

PACIFIC

SALMON

TREATY

UPDATE

Alaska Perspectives on The Pacific Salmon Treaty

April, 1996

A. General

- ▶ It is very important to keep in mind that the vast majority (approximately 95%) of salmon harvested in Southeast Alaska, all species combined, are from Southeast Alaska.
- ▶ It is also important to recognize that Alaska has managed all of their Treaty related fisheries consistent with negotiated agreements, even during recent years when Canada refused to reach agreement. The same can not be said for Canada. They have managed some fisheries in the northern boundary with no regard for negotiated limits, and in years of no formal agreement have managed transboundary River fisheries in a manner to redefine the status quo to their advantage.
- ▶ The Pacific Salmon Treaty between Canada and the U.S. established the Pacific Salmon Commission. Under the treaty, the Commission is the forum for negotiating fishing issues. Canada's consistent attempts to negotiate fishery arrangements between Ottawa and Washington, D.C., at a government to government level, will not be supported by the State of Alaska.
- ▶ We are pleased to see that Canada has finally recognized that there are some conservation concerns with Pacific salmon in Canada and the southern U.S. and I am now optimistic that they will take actions in their fisheries to address concerns without demanding concessions in unrelated Alaska fisheries.
- ▶ Negotiation sessions are currently scheduled over the next two months to develop bilateral fishing arrangements for the 1996 season on all Treaty related fisheries. The Alaska delegation stands ready to do their part to address the conservation and fair sharing of these valuable salmon resources, and we look forward to the challenges that lie ahead.

B. Chinook Salmon Rebuilding

- ▶ Relative to Canada and Washington/Oregon, Alaska harvests roughly 15% on average of the total Pacific West Coast chinook under the Treaty. Alaska continues to harvest chinook salmon at levels 30% below those that existed prior to the Treaty.
- ▶ Many of the chinook salmon harvested in Southeast Alaska are spawned outside Alaska. However, those non-Alaskan chinook salmon feed and grow in Alaskan waters and a vast majority of these chinook salmon are from healthy stocks.
- ▶ Alaska continues to recognize its' legitimate responsibility to participate in the rebuilding of coastwide chinook salmon stocks under the treaty. We will honor that commitment. Alaska also recognizes that some chinook stocks have declined. This was factored into our approach for 1995, and will be considered in 1996.

- ▶ Canada has expressed conservation concerns for 1996 on West Coast of Vancouver Island natural chinook stocks and returns to the Robertson Creek Hatchery. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is currently participating in a scientific evaluation of the situation.

C. Implementation of "Equity"

- ▶ Consistent with the U.S. perspective on Equity, Alaska believes that any Equity arrangement under the Pacific Salmon Treaty must:

1. Be consistent with Treaty principles of conservation and optimum production which have equal standing with the Equity principle;
2. Account fully for the contributions each country makes to the production of fish;
3. Address directly the goal of avoiding undue disruption of existing fisheries;
4. Must prevent a country from being placed at an equity disadvantage by unilateral actions of the other country (flooding of fish into the other countries' waters);
5. Must prevent a country from being placed at an equity disadvantage by factors beyond its control; and
6. Must take into account annual fluctuations in the abundance of salmon stocks, and the uncertainties in estimates of salmon production and benefits.

- ▶ Alaska remains committed to working with the federal government and within the Pacific Salmon Commission process to find a reasonable approach that will resolve the Equity dispute.

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96-094

**ALASKANS URGE NEGOTIATIONS OVER SALMON, CANADIANS
BACK AWAY FROM THE BARGAINING TABLE**

JUNEAU, Alaska - The State of Alaska today criticized British Columbia and Canadian fisheries officials for refusing to come to the bargaining table to negotiate over who gets to catch how many salmon in each country.

Alaska Commissioner for the Pacific Salmon Commission David Benton proposed talks about the "equity issue" in Anchorage to representatives of the Canadian and British Columbia governments this week, but both refused. Benton urged the Canadians to abandon their headline-grabbing strategy on Pacific salmon for reasoned negotiations about how to conserve valuable salmon stocks.

