

**Fishery Data Series No. 91-39**

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**Hook-and-Release Mortality in the Kenai River  
Chinook Salmon Recreational Fishery**

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
LIST OF TABLES.....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	iv
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	2
METHODS.....	5
Data Collection and Procedures.....	5
Experimental Design and Assumptions.....	5
Telemetry Equipment.....	7
Capture and Tagging.....	8
Biological and Fishery Variables.....	8
Dispositions of Tagged Fish.....	10
Mortalities.....	13
Data Analysis.....	14
Estimating Hook-and-Release Mortality.....	15
Explanatory Variables.....	17
Comparison of Experiments.....	17
RESULTS.....	17
Five-day and Ultimate Fates.....	18
Associations Between Fate and Biological Characteristics.....	22
Early Run.....	22
Late Run.....	22
Associations Between Size, Sex, and Fishery Variables...	22
Associations Between Fishery Variables and Fate.....	25
Early Run.....	25
Late Run.....	25
Survival Analysis.....	25
Explanatory Variables.....	30

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Comparison of Experiments 1989-1990.....	30
Explanatory Variables.....	35
Movement Behavior of Tagged Fish.....	35
Initial Direction of Movement.....	35
Returns to Cook Inlet.....	35
Movements Through the Lower River Sport Fishery....	37
Spawning Destinations.....	37
Early Run.....	41
Late Run.....	41
Stream Life of Tagged Fish.....	41
DISCUSSION.....	41
Hook-and-Release Mortality.....	41
Chinook Salmon Movements.....	44
Spawning Destinations.....	45
Implications for Chinook Salmon Management.....	46
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	48
LITERATURE CITED.....	49
APPENDIX A.....	51
APPENDIX B.....	69

Table 4. Distribution of fates by run and sex for Kenai River chinook salmon, 1990.

	Females		Males		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<u>Early Run</u>						
Five-day Fates:						
Harvest	1.00	0.80	.	.	1.00	0.80
Mortality	6.00	4.80	5.00	4.00	11.00	8.80
Survivors	49.00	39.20	63.00	50.40	112.00	89.60
Tag net	.	.	1.00	0.80	1.00	0.80
Total	56.00	44.80	69.00	55.20	125.00	100.00
Ultimate Fates:						
Dropouts	1.00	0.80	2.00	1.60	3.00	2.40
Harvest	6.00	4.80	3.00	2.40	9.00	7.20
Mortality	9.00	7.20	6.00	4.80	15.00	12.00
Spawner	39.00	31.20	55.00	44.00	94.00	75.20
Tag net	.	.	2.00	1.60	2.00	1.60
Uplost	1.00	0.80	1.00	0.80	2.00	1.60
Total	56.00	44.80	69.00	55.20	125.00	100.00
<u>Late Run</u>						
Five-day Fates:						
Dropout	.	.	2.00	1.67	2.00	1.67
Harvest	1.00	0.83	2.00	1.67	3.00	2.50
Mortality	1.00	0.83	6.00	5.00	7.00	5.83
Survivor	28.00	23.33	78.00	65.00	106.00	88.33
Set net	.	.	1.00	0.83	1.00	0.83
Tag net	.	.	1.00	0.83	1.00	0.83
Total	30.00	25.00	90.00	75.00	120.00	100.00
Ultimate Fates:						
Dropout	1.00	0.83	9.00	7.50	10.00	8.33
Harvest	3.00	2.50	9.00	7.50	12.00	10.00
Mortality	1.00	0.83	6.00	5.00	7.00	5.83
Set net	.	.	6.00	5.00	6.00	5.00
Spawner	22.00	18.33	49.00	40.83	71.00	59.17
Tag net	1.00	0.83	6.00	5.00	7.00	5.83
Uplost	2.00	1.67	5.00	4.17	7.00	5.83
Total	30.00	25.00	90.00	75.00	120.00	100.00

10.4% NON Spawners

24.8% NON Spawners

11.67% NON Spawners

40.83 - NON Spawners

- 1 5-day 10-12% non-spawners
- 2 ultimate 25-40 NON Spawners
- 3 Spawners - Actually Spawner? Egg retention only appears to spawn

#### Early Run:

Early-run spawners distributed to both tributary (72%) and mainstem (28%) final destinations (Figure 13). Destinations were independent of weekly entry times for early-run fish ( $\chi^2 = 12.932$ ,  $df = 9$ ,  $p > 0.10$ ). The Killey (42%) and Funny rivers (20%) were the most extensively used tributary destinations, while the middle section (11%) was the most extensively used mainstem river reach. Completion of early-run spawning activity, evidenced by consecutive mortality signals or downstream movement from maximum upper locations, occurred from 23 June through 22 August with peak spawning in mid-July. Median spawning dates were 13, 18, and 19 July for Funny River, Killey River, and mainstem spawners, respectively.

#### Late Run:

Mainstem destinations were selected for spawning by 69 (97%) out of 71 tagged fish. The remaining two fish (3%) spawned in Benjamin and Juneau creeks. Thirty-three fish (46%) spawned in the lower mainstem river reach, followed by 22 (31%) in the middle reach, 9 (13%) in the upper reach, and 5 (7%) in the interlake reach (Figure 13). Distributions of spawners among the four mainstem river reach classifications were independent of weekly entry times ( $\chi^2 = 12.932$ ,  $df = 9$ ,  $p < 0.10$ ). Completion of late-run spawning activity, evidenced by consecutive mortality signals or downstream movement from maximum upper locations, occurred from 23 July through 10 September with a median spawning date of 15 August.

#### Stream Life of Tagged Fish:

The duration of time between tagging and death (stream life) was calculated for 165 fish that were judged to have spawned (Table 12). Mean stream life was 32 days (SE = 0.837) and ranged from 8 to 67 days. Stream life for tributary spawners (mean = 33.7 days, SE = 1.391) and mainstem spawners (mean = 30.3 days, SE = 1.076) was not significantly different.

Tagged fish that migrated to small tributaries spent a larger proportion of their stream life in the mainstem than fish utilizing the Funny and Killey rivers ( $\chi^2 = 5.526$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $0.05 < p < 0.010$ ). Tagged fish utilizing small tributaries expended 79% of their stream life in the mainstem, while Killey and Funny River fish expended 54% and 55%, respectively.

## DISCUSSION

### Hook-and-Release Mortality

Hook-and-release mortality was found to be significantly smaller than the tolerance level of 20% established at the outset of this study. The hook-and-release mortality estimated in this study should be considered an overestimate, as the effect of additional handling during the tagging cannot be subtracted. For the three experiments, the survival after 5 days was estimated at 89.4%, 91.2%, and 94.1% for the late 1989 run, the early 1990, and the late 1990 runs. The 95% confidence intervals for these three estimates were well above the 80% tolerance level that we had established