

A photograph of a dam with a rainbow in the sky. The dam is a concrete structure with a spillway on the right side where water is cascading down. On top of the dam, there are several tall, thin towers with red and white striped tops. The sky is filled with large, grey clouds, but a bright rainbow is visible on the left side of the frame. In the foreground, there is a chain-link fence supported by wooden posts, and some green vegetation. The overall scene is a mix of natural beauty and industrial infrastructure.

**2013**

**Whitehorse Fish Ladder**

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## Staff

All staff were able to start this season before the end of June. I was really impressed with the staff this year; they all got a long very well, and put a lot of effort in to making sure the facility was running smoothly. They were all enthusiastic, and loved giving tours to the public. Most of them have expressed interest in returning next season. They all have a lot of good things to offer the ladder, and I would recommend any of them.

## 2013 Wolf Creek Fry Release

We couldn't have asked for better weather or attendance for the Yukon Fish and Game annual Chinook salmon fry release at Wolf Creek. The campground was packed with families settling in for a weekend of family fun.

With the creek at full spring melt, safety is always a concern. The release areas were cordoned off with flagging and we had a Director at each of the five release locations just in case the parents dropped their guard. Lawrence Vano, the Manager of the Whitehorse Fish Hatchery, doled out buckets of fry from the holding tank. Our volunteers dip netted a dozen or so of the fry into ziplock bags for each of the children. The fry were taken to the creek edge and released, although some of the kids needed a little coaxing from their parents to let their new pets go. It took a little over an hour for the twenty or so biologists, and YFGA Directors and a couple of hundred very excited children to release the 10,000 salmon fry. These salmon have begun their amazing five to seven year journey down to the ocean to mature and back up the Yukon River.

Conservation work can be very physically demanding. This was alleviated with four large cakes, thirty dozen hotdogs, many gallons of juice, coffee and hot chocolate. Thank you to Lawrence and his staff and all the YFGA Directors who set up, cooked, served, cleaned and packed up. We would also like to thank Yukon Energy for their ongoing support of the event.

## Appreciation Night

Yukoner Appreciation Night at the fish ladder is always an exciting night. This year we held the event on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Appreciation Night is our way of thanking the public for supporting us year after year. We seek donations from various local businesses, and always get great responses. The donations are mainly used as door prizes; however, some businesses have chosen to provide us with food for the evening. The night was not only busy with people (292 attended), but with the Chinook salmon. This year we were able to do 2 sorts during the night. We counted at grand total of 92 Salmon for the entire day! All staff really came together, and went out of their way to ensure a successful night!

## Wildlife

This season we had a lot of wildlife going through the ladder. We had some muskrats, and 3 beavers. One beaver gave us quite a hard time. He was unable to get out and began to chew the ladder. It took 5 people, and 2 hours, but we were able to get him out.

We also had a porcupine and a fox that I believe were fighting for a home under the building. We haven't seen them since the beginning of August, but I am willing to bet they are still around.

## **Fish Tanks**

At the beginning of the season we had some issues with the fish tanks. It seemed that there were fish dying in every tank. After changing everything in the filter, with the exception of the bio balls, we did a 20% water change. After the change was done and the filter was running I put in 10mL of both Ammonia remover, and Waste remover (can buy at Duffy's Pet Shop). I continued to add this weekly, and we noticed a big difference in the health of the fish.

This season the fish were taken out of their tanks at the end of August to make closing a little easier.

## **Chinook salmon**

This year was a late start for the Chinook salmon. The first salmon recorded coming into the mouth was on June 16<sup>th</sup>. It takes them close to 2 months to swim 2,800km upstream to reach us here in Whitehorse.

The first fish to reach the Eagle sonar radar was on July 6<sup>th</sup>. The prediction for Eagle was 33,000, but ended up being 30,725. This placed management in the red zone for the Chinook.

We saw our first Chinook in at the entrance to the ladder on July 31<sup>st</sup>. It took 5 days before we saw the first fish (a wild male) in the viewing chamber. The highest day of the year was August 17<sup>th</sup>, where we had 100 fish swim through the viewing chamber. We saw our last salmon on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, and ended with a grand total of 1,139 Chinook.

We had a total of 764 hatchery fish, meaning they took up 67% of the run. The strangest thing to see was the number of females coming through. We had a total of 578 females coming through the ladder. This means 51% of the run were females. This is a very odd percentage to have, and it will be interesting to see how the run is in a few years.

## **Visitors**

This year we had a grand total of 20,991 visitors. 2,111 of these visitors were from Holland America. This is 2,376 more than last year.

## Recommendations

1. The Viewing window closest to the office is leaking. The leak will need to be sealed before the water is put into the ladder.
2. The middle window and the window furthest from the office are leaking from the rain. They will also need to be fixed before water goes into the ladder.
3. A new map for the visitors to put their pins in will need to be purchased.
4. A hand rail by the baffles on the upper ladder should be installed. This hand rail should only cover where the baffles are. If it is put all the way down it will get in the way of staff looking for salmon.
5. A spring should be installed at the top of the back door so it can't slam shut in the wind.
6. A new phone should be purchased. The old one can sometimes make it hard to hear. Perhaps purchase more than one so we can keep one in the merchandise area.
7. New Family Passes will need to be printed.
8. The lock on the far bathroom will need to be fixed. It blows open sometimes.
9. A map should be drawn that outlines the walk to the muster point. This can be done on the computer or hand drawn.