"Certain Canadians are trying to blame Alaska for decimating their salmon stocks through poor management at the same time Alaskans have been world leaders in professional management," Benton said. "Instead of bombastic sword rattling aimed only at re-election, Canadian officials should demonstrate their commitment to conservation by coming to the negotiating table. This is a time for statesmanship, not political self-promotion."

Benton met Monday with Canadian Director for Fisheries Management Bud Graham and on Thursday with B.C. Fisheries Minister David Zirnelt. Benton proposed to both they join Alaska to negotiate equity arrangements on a fishery-by-fishery basis for Northern Boundary fisheries between Alaska and Canada. Both refused.

Alaska has repeatedly pressed Canada to return to the Pacific Salmon Commission process, which the Canadians have repeatedly refused. In 1994, Canada withdrew from the treaty negotiations, pursuing instead an aggressive fishing strategy that contributed to the "grab all" attitude in the Canadian fishing fleet. That led to the over-harvest and failure to meet escapement goals of some segments of the Fraser River sockeye run.

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Pacific Salmon Treaty

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April 19, 1996

Some 95 percent of all salmon harvested in Southeast Alaska are from Southeast Alaska. Alaskans harvest only 15 percent of the total Pacific West Coast chinook fishery under the treaty, while the rest is caught by Canada, Washington and Oregon. In recent years, Alaska's harvests of chinook salmon have been 40 percent below harvests before the treaty.

Alaska believes any equity arrangement under the Pacific Salmon Treaty must be consistent with the principles of conservation and optimum production, account fully for the contributions each country makes to the production of fish, among other principles.

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Province of
British Columbia

NEWS RELEASE

Office of the Premier
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For Immediate Release
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CLARK RELEASES ACTION PLAN TO RESOLVE SALMON CRISIS

- Premier and fishing stakeholders call on Ottawa to get tough with the Americans -

VANCOUVER - Premier Glen Clark and salmon stakeholders have joined forces to turn up the heat on the Canadian and U.S. governments to resolve the salmon crisis.

The Premier stated that, in order to force the Americans to conclude an agreement to conserve West Coast salmon, we are urging Ottawa to formally notify the U.S. government that unless an agreement is reached before this year's fishing season, Canada will:

- Cancel the agreement allowing U.S. nuclear submarines to use the testing range at Nanoose Bay on the Inside Passage.
- Increase entry requirements for all U.S. fishing boats, such as stringently enforcing all existing Canada customs and immigration requirements, conducting extensive safety inspections on all U.S. fishing boats or imposing a transit fee.

"The Canadian and U.S. governments must realize that the survival of our west coast salmon is at stake, and that B.C.'s fishing jobs and communities are being threatened," said Clark. "We can't afford to wait any longer for the Americans to open their eyes to the need to save our west coast salmon. We have to take immediate and decisive action now before it's too late."

The B.C. government and key fisheries stakeholders are sending an open letter to Prime Minister Chretien asking Ottawa to move expeditiously in resolving the dispute with the U.S. They are calling for:

- U.S. agreement to stop catching threatened B.C. salmon runs, including Fraser River sockeye and Vancouver Island chinook.
- Immediate public release of the international mediator's proposals to resolve the Pacific Salmon Treaty.
- U.S. agreement to immediately start binding arbitration on a fair division of a sustainable salmon catch.

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Clark Releases Action Plan to Resolve Salmon Crisis... 2

Each year, about 19 U.S. military vessels, including nuclear submarines, conduct training and testing exercises by Nanoose Bay near Nanaimo. Ottawa has ignored B.C.'s calls for a full public environmental assessment of the Nanoose Bay operation, which is up for renewal this year.

Clark's calls for action follow on the heels of Fisheries Minister David Zirnbelt's trip to Alaska where he strongly urged Americans to address B.C.'s salmon conservation concerns. Clark and Zirnbelt have also been meeting with the B.C. fishing industry to hear first-hand their concerns about the declining fishery and their outrage over the federal government's fleet reduction plan.

