

The Glory Hole at Chilkoot Lake

This clear water spring is located at the NW end of Chilkoot Lake near Haines. The spring area approximates a circle with 60 yard diameter. The water is 1-3 feet deep, covering a white sand bottom. Large numbers of sockeye salmon spawn in this area. It was estimated that 3000 sockeye spawned in the spring during July and August of 1972. The fish dig overlying sand away from a coarse gravel layer and deposit their eggs. Sand eventually covers them. Egg survival is apparently high due to water upwellings of high oxygen and temperature throughout the incubation period. This area is a major sockeye producer in the Chilkoot system.

The spawning peak for sockeye salmon in the Glory Hole in 1972, appeared to be August 15. By Sept. 1, a majority of the spawning fish had died, making the area very aromatic. Large numbers of bald eagles and a few brown bear were observed feeding on these fish throughout the year.

When spawning activity was nearly over, the majority of pool bottom was covered with a scattering of eggs. A majority of the eggs lying on the surface of the bottom appeared to be dead. No Dolly Varden predation was observed in the pool area.

During the Haines creel census, a large number of tourists were advised to observe the salmon spawning in the Glory Hole. Since road access is now developed to within 50 yards of the pool, many people were able to visit the area. A large number of these people expressed that this sight was a high point in their Alaskan trip. The area is one of the finest natural wonders in the state. Due to its uniqueness and accessibility, it should be protected as a spawning ground observatory.