

Occurrence of Pink Salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*)
in Iceland in 1960 and 1961.

by

Þór Guðjónsson

(Institute of Freshwater Fisheries, Reykjavik, Iceland.)

On 2 September 1960 a foreign looking fish was caught in a gill net in the river Skjálfandaflljót in northern Iceland. It proved to be a male pink salmon, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*, 46 centimeters long (forked length), weighing 1175 grams, with a well developed hump on its back. This is the first reported occurrence of pink salmon in Iceland.

When the news of this catch was made public, it was realized that pink salmon had been caught in several rivers previously. The first pink salmon was caught in the river Hítará in western Iceland on 12 August 1960. From this date on until the close of the fishing season on 20 September, 20 pink salmon were reported caught by anglers and in gill nets; 19 of these in the rivers on the western, northern and eastern coasts of Iceland and one in salt water in Hrutafjordur in northern Iceland, see figure 1. It should be mentioned that no fishing for the Atlantic salmon is allowed in the sea. Because of this most of the pink salmon is caught in fresh water in Iceland. The sex of nine of the pink salmon is known; seven were males and two females. The length of 14 fish was recorded being from 45 to 60 centimeters, with an average of 52.8 centimeters. The weight of 11 fish is known. It varies from 1500 to 2500 grams, the average being 1840 grams. The weight-length relationship of 11 fish has been plotted on figure 2.

Scales samples were secured from six pink salmon. These were analyzed by Mr. K. H. Mosher, fishery biologist of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Biological Laboratory, Seattle, Washington, U. S. A. The scales had one annulus and a check in the first summer zone. Mr. Mosher found a certain likeness in the types of structure of the scales from Iceland to those of pink salmon scales obtained from fish caught in the northern Pacific. Scales of three fish looked most like those of pink salmon from the U. S. S. R., scales of two fish bore resemblance to those of fish from the area Asia to the Aleutians, and scales of one fish looked similar to scales of fish from the area Asia to Cook Inlet.

In September 1961 two pink salmon were caught by anglers in Iceland, one in a lake on Snæfellsnes in western Iceland, the other in the river Nordfjardará in eastern Iceland, see figure 1. The former,

a female ready to spawn, was caught on 3 September and the latter a male was caught on 12 September. The length-weight relationship is shown on figure 2. The scales of these pink salmon had one annulus and a check in the first summer zone.

There seems to be no doubt about the Russian origin of the pink salmon caught in Iceland in 1960 and 1961, since during the last years pink salmon have as far as known only been liberated into rivers in northern Russia. In 1960 pink salmon were caught in Norway and Scotland as well as in Iceland.

LOCATIONS OF CATCHES OF PINK SALMON IN ICELAND
IN 1960 AND 1961

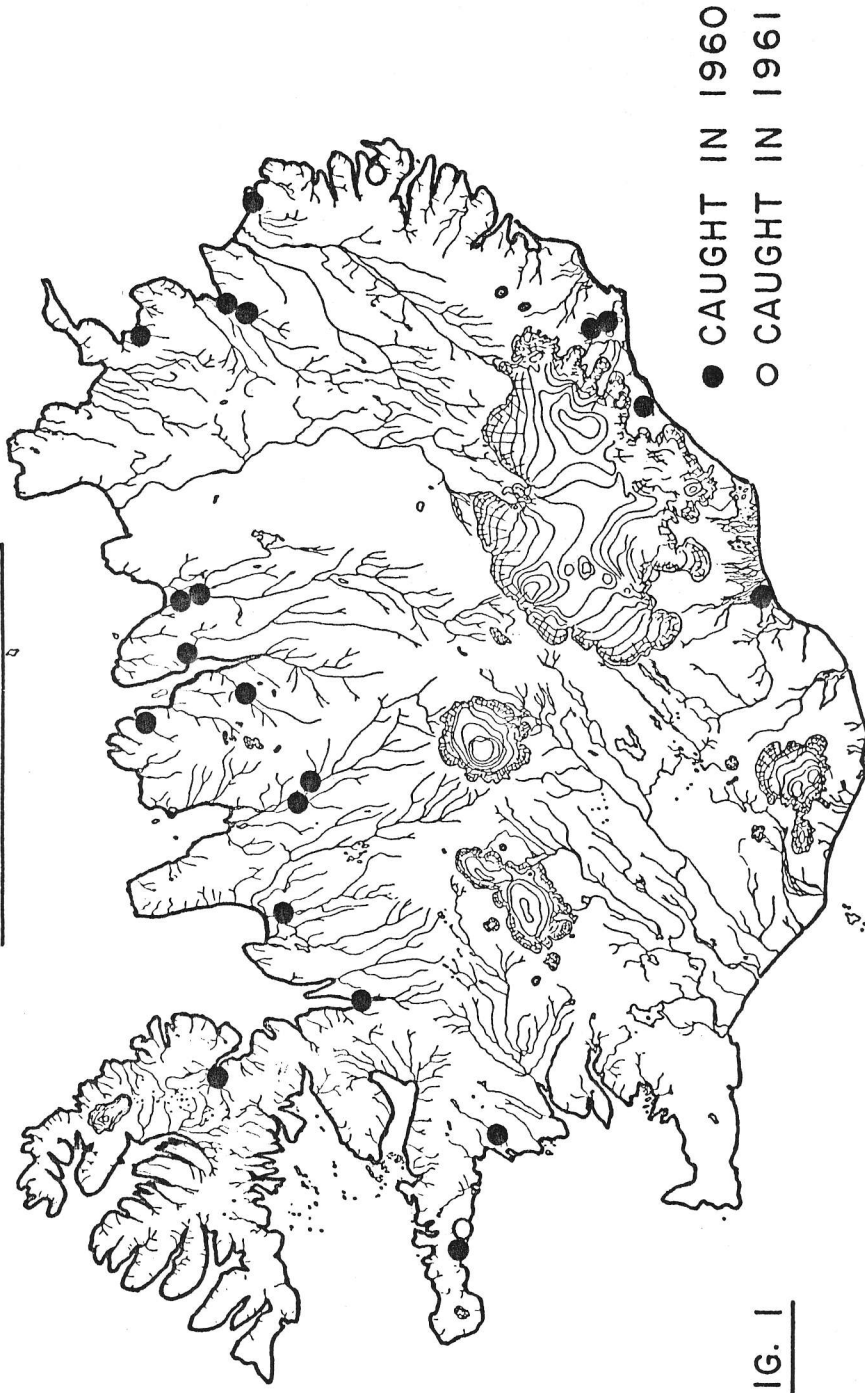


FIG. 1

FIG. 2

LENGTH-WEIGHT RELATIONSHIP OF 13
PINK SALMON CAUGHT IN ICELAND IN
1960 AND 1961