"There's a tremendous sense of instability and frustration within B.C.'s fishing community," said Clark. "In a few weeks, U.S. fishing boats will start heading up the Inside Passage in preparation for the start of the fishing season. We have no agreement in place to keep the Americans from wiping out some of our most important salmon runs. Meanwhile B.C. fishing boats sit idle in an effort to conserve salmon. We won't sit by and allow our salmon stocks, our fishing industry, and our coastal communities to be destroyed."

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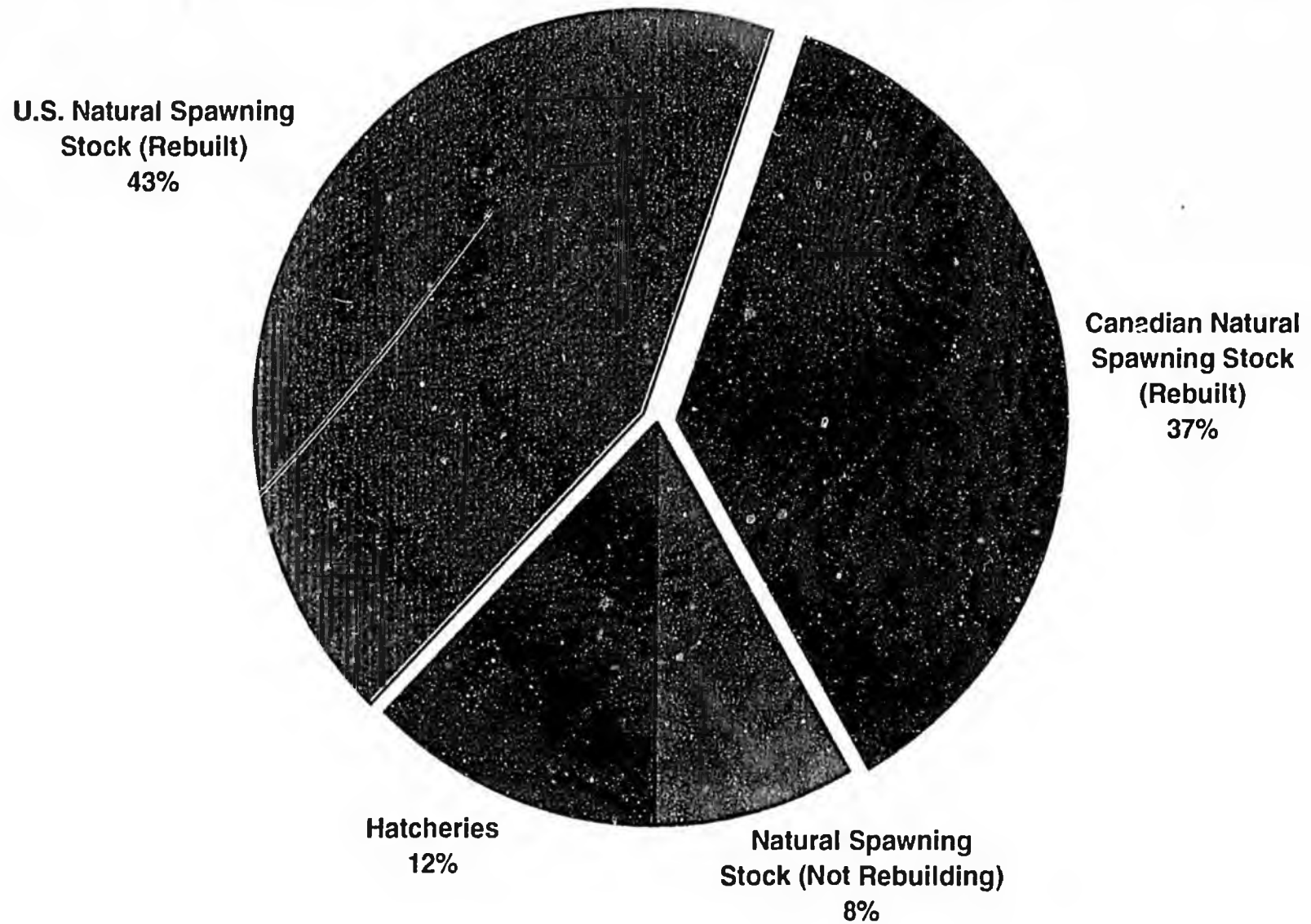
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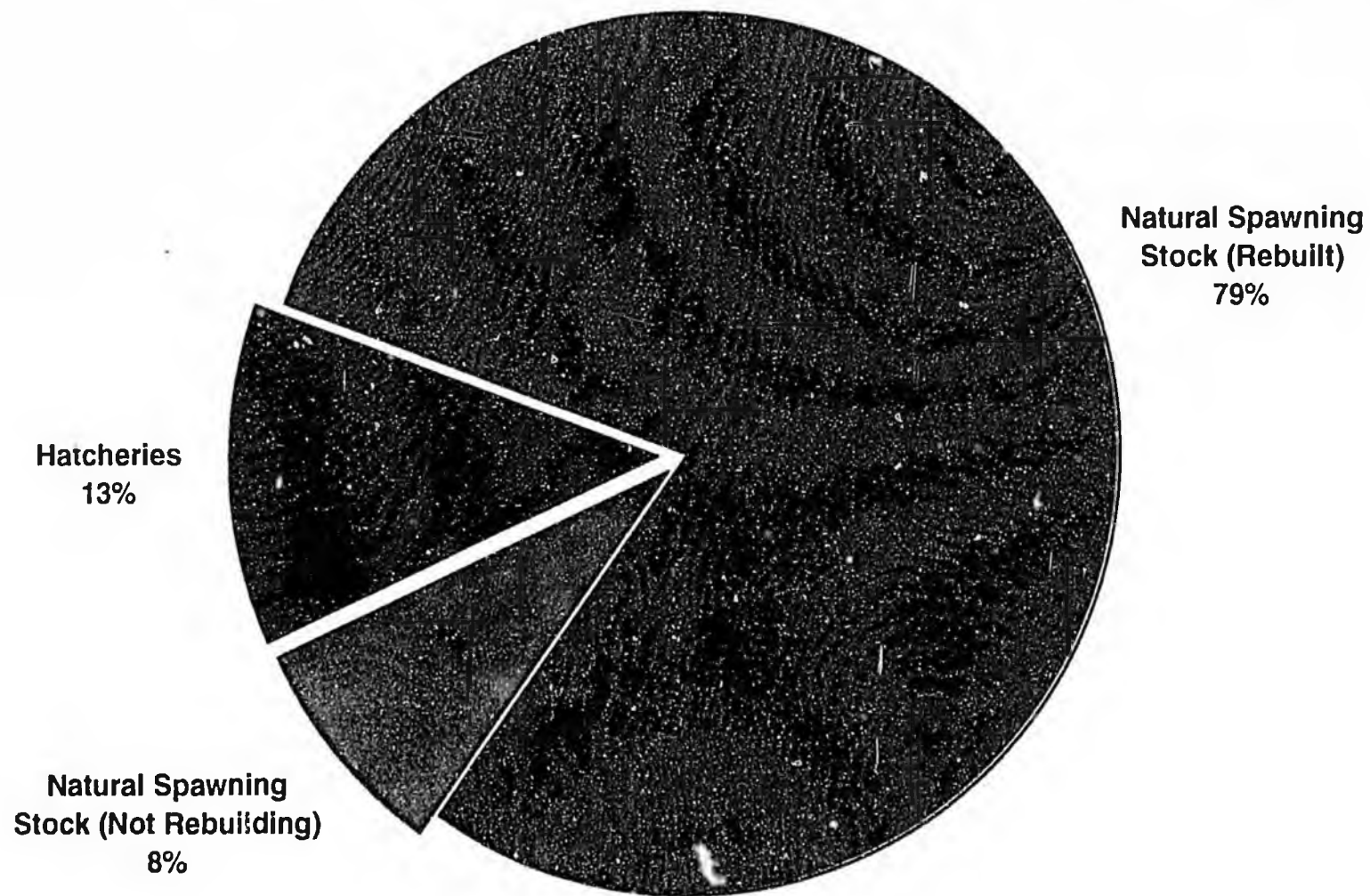
Editor's note: Nanoose Bay backgrounder, open letter to Prime Minister Chretien, and Nanoose Bay map are available.

