

The Commissioner may be quoted on this point as follows:

The number of chinook salmon taken in April and August is relatively small and under conditions not so profitable, either to the canneries or the fishermen, as those carried on during the months of May, June, and July. The April run of this salmon, if allowed to pass without interruption to the headwaters of the Columbia and its tributaries, would spawn in those waters, and the present productive capacity of the river would be increased to such an extent as to much more than compensate for the restrictions imposed by the prohibition of the fishery operations during the month of April. The August run of chinook salmon consists of gravid fish near their spawning time. The flesh for this reason has undergone deterioration, and if canned constitutes an inferior product, the sale of which will discredit the reputation which the Columbia River salmon justly hold in public estimation. None of the August run of chinooks probably ascend the Columbia above The Dalles. They spawn in the tributary streams of the Lower Columbia and in the main stream between The Dalles and the mouth of the river.—(Report of the Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries on Investigations in the Columbia River in regard to the Salmon Fisheries. Washington, 1894. pp. 16, 17.)

As the Commissioner states, the packing of salmon in April is not generally regarded as profitable, owing to the irregularity with which the fish come and the relative scarcity, because of which much time is lost by the canning force. As to the August fish, they are usually so near the spawning period that the flesh is soft and often unfit for canning, and much waste results; the fish are also often scarce and the supply is insufficient to keep the canneries in operation. It sometimes happens, however, that the season is late and the August run consists of an abundance of fish in excellent condition for canning. In some seasons the fish are more abundant and in better condition in August than in any other month, and in 1893 the run of fish in the month in question contributed much to the financial success of the canners.

The sentiment of the canners in the lower river is strongly favorable to the restriction of the canning season to the three months of May, June, and July, and the suspension of fishing during the whole of April and August. A few canners favoring a shorter season would like the privilege of packing in August if they thought it desirable, and still fewer would prefer to operate their canneries in April.

That, as a whole, no conspicuous part of the pack is taken in April and August, and that making a close time of these months would not seriously impair the business of the canners, may be seen from the following summary based on the quantities of fish packed during each of the four years ending in 1892:

Percentage of weight of each kind of salmon packed on the Columbia River in each month in 1889, 1890, 1891, and 1892.

Years and species.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	Total.
1889.						
Chinook	12.47	21.81	23.61	42.11	100.00
Blueback	15.78	32.03	35.49	15.80	100.00
Steelhead	5.77	9.03	38.47	46.73	100.00
1890.						
Chinook	3.06	20.50	28.29	39.99	1.56	100.00
Blueback	8.50	27.35	40.42	20.44	3.00	100.00
Steelhead	8.97	8.31	31.05	50.45	5.02	100.00
1891.						
Chinook	8.74	19.09	23.73	42.22	6.22	100.00
Blueback	9.05	28.70	43.50	10.83	1.02	100.00
Steelhead	2.72	6.90	27.07	51.44	11.18	100.00
1892.						
Chinook	6.05	20.61	26.33	37.70	9.25	100.00
Blueback	9.90	35.38	37.86	14.67	2.10	100.00
Steelhead	2.41	7.51	32.32	45.63	12.13	100.00

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