

REPORT ON THE SPORT FISH RESOURCES
OF THE NAUKATI BAY SALE UNIT
AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEIR
PROTECTION DURING LOGGING OPERATIONS

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This report, submitted by a Fish and Game representative, does not represent an official department policy but is intended as an inventory and recommendations for protection and enhancement of sport fisheries.

During the week of May 8-11, a pre-logging Interdisciplinary Team survey of the Naukati Bay Sale Unit, located on the west coast of Prince of Wales Island, was conducted. Team members included, in addition to myself, Forest Service personnel, as well as game and commercial fish biologists from our Ketchikan office. The following report is the result of observations and evaluations made during this survey.

It should be noted that no attempt will be made to comment on the Sarkar Lake system in this report. Due to the significance of these lakes to the sport fishery resources, it is felt a more detailed study of the area was necessary before recommendations could be made concerning their management under a possible U-3 classification.

I. Location of the main system road through the sale area.

On May 8, I accompanied Wayne Tlusty, Forest Service Landscape Architect, on a survey of the main system road (System Road 5000) location along Long Lake. During the survey it was found the road paralleled the lake, at times coming within 25 feet of the lake shore. As a result of the close proximity of the road to the lake shore, no leave area of timber would be possible, consequently, the entire west shore of the lake would be exposed by the highway.

Although Long Lake is not presently a major sport fishing area, there is definite potential due to its close proximity to the Sakar Lakes. The lake is easily accessible via the 1/2 mile long outlet stream which empties into Sarkar Lake.

There are no barriers on the outlet stream, and thus it can be assumed that all species of fish found in Sakar Lake are potentially available in Long Lake.

The following species were documented in Long Lake by the use of minnow traps: coho salmon, cutthroat trout, sticklebacks, and cottids. In addition, Dolly Varden were observed in the outlet stream.

Due to the potential sport fishery offered by this lake, I recommend the road location be moved east of Long Lake (see map). This would not only remove the road from direct contact with Long Lake, but it would also remove its close location to the three smaller lakes directly south of Long Lake. Although the more easterly route would entail an additional stream crossing (the outlet of Long Lake) I feel the overall impact on the sport fishery resource would be greatly reduced.

II. Unnamed tributary to outlet stream of Long Lake.

This stream (#1 on map) was surveyed on May 9, in the accompaniment of Paul Novak, Commercial Fish Division. This stream averaged 10-20 feet wide and 1½-2 feet deep, with pools up to 5 feet deep.

The lower 1/8 to 1/4 mile has open grassy banks and offers excellent sport fishing opportunities. After the 1/4 mile point upstream, the number of windfalls begins to increase making accessibility somewhat difficult.

Throughout the entire area surveyed (up to the forks about 2½ miles upstream) there is a good pool-riffle relationship and the overall rearing potential is good to very good.

A beaver dam is located at the forks which did not appear to be a block. Dolly Varden and coho salmon were observed above the dam.

A proposed spur road is scheduled to cross this creek at the forks. If this occurs, the road will cross two streams, with adverse impact on both. It is recommended that if a road crossing does occur, that

it be located 200 yards further downstream from the forks. This would reduce the number of streams crossed to one. In general, if logging occurs along this stream, it is recommended care be taken in falling and yarding trees away from the stream channel. It is also recommended that a wind-firm leave of timber be left along both sides of the outlet stream of Long Lake and the lower 1/4 mile of this tributary to protect the recreational access and sport fishing opportunities.

III. Yatuk Creek (ADFG # 103-90-25)

This stream was surveyed on May 10, with Paul Novak. The section surveyed included the area from the lower lake to the mouth. The stream averaged 15-30 feet wide and 1-4 feet deep. There was good spawning areas available throughout the section surveyed and no fish blocks were encountered. The entire area offers good rearing potential.

Overall, due to the characteristics of the stream (much of the time it flowed through canyons with rock walls) I could see no major conflicts between the sport fish resources and logging. If the trees are felled and yarded away from the stream, I foresee no problem as far as the rearing capabilities of the system are concerned. The only possible conflict would be the tributary which flows in from the north about 1/2 mile below the lake. This tributary offers excellent spawning and rearing areas. The valley through which it flows is fairly broad and consequently large trees are found right down to the stream banks. Extreme care will have to be taken when logging this area in order to protect the stream.

There are two areas of possible stream improvements on Yatuk Creek. Both are blowdown areas, one is located immediately downstream of the upper Commercial Fish study site, the other consists of the lower 1/3 mile of

stream. In both areas, accessibility is extremely difficult due to the large number of windfalls across the creek.

Since nearly all the windfalls are not in the creek itself, but rather across it, I can see no problems in removing as many as possible.

Cleaning up these two areas would not only improve accessibility, but would also eliminate possible future log jams.

IV. Outside coastline of sale area.

This area was surveyed jointly by Novak and myself, as well as Blankenbeckler and Wood on May 9 and 10. There were approximately one dozen small streams encountered (numbers 3-15 on map) which would offer fair to good rearing potential. Many of these streams, however, were flowing through areas which have already been clearcut.

There is virtually no major sport fishing conflicts along the outer coast due to the fact that most of the area has been logged already or is being logged at the present time. The overall recommendation concerning this area would be to fell and yard trees away from these streams.

V. Naukati and Gutchi Creeks.

Although I did not personally survey these two streams, members of the Commercial Fish Division documented coho in Naukati Creek. It must also be assumed coho and probably Dolly Varden are distributed throughout both systems as there are no fish blocks present. As a result, if logging occurs near these streams, care should be taken in felling and yarding trees away from the streams.

VI. General comments and summary of recommendations.

It must be remembered that the SarkarLake system, with its exceptional

recreational opportunities, borders this sale area. Due to the fact that large recreational leave areas will be requested around these lakes, I feel additional large recreational leave areas within this sale unit are unnecessary.

This should not imply, however, that the lakes and streams within this unit are not important for sport fishing as well as rearing areas, but merely that I feel logging can take place with a minimum of disturbance to the area if the following recommendations are followed:

- (1) Relocate system road east of Long Lake.
- (2) Leave windfirm stand of timber along outlet stream of Long Lake and lower reaches of tributary to the outlet stream.
- (3) Locate spur road crossing of tributary to Long Lake outlet stream 200 yards or more below forks.
- (4) Leave windfirm stand of timber around Long Lake.
- (5) Fell and yard trees away from Yatuk Creek and all its tributaries.
- (6) Fell and yard trees away from all streams along the outside coast of the sale unit.
- (7) Fell and yard trees away from Naukati and Gutchi Creeks and all their tributaries and lakes.

cc:Wadean
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