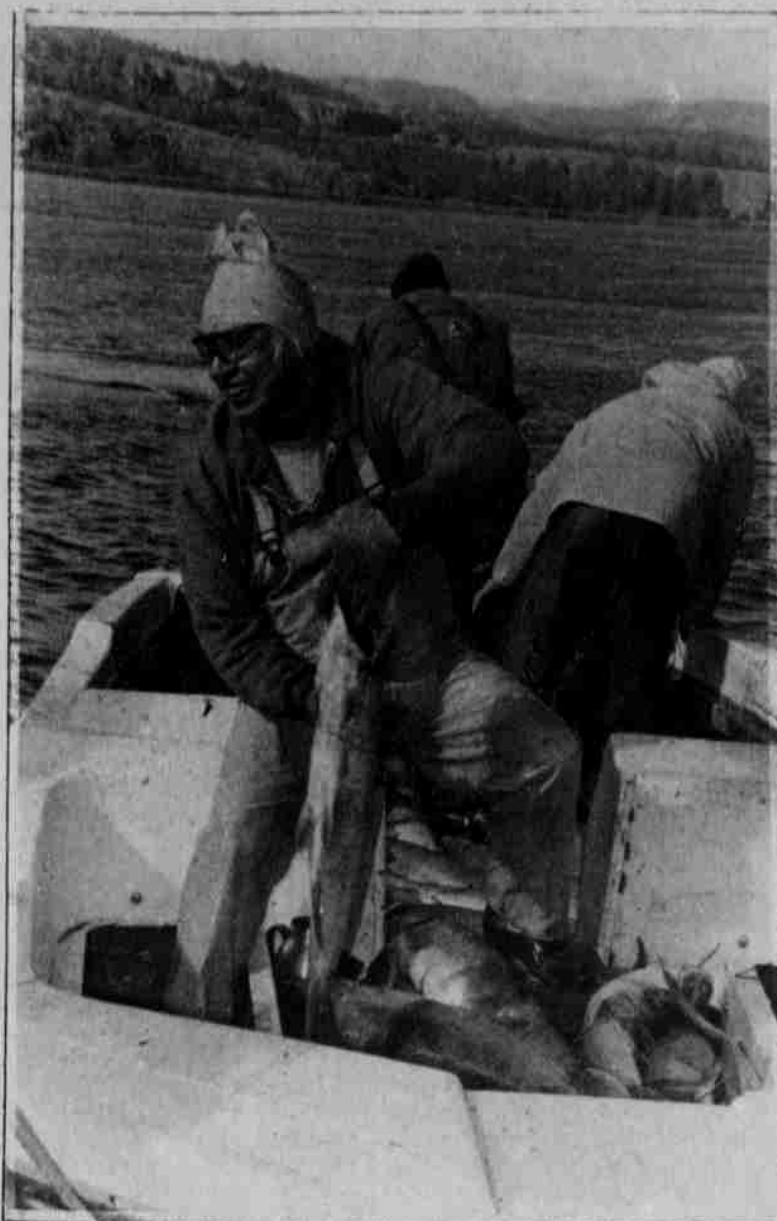


Ceremonial Fisherman Harvest Spring Chinook & Revive Debate Over Snouts



Wilbur Johnson, Sr. loads the days harvest onto the tribal boat.

By Lenora Starr

The number of spring salmon running up the Columbia River is the highest it has been in more than 2 1/2 decades and with that the Ceremonial Fisherman of the Warm Springs, Yakama, Nez Perce and Umatilla Tribes were able to harvest an additional 750 salmon for their people.

Bruce Jim, Virgil Culps, Randy Smith and Wilbur Johnson, Sr. have more than a century of fishing experience between them. They share their frustrations of this spring's harvest.

"We risk our lives to get this fish for our people and we're glad to go down to get the fish. We always pray and we always sing and we give offerings to the river. This is the way we were shown by our elders," said Bruce Jim.

Earlier this season a boat sank with a crew of fisherman and a natural resources biologist. Although there were no fatalities, the river could have taken any of them. "One little mistake could cost your life. It could get real dangerous. Something like a button or a watch could get caught or sometimes the waves could get really high," says Virgil Culps.

