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Quantitative Measures of Rearing and Spawning Habitat Characteristics For Stream-Dwelling Salmonids: Guidelines For Habitat Restoration

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ABSTRACT

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To assist in habitat restoration, we conducted a literature survey to compile quantitative measures of rearing and spawning habitat characteristics for salmonid fishes in streams. From our search we found 70 studies that provided quantitative measures of habitat characteristics. Of these studies, 37 reported microhabitats selected for rearing, over a wide range of stream conditions, resulting in measures for 9 species. The 33 remaining studies reported microhabitats selected for spawning, resulting in measures for 13 species. The most common variables measured in these studies were water depth and velocity. Substrate composition was relatively well described for spawning site selection, and for rearing areas. Space requirements or territory size for juvenile salmonids is reasonably well reported in the literature, but with few measures for salmonids of the Pacific Northwest. Measures of territory size for spawning adults is almost non-existent. As a surrogate measure of spawning space requirements, redd area may be a reasonable estimate which is well described for many salmonid species. Our analyses of these data sets revealed a great deal of overlap in the range of habitats selected by salmonids, despite the number of different species examined. The best empirical correlate of habitat selection appears to be body size. The largest species or age-class tends to occupy the deepest and fastest water and demands the greatest amount of space for rearing or spawning. In our synthesis, we also found a second group of studies that have identified important habitat features such as large woody debris, off-channel and over-wintering habitat. These data are summarized briefly.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was supported by the Province of B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks; the British Columbia Conservation Foundation, and the B.C. Watershed Restoration Program. We thank Daiva Zaldokas for technical support and Wendell Koning, Don McPhail, and James Baxter for helpful discussions on the ecology of salmonid fishes. Matt Foy and Brent Lister kindly provided data from off-channel studies.

INTRODUCTION

Studies on the behaviour and ecology of stream fishes have often revealed that many factors influence their distribution and abundance (Bjornn and Reiser 1991). The British Columbia Watershed Restoration Program was established by the government and private sector to restore and mitigate past logging impacts to stream and river systems and re-establish lost or depressed fish populations (Keeley and Walters 1994). In British Columbia, the dominant group of fishes that inhabit streams are the salmonids (McPhail and Lindsey 1970). Salmonids provide an extremely important and valuable sport and commercial fishery and are also an integral component of the province's heritage. Unfortunately, habitat degradation continues to threaten many salmonid stocks with extinction (Nehlsen et al. 1991; Slaney et al. 1996). If this group of fishes is to remain a large part of B.C.'s wilderness landscape, then steps must be taken to halt or reverse declining trends in fish numbers. The Watershed Restoration Program is an attempt to help restore lost or declining fish stocks.

There is significant evidence that logging practices of the past have degraded the rearing and spawning habitat of salmonids in coastal and interior B.C. streams (Slaney et al. 1977a, b; Scrivener and Brown 1993; Slaney and Martin 1997). These unsound practices have caused major sources of stream sedimentation and debris flows as well as hillside and gully failures. The result has been the scouring or infilling of prime salmonid habitat (Cederholm et al. 1980; Hogan 1986; Tripp 1994). In addition to the physical alteration, the logging of riparian areas has caused a long-term deficit of large woody debris, which appears to be critical in providing habitat features that salmonids require for survival (Koski 1992; Scrivener and Brown 1993). Unfortunately without mitigative intervention, habitat loss will require from decades to centuries to recover naturally (Koski 1992; Slaney 1994).

Despite major efforts to supplement salmonid populations through hatcheries, the benefit of artificial rearing has been low relative to the cost (Meffe 1992) and may threaten the genetic variability of wild salmonid populations (Gauldie 1991). Even when hatcheries are successful at raising and releasing fish into the wild, the environments they are released into are often unsuitable or marginal for salmonid survival (Meffe 1992). Therefore, not only is it important to understand habitat requirements for wild salmonids, but it may also improve the success of hatchery released fish, when extirpated stocks are re-introduced.

Fundamental to the implementation of fish habitat restoration is an understanding of the ecological factors that influence the abundance of stream-fishes (Hartman et al. 1996). The availability of suitable stream habitat for salmonids is crucial to maintaining healthy populations. Despite a wide variety of life-history patterns, salmonid fishes almost always use streams for spawning or rearing at some point in their life-span (McPhail and Lindsey 1970; Scott and Crossman 1973; Behnke 1992). Hence, it is not surprising that the loss of key salmonid spawning and rearing habitat is believed to be a major cause of declining salmonid populations in the Pacific Northwest (Koski 1992; Slaney et al. 1996). In several habitat restoration studies, however, biologists have found that these losses can often be reversed (Hunt 1976; Ward and Slaney 1993; Binns 1994) and fish populations can sometimes even exceed unimpacted historical levels (Binns and Remmick 1994). In order to restore damaged areas, it is essential for biologists to consider the habitat requirements for salmonids and re-establish the range of habitat features that salmonids prosper under. To maximize the benefits received from restoration efforts, quantitative measures of habitat features preferred by salmonids will be required to increase the likelihood of a restoration program being successful and cost-effective. In the past twenty-five years, studies on the behaviour and ecology of stream salmonids has increased substantially (Northcote 1988). This

pool of studies should therefore provide quantitative information on habitat requirements for many salmonid species.

In this report, it is our objective to review the available literature on spawning and rearing habitat for stream-dwelling salmonids and to synthesize this information into a quantitative description of the habitat requirements. It was not our intention to provide a review of the life-history patterns of salmonid fishes; see McPhail and Lindsey 1970; Scott and Crossman 1973; Groot and Margolis 1991 for a review. We also used our survey to look for studies that have identified macrohabitat features that appear to be important in determining salmonid fish abundance. From these data, we hope to provide a synthesis of as much of the existing information to aid restoration biologists in determining the suitable range of habitat requirements for many salmonid species.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

We surveyed the literature for any study that reported habitat use for salmonids in streams. We defined habitat as being of two types: for purposes of feeding and growth which we call rearing habitat, and secondly for purposes of reproduction which we call spawning habitat. We began our literature search with the last 27 volumes of two primary fisheries journals, The Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences (volumes 26-52), and Transactions of the American Fisheries Society (volumes 98-124). We also used the 15 available volumes of the North American Journal of Fisheries Management (for the years 1980 to 1995). We supplemented our primary reference sources by using the cited references within each paper that appeared relevant from its discussion in the paper. These citations provided us with studies from other primary journals, technical reports, edited volumes, theses, and manuscripts. Although we were primarily interested in salmonids native to B.C., we also included non-native species for comparative purposes and to extend the range of the data base. From each article, we recorded physical habitat features most commonly studied over a range of species for either rearing or spawning. We only included habitat features that were reported quantitatively in a sufficient number of studies to provide estimates of habitat requirements for several salmonid species.

Whenever possible we recorded the mean and range of reported habitat features in each article. If a range of values was provided, but not a mean, we assumed a normal distribution and used the mid-point of the range as a central measure. We only included studies where microhabitat features were directly measured for fish occupying a given location in a stream. When studies recorded habitat features for different areas in a stream, we calculated a datum for each reach studied. For statistical analyses we also recorded body size of the fish directly from each study. Although most studies reported body sizes of the individuals they observed, a few did not. In these cases we used a secondary reference source that gave a general body size for the population or species (Shapovalov and Taft 1954; Scott and Crossman 1973; Sublette et al. 1990). All data sets were examined for normality, and when required were \log_{10} transformed. All regression equations used an ordinary least squares technique to calculate minimum sum-of-squares (Neter et al. 1990).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We found quantitative measures of habitat variables for 9 salmonid species for rearing (Table 1) and 13 species for spawning (Table 2). Studies that examined salmonid rearing conditions most commonly reported values for depth and current velocities selected by individuals, over a range of body sizes. We also found data for stream substrate associated with salmonid rearing microhabitats. In most cases, researchers categorized substrate size using an interval method such as a modified Wentworth scale (*cf.* Bovee 1982). For studies that used a different scale (e.g., Bain et al. 1985) or reported mean particle size, we converted their data into the Wentworth scale for our analyses.