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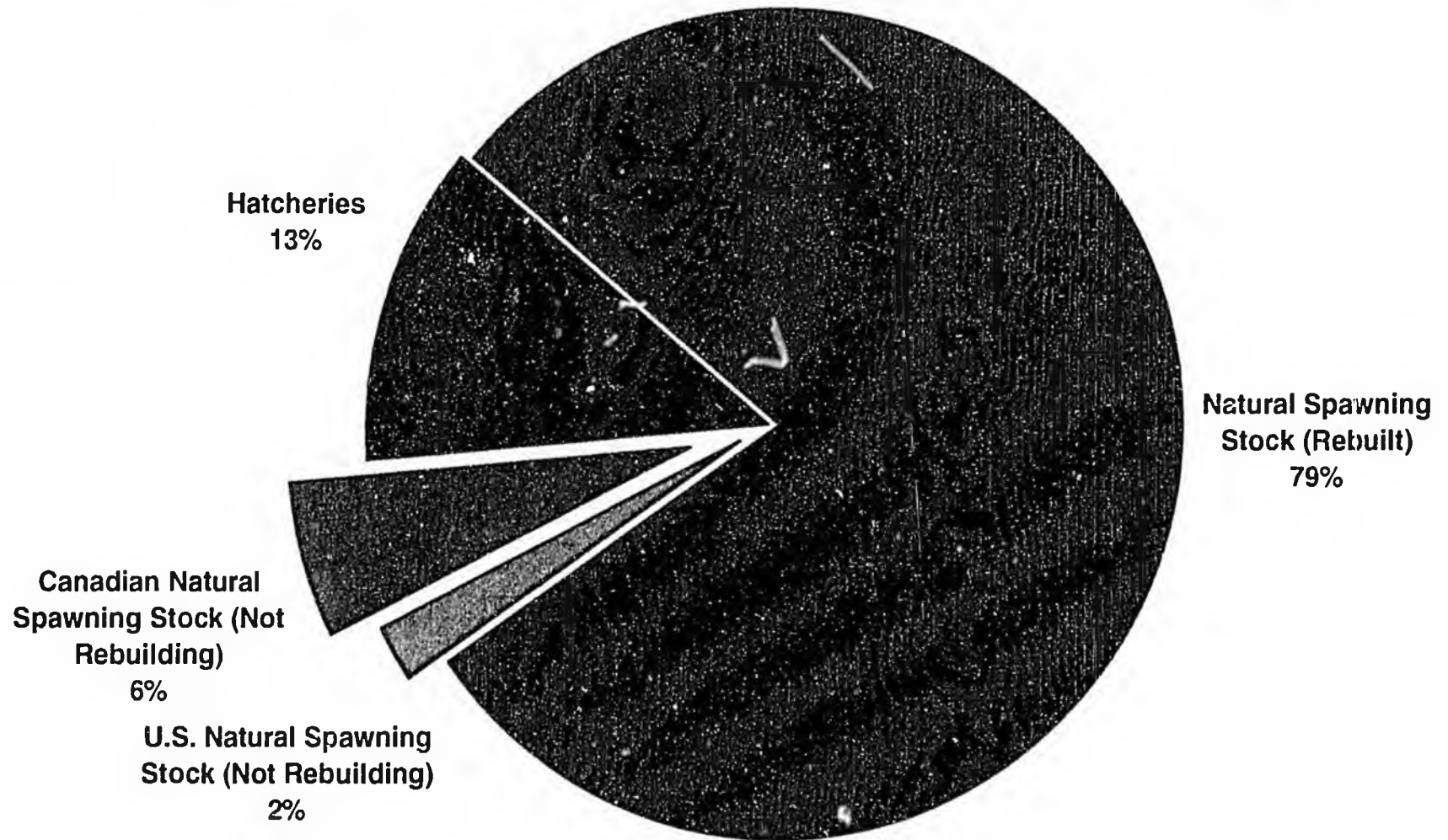
