

2001 SALMON REPORT RESULTS
by Jack Long

A number of years ago the salmon report coupon program was pioneered. The intent of the program was two-fold. It would give salmon anglers a weekly update on salmon activity, fishing depths, "hot" locations and presentations that were working best at the time. The other benefit of the program was an annual summary of the salmon activity. The report coupons are made available at bait and tackle shops and anglers are encouraged to pick them up, complete one for each salmon caught and mail them in. Each week the coupon results are compiled into a report and this report is broadcast Thursday, Friday and Saturday on **KFYR 550 Radio**. 2001 sponsors of the program were **Moritz Sport and Marine**, Bismarck; **KFYR 550 Radio**, Bismarck; **Gibbons Fiberglass & Aluminum Boat Repair**, Bismarck; and **Dakota Tackle**, Bismarck. A special thank you to **Gene Werre**, an account executive with KFYR, for his continued support of the project.

As an encouragement to anglers to submit coupons, weekly prize packages, twice monthly cash prizes and two major prizes were given away this year. The major prizes are awarded at mid-season and at the season's end. In each case, the drawing is from all coupons submitted prior to the date of the drawing. The mid-season drawing winners was **Scott Stockdill** of Garrison. Scott won a **Okuma Classic 300 L Salmon Reel**. The season end prize was won by **Kelsey Johnson** of Bismarck. Kelsey won a **Okuma Classic 300 L Salmon Reel, 8ft. Shimano Rod, 100 feet of 20 lb line and a "25 Long A Bomber" Lure**. The mid and season end prizes were donated by **Wade Anderson and Dakota Tackle** of Bismarck. The weekly prize packages winners are selected from those coupons turned in for that week. The packages are a combination of lures and attractors and were donated by **Rhys Davis Ltd.** maker of the **Teaser** and **Anchovy Special** lures, **O'Ki Tackle** maker of the **Big Shooter** flasher, **Silver Strike Distributing** of Bismarck, **Stinger Spoons and Sidekick Attractors** and **Scott's Pick City Conoco**. The twice monthly cash prizes of \$25 for the months of June, July and August were sponsored by the **Great Planers Trout and Salmon Club**.

Through the summer 539 report coupons were submitted. The leading lure for the summer was the squid at 163 followed by the squish or needlefish with 135 and cutbait at 130. These three lures caught 79% of the salmon reported. Three main colors caught 64% of the fish. They were, in order, white, green, and blue. The flasher was again the leading attractor and the favorite color was blue. It is interesting to note, however, that it is becoming less important to anglers to put a flasher on every line they have in the water. Anglers are finding success in running terminal tackle - bait, spoons and crankbaits - without an attractor. Some are running the attractor directly off the cannonball and then running their lines above the ball with just the terminal tackle. Those with more than one downrigger choose not to put attractors on every rod. These options allow the angler to enjoy the fight of

the fish alone without the drag of an attractor and it greatly reduces the chance of a tangle. Some of the anglers who run stackers are only using attractors on one of the rods, usually the deeper line. This allows one to reduce the vertical separation between lines and to get both set-ups in the "fish zone". The salmon weighed a total of 4,172 pounds or about a 7.8 pound average for the season. For the summer, the average lure depth was 70 feet and the lure was fished over an average of 102 feet of water. 198 salmon were picked up between 9am and noon, 119 between 6am and 9am and 109 between noon and 3pm. Five areas produced 78% of the salmon. Deadman's Bay led the way producing 154 fish and was followed by Pochant Bay, the face of the dam, the Riverdale Bluffs, and Government Bay.

April, May, and June started extremely slow in 2001 with only 25 report coupons being filled out and sent in. The tailrace produced 17 salmon as the leading location. Seven salmon were caught on a crankbait. Green were the favorite lure color and 9am to noon was the best time of the day. The fish averaged 8.8 pounds and were caught 18 feet down in 26 feet of water.

July saw a slight increase with 50 coupons being turned in. The face of the dam was the best place to catch a salmon. The squish or needlefish and the squid tied for top honors with 9 salmon each. White became the color of the month with 12 fish. The best time of the day was between noon and 3pm when 12 fish were caught. A blue flasher was the preferred attractor. The average salmon weighed 7.4 pounds and was caught 39 feet down over 54 feet of water.