Table 1. Species of salmonid fishes with quantitative measures of habitat characteristics for rearing (X), as reported in the scientific literature.

Rearing Habitat Characteristics					
Species ^a	Water velocity	Water depth	Substrate type	Space requirements	Sources ^b
chinook salmon	X	X	X		7, 18, 22, 33
coho salmon	X	X	X	X	3, 4, 8, 9, 22
cutthroat trout	X	X	X		17, 23, 27, 28, 30
rainbow / steelhead trout	X	X	X	X	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 14, 19, 21, 23, 32, 35
Atlantic salmon	X	X	X	X	6, 10, 13, 15, 25, 26, 31
brown trout	X	X	X		6, 16, 20, 23, 24, 29, 36
brook trout	X	X	X	X	12, 21, 23, 28, 37
bull trout	X	X	X		27, 34
Dolly Varden	X	X	X		3, 4

^a Scientific names for species listed in Table 1 can be found in Robins et al. 1991.

^b Sources for data used in analyses of rearing habitat are listed as follows: 1= Bugert (1985), 2= Smith and Li (1983), 3=Bugert et al. (1991), 4= Dollof and Reeves (1990) 5=Hill and Grossman (1993), 6=Heggenes and Saltveit (1990), 7=Everest and Chapman (1972), 8=Nielsen (1992), 9=Puckett and Dill (1985), 10=Keeley and Grant (1995), 11= E.R. Keeley (unpublished data), 12=Grant and Noakes (1988), 13=Morantz et al. (1987), 14= Riehle and Griffith (1993), 15=de Graff and Bain (1986), 16=Shirvell and Dungey (1983), 17=Moore and Gregory (1988), 18=Hillman et al. (1987), 19=Baltz et al. (1991), 20=Rincon and Lobon-Cervia (1993), 21=Lohr and West (1992), 22=Shirvell (1994), 23=Horton and Cochauer (1980), 24=Fausch and White (1981), 25=Wankowski and Thorpe (1979), 26=Stradmeyer and Thorpe (1987), 27=Shepard et al. (1984), 28=Griffith (1972), 29=Hayes and Jowett (1994), 30= Bozek and Rahel (1992), 31=Rimmer et al. (1984), 32= Cunjak and Green (1983), 33=Nechako River Project (1987). 34= Boag 1991 (cited from Baxter and McPhail 1996), 35=Slaney and Northcote (1974); 36=Elliott (1990), 37=Grant et al. (1989).

For spawning salmonids, depth and current velocities were also often reported as well as the types and sizes of spawning substrates. We synthesized each of these studies to provide a range of depth and current velocities selected by each species and also the types of spawning substrates selected. In contrast to rearing substrate, most researchers reported geometric mean particle size as an average in spawning sites used by salmonids. Hence, we used geometric mean or median substrate size as a measure for describing spawning substrate. We also found a number of studies

that reported the importance of habitat features on a larger scale. These features included large woody debris, over-wintering and off-channel habitat.

Table 2. Species of salmonid fishes with quantitative measures of habitat characteristics for spawning (X), as reported in the scientific literature.

Spawning Habitat Characteristics					
Species ^a	Water velocity	Water depth	Substrate type	Space requirements ^b	Source(s) ^c
chinook salmon	X	X	X	X	1, 3, 5, 24, 25, 26, 27, 32
coho salmon	X	X	X	X	3, 7, 12, 24, 25, 26, 32
chum salmon	X	X	X	X	3, 24, 32
pink salmon	X	X	X	X	10, 32
sockeye salmon	X	X	X	X	3, 11, 24, 32
cutthroat trout	X	X	X	X	4
gila trout	X	X	X	X	23
golden trout	X	X		X	30
rainbow / steelhead trout	X	X	X	X	8, 16, 24, 26, 32
Atlantic Salmon	X	X	X	X	31, 32
brown trout	X	X	X	X	2, 6, 14, 31, 32
brook trout	X	X	X	X	9, 13, 32
bull trout	X	X		X	17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22

^a Scientific names for species listed in Table 2 can be found in Robins et al. 1991.

^b Space requirements based on redd area.

^c Sources for data used in analyses of spawning habitat are listed as follows: 1=Neilson and Banford (1983), 2=Grost et al. (1990; 1991), 3= Burner (1951), 4=Thurrow and King (1994), 5=Chapman et al. (1986), 6=Ottaway et al. (1981), 7=Crone and Bond (1976), 8=Orcutt et al. (1968), 9=Young et al. (1989), 10=McNeil (1967), 11=Lorenz and Eiler (1989), 12=van den Berghe and Gross (1984), 13=Witzel and MacCrimmon (1983), 14=Shirvell and Dungey (1983), 15=Parsons and Hubert (1988), 16=Hartman and Galbraith (1970), 17=Kitano et al. (1994), 18=Baxter and McPhail (1996), 19=Shepard et al. (1984), 20=McPhail and Murray 1979, 21=Oliver (1979), 22=Leggett (1969), 23=Rinne (1980), 24=Smith (1973), 25=Sams and Pearson (1963; cited from Smith 1973), 26=Briggs (1953), 27=Hobbs (1937), 28=Chambers et al. (1955). 29=Stefferd (1993), 30=James and Sexauer (in press), 31=Heggerget (1991); 32=Kondolf and Wolfman (1993).

Rearing Habitat

The increase in observational and experimental studies of salmonid biology, as noted by Northcote (1988), was reflected in our literature search that provided 37 studies measuring microhabitats selected for feeding or rearing purposes (Table 1). We also encountered many other studies that examined salmonid fish abundance, but we did not include these studies in our data set because they often measured habitat on a larger scale, which probably included areas of unused habitat.

Depth and Velocity Characteristics

For the 9 species that we found habitat measures from the literature, there was a large range in overlap of depth and velocities selected (Fig. 1a and b). Although species that appear to prefer complex riffle habitats, like steelhead (Hartman 1965) or Atlantic salmon (Morantz et al. 1987), also tended to occupy faster areas (Fig. 1b), there was considerable overlap with depths and velocities selected by other species. This was probably due to our pooling of data that included fish sizes from several different age classes. As observed by other researchers, larger fish tend to select deeper, faster areas of the stream (Everest and Chapman 1972; Smith and Li 1983; see also Bjornn and Reiser 1991 for species specific relationships). Our data set also revealed this same trend (Fig. 2a and b). Fish size was positively related to both water depth ($r = 0.45$, $n = 72$, $P = 0.02$) and water velocity ($r = 0.51$, $n = 109$, $P = 0.015$), despite pooling data from a wide range of studies and species. The functional relationship between fish body size and water depth or current velocity was not linear; both tended to level off as fish size reached the upper end of the size distributions we had information on (Fig. 2a and b). The equations describing the relationships in Fig. 2a and b are as follows:

$$\log_{10} \text{ water depth (cm)} = 1.86 \log_{10} \text{ fish length (cm)} - 0.60 \log_{10} \text{ fish length}^2 \text{ (cm)} + 0.44$$

($r^2 = 0.46$, $P < 0.001$),

$$\log_{10} \text{ water velocity (cm} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}) = 1.95 \log_{10} \text{ fish length (cm)} - 0.66 \log_{10} \text{ fish length}^2 \text{ (cm)} - 0.013$$

($r^2 = 0.31$, $P < 0.001$).

