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**Yale Reservoir Kokanee (*Oncorhynchus nerka*)  
Escapement Report**

**2020**



**North Fork Lewis River Hydroelectric Project**  
*Yale FERC No. 2071*

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*April 2021*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since 1979, PacifiCorp biologists, along with various state and federal agencies, have conducted annual surveys to estimate spawning escapement of kokanee in Cougar Creek, a tributary to Yale Reservoir. This report presents results of kokanee spawner surveys conducted on Cougar Creek and the Constructed Channel within the Swift Bypass Reach in 2020. Surveys are performed per Article 402(b) of the Yale and Swift Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) operating licenses and Article 402(c) of the Merwin FERC operating license.

## 2.0 STUDY AREA

Surveys for kokanee spawners were performed on Cougar Creek and the Constructed Channel in 2020. Cougar Creek is a third order stream and tributary to Yale Reservoir in Southwest Washington. Cougar Creek originates from an underground lava tube and flows for approximately 1,700 meters before entering Yale Reservoir.

The Constructed Channel flows from a valve off of the Swift Power Canal for approximately 200 meters before entering the Lewis River channel within the Swift Bypass Reach. The valve that controls flow into the Constructed Channel is set to a level to contribute a constant flow of 14 cubic feet per second (cfs) (*Figure 1*).

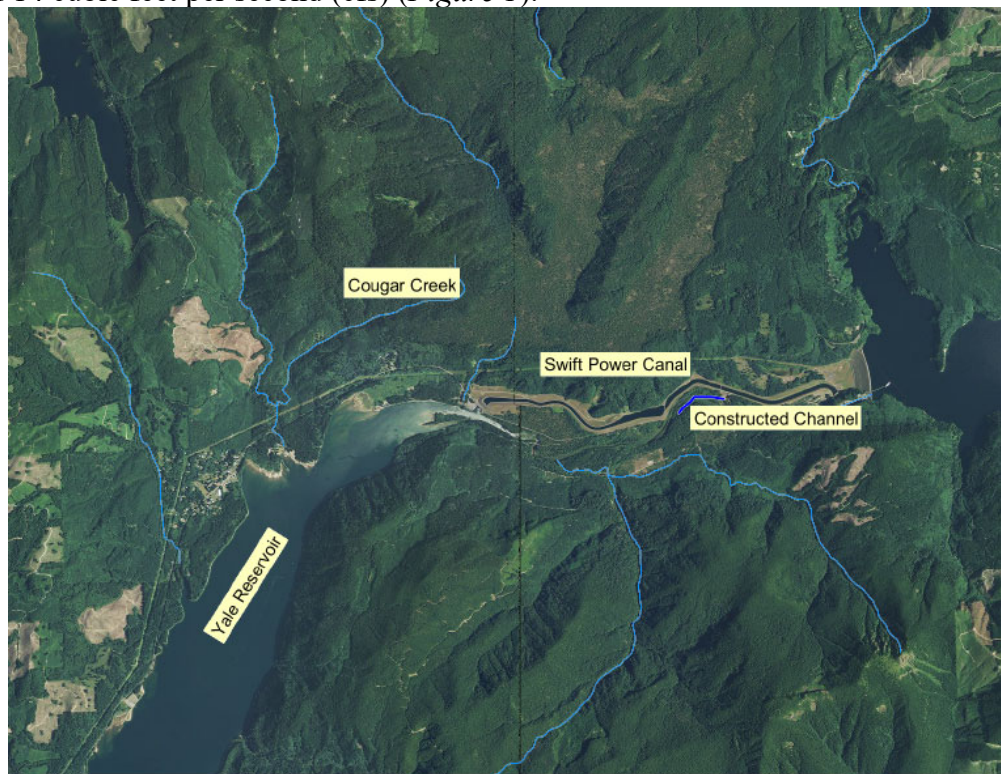


Figure 1. Survey area map.

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### 3.0 METHODS

To enumerate kokanee spawners, two biologists, one on each side of the stream, walk together from the stream mouth upstream to its anadromous fish barrier. Each biologist counts spawning and holding kokanee on his/her side of the stream, including side-channels. This process is repeated on three to four occasions over the course of the kokanee spawn time-frame, mid-September through early-November, to estimate the numbers of live kokanee and estimate the peak timing of the spawning run. The highest count during the survey period is considered the peak and is preceded and followed by surveys with a lower kokanee count.

