

COLVILLE TRIBES FISH & WILDLIFE NEWS



Staff work long hours at fish weir to reach program goals

FISH WEIR IN ITS THIRD YEAR OF OPERATION

Colville Tribes Fish and Wildlife (CTFW) staff installed a fish weir in the Okanogan River which is located near Malott, Wash. It stretches 340 feet across the river and was installed the first week of August. The fish weir is a tool that is used to capture adult salmon (broodstock) for the hatchery and to manage the ratio of hatchery fish and wild fish on the spawning grounds. Staff will operate the weir until the end of September.

CTFW Senior Research Scientist, Casey Baldwin said removing excess hatchery fish is critical. "It is important to reduce competition on the spawning grounds and limit genetic interaction with wild fish by removing hatchery fish. Most of the wild summer and fall Chinook are released to spawn upstream and we only keep a small percentage of the wild return as broodstock for the CJH program." Baldwin continued, "In the past, hatchery programs could only collect broodstock until the end of August, but the weir allows us to collect salmon through the end of September."

The weir is constructed with a series of panels made of PVC pipe, a large fish trap, and cameras above and below water, an observation tower, and an access area. Staff

are working around the clock to reach their program goals.

"We have been seeing a lot more fish movement when water temperatures are about 71 degrees," said Andrea Pearl, CJH fisheries biologist. "When temperatures drop, fish head upstream and we've got to be ready." She said, "We have staff working day and night shifts. It's a collaborative effort between the monitoring and evaluation, hatchery and harvest programs."

Hatchery fish removed at the weir are distributed to tribal members.



Baldwin shows hatchery fish recently caught in fish trap

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE PROJECT PARTNERS



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Fish in holding tank before tagging & marking activities

CHIEF JOSEPH HATCHERY UPDATE

In the last few months, Colville Tribes Fish and Wildlife (CTFW) staff have been busy with spawning activities, collecting adult salmon (broodstock) from the purse seine fishing boat, fish weir, and CJH fish ladder.

Hatchery staff began filling trays of eggs from spring Chinook on August 19. Summer and fall Chinook eggs will be collected until late November. Staff will fill 555 trays; each tray holds approximately 6,000 eggs – that's just over three million salmon eggs!

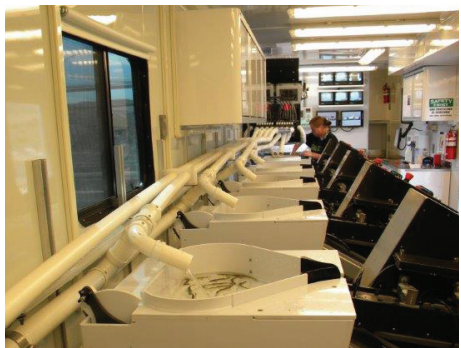
"In about eight weeks our staff with the help of an automated fish system, marked about 1.865 million spring and summer Chinook salmon," said Pat Phillips, CJH manager. "The salmon are about four inches in length when they have their adipose fin removed. Once they are processed through, they are held in rearing ponds at the hatchery or at the Omak or Riverside ponds until they grow to smolt size."

CJH staff work in a state-of-the art mobile unit that sorts, clips and tags juvenile salmon. The unit can process 60,000 fish in an eight

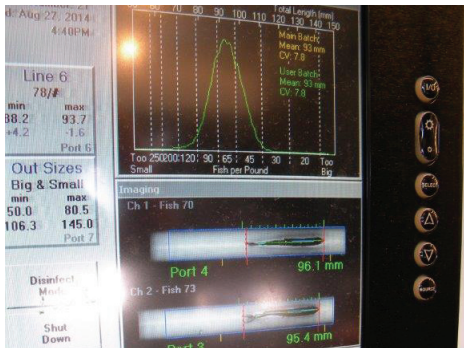
hour period. Each fish is injected in the snout with a tiny coded wire tag and their adipose fin is removed. This method helps fish managers and fishermen identify which salmon are from a hatchery. The coded wire tags shows which hatchery or acclimation pond the fish are from.

Hatchery, selective harvest, and monitoring and evaluation staff work in close coordination to complete fish management

tasks for CJH. The CTFW selective harvest crew collected 1,116 adult summer Chinook (broodstock) for the CJH program using the purse seine. Hatchery and selective harvest staff worked at the fish weir this summer alongside the monitoring and evaluation crew who collected data at the weir site. They will collect 15 percent of the hatchery's natural-origin (NOR) broodstock from the weir in September.



Mobile unit sorts, clips and tags juvenile salmon



As fish travel out of the sorting tub, fish length determines what station fish are sent to.



