including drop-out mortality, post-capture fish handling procedures, survival of released fish, and variability among vessels in gear operation. This experiment should be designed with the assistance of independent experts, and its results should be reviewed by them.

Addendum to the Skeena Independent Science Panel Report

Catch Monitoring for All Fisheries

Some people have the perception that the Panel focused its attention on the commercial fishery because of the lack of reliable data for most of the marine and freshwater recreational fisheries in recent years. We recognize that this data gap deserved greater emphasis than the limited mention in Recommendation 11 that “Better estimates of catches by First Nations and anglers are also needed”. We strongly support the position that reliable catch monitoring procedures be implemented immediately for all marine and freshwater recreational fisheries that catch Skeena salmon and steelhead.

Conclusion

We strongly encourage people in the Skeena region to move ahead with their recent initiatives to develop open and collaborative relationships among all parties, and to implement our recommendations to help inform a shared decision-making process. We urge you to implement our recommendations and to use our report merely as a starting point for your collaborative initiatives. We also urge you to see beyond any misunderstandings created by terminology or limitations in the data available for analysis, and any controversial statements that were brought up at the public meeting in Terrace on June 10th. What should endure over the long term is the willingness of all parties to improve the salmon and steelhead situation in the region.

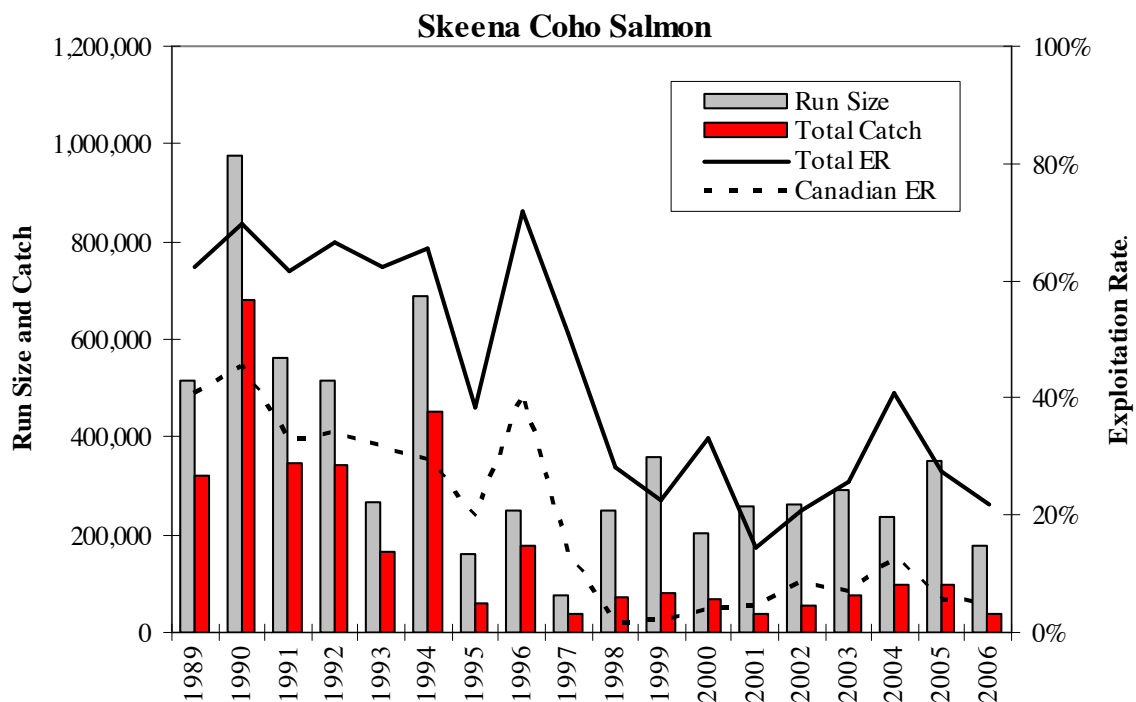
Addendum to the Skeena Independent Science Panel Report

APPENDIX D. RUN SIZE, CATCH, AND EXPLOITATION RATE ESTIMATES FOR SKEENA SOCKEYE, CHINOOK, COHO AND PINK SALMON

Addendum for Coho Salmon

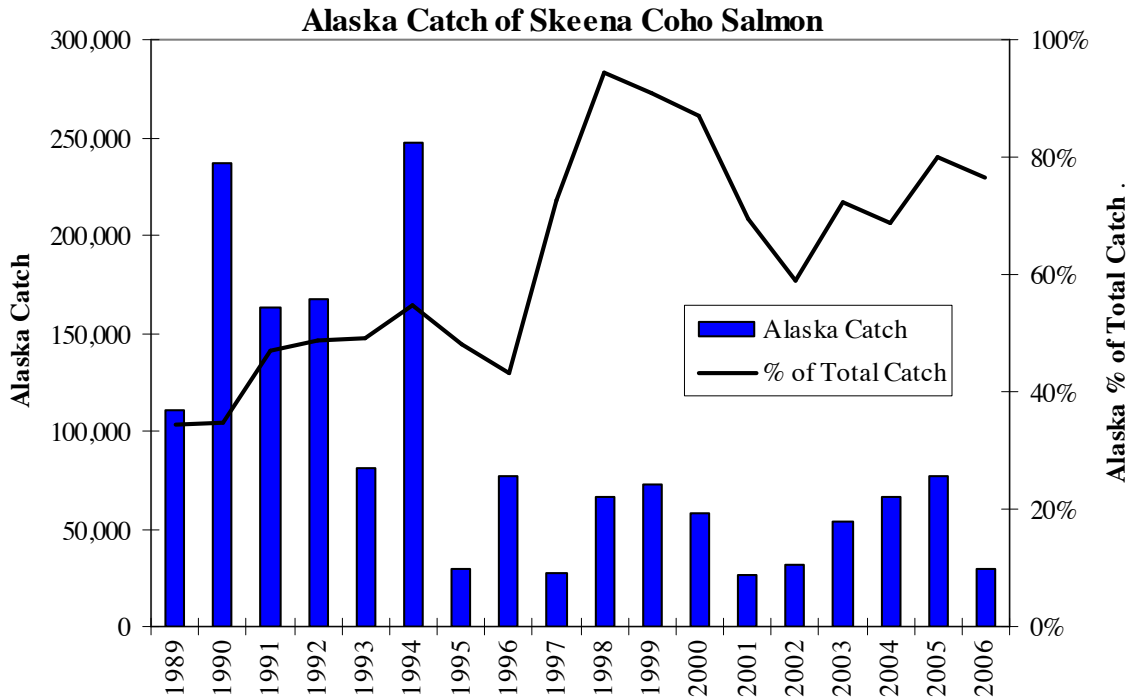
An error was identified in the coho catch estimate for the BC commercial fishery in Appendix D Table 3. The BC commercial catch estimate included the harvest estimate of Skeena coho in Alaskan fisheries. This error also affected Appendix D Figures 5 and 6 and the following text. All parts have now been corrected.