### 4.0 RESULTS

#### Cougar Creek

Peak kokanee escapement estimates increased for the first time since 2017. The 2020 spawning estimate of 12,167 fish (*Figure 2*) is the highest recorded in the last five years, but still well below the 10-year average of 21,796.

As in previous years, Cougar Creek was surveyed on foot with two surveyors. Kokanee were enumerated from the stream mouth upstream to its origin, a distance of approximately 1,700 meters. For survey purposes, the accessible anadromous fish habitat in Cougar Creek is broken into five survey reaches. There are a series of three major log jams in Reach 2 and 3 of Cougar Creek. In 2020, the upper extent of kokanee spawning was observed to be just below the last log jam in Reach 3 which is the last of three major log jams encountered.

Cougar Creek was surveyed for kokanee three times in 2020 (*Table 1*). Survey conditions during the sampling time period (Sep – Nov) were ideal and water clarity very good throughout the survey season.

#### 4.1 Distribution and Timing

The peak kokanee count was recorded on October 28, 2020 (*Table 1*). This peak timing of kokanee abundance in 2020, though late on the timing spectrum, is within historical timeframes on record (1978-2019). Most kokanee were observed in Reach 2, which is consistent with prior years. This largest concentration of kokanee occurs just below the first log jam encountered on their travel upstream.

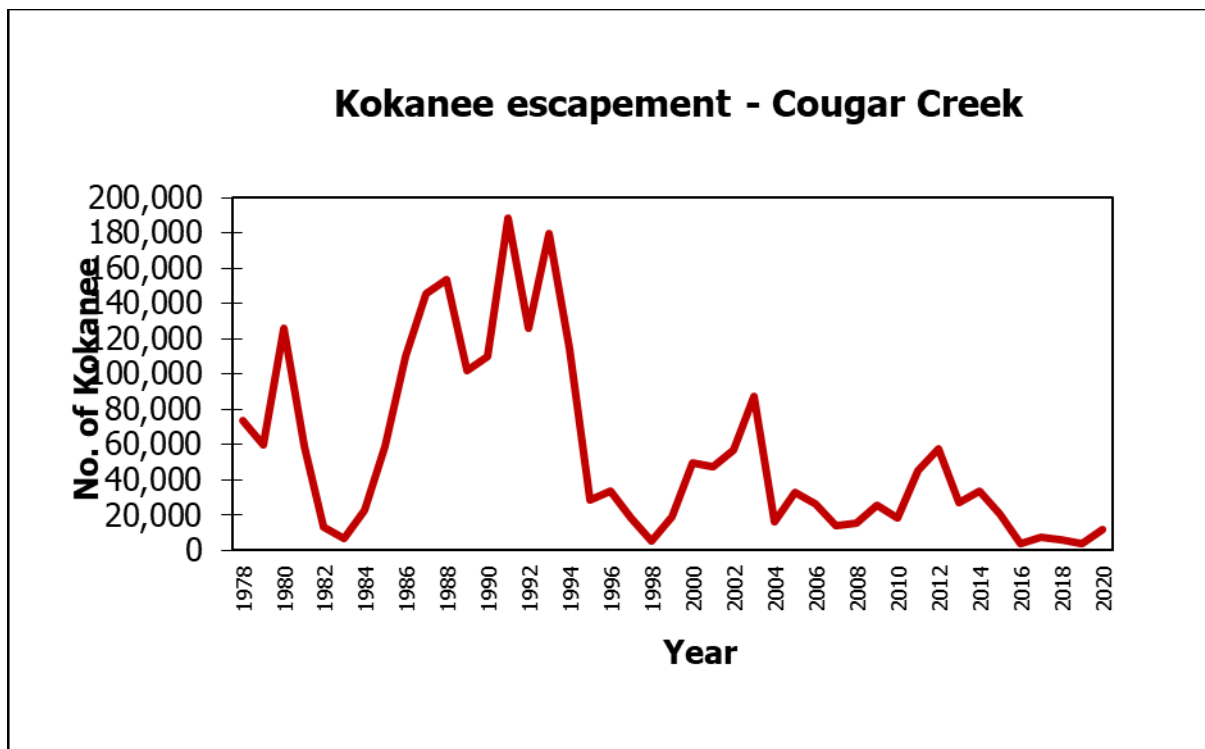
**Table 1. Distribution and peak counts of kokanee in Cougar Creek in 2020**