Fisheries staff collect Chinook broodstock for Chief Joseph Hatchery

TRIBE SHARES THIS YEAR'S SALMON HARVEST

The selective harvest crew for the Colville Tribes' Fish and Wildlife (CTFW) Dept. began their fishing season on July 1, and fished for salmon until the end of August. The crew collects summer and fall Chinook broodstock for Chief Joseph Hatchery and salmon for tribal ceremonies and subsistence needs.

The crew begins their day on the water at 4:30 a.m. They launch their boat from Mosquito Park and fish at the mouth of the Okanogan River, but for a few weeks they had some company. The Upper Columbia United Tribes (Coeur d'Alene, Kalispel, Spokane Tribe of Indians (STOI), and Kooteni Tribe of Idaho) assisted the selective harvest crew in sorting and carrying loads of fish from the boats. Once the CTFW trucks were loaded up with salmon to distribute to Colville tribal members or taken to the ceremonial locker, then more totes were filled for the other tribes to take home.

"The first time I helped the Colville fishermen was about three years ago," said Mark H. Stanger, fisheries technician for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. "This year we have four individuals from our fisheries department helping out. The salmon we bring back gets distributed to tribal members and everybody in our community. We fillet a lot of fish; we smoke some too and freeze some salmon for dinners and special events."

The updated Technical Advisory Committee's forecast for 2014 estimated upriver summer Chinook at 78,000 adult fish and 615,000 sockeye to the Columbia River mouth, with a projected 85 percent of the sockeye destined for the Okanogan River. By the end of August, the crew harvested approximately 18,572 sockeye and 569 hatchery Chinook salmon.

"The STOI express our gratitude to the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation for this salmon," said Spokane Tribal Council Business Chairman, Rudy Peone. "Although the STOI does not currently have access to a salmon fishery, when times arise like this our membership is greatly touched and reminiscent when salmon from lost resources such as Spokane Falls, Little Falls and Kettle Falls fisheries would be allocated by our salmon chief." He said, "The Colville Tribes sharing of salmon today validates that a river and its resources does not separate our tribes' traditions and heritage."

The selective harvest crew uses a purse seine net to catch salmon from their boat. This allows staff to capture salmon live, and retain broodstock for the CJH program. The net has sinkers on one end and floats on the other that hang vertical in the water, when the ends are pulled together they can capture a large amount of fish in one set. The fishermen grab

each salmon one-by-one hollering out wild or hatchery and separate them into bins.

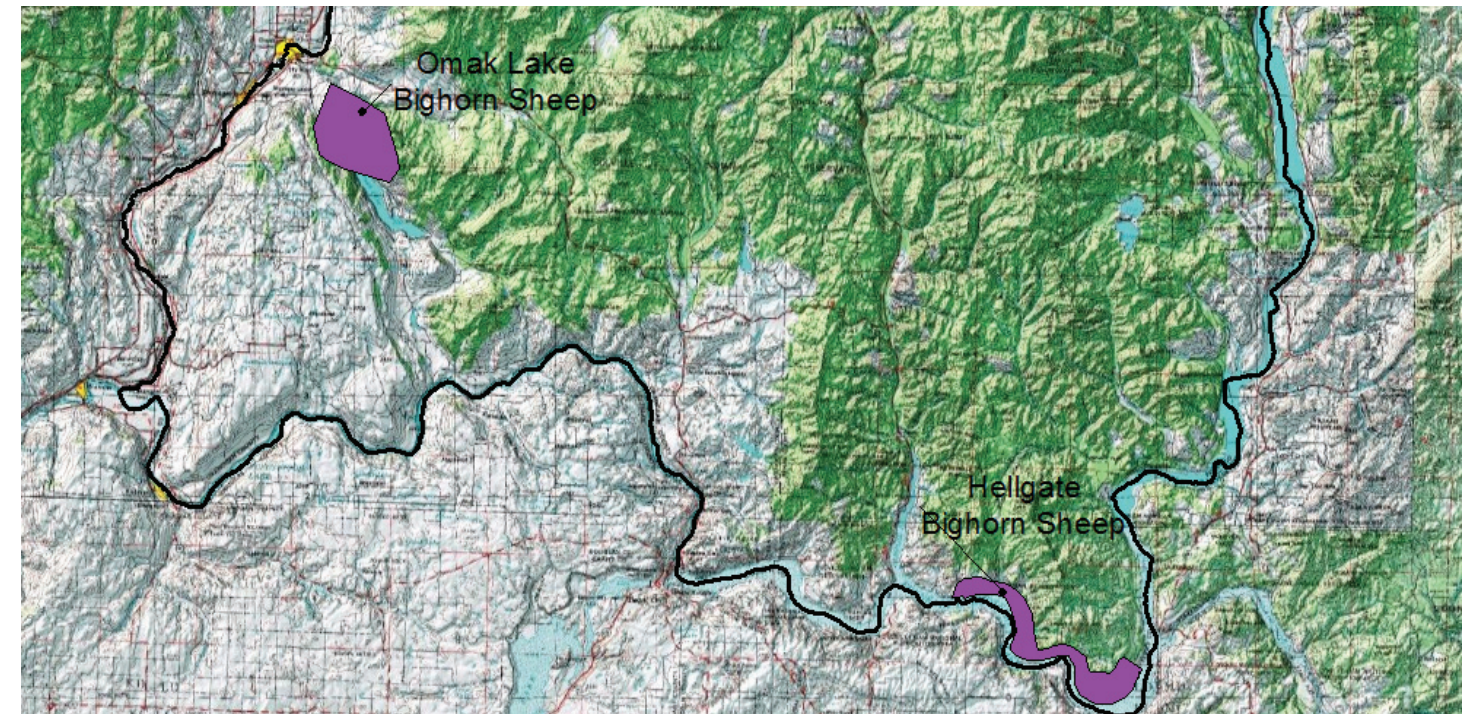
"The hatchery-origin Chinook and all sockeye are harvested for subsistence needs," said Mike Rayton, CTFW selective harvest biologist. "The salmon we catch is distributed to tribal members on the same day or by the next day. Some of these fish are taken to our processing building in Omak where they are cleaned and packaged."

