Sampling Juvenile Salmon Minter Creek Salmon Hatchery

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Introduction

Hatchery fish rearing programs help restore salmon populations back to a sustainable level. To manage hatchery fish growth, samples of juvenile salmon from each pond at the hatchery are collected weekly. The purpose of this internship was to assist with weekly sampling, adjust feed schedule, weigh feed, and monitor growth of samples. The sample data is then given in fish per pound (fpp).

Methods

Sampling salmon is a tool hatcheries use to find out the approximate size of the fish in the rearing ponds. The WDFW has standardized their sampling so all sample results are given in fish per pound. During the internship I sampled on a weekly basis Monday mornings. The duration of the internship/ sampling was February through May.

Calculating Fish Per Pound

Sample bucket weight (X) / 454 grams * number of fish counted in sample. For example 200 grams X / 454 x 115= 50.6. (fpp)

Main building Minter Creek Salmon Hatchery.

Sampling Process

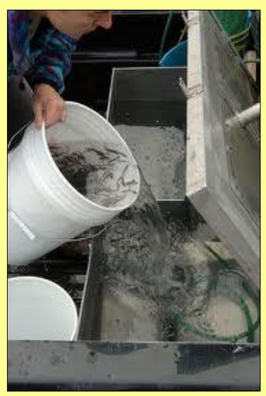
Crowding juveniles in pond.

Netting juveniles for sampling.

Yearling Coho being transferred to sampling buckets.

Weighing samples in lab.

Counting juveniles by hand to determine fish per pound of sample.



Returning juveniles to pond.

Results

Results were measured by the successful release of juvenile salmon into Minter Creek at the correct (fpp). Juvenile Coho and Chinook were released into Minter Creek at 100- 120 (fpp) Yearling Coho were released at 20-25 (fpp). Juvenile Chum at 100-120 (ffp). At 100-120 (fpp) the juvenile salmon are approximately 4 to 5 inches in length and are ready for the ocean phase of their lifecycle.

Conclusion

The future of salmon hatcheries in the state of Washington is up in the air during these rough economic times when government agencies budgets are being reduced. The number of hatcheries programs are being reduced. Other salmon stakeholders such as the native tribes are now beginning to financial backing hatchery programs to make sure that there will be enough salmon to harvest in the coming years.

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