\* Estimate uses a 2.3 multiplier of the peak count (Graves unpublished data, 1982)

Reach	Survey Date		
	10/09	10/28	11/05
1	900	1,040	700
2	1,500	2,900	2,000
3	0	1,350	1,100
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
<b>Spawning Estimate</b>	<b>5,520</b>	<b>12,167</b>	<b>8,740</b>

## 4.2 Escapement

The kokanee spawning escapement in 2020 is estimated at 12,167 fish (*Figure 2*). This is the highest count in the last five years and marked increase from the peak observed in 2019 (3,703). Kokanee escapement into Cougar Creek has been less than the historical running average of 71,519 since 2003. This year’s estimate is also well below the ten-year average of 21,796 fish (*Table 3*).

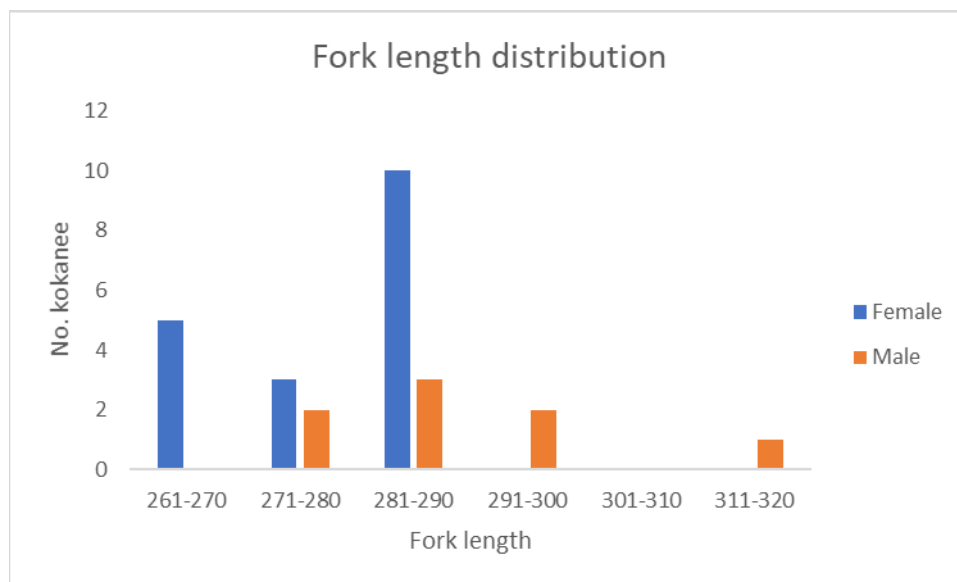


**Figure 2. Kokanee spawning estimates for Cougar Creek, 1978-2020**

### 4.3 Length Distribution

Due to low escapement numbers, kokanee carcasses were difficult to find in 2020, therefore lengths were only measured from 8 male and 18 female kokanee (*Figure 3*). Lengths came from Cougar Creek kokanee. The average lengths of male and female kokanee in 2020 were 292 and 280 millimeters, respectively.

Combined mean fork length of all kokanee observed in 2020 (283 millimeters) was substantially smaller than what was observed during 2019 (323 millimeters). Historically, mean fork length follows a density dependent inverse relationship with estimated escapement. In years, when escapement is lower than average, kokanee length tends to be above average, and vice versa.



**Figure 3. Length frequency histogram of male (n=8) and female (n=18) kokanee lengths (FL) sampled in Cougar Creek, Washington – 2020**

The average female fork length in 2020 is less than the historical running average of 288 millimeters (1978-2020).