The mean velocity selected over all studies was $17.5 \text{ cm} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ (range: $48.8 - 3.0 \text{ cm} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$). The mean depth selected over all studies was 44.4 cm (range: $80.0 - 8.0 \text{ cm}$).

As visual predators, salmonids require an abundant food supply in the waters they inhabit to allow for growth and subsequent reproduction. Several authors have proposed that salmonids select foraging sites in areas of stream based on the trade-off between obtaining a sufficient supply of invertebrate drift, which typically increases with current velocity, and the costs of maintaining position in the current (Fausch 1984; Hughes 1992). Because energy requirements increase for fishes with increasing body weight, by the power 0.75, larger fish expend less energy swimming in fast current than smaller fish (Beamish 1978). Hence, this may be an explanation as to the tendency for large fish to occupy deeper and faster areas of the stream. It may also explain the growing number of habitat preference curves (*sensu* Bovee 1982) that find significant changes in the types of habitats characteristics preferred by different age-classes of salmonids. Given that microhabitat velocity and depth for rearing salmonids is a function of fish size, this factor should be taken into account when considering the potential for re-establishing a particular species in degraded streams.

Rearing Substrate

Substrate associated with rearing areas is believed to be important to salmonids in providing a number of habitat requirements, including cover, velocity refugia, and rearing surfaces for invertebrate prey (Bjornn and Reiser 1991). From the data we collected from the literature, most species appeared to be associated primarily with substrates that **exclude** fine particles in rearing areas (Fig. 1c). As was the case with depth and current velocity in rearing microhabitats, substrate size increased with the size of fish occupying specific areas of the stream (Fig. 2c);

$$\text{substrate category} = 3.11 \log_{10} \text{ fish length (cm)} + 3.46 \text{ (} r^2 = 0.25, n = 47, P < 0.001 \text{)}.$$

Although, fish have been observed over a wide range of substrate sizes, most seem to be associated with substrate categories of 5 (see Bovee 1982) or greater; corresponding to gravel and larger sized substrates, such as boulders. We know of no experimental studies that have determined the exact mechanism for substrate association for stream-dwelling salmonids. We believe it is not a simple one, but is probably related to a number of factors that optimize energy intake and minimize risk of predation. In some species, such as steelhead trout, the addition of large boulders clusters has been observed to increase densities of fish (Ward and Slaney 1979). This increase may provide access to swifter, profitable areas of a stream, by providing a velocity refuge to fish. In addition, areas of stream without high proportions of imbedded fine particles, may also be excellent rearing surfaces for aquatic insects, the primary food source for stream-dwelling salmonids (Allan 1995). Regardless of the exact reason or combination of reasons, rearing streams seem to be associated with stream bottoms relatively free of high proportions of fine particles.

Space Requirements for Rearing

Behavioural observations of salmonid feeding territoriality have been of interest to fisheries biologists for some time because territory size is thought to limit the density and therefore production of stream-dwelling salmonids (Chapman 1966; Allen 1969; Grant and Kramer 1990). Territory size may be dependent on environmental factors such as food abundance because higher levels of food abundance means that fish require a relatively small area to meet energetic demands in comparison to areas of low food productivity (Slaney and Northcote 1974; Dill et al. 1981; Keeley and Grant 1995). At the population level, this may mean that streams with more food production will have higher standing crops of fish because individuals will have smaller space requirements. The benefit of higher invertebrate production has been demonstrated by adding low-level nutrient fertilizer to nutrient deficient streams. For instance when fertilizer was added to the Keogh River, on Vancouver Island, B.C., a significant decrease in age to smoltification was observed as well as a significant increase in numbers of steelhead trout smolts produced from the river (Ward and Slaney 1993).

A second and important component of territory size and limits to population density, is the relationship between territory size and fish body size, also known as the allometry of territory size (Fig. 3.). Because salmonids in streams defend territories from small post-emergent juveniles until they either become smolts or become sexually mature, they must increase the area they defend to meet increasing energetic requirements. This results in a decreasing population density as average body size within a cohort increases (Grant and Kramer 1990). Allometric territory size lines may therefore be good predictors of space requirements and hence maximum densities of salmonids in streams. Several studies have provided allometric territory size lines, including a general interspecific regression model (Grant and Kramer 1990), and intraspecific lines for brook trout (Grant et al. 1989), brown trout (Elliott 1990) and Atlantic salmon (Keeley and Grant 1995). Unfortunately, no allometric territory size regressions exist for endemic salmonids of B.C.

