

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

2020 Strawberry Creek Weir Summary

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Introduction

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) operates three salmon and trout egg collection facilities on Lake Michigan tributaries, including the Strawberry Creek Salmon Spawning Facility or Strawberry Creek Weir (SCW) discussed herein. SCW is located in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin in Door County and has been in operation since the early 1970s. SCW is the DNR's primary egg collection facility for Chinook Salmon *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* and typically provides the entire egg quota needed by the DNR to produce Chinook Salmon for stocking into Lake Michigan.

This basic report summarizes the number of fish processed at SCW during 2020. Please note that these numbers cannot be interpreted as absolute numbers of fish returned. Many variables impact these spawning runs, including stream flow, lake level, water temperature, stocking numbers, survival, harvest, dates of operation for each weir, etc. These factors vary from year to year and can impact the number of fish available and processed at each egg collection facility. Egg collection goals also vary from year to year, depending on projected stocking quotas, DNR production needs and egg requests from other states or agencies.

Spring 2020 Strawberry Creek Summary

Chinook Salmon were not reared in the Strawberry Creek pond during 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, these Chinook were stocked directly into Strawberry Creek (at Strawberry Lane) and at the Sturgeon Bay canal (Barge Road). About half were stocked at each location, with 55,380 stocked at Strawberry Lane and 54,955 at Barge Road. Additionally, due to the pandemic, fin clips were not given to any of these stocked Chinook.

Autumn 2020 Strawberry Creek Summary

During fall 2020, the DNR collected eggs at facilities in Kewaunee and Racine. However, the Strawberry Creek Salmon Spawning Facility in Sturgeon Bay was not operated due to high

water (operational challenges) and the COVID-19 pandemic (streamlined workload totwo of three facilities). Figures 1 and 2 show the numbers and weights of Chinook Salmon through 2019 (not 2020).

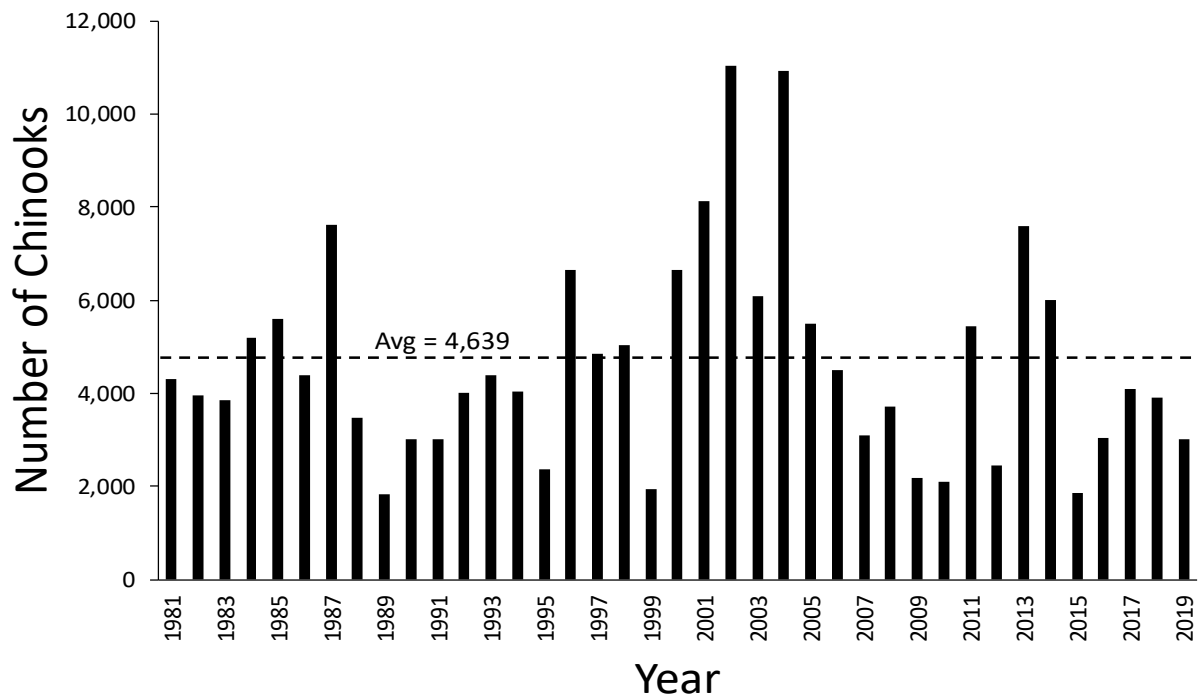


Figure 1. Numbers of Chinook Salmon handled during autumn spawning operations at the Strawberry Creek Weir per year from 1981-2019 (2020 data not available). The long-term average is 4,639 (dotted line). Several factors impact these numbers including stream flow from rainfall and supplemental water pumping, lake level, water temperature, stocking numbers, survival rates and dates of operation for the weir.

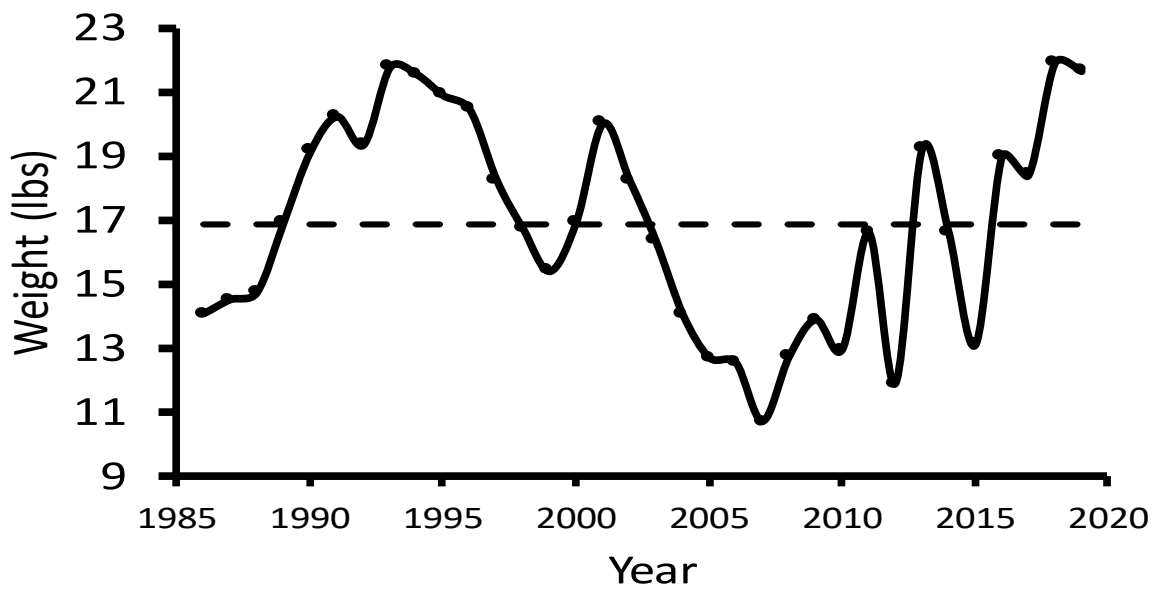


Figure 2. The average weight of age-3 female Chinook Salmon processed at the Strawberry Creek Weir per year from 1986-2019 (2020 data not available). The long-term average is 16.9 pounds (dotted line). Many factors impact Chinook size including alewife biomass, Chinook abundance and the ratio of predator/prey.

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