With the regression line established in *Figure 4*, the average fork length size for females in 2020 is under-estimated from the equation by 8 percent. The fitted line suggests that given the spawning population estimate the female average length should be 305 millimeters, instead of the observed average of 280 millimeters, an underestimate of 25 millimeters. This observed difference in estimation of 8 percent is significant and may indicate that during the reservoir life-cycle of this brood year that productivity was lacking for proper fish growth and development for this brood escapement estimation.

The size at spawning estimate may be a good indication of reservoir production in terms of food availability and fish growth. When kokanee are smaller than anticipated (based on size

at spawning and spawning escapement) it may be an indication that reservoir productivity was limited at some point during their residency in Yale Reservoir.

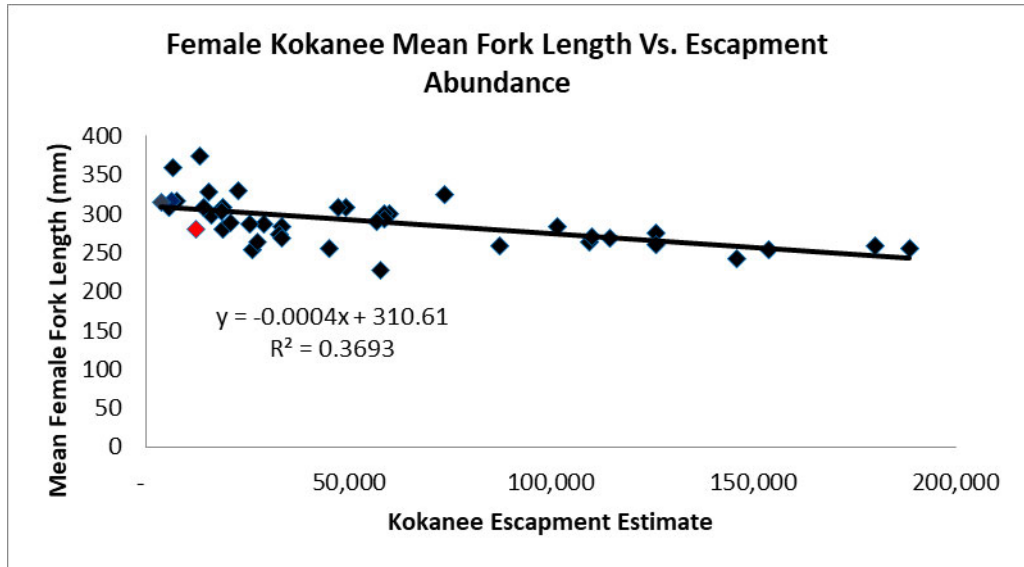


Figure 4. Relationship between mean kokanee fork length (female) and spawning escapement in Cougar Creek (1978-2020). Red dot represents 2020, black dots are all other years on record.

#### 4.4 Constructed Channel

One Constructed Channel kokanee spawner survey was completed on November 11, 2020 from its confluence with the Swift Bypass Reach upstream to its anadromous fish barrier, a distance of approximately 200 meters. A peak count of 390 kokanee spawners was recorded, this compares to a peak count of 1,250 kokanee spawners recorded in 2019 (*Table 2*).

The escapement estimate in 2020 (897) is lower than what was estimated in 2019 (2,875), and the lowest on record for this reach (*Table 2*, 2010-2020). It is important to note that the flows within the Constructed Channel come straight off the Swift Power Canal via a mechanically controlled stem valve that is set to release a constant 14 cfs. Habitat improvements to the Constructed Channel were completed by PacifiCorp in 2010, and the constant flow rate of 14 cfs has been in effect since that time.

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**Table 2. Historical Constructed Channel peak counts and estimated spawning escapement.**

<b><i>Constructed Channel</i></b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Peak Count</b>	<b>Estimated Spawning Escapement</b>
2010	410	943
2011	500	1,150
2012	3,400	7,820
2013	450	1,035
2014	450	1,035
2016	890	2,047
2017	1,190	2,553
2018	1,380	3,174
2019	1,250	2,875
2020	390	897