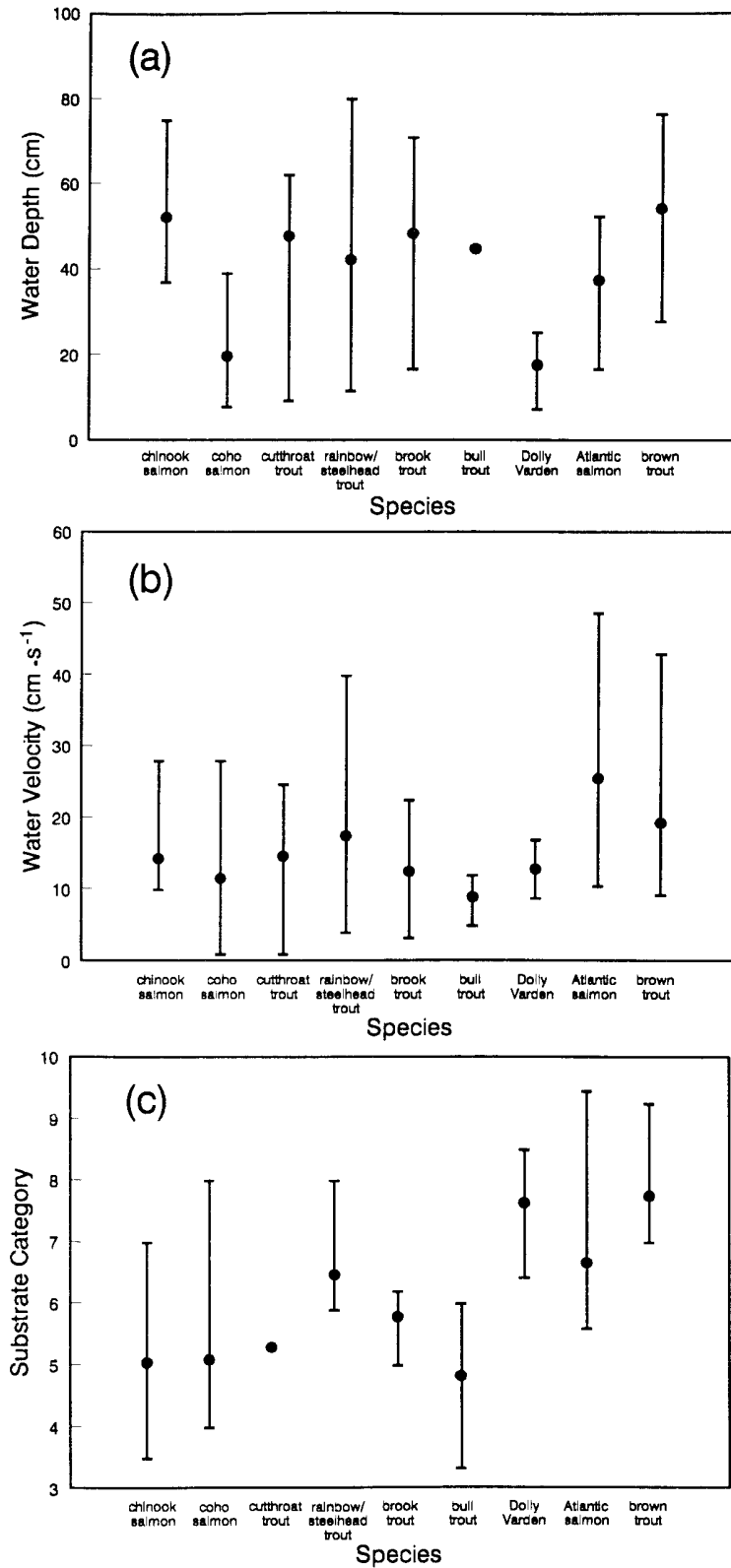


Figure 1. Rearing microhabitats selected by 9 stream-dwelling salmonid species for (a) depth of stream (mean \pm range), (b) water velocity (mean \pm range), and (c) substrate type (mean \pm range). Data are compiled from the literature, see Table 1 for a list of sources.

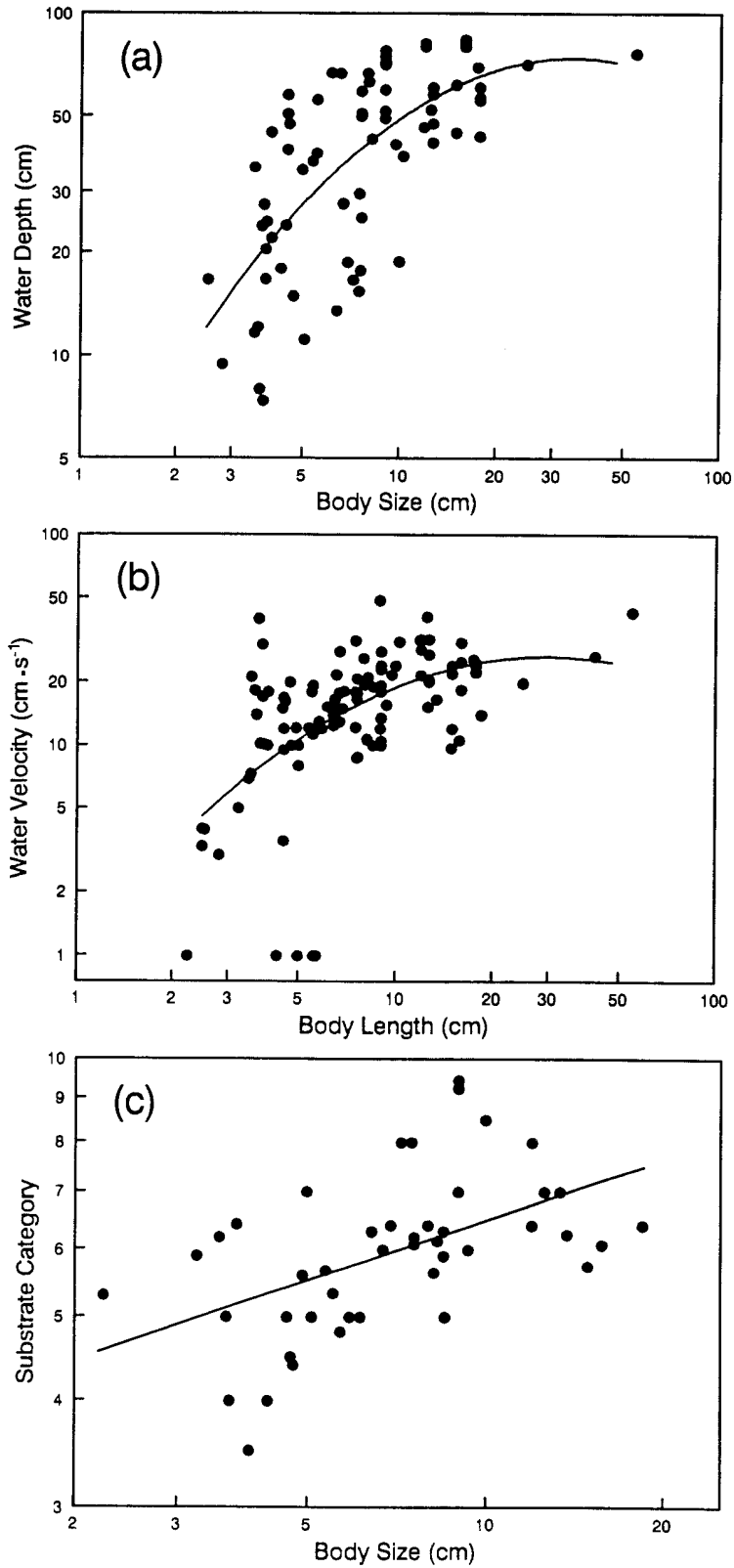


Figure 2. Rearing microhabitats selected by stream-dwelling salmonids in relation to body size for (a) depth of stream, (b) water velocity, and (c) substrate type. Data are compiled from the literature, see Table 1 for a list of sources.

