



2017 Slamgeesh Salmon Project – Smolt Season Update Gitksan Watershed Authorities

The Slamgeesh Salmon Project is located in the Slamgeesh River Watershed within the Gitksan traditional territory of Gwininitxw in the Upper Skeena River Watershed. Since the year 2000, Gitksan Watershed Authorities have been monitoring the salmon populations that spawn on Upper Damshilgwet Creek between Slamgeesh and Damshilqwet Lake. The following data are to be considered preliminary until further notice.



Slamgeesh Smolt Program 2017

Two fyke velocity smolt traps were in full operation by April 28th and remained in until July 2nd. These traps are targeting sockeye and coho salmon smolts during their outmigration from lake to ocean. Each sampled smolt had its adipose fin removed to aide in the mark-recapture population estimates as well as estimating exploitation rates. Auxiliary data is collected from a subsample of smolts on a daily basis that includes the following; length, weight, scales, and tissue (genetic analysis).

We experienced the second highest recorded flows in the history of the project. High flows inhibited trapping twice during the season for a total of five days. Water temperature at the trapping site ranged from 2.6°C to 15.8°C. From this project, we hope to further increase our knowledge in life histories of salmon within the Slamgeesh River watershed.

Preliminary Smolt Population Estimates:

42,115 ± 3,607 Sockeye Salmon Smolts (project average; 25,200)

23,522 ± 2,615 Coho Salmon Smolts (project average; 51,200)



Sockeye

The 2017 sockeye salmon smolts are mainly derived from the 2015 brood year, which had a total escapement of 1,276 pre-spawn large sockeye salmon (829 females). With the highest estimated number of sockeye salmon smolts in the history of the project, the estimated number of smolts per female for the 2015 brood year (range; 46 to 55) was below the project's historic average (84 smolts per female).

Coho

A coded wire tag (CWT) is implanted into the snout of every adipose fin clipped coho salmon smolt. The total output for 2017 was 2,023 (adjusted for 85% tag retention). The intended purpose of the CWT program is to provide estimated ocean harvest rates in a mixed stock fishery.

Slamgeesh Adult Weir Program

The 2017 adult fish weir is scheduled for installation on July 18th and will run through October. All adult sockeye and coho salmon captured in the weir will be examined for adipose fin clips, which will yield an estimate of smolt to adult survival. The 2017 adult sockeye return is expected to be poor due to low returns in 2013.

For more information please contact:

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