

Comments to the Reydovo Salmon Hatchery Report.

1. What was the origin of taimen individuals mentioned? Where did they come from and when they were collected?

The taimen individuals were caught in the mouth area of the Kuibyshevka River in May, 2000. Fishing gear used – beach seine. Body length of the taimen fry was 30 cm on the average at the moment of collection.

The project's objective was as follows: In the period 1999 -2000 taimen habitats and spawning grounds were practically under no custody; the existing taimen population of the Kuibyshevka River System was subjected to a strong poaching pressure and taimen population of the Reydovy and Kurilka Rivers' systems consisted of only singular mature individuals. The collection of the taimen individuals in question was performed to preserve genetic material and work out techniques of holding and feeding for fish adults.

Situation regarding guardianship of the Kuibyshevka River has changed to the better over the recent five's years period (The private security Company - OOO Continent – took charge of it) and the strength of the natural population began to recover. Due to this reason in July, 2007 a decision was made to release the taimen individuals into their native river (Kuibyshevka). The release effort was performed by the employees of the Reydovy Salmon Hatchery; the fish were transported to the point of release in live fish containers and the release into the river was carried out under the supervision of the Kurilsk district fishery inspection and ichthyological agency representatives.

Therefore holding / rearing duration made up 7 years; taimen body length increased from 30 cm up to 80 cm. Over the recent two years (2005 – 2007) taimen were fed entirely with the live fish (Dolly Varden and East Siberian char – kundscha).

2. What was the origin of these fish (masu) and what is the status and distribution of masu salmon in the certification area ?

On Iturup there are stable and self-sustained masu salmon populations practically in any rivers having ground water fed streams within their basins (there is a warm water in such streams even in winter time). The distinctive feature of the species is that masu enter river mouths in May-June when there is no marine harvesting of salmon and masu salmon are not harvested at sea. Also due to a small local human population there is no mass-scale masu salmon harvesting in the rivers themselves. Because of this masu salmon populations of the Reydovy and Kurilka river systems are stable and self-sustained (that is also true for many other rivers of the island).

The timing of masu spawning in rivers coincides with that for the first spawning of pink (counting from beginning of the run) – in rivers these two species get separated according the species-specific spawning habitats (pink spawn in the shallow water rapids with underflow and masu migrate to the groundwater and spring fed streams or brooks. Such adaptation evolved due to a high predator (bear and fox) pressure. (Masu spawn in small streams and so could be caught too easily, but predators switch over to a more abundant species – pink salmon, thus making no damage to the masu).

Masu often enter hatchery weirs during the start-of-the-run's pink collection for brooding. They are caught together with pink using dip nets. As it is impossible to ensure masu escapement upriver beyond the weir # 2 (there are no spawning grounds upriver beyond this point and also due to a typically low survival of fish after being caught using a dip net), masu are collected and their eggs are taken for incubation.

3. *Is this an annual practice (char catches), how long has it occurred and are similar data available from other years when it occurred. Also is there any information on the status and distribution of these species in the certification area?*

As to the char, their population is in the flourishing state in the Reydovy River System. During the downward migration of the natural and hatchery salmon fry the char density may reach 1,0 – 1,5 thou. individuals per 100 m. of the river area. Moreover, there is a relationship such as: char density increase and their body length decrease with the distance from the river mouth area towards the spawning grounds (maximum density is at the redds in the spawning grounds area).

Char are caught in the discharge channel of the hatchery at night time using portable trap nets on the annual basis practically. As to the river proper there are only sport fisheries for char using fishing rods. Also as many as 50-70 dolly varden per week were caught using trap nets to feed taimen.

Catches breakdown in years (Reydovy River):

2007 - 2006 – No catches (sport fisheries only).

2005 – East Siberian char (kundscha) – 499 individuals.

Мальма – 1086 individuals.

2004 – Kundscha - 250 individuals.

2003 - Kundscha – 290 individuals.

- Doly Varden – 350 individuals.

2002 - Doly Varden – 1600 individuals.

2001 - No catches (sport fisheries only).

2000 - No catches (sport fisheries only).

Rivers with no hatcheries are characterized with only a small scale sport fisheries for char therefore their stocks are stable and very abundant.

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