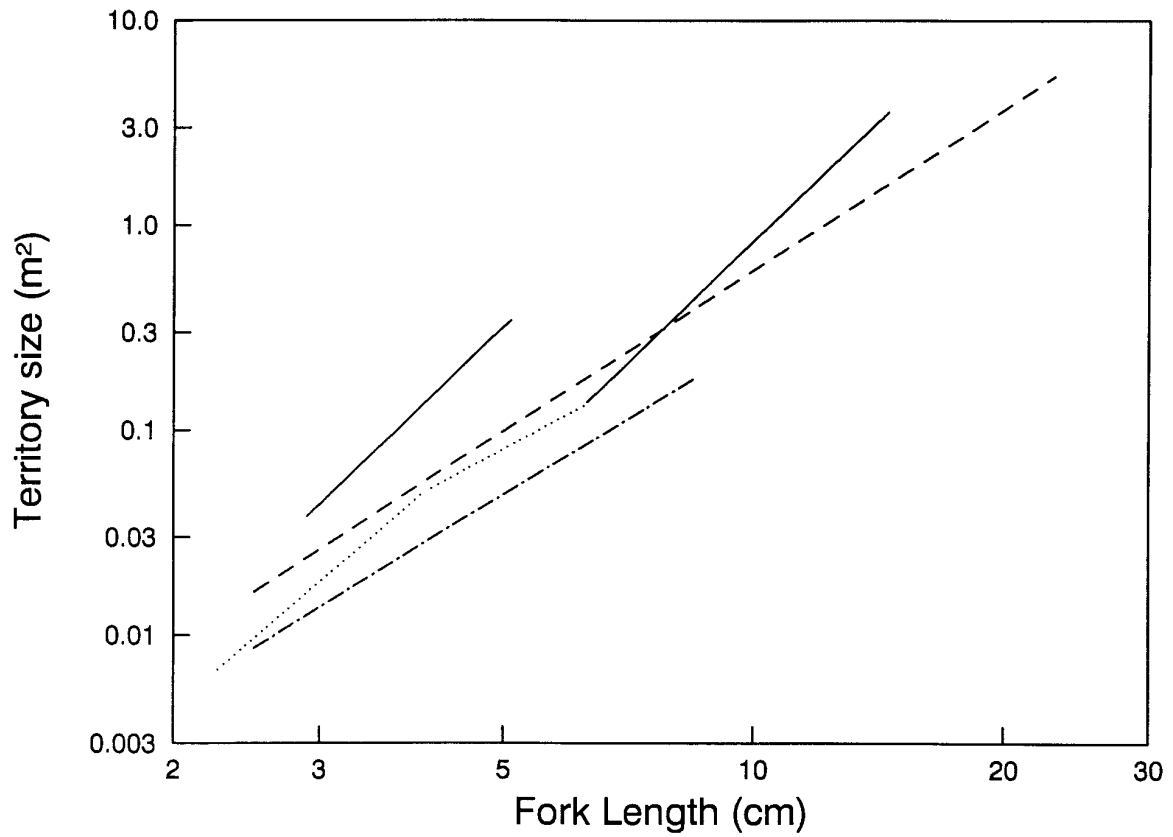


Figure 3. Regression lines of territory size versus body size (after Keeley and Grant 1995). Regression lines are depicted as follows: solid lines, Atlantic salmon; dashed line, interspecific; dotted line, brown trout; dot-dashed line, brook trout.

Spawning Habitat

Salmon, trout and char are well known for their characteristic oval shaped nests or “redds” they excavate for spawning. Historically, these obvious areas seem to have had an early impact on researchers. Some of the first quantitative ecological studies on salmonid habitat requirements, recorded spawning habitat features for several species (Hobbs 1937; Burner 1951; Briggs 1953; Chambers et al. 1955). In the adjoining time since those early studies, many other researchers have recorded a great deal of information (Table 2). However, most studies are empirical records of spawning areas, and few have provided experimental evidence for explaining the distribution of spawning sites. Qualitative observations suggest that salmonids often prefer to spawn in areas of accelerating current, such as in transitional pool to riffle zones (Hobbs 1937; Briggs 1953; Tautz and Groot 1975). In these areas, downwelling currents are likely to provide well oxygenated water to developing embryos over the incubation period. A few experimental studies have demonstrated that some species also ensure sufficient oxygenation of embryos by selecting areas of groundwater seepage (Scott and Crossman 1973).

Depth and Velocity Preferences

Despite a wide range of studies, there appears to be a great deal of overlap in spawning site characteristics for many of the salmonid species studied (Fig. 4a and b). The basic criteria for suitable spawning habitat seems to be water flows greater than $10 \text{ cm} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$ and 10 cm deep (mean velocity selected = $48.8 \text{ cm} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$, range = $75.0 - 11.2 \text{ cm} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}$; mean depth selected = 35.2 cm, range = 95.8-10.2 cm). The most commonly cited explanation for differences in habitat characteristics is fish size (*cf.* Bjornn and Reiser 1991; Stalnaker and Arnette 1976). In fact, from the data compiled from the literature, fish tend to spawn in deeper faster water with increasing body size (Fig. 5a and b; $r = 0.45$, $n = 26$, $P = 0.021$ for depth; $r = 0.51$, $n = 22$, $P = 0.015$ for current velocity). Presumably, the deepest, fastest areas of a stream afford the greatest likelihood of a spawning site remaining within suitable conditions for developing embryos. However, spawning fish may be constrained to spawning in certain areas because body size will determine the maximum sustained swimming speed (Beamish 1978) and only the largest species (e.g., chinook salmon) can maintain position in swift current for sufficient lengths of time to complete spawning.

Spawning Substrate

The importance of substrate composition for spawning salmonids is one of the few habitat characteristics that have been examined experimentally to determine its importance to salmonid ecology. Because salmonids bury their eggs in gravel nests, substrate composition must provide interstitial spaces to allow sufficient waterflow and oxygenation of embryos. Chapman (1988) reviewed the literature on embryo survival in relation to proportion of fine substrate sizes (particles less than 6 mm in diameter) in salmonid redds. Chapman's (1988) synthesis of published studies generally showed that embryo survival decreases significantly with high proportions of fine substrate in salmonid redds. As one might expect, permeability of water to developing embryos is reduced, resulting in lower oxygen levels, increasing mortality of embryos, and decreasing size at emergence for surviving individuals.

Kondolf and Wolfman (1993) compiled an extensive data set of salmonid spawning gravels, and found that the median and geometric mean gravel size used for spawning (25 mm and 16 mm) were several times larger than the fine gravels that have been shown to reduce embryo survival. Kondolf and Wolfman's (1993) data set also revealed that a great deal of overlap exists in the sizes of spawning gravels used by 8 different salmonid species as well as in a few additional studies for 3 other species (Rinne 1980; Stefferud 1993; Thurrow and King 1994 (Fig. 4c). This suggests that salmonids can use a wide range of gravel sizes as long as fine particles are low in abundance. Like depth and velocity selection, larger species tend to have the largest median gravel sizes present in their redds ($r = 0.42$, $n = 139$, $P < 0.001$; Fig. 5c). Whether larger salmonid species actively seek areas with the largest gravels, has never been confirmed experimentally. However, larger salmonids have larger eggs and may therefore require larger spawning gravels with wider interstitial spaces to allow sufficient water percolation (van den Berghe and Gross 1989).

Space Requirements for Spawning

Both male and female spawners defend spawning sites against conspecifics. If the amount of available habitat for spawning is limited, then space requirements (territory size) per spawning pair will dictate the number of spawners that can be accommodated within a stream. While the description of aggressive behaviour during spawning has been documented for some time (Tautz and Groot 1975), there are few quantitative measures of territory size for spawning adults. Researchers have most often measured space use for spawning salmonids by measuring the area of gravel disturbed by the female while constructing the redd. Redd area can differ greatly between salmonid species, although the data we compiled also show some degree of overlap (Fig. 6). As several authors have speculated (Bjornn and Reiser 1991; Crisp and Carling 1989; Chapman 1988) redd area increases with fish size (Fig. 7). If redd area is directly related to spawning territory size then the largest species will have the lowest maximum spawning densities. Burner (1951) recognized over 40 years ago, the importance as well as the paucity of quantitative measures of territory size. He suggested that an area four times that of the redd would be a reasonable estimate of territory size for spawning salmonids. Since 1951, the number of studies examining spawning in salmonids has increased estimates of redd area, but there are still very few measures of territory size. However, the few studies that do exist, suggest that territory size may be roughly 4 times that of the redd area (Fig. 7). Hence, the data available from the literature for redd area may serve as a reasonable estimate of space requirements for spawning adults over a wide range of species.

