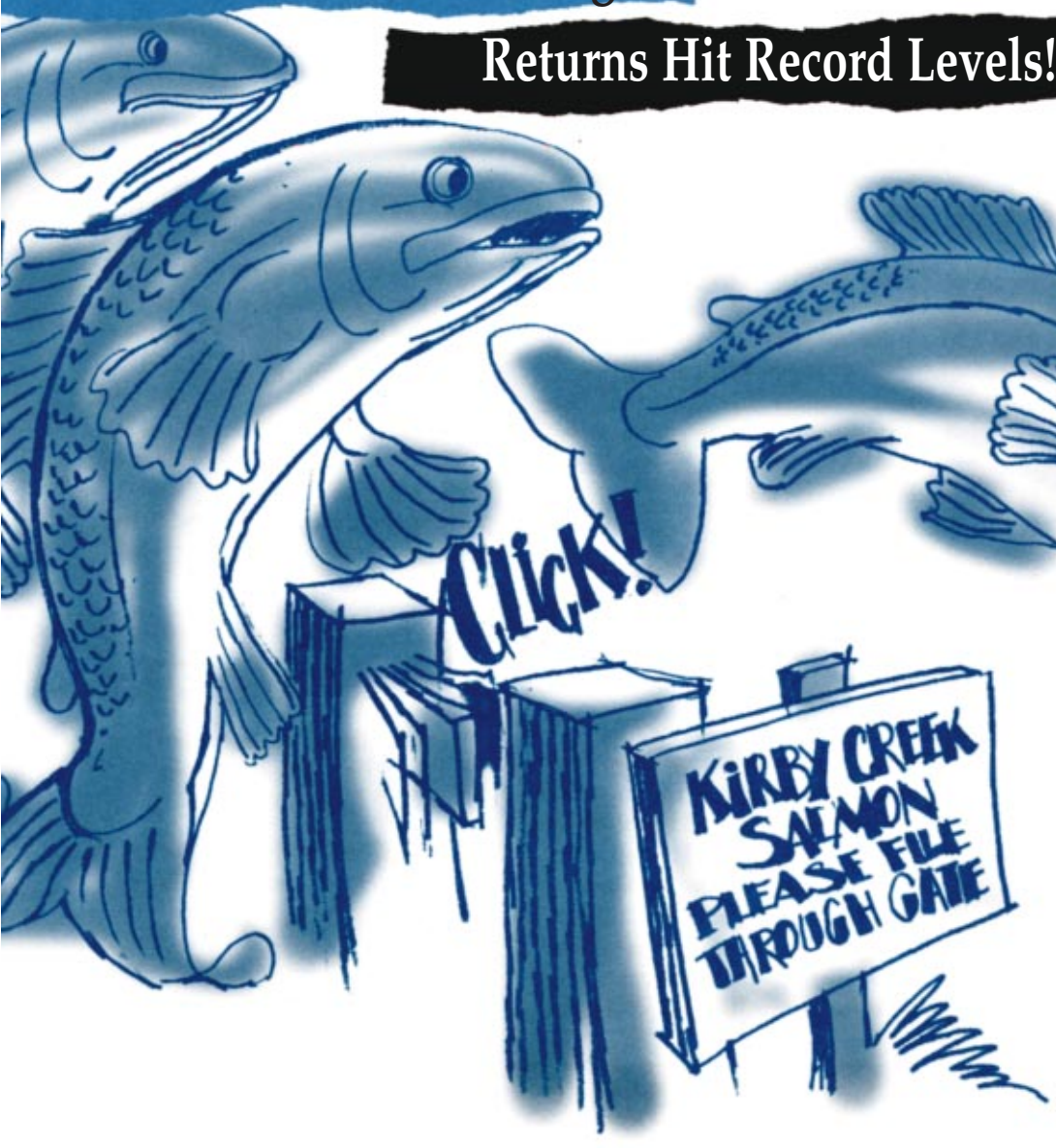
Worldfish NEWS
February 1998

WFT helps build counting fence at Kirby Creek

Salmon Stocks In Trouble!

Coho Numbers Still Falling!

Returns Hit Record Levels!



Did you ever wonder what these headlines are based on?

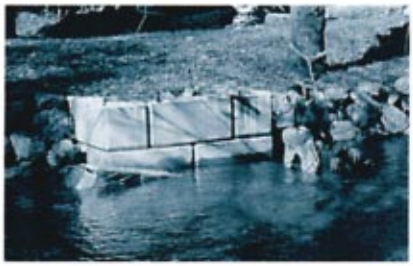
Reports on salmon stacks are common in the media these days, but did you ever stop to ask yourself., Where do all these numbers actually come from?" When fisheries managers tell us "50,000 Sockeye returned to the Adams River last year", how can they be so sure? The answer is, by counting every one. And one of the tools biologists use to do this is a counting fence.

What is a counting fence?

Counting fences come in all shapes and sizes. One intriguing new design is the floating fence, a temporary barrier that diverts migrating salmon into a holding area where they can be counted,

tagged and sent on their way upstream to spawn. Floating fences have a clever design that allows the barrier to pivot when debris comes downstream : the fence submerges temporarily so that leaves, branches or logs can slide right over instead of clogging the fence and causing it to "blow out".

In the summer of 1997, World Fisheries Trust built a floating counting fence on Kirby Creek, a beautiful and once-productive stream in Sooke, near Victoria.



Why Kirby Creek?

Kirby Creek is special because it's one of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Indicator Streams - selected rivers that have been relatively untouched by development or re-stocking efforts. **Indicator streams** get special survey attention and the data gathered from them is used to judge the health of the watershed a s a whole.

Better numbers on Kirby Creek's salmon stocks will provide a much better understanding of matters in the whole Sooke watershed, and a counting fence is the way to get them.

How will the fence be used? How will it make a difference to salmon stocks?

World Fisheries Trust supports the Kirby Creek project as an example of science-based community work. The Kirby Creek fence was completed and began operation in September 1997. Field crews are now making accurate counts of spawning adults and, starting in 1998, will also count young salmon leaving the river to go out to sea. These counts tell biologists what goes into Kirby (adults) and what comes out (young fish), vital information that managers need to set harvest rates at a level that conserves the stock.

Partners

building and operating the Kirby Creek fence was a community team effort. Carmen Ross managed the project for World fisheries Trust and had tremendous cooperation from the following;

Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Without DFO there would be no fence. WFT had help from DFO habitat biologists, engineers, scientists and community advisors. DFO surveyed the site, designed the fence, produced engineering drawings, helped us with construction and installation, and is now studying the data the fence has started to produce.

South Island Streams provided the labour to build the fence and are helping WFT gather biological data for DFO. Special thanks to Al Jones, whose land Kirby Creek runs through.

The Sooke Salmon Enhancement Society helped plan the fence and gave us a good overview of the Sooke watershed.

Funders

Many organizations contributed funds toward the $30,000 price tag of the Kirby Creek fence. They include: **Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation** (Chapters in Victoria/Sidney, Duncan, Nanaimo/Parksville and Campbell River) **The Shell Environmental Fund** (Calgary) **Western Forest Products Ltd.** (Vancouver) **Scott Plastics Ltd.** (Victoria) **The Department of fisheries and Oceans** and **World Fisheries Trust.**

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