Following the boating accident the natural resources department had a boat "shadowing" the ceremonial fisherman.

Bruce Jim, "Living in Celilo and Tenino, fishing and hunting has been my life. I grew up a fisherman. I grew up a hunter. We traveled all over the place, hunting and gathering."

Bruce started ceremonial fishing almost 30 years ago. During that time he witnessed many changes. He recalls one of the changes is the snouts being cut off of the salmon. He explains that the taking of the snouts wasn't done in the past. But when the biologists came along and wanted to conduct research, it was the tribal members/fisherman who took the scale samples. "We took the snouts off and this was supposed to only be done for two years. After that time the taking of the snouts were to end." Bruce states the fish and wildlife committee members were in agreement not to take any more snouts. "These fish are used for ceremonial purposes and we do not want to deface

ervation of Oregon reserved the right in the Treaty with the Tribes of the Middle Oregon of 1855 to fish for ceremonial, subsistence and commercial purposes in the waters of the Columbia River and at all other usual and accustomed places beyond the boundaries of the Warm Springs Reservation; and

WHEREAS, The Tribal Council regards the right to fish for ceremonial and religious purposes to among the most sacred of its Treaty rights, and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Tribal Council to exercise full regulatory control over the ceremonial fisheries so as to protect the religious purpose of the fisheries and to insure conservation of fishery resource; now, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Tribal Council of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon that the following tribal ceremonial fishery procedures are hereby adopted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the following tribal ceremonial fishery procedures shall be codified in the appropriate chapter of the Warm Springs Tribal Code, and all prior resolutions governing ceremonial fishing procedures are hereby rescinded:

Ceremonial Fishery Procedures

1. Fishery Plan

1.1 Prior to each ceremonial fishery Natural Resources Department shall prepare and present to the Tribal Council for approval or modification a fishery plan.

1.2 The ceremonial fishery plan shall include the following elements:

(a) The harvest goal for each salmonid species. The harvest goal shall be based on a determination of tribal needs with due consideration given to the conservation requirements of the salmonid species contributing to the ceremonial fishery. Tribal needs shall be determined through consultation with tribal elders and religious leaders.

(b) The dates of the ceremonial fishery. The dates of the fishery will be determined with due consideration given to the conservation requirements of the salmonid species contributing to the fishery.

(c) The minimum qualifications for head fisherman and helper.

1.3 No ceremonial fishing shall take place until approval of the fishery plan by the Tribal Council.

1.4 All ceremonial fishing shall be conducted in strict accordance with the fishery plan approved by the Tribal Council.

2. Fishing Crew

All ceremonial fishing shall be conducted by a single crew of four persons. The crew shall consist of a member of the Natural Resources Department staff, a member of the tribal fish and game law enforcement staff, and a head fisherman and helper selected by the Fish Committee in accordance with the procedures set herein.

(a) Prior to each ceremonial fishery, Natural Resource Department shall solicit applications for a head fisherman and helper and shall publish notice of the minimum qualifications.

(b) In addition, Natural Resources Department shall compile a list of individuals nominated by Tribal elders and religious leaders for head fisherman and helper.

(c) Natural Resources Department shall submit a list of all applicants satisfying the minimum qualifications and all individuals nominated by Tribal Elders and religious leaders to the Fish and Wildlife Committee.

(d) The Fish & Wildlife committee shall select a head fisherman and helper.

3. Notice

3.1 Natural Resources Department shall submit appropriate notification to state and federal agencies a minimum of seven days prior to the start of the fishery.

3.2 The tribal notice shall contain a statement of the dates of the fishery, the fishing sites used, the harvest goal for each salmonid species, and the identity of the fishing crew.

4. Fishery

4.1 The fishery shall be conducted in strict accordance with the fishery plan approved by the Tribal Council.

4.2 The fishery shall utilize fishing sites registered to the head fisherman or helper, and any other fishing sites registered to Warm Springs Tribal members.

4.3 All nets shall be clearly marked as Warm Springs tribal ceremonial fishing nets.

4.4 During the course of the fishery, Natural Resources Department shall be responsible for preserving and storing the catch at a site near the fishery.