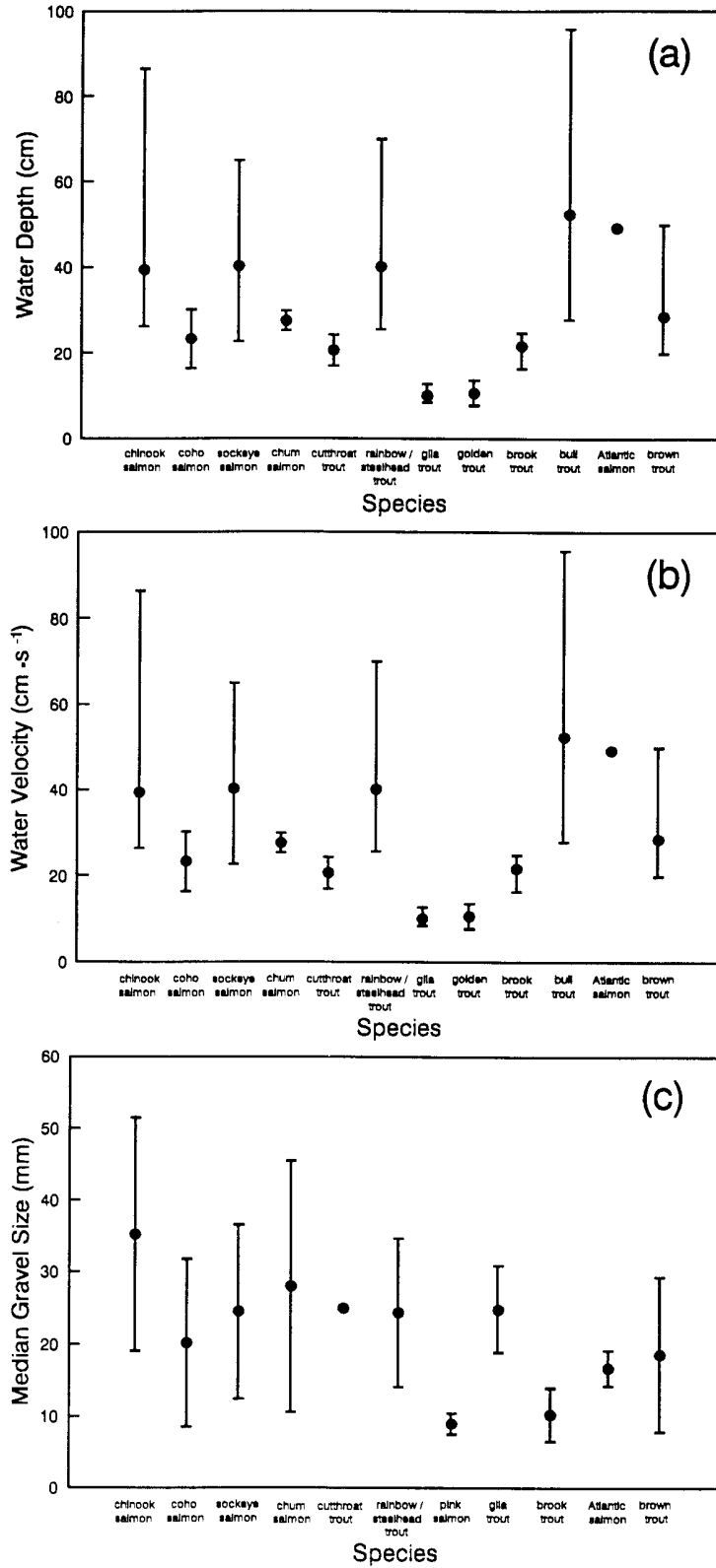


Figure 4. Spawning microhabitat selected by salmonid fishes for (a) depth (mean \pm range), (b) water velocity (mean \pm range), and (c) substrate sizes (mean \pm range) at spawning sites. Data are compiled from the literature, see Table 2.

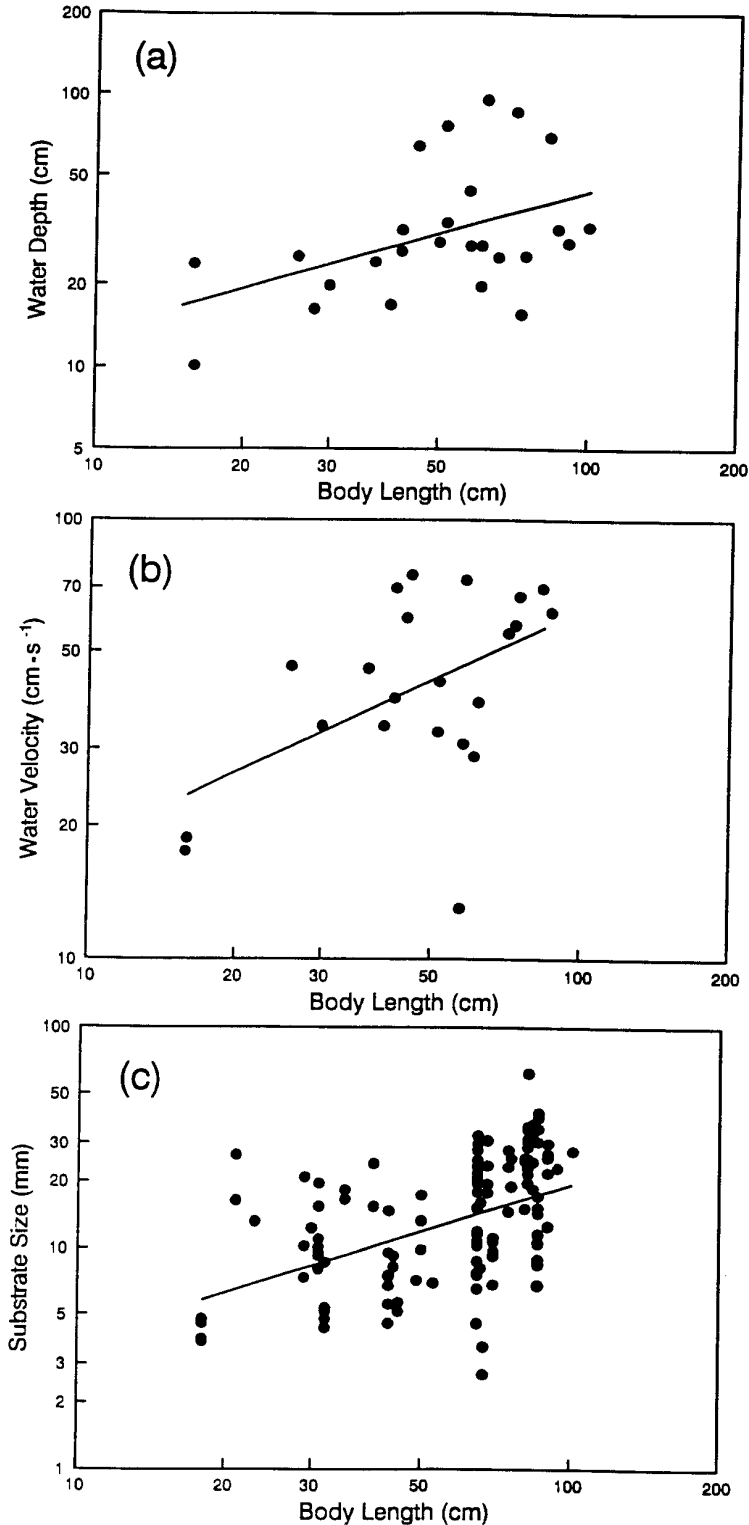


Figure 5. Spawning microhabitats selected by salmonid fishes in relation to body size for (a) depth of stream ($\log_{10} \text{ depth (cm)} = 0.51 \text{ fish length (cm)} + 0.62$, $n = 26$, $r^2 = 0.20$, $P = 0.021$), (b) water velocity ($\log_{10} \text{ velocity (cm} \cdot \text{s}^{-1}) = 0.53 \text{ fish length (cm)} + 0.73$, $n = 22$, $r^2 = 0.26$, $P = 0.015$), and (c) substrate sizes at the spawning sites (median substrate size = $0.28 \text{ fish length (cm)} + 8.43$, $n = 139$, $r^2 = 0.18$, $P < 0.001$). Data are compiled from the literature, see Table 2.

