

THE ORIGINAL ACCOUNT OF THE PACIFIC SALMON. Morton (1965, *Copeia* (1):14-19) began his recent article on the salmonids with the statement "Johann Julio Walbaum's descriptions of the salmonid species he encountered in eastern Siberia shortly before 1792 represent one of the greatest original contributions to salmonid systematics which have successfully withstood the test of time." This observation serves to emphasize the confusion that has existed concerning the origin of the names and, indeed, the first body of knowledge about the 5 species of Pacific salmon found on both sides of the north Pacific Ocean.

As Jordan (1905, *A Guide to the Study of Fishes*, Archibald Constable and Co., Westminster) pointed out, Walbaum was a compiler who gathered together records of all known species, using the work of Artedi as a basis and giving binomial names in place of the vernacular terms used by some of the earlier biologists. There are no indications that Walbaum ever traveled to eastern Siberia, nor can he be given credit for making one of the greatest original contributions to salmonid systematics.

Thanks to Stejneger's fine biographical account (1936, *Georg Wilhelm Steller*, Harvard Press, Cambridge) it is clear that the first recorded observations on the Pacific salmon were made by Georg Wilhelm Steller. Upon arriving at Okhotsk in 1740, Steller began work on 2 voluminous manuscripts entitled *Observationes Ichthyologicae* and *Index Piscium Camtschaticorum*. These accounts apparently contained detailed descriptions, life history data, and the Russian vernacular names for the 5 salmon species.

After Steller's death in 1746, his manuscripts were turned over to Krasheninnikov who then published a report on Kamchatka (1755, *The History of Kamchatka*, Imperial Academy of Science, St. Petersburg [in Russian]). In later years, English, German, and French translations were published. This work contained a chapter on fishes based on Steller's manuscripts but, unfortunately, subsequent authors tended to give credit to Krasheninnikov.

An account of Kamchatka fishes by Steller

was published finally by Scherer (1774, *Beschreibung von dem Lande Kamtschatka*, etc., Johann Georg Fleischer, Frankfurt und Leipzig) but this work seems to have attracted little attention. In 1784, the first edition of Thomas Pennant's famous *Arctic Zoology* (Henry Hughs, London) appeared. Here, Pennant gave detailed accounts of the Pacific salmon and mentioned his indebtedness for the information to Doctor Pallas (Peter Simon Pallas) ". . . who extracted it from the papers of Steller, for the use of this work" (p. cxxvii).

In all probability, Walbaum picked up the descriptions and vernacular names of the Pacific salmon from the works of either Krasheninnikov or Pennant. Walbaum's contribution consisted of merely taking the common names and placing them in the proper binomial sequence. Hereafter, it is hoped that Steller will be given credit for his painstaking, original accounts.—JOHN C. BRIGGS, *Department of Zoology, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida 33620.*