

Coho, Sockeye, Pink, Chinook and Chum

In a good year millions of salmon — sockeye, pink, coho, chinook and chum — return from the Pacific to the rivers of the North American west coast. American and Canadian trollers are waiting offshore; net fishermen are behind the surf line, in inlets and river mouths; and the two governments are watching to see that each gets a fair share of the catch and that enough salmon make it to the spawning grounds to assure future harvests.

They have been doing this separately and jointly, for most of the century. The first efforts were in the Fraser River system, in British Columbia, one of North America's greatest spawning grounds. Salmon of all types come back to the Fraser, but the sockeye are the most plentiful. Normally 10 to 20 per cent return past the top of Vancouver Island through Queen Charlotte Strait and the Strait of Georgia. The rest come through the internationally divided waters of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Cooperation began slowly and proceeded one step at a time. In 1913 a rock slide caused by railway construction blocked the Fraser at Hells Gate and threatened the survival of that river's run. Canada built some fishways past the blockage. By a

chum. In 1944 it supervised the removal of the major obstructions at Hells Gate and construction of the Hells Gate fishways.

In 1952 the two nations signed the International North Pacific Fisheries Convention with Japan. Japan, which fishes for salmon on the high seas, agreed to keep its salmon fleets on the Asian side of a line in the northern Pacific.

In 1955 both countries, through the IPSFC, began restoration of the Fraser tributaries whose runs had been depleted by one thing or another. An artificial spawning bed was built on Jones Creek, to restore a run that had been cut by a hydroelectric development from 6,000 to 400 fish. The bed — a man-made channel swept by water moving over clean gravel — produced 100,000 migrant salmon in the spring of 1956; and by 1961 the Jones Creek run was back to normal. The Stuart, Bowron and Horsefly were also restored. The Quesnel, down to a level of 1,000, was increased to 100,000 by 1953 and 229,000 by 1957.

In 1957 the two countries agreed to let the commission take the pink species as well as the sockeye under its care.

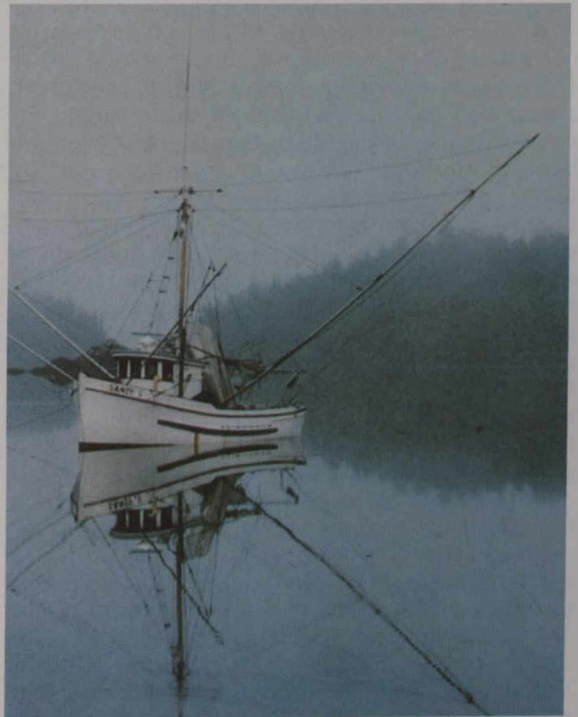
It is possible to regulate the netting of particular salmon off the mouths of particular river systems with relative ease because their arrival dates are known and their numbers can be predicted. Pacific salmon arrive in the mouths of the rivers two to five years after they are born, swim upstream, spawn and die. The salmon of any river can be identified by their scales — not only can those from the Fraser system be distinguished from the Columbia River



Salmon return through the Fraser system to reach the spawning grounds (shaded areas) where they were hatched.

convention signed in 1923, the two countries agreed to work together to manage the Pacific halibut, but could not agree on the salmon.

In 1937, after the United States ratified a 1930 convention, the International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission (IPSC) was formed to make sure that the sockeye in the Fraser system had clear, protected passage through pure water to the spawning grounds. The commission took no official interest in the pink, chinook, coho and



Trollers use multi-hooked lines to catch unblemished salmon, which are sold whole to gourmet markets.