

Shelly Creek Minnow Trapping Results

Feb. 25, 2014

Project Objectives: Determine if Coho pre-smolts have entered Shelly Creek and how extensive have they infiltrated the habitat.

Introduction; Shelly Creek has had a productive three years of coho smolt trap operation the last three years (2011 – 2881, 2012 - 8094, 2013- 7564). It is operated by volunteer stewards coordinated by the Mid Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society (MVIHES) in partnership with Dave Davies of DFO community programs. These smolts are assumed to be coming into Shelly Creek after summer low flow for feeding and flood refuge. The extent and timing of the pre-smolt in-migration is not known. As part of the Englishman River Watershed Recovery Plan the MVIHES also wanted to use the opportunity to conduct a fry trapping and fish identification training session to recruit and train stewards.

Methods: We used 34 minnow traps baited with cured salmon eggs. Each trap was tagged with a number to its anchor twine. The site was measured with a hip chain from Martindale upstream 500m by Dave Davies. Traps were placed in five pools over 500m and five different pool locations. They were soaked 24 hours and fish identified and counted by MVIHES organized stewards. The trap locations are noted below;

- Pool 1- Smolt Trap pond located below Martindale Road culvert
- Pool 2 – First pool above Martindale road to 50m flag
- Pool 3 – Pool along marshland below old road crossing to approx. 200m flag
- Pool 4 – first pool above old road crossing up to beaver dam
- Pool 5 – above beaver dam largest pool, extends beyond 300m flag into Shelly Farm

Results:

Water Temperature: 2.1 C **Ph:** 6.7 **D.O:** 10.7ppm/ 77%

Trap In: Feb. 21, 2014. 10:00 – 12:00 AM **Trap Out:** Feb. 22, 2014. 9:00 -12:00 AM

Location	No traps	Coho	Stickleback
Pool 1	5	159	7
Pool 2	5	77	35
Pool 3	10	258	10
Pool 4	4	46	11
Pool 5	10	14	65
Total:	34	554	128

Discussion: Over 500 Coho were found throughout the habitat, above the culverts and beaver dam. This proved the fish are entering in in winter and spending several months in the waterway. The new questions are ; how early do they come in, will more come with better access, can habitat be improved what is the total area of habitat being used?