August, as in past years, saw a definite change in angling success. In all, 391 coupons were submitted in August. Deadman's Bay accounted for 138 of the salmon caught in August, followed by Pochant Bay (76), Government Bay (53) and the Riverdale Bluffs with (38). The prime time of the day to fish was 9am to noon (158), followed by 6am to 9am (96), and noon to 3pm (76). Three main lure presentations were key to August fishing. A squid led the way with 144, followed by a squish or needlefish at 105 and cutbait at 87. Lure color was spread out primarily between three choices. Those top three were: white (112), green (84), and blue (81). As usual, a blue flasher (111) led the way. The average fish size was 7.8 pounds and the average depths were 75 over 111 feet.

During September 73 report coupons were sent in. The face of the dam was the best producer with 23 fish. Cutbait caught 36 salmon and was followed by the squish or needlefish (21) and the squid (10). Blue and pink at 15 were the favorite color of the salmon, followed by white (13). From 9am until noon 26 salmon were netted while noon to 3pm accounted for 17 salmon and 6am to 9am 15 salmon. As usual, the blue flasher (15) led the attractor charge. The average September salmon weighed 7.5 pounds. The September salmon were caught at an average lure depth of 73 over 95 feet of water.

As a quick review of the season, in April, May, and June a 8.8 pound salmon could be caught in the tailrace on a green crankbait. If you were fishing between 9am and noon and fishing 18 feet down in 26 feet of water, you were in the right place at the right time.

As we moved into July, you should unload your boat in the lake and fish the face of the dam. Keep a squid or squish handy, but make sure it is white and trailing a blue flasher. Do your fishing between noon and 3pm and stay in 54 feet water with your lure down 39 feet. Following all these directions should land you a 7.4 pound salmon.

In August you could catch a 7.8 pound salmon at Deadman's Bay between 9am and noon. You had to be using a white squid behind a blue flasher. Finally fish that squid 75 feet down over 111 feet of water.

As we moved into September, the face of the dam became the hot place to be. Fishing there between 9am and noon with cutbait and a blue flasher would get you a 7.5 pound salmon. By the way, that salmon came at 73 feet over 95 feet of water.

As data is compared going back to 1989 for the months of August and September, the prime salmon fishing months for many anglers, it is again encouraging to look at some of last year's numbers. In 1989 the average size fish reported for the year was 6.0 pounds. 1990 saw this dip slightly to 5.8 pounds and then during the period 1991-2000 the average weights were 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.4, 5.3, 6.0, 5.6, 6.0, 6.2, and 10.0 pounds. 2001 saw a slight dip in average weight to 7.8 pounds but this was still the second highest recorded average weight in the period. The number of salmon caught during August and September has leveled off after peaking in 1996. There is concern that continued low water levels on the lake may negatively affect salmon angling success in the future. The numbers and size of fish caught in 1992 - 1994 definitely reflect the record low water level set in May of 1991 when the lake dipped to 1815.0 feet. With a fourth year of below normal upstream runoff, we can only hope the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will practice a conservation mode when considering Garrison Dam releases for the remainder of 2002 and until we can recover to more normal precipitation patterns. 1989 saw 448 salmon caught during those two months while 607 were caught in 1990, 520 in 1991, 334 in 1992, 341 in 1993, 305 in 1994, 596 in 1995, 943 in 1996, 631 in 1997, 614 in 1998, 597 in 1999, 488 in 2000, and 464 in 2001. For the whole summer 53% of the salmon caught weighed 8 pounds or greater and 29% were 10 pounds or greater. Seeing sustained growth in both numbers of fish caught and the size of fish is encouraging.

As in the past, thank you to all who took the time to fill out and send in the coupons. Chart detailing past years results follows (squish = needlefish size squid):

MOST PRODUCTIVE FISHING AREAS BY MONTH

DC = Douglas Creek PB = Pochant Bay
 DF = Face of the Dam SB = Scoria Bay
 RB = Riverdale Bluffs DB = Deadman's Bay
 ST = Steinke's Bay GB = Government Bay
 GA = Garrison Bay DT = DeTrobriand Bay
 TR = Tailrace HB = Hazen Bay

(There was no data available for 1989)

YEAR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT
1990	DC	DF	DF	PB	DB
1991	DC	DF	DF	DB	PB
1992	DF	DF	RB	DB	SB
1993	DC	DF	DF	DF	SB
1994	DF	DF	DF	DF	DF
1995	SB & ST	DF	DF & RB	GB	RB
1996	GA	DF	RB	DB	GB
1997	DT	DF	DF	DB	DF
1998	TR	TR	DF	PB	DB
1999	TR	TR	HB	DB	DF
2000	DF	DF	DF	DF	SB
2001	TR	TR	DF	DB	DF

