

Tl'azt'en Nation Fisheries

Traditional Fishing Methods

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Introduction

- Fish and Sockeye salmon were so important to Tl'azt'enne and the Carrier people that several different methods of catching them were developed
- Sockeye salmon is the single most essential item for food and subsistence
- Morice (1893) wrote that Sockeye salmon was the most important fish species due to its economic value

Weirs and Traps

- The most productive tool of any of the fishing devices
- Allowed for large quantities of salmon to be taken during peak migration
- Carrier technology was complex
- Fishing methods varied according to the location

Weirs and Traps

- Weirs were constructed 10 days after the first salmon were observed in the system
- Allowed for the first part of the run to reach the spawning grounds
- Allowed for other users up stream to get Sockeye

Weirs and Traps

- Several models of traps were designated specifically for capturing Sockeye salmon
- All were constructed with an open trellis or lattice work made out split fir, spruce, or pine
- All were tied together by spruce roots

Weirs and Traps

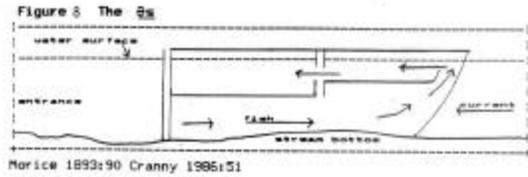
- Seven types of traps
 - Weir-Es (two types)
 - Nazgwet: funnel like fish trap
 - Kes: tube like fish trap
 - Yetaskai: live box
 - Koonsai: partial weir with a live box
 - Teskai: dip net
 - Tehskai: coffin shaped trap for low water

Type of Weirs

- The Es
 - For high water levels and strong current
 - Toboggan like trap
 - Used as a partial weir
 - Requires little or no attention
 - Only requires to be emptied when full

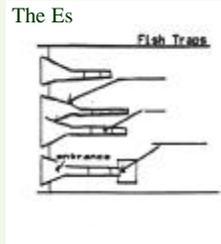
Type of Weirs

- The Es



Type of Weirs

- Weir for low water level
 - Constructed to block streams
 - Used in conjunction with fish traps
 - Requires constant attention

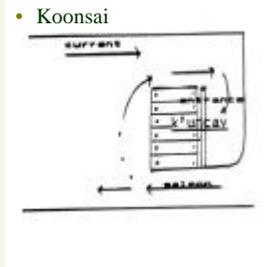


Partial weir and trap (Koonsai)



Type of weirs

- Partial weir
- Used in conjunction with fish traps
- Form of beach seining
- Fish were driven into the weir by canoe
- Can be set up anywhere



Koonsai



Tehskai



Conclusion

- The Carrier people and Tl'azt'enne had extensive knowledge of the timing and habits of the various fish species in Carrier territory and developed appropriate technologies to catch these species. The fishing technology was an investment of labor which resulted in a successful fishing season.