5. Post Fishery

5.1 At the conclusion of the fishery, Natural Resources Department shall be responsible for safe transportation of the ceremonial catch from the fishery storage site to the tribal lockers.

5.2 Natural Resources Department shall submit relevant harvest data to state and federal agencies and shall maintain all appropriate records required for tribal fishery management.

6. Violation

6.1 It shall be unlawful for any person to engage in ceremonial fishing except in accordance with the procedures set out herein.

6.2 It shall be unlawful for any member of the ceremonial fishing crew, or any other person, to sell, barter, give away or keep, fish taken for ceremonial purposes.

6.3 Unlawful activity in connection with the tribal ceremonial fishery shall be punishable in accordance with the penalties set out in WSC 340.700.

Certification

The undersigned, as Secretary-Treasurer of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, hereby certifies that the Tribal Council is composed of 11 members, of whom 8 constituting a quorum were present at the meeting thereof, duly and regularly called, noticed, convened and held this 8th day of June, 1982; and that the foregoing resolution was passed by the affirmative vote of 7 members, the Chairman not voting; and that the said resolution had not been rescinded or amended in any way.

Ralph Minnick, Secretary-Treasurer
Merritt E. Youndeer, Superintendent

Randy Smith, a fishing crew member, "you look at this resolution 6231 everything that is noted in this resolution is enacted by Tribal Council action and not any one individual. The majority of the Tribal Council had to be in agreement and not any one individual can change this resolution. That's the way I understand it."

Bruce Jim explains that it isn't just a matter of keeping the fish "whole" but it's our rights. Speaking passionately Bruce says, "We are protecting that little right that we have from our fishing. Once they start infringing on that right, then they will continue to take more and more like they are doing because nobody wants to say anything and it's making them stronger. Enough is enough! We are losing a lot of things. Even our hunting! All in the name of protection of the resources. A deer lives where he can live. Just because there isn't a deer in that square mile, it doesn't mean that there's supposed to be one there. Everything was fine until they came here."

Wilbur Johnson, Sr. recalls a time

when the salmon were so plentiful that he and his family could go to Beaver Creek on horse back and hook and line or gaff them out. He also remembers the big meetings that took place in Celilo about the building of the Dalles Dam. He saw the surveyors at the site and recalls his grandpa saying, "What are we coming down here for? They are already surveying like they already beat us." "Sure enough, we went out there for nothing. They already decided they were going to take Celilo away from us."

"We can't make our own biologists understand that it's the things that we do that make a good return of the salmon, a good healthy salmon," said Wilbur. He continues, "We try to explain to them that they have done enough handling of the fish. They have done enough damage to them, they take the snouts. When we pray for the salmon, we pray for the whole salmon. And when they take the snout they are taking the part of the salmon that is the main part of the salmon that guides them back. There's a lot of things that old people say about the brain of the salmon. He (the salmon) can tell where his own water is and knows which one to go back to. When he leaves the ocean he challenges many different streams and he always knows which one to go back to. We never harvest until we are finished giving thanks and the creator recognizes that and takes care of us."

Wilbur credits much of the knowledge he's gained to his grandfather and from listening to the old people. He learned that there is a right time to gather tools and foods and offers this story as an example of knowing how to recognize as a sign of when the salmon are coming, "Swallow, she come up the river too early. She had her babies. She waited to fish the salmon. Day after day she would go to fish the salmon. Everyday there was no salmon. Everyday she was getting hungrier and everyday here babies were hungry. She had nothing to give them. Finally she got so hungry when she went back to her babies and she ate them to survive. The next day the salmon came. Just one more day she had to wait. So in her way to show that she was guilty and wanted forgiveness, she told everybody, 'Next time when the salmon come, I will come up a day ahead of the salmon and they will be behind me. When you see me flying

around, you know the next day the salmon are coming.' That's what she done to say that what she was sorry for eating her babies. Wilbur: "You know that it's true when you see the swallows diving around the river that the salmon are coming the next day."