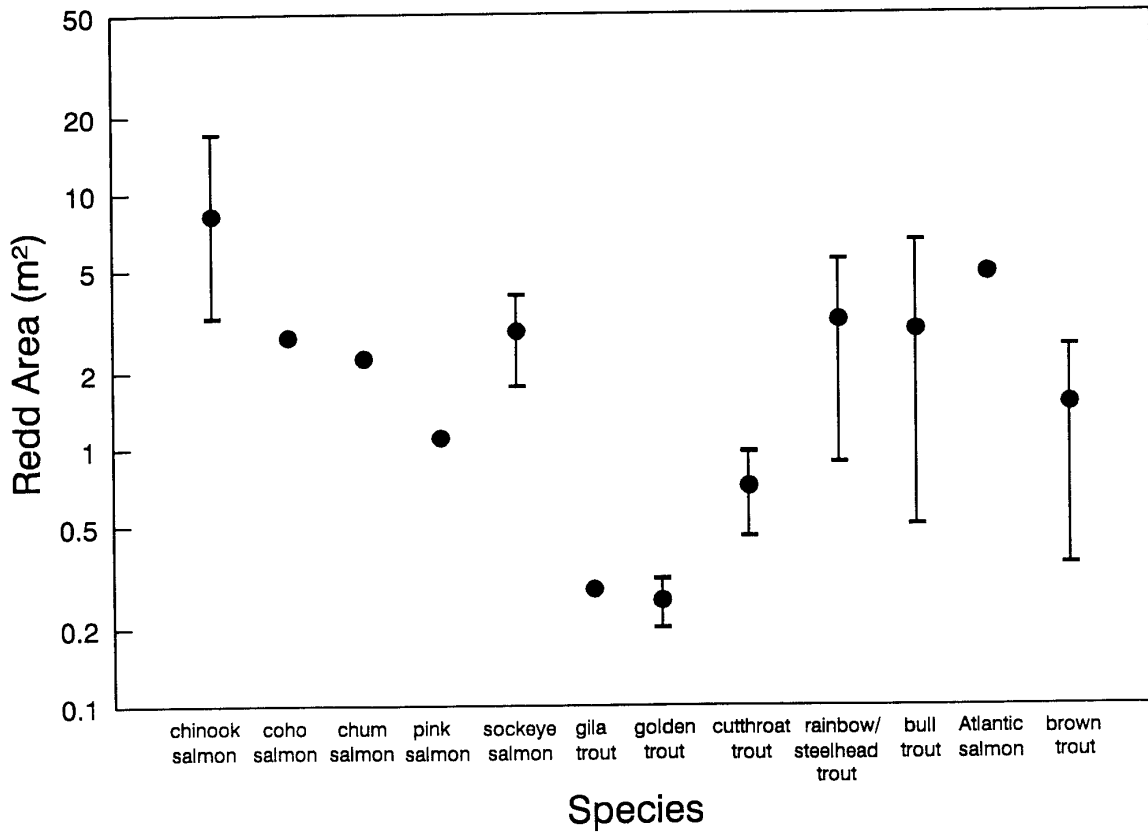


Figure 6. Size of redds constructed by salmonid fishes (mean \pm range). Data are compiled from the literature, see Table 2 for sources.

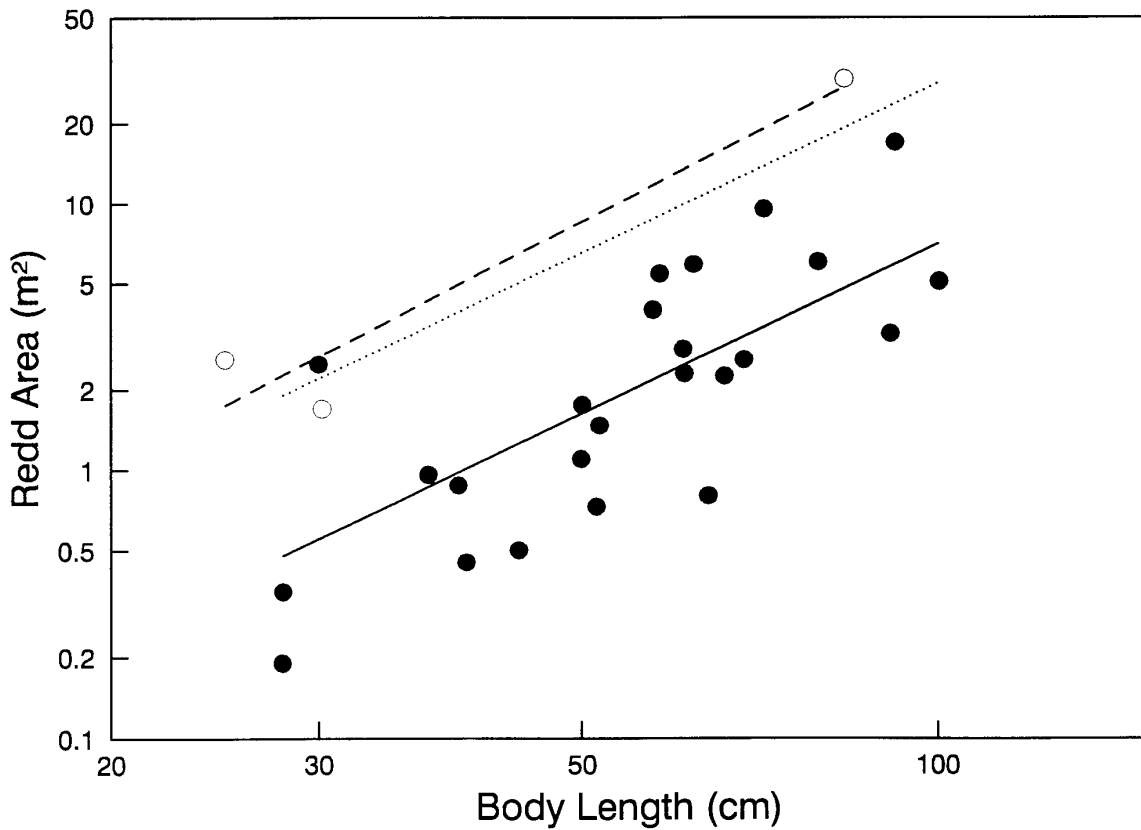


Figure 7. The relationship between body size of spawning adults and the size of the area excavated for redd construction (solid line and circles): $\text{Log}_{10} \text{ redd area (m}^2\text{)} = 2.12 \text{ log}_{10} \text{ fish length (cm)} - 3.39$, $n = 25$, $r^2 = 0.62$, $P < 0.001$). Data are compiled from the literature, see Table 2 for sources. Dashed line represents the area recommended by Burner (1951) for space requirements of spawning adult salmonids based on qualitative observations. Dotted line and open circles represents spawning territory size measurements from 3 studies: Fabricius and Gustafson 1954; Fabricius and Gustafson 1955; Hartman 1969).

Macrohabitat Correlates of Fish Abundance

Large Woody Debris

In the past few decades, fisheries biologists have come to realize that the input of fallen trees from the riparian area surrounding a stream is an important process in maintaining a healthy and productive salmonid stream (Lisle 1986; Andrus et al. 1988; Fausch and Northcote 1992). Studies have found that an increasing presence of large woody debris tends to be correlated with fish abundance (Elliott 1986; Lisle 1986; Fausch and Northcote 1992). The exact mechanism by which large woody debris may improve fish habitat has never been confirmed experimentally. However, the benefit of its presence appears to serve several functions within a stream system. Researchers have found that large woody debris is an important structural component to a stream, maintaining regular stream sinuosity, channel depth, and creating pools and riffles (Elliott 1986; Hogan 1986; Tripp 1986; Andrus et al. 1988; Crispin et al. 1993). In addition, large woody debris is also thought to provide instream cover from predators (Bugert et al. 1991) as well as improve substrate habitat for the rearing of aquatic invertebrates, an important source of food for salmonid fishes (Angermeier and Karr 1984).