**Table 3. Summary of data collected from Cougar Creek kokanee surveys from 1978 to 2020.**

Spawn Year	Peak Count	Date	Estimated Escapement*	Moving Average	Number of Females**	Mean Length (mm) Females	Mean Fecundity+	Total Eggs
1978	32,064		73,747	35,930	36,874	325	582	21,468,547
1979	26,136		60,113	66,930	30,056	300	515	15,485,658
1980	54,782		125,999	86,620	62,999	275	448	28,237,546
1981	25,614		58,912	79,693	29,456	300	515	15,176,372
1982	5,750		13,225	66,399	6,613	375	716	4,736,005
1983	2,875		6,613	56,435	3,306	359	673	2,226,230
1984	9,915		22,805	51,630	11,402	329	593	6,760,850
1985	25,623	9/25/1985	58,933	52,543	29,466	294	499	14,707,884
1986	47,680	10/10/1986	109,664	58,890	54,832	264	419	22,960,352
1987	63,406	9/30/1987	145,834	67,584	72,917	242	360	26,234,042
1988	66,865	10/3/1988	153,790	75,421	76,895	254	392	30,138,128
1989	44,199	10/11/1989	101,658	77,608	50,829	284	472	24,008,499
1990	47,859	10/9/1990	110,076	80,105	55,038	270	435	23,931,558
1991	81,993	10/7/1991	188,584	87,854	94,292	256	397	37,462,192
1992	54,801	10/2/1992	126,042	90,400	63,021	260	408	25,713,890
1993	78,260	10/6/1993	179,998	95,999	89,999	259	405	36,480,195
1994	49,830	9/21/1994	114,609	97,094	57,305	269	432	24,763,567
1995	12,590	10/12/1995	28,957	93,309	14,479	287	480	6,955,182
1996	14,508	10/9/1996	33,368	90,154	16,684	284	472	7,880,615
1997	8,169	10/23/1997	18,789	86,586	9,394	308	537	5,041,572
1998	2,435	10/6/1998	5,601	82,729	2,800	308	537	1,502,782
1999	8,260	10/22/1999	18,998	79,832	9,499	281	464	4,410,386
2000	21,495	10/13/2000	49,439	78,511	24,719	308	537	13,265,833
2001	20,611	9/24/2001	47,405	77,215	23,703	309	539	12,783,787
2002	24,750	10/17/2002	56,925	76,403	28,463	290	488	13,901,654
2003	38,004	10/9/2003	87,409	76,827	43,705	258	403	17,598,094
2004	6,964	10/8/2004	16,017	74,574	8,009	299	513	4,104,728
2005	14,226	10/7/2005	32,720	73,080	16,360	273	443	7,245,145
2006	11,383	10/23/2006	26,181	71,462	13,090	254	392	5,130,671
2007	6,175	10/17/2007	14,203	69,554	7,101	308	537	3,810,957
2008	6,780	10/3/2008	15,594	67,813	7,797	328	590	4,602,257
2009	11,075	9/29/2009	25,473	66,490	12,736	286	478	6,084,107
2010	8,030	10/4/2010	18,469	65,035	9,235	303	523	4,832,044
2011	19,610	10/11/2011	45,103	64,449	22,552	254.9	394	8,893,229
2012	25,150	10/8/2012	57,845	64,260	28,923	227	320	9,243,053
2013	11,910	10/14/2013	27,393	63,236	13,697	264	419	5,735,272
2014	14,620	10/3/2014	33,626	62,435	16,813	269	432	7,265,570
2015	9,105	10/29/2015	20,942	61,008	10,471	289	486	5,086,062
2016	1,580	10/24/2016	3,634	59,864	1,817	315	555	1,009,198
2017	3,230	10/17/2017	7,429	58,553	3,715	316	558	2,073,062
2018	2,660	10/25/2018	6,118	57,274	3,059	316	558	1,707,228
2019	1,610	10/16/2019	3,703	55,999	1,852	315	555	1,028,360
2020	5,290	10/28/2020	12,167	54,396	6,084	280	462	2,808,265
<b>MEAN</b>	<b>23,904</b>		<b>54,979</b>	<b>71,519</b>	<b>27,490</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>13,804,823</b>

\*Peak Count x 2.3 (Graves unpublished data, 1983)

\*\*Assuming a 1:1 ratio

+ From the model: Fecundity = -288.78 + 2.68 x Length of Females (Graves unpublished data, 1983)

^ Estimated Escapement of Adults (3 year-olds) / estimated number of eggs