Wilbur wanted to share this message. "One thing I'd like to share is about what education is doing to us and tribes all around the world and all people. This part I'm talking about is in the Bible. It's coming to one government. Even the money is going to change; we have a new 100 dollar bill. A new 20 Dollar bill and even a new silver dollar. Banks will go broke pretty soon. More and more earth quakes, hail storms, and fires. One third of our trees are going to burn. Look at the fires we've had. Our trees are burned. We are working toward on world government and you could see that. Our cops are able to go to Madras and the Dalles and their cops come here. The state cops, they're allowed to come here. States and Canada's agreements. And the laws are becoming more. And people will become frustrated. Now you see the laws are becoming more. And people will become frustrated. Now you see the Tribal Council traveling everywhere. They're forgetting what the old people was teaching them. The guys getting educated. The world is coming to an end and the prophecies from the Bible are being fulfilled. The white man is coming in and doing this research. We're trying to get the council to realize that we have all these fisherman with experience about the salmon. We don't need the biologist to tell us anything about the salmon because we already know this from our old people. You're letting the education go over the experience. And you let them study 'cause they're college people and you're letting the experience go to waste."

the fisherman finished their ceremonial harvest and the fish are stored away for ceremonial use. Some of the salmon are laying in the freezers with the snouts removed. The snouts are removed from the hatchery fish because there is identifying data place in the snouts by the hatcheries. It is this data that the biologists are after.

There fisherman will continue to talk to the council about the fishery procedures. We will know how that turns out when it comes time for the fall harvest.



Oliver Kirk, Natural Resources Enforcement packs fish to be stored for ceremonial purposes after being weighed and measured.

Warm Springs Fish Hatchery Spring Chinook Salmon 2000 run, breaks new record



Hatchery Manager Mike Paiya, displays one of many native salmon that were processed during this year's salmon run.

The Spring Chinook Salmon 2000 run at the Warm Springs Fish Hatchery has been the best year yet with hundreds of incoming salmon on a daily basis. This is the first large return run of upriver spring chinook for years. According to Mavis Shaw, Assistant Manager at the Warm Springs Fish Hatchery, 70% of the run is already in.

"This is record breaking news. As of May 30, 2000, a total of 1,667 wild and 4,003 hatchery salmon have returned bringing the total to 5,670 salmon," says Mavis. The difference between the wild and hatchery salmon is, wild salmon have been uniquely shaped by natural forces to survive and reproduce in their home stream. Hatcheries do not present the same rigors as stream life, and thus, can produce fish that

are not as genetically and behaviorally suited to life in the stream over generations.

"The run is expected to continue through mid-June or early August. According to Warm Springs Fish Hatchery old records, the best years were in 1990 1,867 salmon were processed while in 1989, 2,528 were processed bringing the total to 3,947," said Mavis.

"Salmon are still coming in," said Hatching Manager Mike Paiya. "There for awhile about 300 to 400 salmon were coming in daily with bigger numbers waiting after the weekend," said Mike.

According to Randy Boise Fish Hatchery employee, many of the salmon are being stored in the hatchery freezer for future tribal ceremonial use, while a

total of 3,658 have been donated to Warm Springs Tribal community members.

In the wild, Pacific salmon return to their streams of origin to spawn at the end of their natural life cycles, and die afterwards. Returning hatchery salmon are also at the end of their natural life cycles. They are killed to allow the removal of eggs and semen, which are combined to produce fertile eggs. This is called artificial spawning. Each hatchery has a quota, determined by a management plan, for the number of salmon needed for artificial spawning.

When more salmon return to the hatchery than are needed for artificial spawning, they are surplus and may be killed if they cannot be returned to rivers and streams for harvest or to spawn

naturally. These fish are also at the end of their natural life cycles and are used as a food resource, or to provide nutrients to streams from the decaying salmon bodies to enhance aquatic life.

When the return salmon are processed, usually, the fish are struck once over the head with a club, similar to a baseball bat, which, when done properly, is a quick and humane way to kill them.

The Warm Springs Fish Hatchery would like to thank the Fire Management employees who assisted them as well as the Warm Springs Salmon Corps crew. For more information or questions about the Spring Chinook Salmon 2000 run, please call (541) 553-1692.