

## **2003 Salmon Report Summary – Lee Klapprodt**

This ends the 19<sup>th</sup> year that I've done the weekly salmon fishing report on KFYZ – 550 am radio. It's great that the good folks at Kfire have provided so much support for this project for so long. We have had good years and not so good years catching the elusive chinook salmon on Lake Sakakawea but we've always had great sponsor support. Again in 2003, Gibbons Fiberglass and Aluminum Boat Repair, Moritz Sport and Marine and Dakota Tackle provided major sponsorship. These folks have supported the show for several years now and I hope you will make a point of expressing appreciation to them when you have a chance.

In addition to the major sponsors that help pay for the radio time etc., we have several additional sponsors that donate prizes as an incentive for anglers to submit their salmon report coupons each week. This year, Rhys Davis Ltd. makers of the Anchovy Special and Oki Tackle makers of the Big Shooter Flasher contributed for the 19<sup>th</sup> year in a row. Dan Veer, Distributor for Stinger Spoons and Attractors; Scott Hobbs owner of Scott's Bait and Tackle in Pick City; and Kit Henegar owner of Captain Kit's Marina in Lake Sakakawea State Park all contributed to the weekly prize packages. Wade Anderson, owner of Dakota Tackle provided the mid-season and season-end major prizes. Please support all the businesses I've mentioned with your dollars when your shopping.

So who were the winners this year? Here's the list: Joey Veer, Coon Rapids, MN; Jon Mitzel, Bismarck; Todd Sando, Bismarck; Wayne Schmitz, Minot (twice); Bob Gregoire, Bismarck (twice); Derwin Mann, Bismarck (twice); Kathy Modin, Bismarck; Marilyn Schick, Bismarck; Leah Merdoff, Fargo; Craig Engel, Grand Forks; Pat Fridgen, Bismarck; Barb Fischer, Bismarck; Rose Becher, Mandan; and Floyd Fischer, Bismarck. Larry Freed of Bismarck won the mid-season prize and Floyd Fischer of Bismarck won the season-end prize. Congratulations to all!

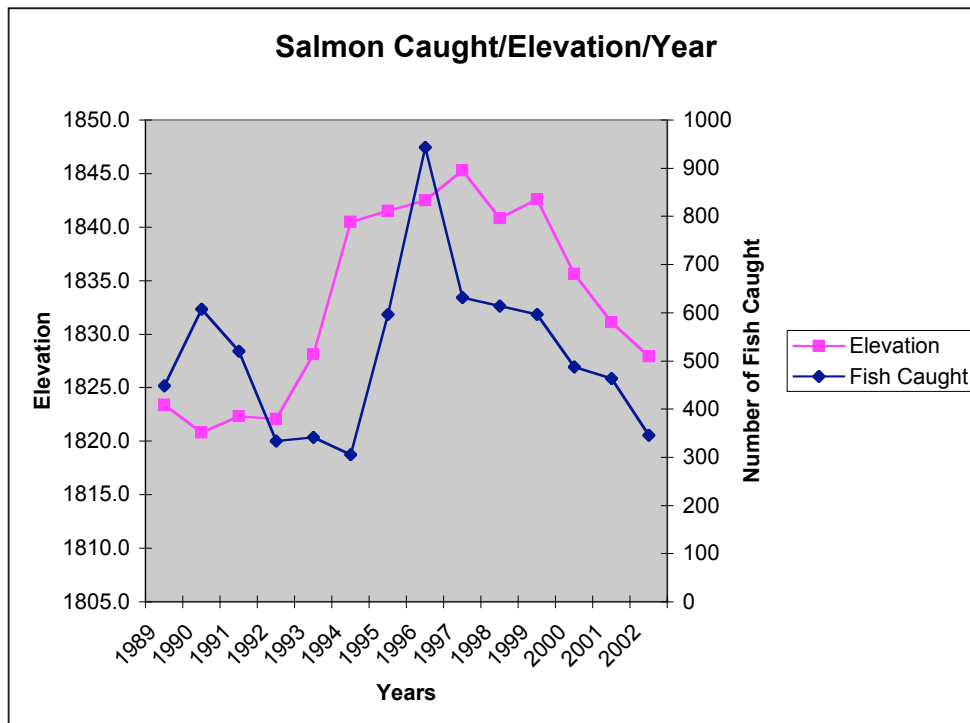
My apologies for being slow in getting prize packages delivered. Some have theirs and the rest will be distributed soon. Thanks for your patience and for sending in those report coupons; I wouldn't even try to do the weekly reports without direct angler input.

For years, Jack Long has done a superb job in compiling the data provided on the report coupons in a detailed and user friendly fashion. We all really appreciate the time and energy he puts into it. You can find his summary reports on my salmon web site at <http://ndteaser.tripod.com>. To satisfy my curiosity, I plotted the number and the average weight of salmon reported on coupons since 1989. It confirmed my suspicion that water levels in Lake Sakakawea probably have a great deal to do with the condition of our salmon fishery and likely explains why this year was a fairly tough one. Jack's work made it was easy to plot this info, I hope you find it interesting.

Note on the first graph that the number of salmon caught goes up with water levels but the response is delayed two to three years. However, when the water levels go down, the number of salmon caught goes down immediately. The second graph confirms that after a drought impacts the size of Lake Sakakawea salmon, it can take many years for the quality of our fishery to rebound. And again, when the water levels fall off, there is an

almost immediate reduction in the size of our salmon. This only reflects what has happened in the past. We can't know for sure what will happen in the future. However, this is enough indication to me to say that we must get the Corps of Engineers to change the way they manage the Missouri River reservoirs, especially Lake Sakakawea.

I believe it is critical that the Corps of Engineers adopt a new Master Manual that includes conservation measures to prevent future huge, negative impacts to our fishery. I know it seems like a waste of time to attend public meetings on Missouri River management, but if we don't continue to loudly express our displeasure with the current system, we will be doomed to live with it for ever. An Annual Operating Plan meeting is scheduled for Pierre, South Dakota on October 28<sup>th</sup>. I hope we can get a group together to go make some noise.



### Salmon Weight/Elevation/Year

