TAM Rule Explainer

Fraser River sockeye salmon are managed using a harvest control rule that adjusts total allowable catch (TAC) based on two fishery reference points (FRP). TACs and FRPs are defined, at least initially, at the management unit (MU) level because MUs exhibit relatively consistent differences in migration timing that moderate their exposure to commercial marine fisheries. The overarching framework is referred to as a Total Allowable Mortality (TAM) rule because TACs are adjusted based on environmental conditions. Specifically, in-season estimates of recruit abundance are adjusted downwards to account for mortality that occurs in-river during migration to spawning grounds. This adjustment attempts to ensure that a sufficiently large number of spawners are allowed to “escape” the fishery to meet spawning ground escapement goals, even if considerable en route mortality occurs.