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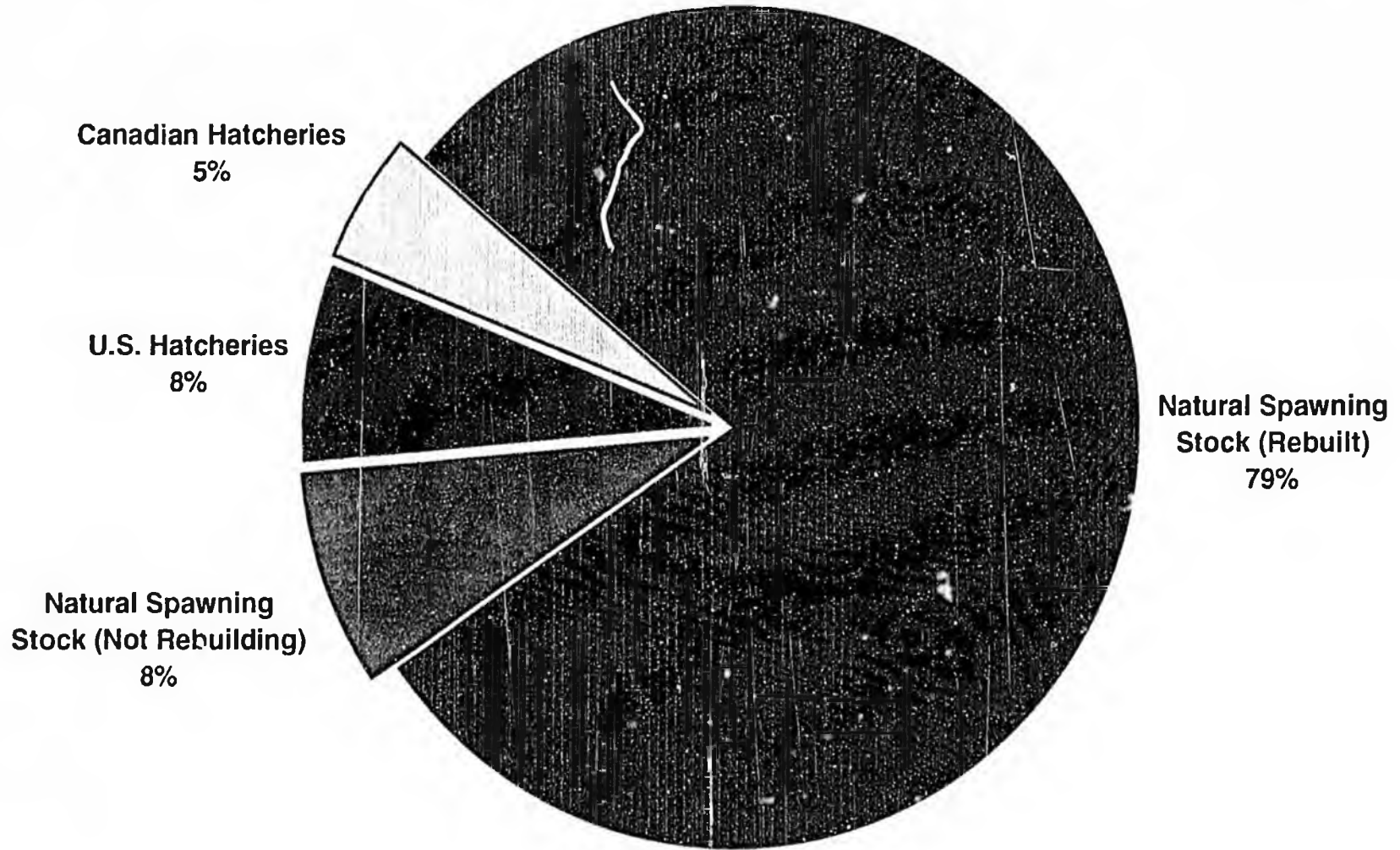
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