A large riparian zone is required to supply large woody debris to a stream because the input of wood is a dynamic process that results in slow net losses of woody debris from a watershed. Hence, new trees must be recruited into the stream over time. The removal of riparian trees often leads to a deficit of large woody debris within a stream, particularly in large streams where trees must be of substantive size to remain within a watershed long enough to provide complexity to fish habitat (Murphy and Koski 1989). In the absence of large trees capable of withstanding freshets, researchers have found that smaller wood mechanically anchored to the streambed, can serve as a surrogate possibly until larger trees can be recruited into a stream (House and Boehne 1985; Armantrout 1991; Ward and Slaney 1993; Slaney et al. 1994).

Off-Channel and Winter Rearing Habitat

As ectotherms (cold-blooded animals) salmonids metabolize and grow very slowly in cold water temperatures. Usually growth is non-existent or nearly so in temperatures below 8-10°C (see Elliott 1994 for a review of temperature and growth). Corresponding to seasonal changes such as in the beginning of autumn where temperatures fall below a range where growth occurs, salmonids often begin to seek over-wintering areas until water temperatures increase sufficiently to make active feeding a worthwhile endeavor (Rimmer et al. 1984; Campbell and Neuner 1985; Cunjak 1996).

Depending on the species and availability of over-wintering habitat, salmonids may make short migrations into over-wintering habitat. For instance, coho salmon often seek out slow flowing side channels and ponds as areas of congregation in winter months (Peterson 1982; Tschaplinski and Hartman 1983; Murphy et al. 1984.). These channels and ponds can often harbor large numbers of fish (Fig. 8). They are thought to provide refugia, where mortality rates are much lower than in mainstem stream channels (Bustard and Narver 1975; Tschaplinski and Hartman 1983).

Salmonid species that appear to prefer swifter riffle habitats with large substrate in summer, such as steelhead trout (Hartman 1965) and Atlantic salmon (Morantz et al. 1987) often remain in similar areas during winter but behave differently. For instance, Cunjak (1988) observed

that juvenile Atlantic salmon became photonegative and hid under large substrate where water velocity was zero, but remained in channel areas with swift current. Therefore, while off-channel habitat may be important for species like coho salmon, others such steelhead trout and Atlantic salmon, may require large substrate and debris within the main channel for over-winter survival (Bustard and Narver 1975; Campbell and Neuner 1985; Cunjak 1988).

CONCLUSIONS

Anyone who has walked or snorkeled a trout stream will have noticed that the abundance of fish is often not evenly distributed throughout all areas. Presumably, this is related to differences in habitat quality between sites and to differences in habitat preferences between species of salmon, trout and char. Being able to provide stream habitat that falls within the range of suitable or preferred habitat for growth and reproduction is essential to increase and stabilize populations of salmonids threatened by habitat degradation. To accomplish this, we must first quantitatively describe or provide an index of preferred habitat features. We hope that this document will aid biologists by providing a reference point in describing habitat requirements for stream-dwelling salmonids. Unfortunately, the few simple measures we have summarized here, cannot represent the entire suite of habitat characteristics that salmonids require because they live in highly complex and dynamic ecosystems. Our hope is that the few features we have described will be well correlated enough with all habitat features, that restoring them will satisfy the minimum requirements for stable fish populations.

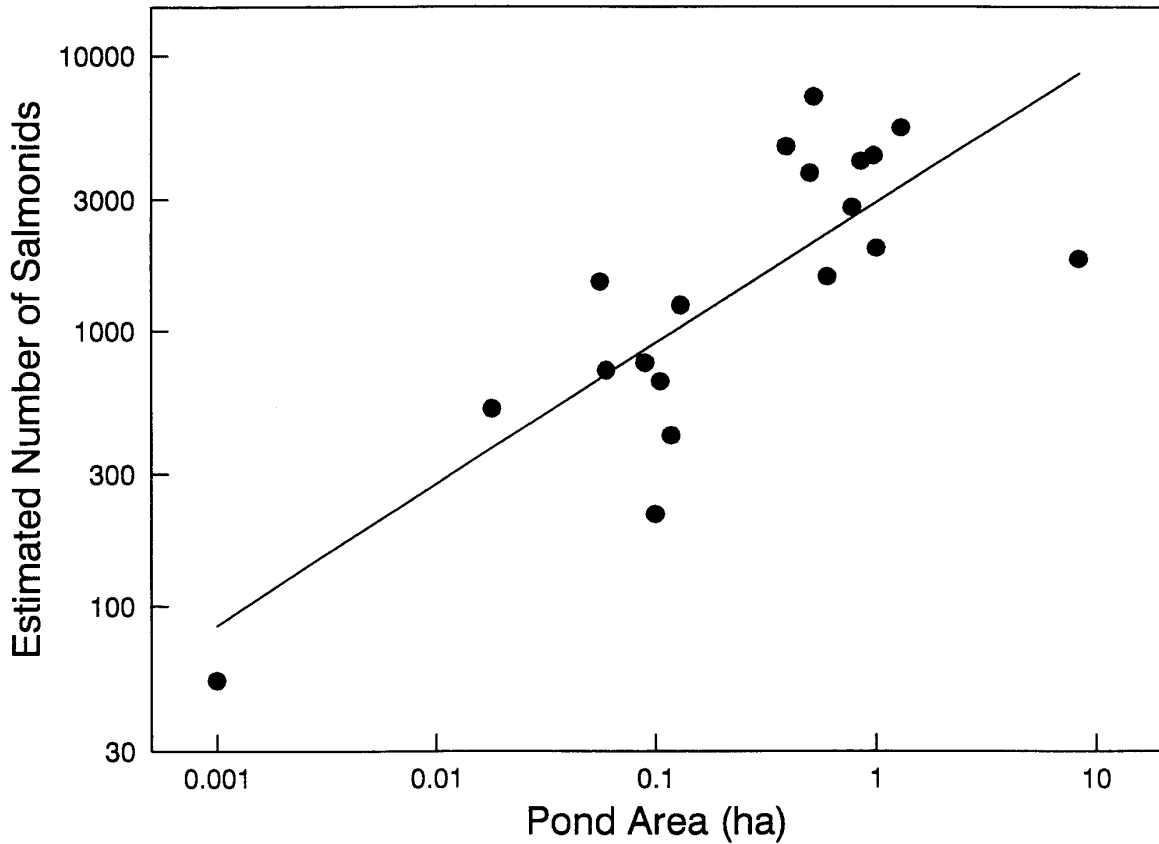


Figure 8. The relationship between surface area of off-channel ponds and estimated number of salmonid fish present. Equation of the line is: Log_{10} fish number = 0.51 log_{10} pond area (ha) + 3.47, $n = 19$, $r^2 = 0.64$, $P < 0.001$ (data are from Bustard and Narver 1975; Lister et al. 1980; Peterson 1982; Swales et al. 1986; Beniston et al. 1987; Swales et al. 1988; Beniston et al. 1988; Cederholm et al. 1988; Swales and Levings 1989; Lister and Dunford 1989; Cederholm and Scarlett 1991; M. Foy, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Vancouver, B.C., unpublished data).

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