

Introduction: For many years Jack Long of Bismarck (Skip Jack on the radio) has analyzed the salmon report coupons sent in by anglers and provided the Great Planers Trout and Salmon Club with tabulated results. Jack is a very dedicated salmon angler and says compiling the results each year is his way to help others be more successful. I don't think any of us fully appreciate the hours of effort Jack puts into this project each year. Once you've read his report, you'll agree that we owe him a hearty thank you.

Thanks Jack,
Lee Klapprodt.

1998 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**. 1998 sponsors of the program were **Bismarck Firestone Store**, Bismarck; **KFYR 550 Radio**, Bismarck; **Gibbons Fiberglass & Aluminum Boat Repair**, Bismarck; and **Sioux Sporting Goods**, 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 and three 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 were **Erik Sunderland** of Mandan and **Bill Roach** of Bismarck. Erik and Bill each won a **Minn-Kota Deck Hand Electric Anchor Wench**. The season end prize was won by **Craig Engel** of Grand Forks. Craig won a **Minn-Kota 36 lb thrust Extreme tiller mount Trolling Motor**. Prizes were donated by **Sioux Sporting Goods** 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.**, **O'Ki Flashers Ltd.**, and **Dakota Tackle** and **Silver Strike Distributing** of Bismarck.

Through the summer 776 report coupons were submitted. The leading lure for the summer was the squish or needlefish which accounted for a little over one-fourth of the salmon caught. The squish was followed by cutbait, squids and crankbaits. Four main colors made

their presence felt and they were, in order, blue, pink, green, and white. These four colors produced 573 or 75% of the salmon caught. The flasher was again the leading attractor and the favorite colors were blue, green, and white. 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 and without the drag of an attractor. The salmon weighed a total of 4,414 pounds or about a 5.7 pound average for the season. For the summer, the average lure depth was 68 feet and the lure was fished over an average of 95 feet of water. 279 salmon were picked up between 9am and noon, 168 between 6 and 9am and 150 between noon and 3pm. Four areas produced 100 or more salmon each during the past season. The face of the dam led the way producing 151 fish and was followed by Pochant Bay, Deadman's Bay, and the Tailrace.

April and May started extremely slow in 1998 with only 18 report coupons being filled out and sent in. The Tailrace produced 9 salmon as the leading location. Ten salmon were caught on a crankbait. Green and blue were the favorite lure colors and 6 to 9am or 9am to noon were the best times of the day. The fish averaged 3.2 pounds and were caught 18 feet down in 30 feet of water.

June saw a slight increase with 66 salmon report coupons turned in. The Tailrace was the only place to be with 64 of the 66 fish being caught there. The crankbait was the best producer with 61 salmon being caught on it. To work, the lure had to be chartreuse or green in color and fishing was again best between 6am and noon. If you ran your lure at an average depth of 12 feet over 23 feet of water, fish caught would average 5.4 pounds.

July kept the pace with 78 coupons being turned in. The face of the dam and the Tailrace were your best bet to catch a salmon, with 45 being taken there. The squish led the charge with 29 and the crankbait at 18 came in second. Blue became the color of the month with 23 fish, while chartreuse followed with 13. The best time of the day was between 9am and noon when 29 fish were caught. A blue flasher was the preferred attractor for 43 salmon. The average salmon weighed 4.4 pounds and was caught 48 feet down over 73 feet of water.

August again saw a definite change in angling success. In all, 442 coupons were submitted in August. The Pochant Bay area accounted for 91 of the salmon caught in August, followed by the face of the dam (89), Government Bay (65) and Deadman's Bay and

the Riverdale Bluffs with (59) each. The prime time of the day to fish was 9am to noon (169), followed by noon to 3pm (108), and 6am to 9am (95). Three main lure presentations were key to August fishing. A squish led the way with 146 followed by cutbait at 137 and a squid at 121. Lure color was spread out primarily between five choices. Those top five were: pink (105), blue (91), white (87), green (74), and rainbow at (38). As usual, a blue flasher (175) led the way. The average fish size increased to 6.1 pounds and the average depths were 74 over 105 feet.

During September the good fishing continued with 172 report coupons being sent in. Deadman's Bay with 40 fish was the leading producer. Cutbait caught 69 salmon. Pink at 52 remained the favorite color of the salmon, followed by blue (47), and green (21). From 9am until noon 63 salmon were netted. As usual, the blue flasher (61) led the attractor charge. The average September salmon weighed 5.8 pounds. The September salmon were even deeper with an average lure depth of 79 over 103 feet of water.

As a quick review of the season, in April or May a 3.2 pound salmon could be caught from the Tailrace on a green or blue crankbait. If you were fishing between 6am and noon and fishing 18 feet down in 30 feet of water, you were in the right place at the right time.

June was time to pull out your chartreuse crankbait. Fish the Tailrace between 6am and 9am and fish 12 feet down in 23 feet of water, you just might hook a 5.4 pound salmon.

As we moved into July, you should fish the face of the dam. Keep a squish handy, but make sure it is blue and trailing a blue flasher. Do your fishing between 9am and noon and stay in 73 feet water with your lure down 48 feet. Following all these directions should land you a 4.4 pound salmon.

In August you could catch that 6.1 pound salmon in front of Pochant Bay between 9am and noon. You had to be using a pink squish behind a blue flasher. Finally fish that needlefish 74 feet down over 105 feet of water.

As we moved into September, Deadman's Bay became the hot place to be. Fishing there between 9am and noon with cutbait and a blue flasher would get you a 5.8 pound salmon. By the way, that salmon came at 79 feet over 103 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 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 1991-1997 the average weights were 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.4, 5.3, 6.0

and 5.6 pounds. 1998 saw the average weight return to the period high of 6.0 pounds. The number of salmon caught during August and September continues it's rebound. 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 and 614 in 1998. Seeing increases 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.