

Inter-Tribal Workshop on Coho Reintroduction and Production Programs (Lewiston ID; July 8-10, 2013)

SUMMARY POINTS

Hatchery Production

1. The CRITFC tribes release a combined 8 million Coho smolts/year above Bonneville Dam:
 - a. YN/Yakima R (reintroduction/harvest augmentation program) – 60% ad-clipped
 - b. YN/Mid-Columbia (Wenatchee and Methow; reintroduction program) – none ad-clipped
 - c. NPT/Clearwater (reintroduction program) – none ad-clipped
 - d. CTUIR/Umatilla (reintroduction/harvest augmentation program) – 100% ad-clipped
 - e. YN/Klickitat (harvest augmentation program) – 90% ad-clipped
2. Each program was initiated 18(+) years ago, with releases of lower Columbia River composite stock Coho from Mitchell Act hatcheries
3. Transition to releases of juveniles produced with in-basin broodstock is complete in the Yakima, Mid-Columbia and Clearwater programs; transition is in progress in the Umatilla program; the Klickitat program continues to release Washougal Hatchery stock fish
4. All programs were initiated with early run stock, except Klickitat program which uses a late stock
5. While previously extirpated, Coho returns are now approximately (average for 2001 to 2011):
 - a. Yakima R – 4,000 (in-river Prosser Dam count)
 - b. Wenatchee R – 6,000 (RIS minus RRH dam counts)
 - c. Methow R – 1,000 (WEL Dam count)
 - d. Clearwater R – 2,000 (LGR Dam count)
6. Annual redd counts also show increase and expansion of redd distribution, and a (increasing?, limited monitoring data available) proportion of the escapement is now of natural origin fish – evidence of adaptation and nascent natural populations
7. No suggestion of negative interactions (predation) of hatchery Coho smolts with other (listed) species
8. Alternative release strategies (adult out-plant, parr, smolts – direct or acclimated) discussed – each has advantages and disadvantages (cost, survival and return rates, homing) relative to tribal harvest goals and to tribal natural production goals
9. Increased monitoring & evaluation is needed for determining natural Coho life history characteristics, production, and limiting factors

Harvest of Coho

1. Terminal fishery for Coho recently begun in Yakima, Wenatchee and Clearwater, but number of fish harvested remains low – due to limited effort and reduced flesh quality as fish approaching maturity
2. Interior Coho are captured in the ocean and the Zones 1-5 fisheries, but of the 100,000+ Coho that pass Bonneville each year, only about 5,000 to 7,000 are harvested in the Zone 6 fishery
3. Between the terminal and Zone 6 fisheries, many “available” Coho go unharvested
4. Requirement to use minimum (8”) gill net mesh size to avoid steelhead harvest (also too large for capture of Coho)
5. Return of early run Coho coincident with fall Chinook; return of late run Coho subsequent to fall Chinook fishery