Annual estimates of the total run size, catch and exploitation rates for Skeena coho stocks (Appendix D - Figure 5) were derived using information on escapement and stock specific catch obtained from DFO (J. Sawada, DFO Prince Rupert, pers. comm.). On average, 63% of the catch of Skeena coho has been taken in Alaska fisheries (Appendix D – Figure 6), 25% in Canadian commercial fisheries, 8% in Canadian recreational fisheries and 4% in First Nation FSC (Appendix D – Table 3). The estimated number of Skeena Coho harvested in Alaska and Canadian marine fisheries was computed using fisheries specific exploitation rates for Toboggan Creek coho derived from CWT recoveries (1989-2006). Catch estimates for Skeena First Nation FSC fisheries were derived from catch monitoring programs that focus on the July-August fisheries, so these numbers are likely underestimates of the total FSC harvest.



Addendum to the Skeena Independent Science Panel Report

Appendix D - Figure 5. Annual run size, total catch, and exploitation rates for Skeena coho salmon.



Appendix D – Figure 6. Alaskan harvests of Skeena coho salmon and Alaskan percentage of the total annual harvest.

Addendum to the Skeena Independent Science Panel Report

Appendix D – Table 3. Skeena coho estimates for annual run size, escapement and harvests by fishery, 1989-2006.

Year	Escapement	Harvest by Major Fishery					Total Run	Exploitation Rate					Total	Percentage of Harvest				
		FN FSC	FN ESSR	BC Comm.	BC Sport	BC Alaska		FN FSC	FN ESSR	BC Comm.	BC Sport	BC Alaska		FN FSC	FN ESSR	BC Comm.	BC Sport	BC Alaska
1989	194,127	2,714		199,560	8,729	111,029	516,158	1%		39%	2%	22%	62%	1%		62%	3%	34%
1990	293,557	8,517		419,934	15,244	236,936	974,188	1%		43%	2%	24%	70%	1%		62%	2%	35%
1991	215,547	4,946		172,933	5,266	163,240	561,931	1%		31%	1%	29%	62%	1%		50%	2%	47%
1992	172,710	2,300		141,068	31,983	167,379	515,440	0%		27%	6%	32%	66%	1%		41%	9%	49%
1993	101,167	479		66,413	17,853	81,529	267,442	0%		25%	7%	30%	62%	0%		40%	11%	49%
1994	239,290	4,237		171,378	28,302	247,032	690,239	1%		25%	4%	36%	65%	1%		38%	6%	55%
1995	98,644	1,447		25,421	4,741	29,394	159,648	1%		16%	3%	18%	38%	2%		42%	8%	48%
1996	69,790	2,494		86,395	12,924	76,899	248,502	1%		35%	5%	31%	72%	1%		48%	7%	43%
1997	36,492	1,157		4,159	4,999	27,494	74,302	2%		6%	7%	37%	51%	3%		11%	13%	73%
1998	178,948	1,197		0	2,847	65,890	248,883	0%		0%	1%	26%	28%	2%		0%	4%	94%
1999	277,149	4,024		101	3,122	72,812	357,208	1%		0%	1%	20%	22%	5%		0%	4%	91%
2000	134,442	1,515		0	7,222	57,976	201,155	1%		0%	4%	29%	33%	2%		0%	11%	87%
2001	220,285	4,542		959	5,954	26,196	257,935	2%		0%	2%	10%	15%	12%		3%	16%	70%
2002	206,931	5,653		4,352	12,305	31,993	261,234	2%		2%	5%	12%	21%	10%		8%	23%	59%
2003	217,112	2,421		12,039	6,317	53,802	291,692	1%		4%	2%	18%	26%	3%		16%	8%	72%
2004	139,889	5,635		16,992	7,402	65,874	235,792	2%		7%	3%	28%	41%	6%		18%	8%	69%
2005	252,920	7,770		6,472	4,953	76,655	348,769	2%		2%	1%	22%	27%	8%		7%	5%	80%
2006	139,685	2,231		4,749	2,280	29,918	178,863	1%		3%	1%	17%	22%	6%		12%	6%	76%
Mean	177,149	3,515		74,051	10,136	90,114	354,966	1%		15%	3%	25%	44%	4%		25%	8%	63%