More follows:

TERMINAL TACKLE BY MONTH

YEAR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT
1989	CRANK	CRANK	SQUID	SQUID	SQUID
1990	CRANK	SQUISH	SQUID	SQUID	SQUID
1991	CRANK	SQUISH	SQUISH	CUTBAIT	SQUID
1992	CRANK	CRANK	SQUISH	CUTBAIT	SPOON
1993	SPOON	SPOON	CRANK	SQUISH	CRANK
1994	CRANK	CRANK	CRANK	SQUID	SQUID
1995	SPOON	SQUISH	SQUISH	SQUID	SQUID
1996	CRANK	CRANK	SQUID	SQUID	SQUID
1997	CRANK	SPOON	SQUISH	SQUID	SQUID
1998	CRANK	CRANK	SQUISH	SQUISH	CUTBAIT
1999	CRANK	LIVEBAIT	SQUISH	SQUID	SQUID
2000	CRANK	CRANK	SQUID	SQUID	SQUISH
2001	CRANK	CRANK	SQD&SQH	SQUID	CUTBAIT

TERMINAL TACKLE COLOR BY MONTH
 BL = BLUE PK = PINK CH = CHARTREUSE
 WH = WHITE GR = GREEN RB = RAINBOW

YEAR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT
1989	BL	BL	PK	PK	PK
1990	CH	WH	WH	GR	RB
1991	BL	BL	BL	PK	PK
1992	BL	BL	BL	GR	GR
1993	GR	GR	BL	WH	PK
1994	GR	BL	BL	WH	PK
1995	BL	PK	BL	BL	PK
1996	RB	BL	PK	GR	PK
1997	GR	GR	BL	PK	PK
1998	GR & BL	CH	BL	PK	PK
1999	GR	WH	BL	BL & PK	PK
2000	BL	BL	BL	BL	BL
2001	GR	GR	WH	WH	BL & PK

AVERAGE LURE DEPTH BY MONTH
(FEET)

YEAR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT
1989	25	25	37	79	37
1990	10	32	61	87	78
1991	12	40	67	86	83
1992	25	25	63	86	14
1993	13	17	22	81	25
1994	13	12	45	78	43
1995	6	34	73	80	82
1996	10	25	45	80	72
1997	12	22	55	92	64
1998	18	12	48	74	79
1999	20	24	49	95	59
2000	26	26	50	75	40
2001	18	18	39	75	73

AVERAGE WATER DEPTH FISHED BY MONTH
(FEET)

YEAR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT
1989	47	47	61	113	60
1990	34	53	91	120	104
1991	36	71	96	119	111
1992	54	54	97	120	27
1993	38	48	44	105	45
1994	30	28	63	110	69
1995	21	62	118	123	114
1996	37	58	91	123	96
1997	39	47	71	138	103
1998	30	23	73	105	103
1999	28	34	69	132	87
2000	37	37	70	103	56
2001	26	26	54	111	95

AVERAGE FISH SIZE BY MONTH
(POUNDS)

YEAR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT
1989	4.4	4.4	5.2	6.4	7.1
1990	4.6	4	5.4	6.9	6.3
1991	3.2	3.8	3.3	5.1	4.7
1992	3.7	3.7	4	4.9	5.2
1993	2.2	2.2	3.8	5.7	5.5
1994	2.3	2.7	3.6	4.6	5.1
1995	2.3	4.1	3.1	5.3	6.3
1996	3.5	3.9	4.7	6	5.9
1997	3.8	4.1	4.2	5.5	5.9
1998	3.2	5.4	4.4	6.1	5.8
1999	3.8	6.6	5.9	6.1	6.4
2000	6.1	6.1	8.3	10.1	9.5
2001	8.8	8.8	7.4	7.8	7.5

NUMBER OF FISH CAUGHT
AND
AVERAGE FISH WEIGHT
AUGUST & SEPTEMBER

YEAR	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	TOTAL	WEIGHT
1989	290	158	448	6
1990	397	210	607	5.8
1991	380	140	520	4.3
1992	293	41	334	4.5
1993	276	65	341	4.6
1994	221	84	305	4.4
1995	332	264	596	5.3
1996	669	274	943	6
1997	431	200	631	5.6
1998	442	172	614	6
1999	455	142	597	6.2
2000	424	64	488	10
2001	391	73	464	7.8