THE SELECTIVE HARVEST GOALS ARE TO:

- Support CJH broodstock collection efforts
- Secure the Colville tribal harvest allocation and protect resources
- Release natural-origin fish unharmed to create healthier salmon runs
- Recover listed species (spring Chinook and summer steelhead)
- Prevent future listings (summer/fall Chinook and sockeye salmon)
- Interrogate fish for tags
- Create harvest opportunities for individuals, while serving the communal effort to protect our resources for present and future generations
- Reestablishing subsistence and ceremonial harvest for Native Americans while increasing recreational sport fishing opportunities in the Columbia and Okanogan Rivers



Carol Colman, WDFW tosses a big one!



WILDLIFE OFFICIALS SEE INCREASE IN BIGHORNS, ALLOWS HUNT

Wildlife biologists for the CTFW have seen an increase in bighorn sheep numbers at both the Hellgate Game Reserve and Omak Lake Ridge Reserve. Increases they believe are going in such a positive direction, that they've allowed a hunt this year. This is the first time a hunt for bighorns has been allowed in the Hellgate Game Reserve, located on the Colville Indian Reservation.

"We did aerial bighorn surveys last winter and we observed 168 bighorn sheep in the Hellgate area and 51 bighorns at Omak Lake Ridge Reserve and that's just what we observed at the time," said Eric Krausz, wildlife biologist for CTFW. "Through a four-year reintroduction period that ended in 2012,

we believe the bighorn sheep population in Hellgate grew substantially. With the increase in numbers, we decided to allow a hunt in that area for tribal members."

A reintroduction effort of bighorn sheep began in 2008. Tribal wildlife biologists worked with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to transport 113 California bighorns to Hellgate and that took three years. Several ground and aerial captures took place in order to surplus bighorns from three existing populations in Washington State.

This fall wildlife staff will do survey work from a boat on Lake Roosevelt and observe the Hellgate population. They will use radio telemetry to monitor survival of the radio

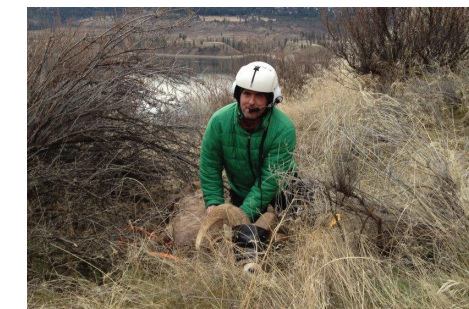
collared bighorns which will help them to locate individual groups.

"Each time we observe a group, we count the total number of rams, ewes, and lambs," said Krausz. "This information is reviewed year-to-year to give us a better understanding of how the population is doing in regards to reproduction and survival."

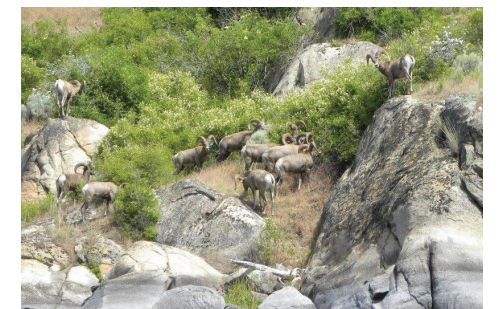
"We decided to allow two rams to be harvested from the Hellgate population," said Richard Whitney, wildlife manager for CTFW. "I see this as a huge success, especially when we can restore a native species and see the population do well. This provides a new harvest opportunity for tribal members."



Capture near Yakima 2009



Krausz collaring a ram in Hellgate



Rams in Hellgate