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CANADA

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL SUPERVISOR

Prince Rupert, B. C.,
March 23, 1955.

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FILE No. 60-2-23

Mr. A. J. Whitmore,
Chief Supervisor of Fisheries,
1110 West Georgia Street,
Vancouver, B. C.

MAR 23 1955

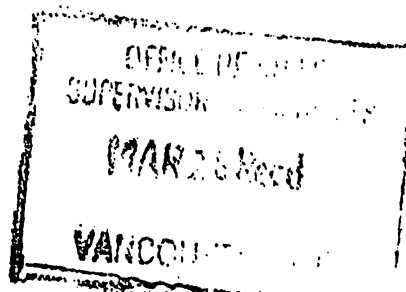
LETTER NO. 11127

Attached please find Annual Narrative
Report in duplicate for 1954 for the follow-
Area:-

Terrace-Lakelse

S. Reade

G. S. Reade,
DISTRICT SUPERVISOR OF FISHERIES.



when there was about 1,000,000 fish on Lakelse river alone. Lakelse river accounted for about 390,000 this year, while Atitwanga river was down to about 100,000 compared to 150,000 in 1952. By observations at the mouth of the Aspiox river it would appear that the run was lighter than in either 1952 or 1953, but the part of the river inspected for the first time this year showed about 100,000 fish. This run while light as compared to 1952 can be considered in my opinion as a good seeding.

Chums.

A chum run of about 15,000 fish was found on the Upper Aspiox System and although it was not inspected in the cycle year, for comparison would think that it had a better than average seeding. Other chum streams were about equal to the cycle year.

WEATHER CONDITIONS.

The weather was very mild in January, February and March, snow-fall was exceptionally light, and ice conditions were not as severe as in normal years. Very mild weather with heavy rains brought local streams up to flood stage in February and ice broke up in the Skeena river to well above Hazelton. This early break-up was more severe in the Copper, Kitwanga and Kispiox rivers and no doubt some damage was done to spawning grounds on these streams. Colder weather followed this thaw and streams were frozen over again for a short period. Spring run-off was later than normal, but was gradual and rivers did not get exceptionally high.

Water levels remained above normal during the Summer and were well above normal during the Fall. There were four flash floods in the Terrace Area but these did not reach far inland and the area around Hazelton did not have these floods.

The winter up to the end of the year was mild, snow was late and light. There was very little ice on streams and lakes at the end of the year.

SPAWNING GROUND SUMMARY.Sockeye.

The sockeye run of about 30,000 fish was better than the run of 1950. Kispiox river system was very light, but an increase at Lakelse lake of about 6,000 fish and a slight increase on the Allistair lake system more than made up for this loss. This run is about the same as last year, but lighter than in 1952, and can be considered with the exception of the Kispiox to be a good average seeding.

Springs.

Spring escapement can be considered to be about average. The run came in late, but when it did come fish were plentiful in the Indian fishery. A new spawning ground was found on the Kispiox river which was seeded by at least 5,000 fish but as this part of the river has not been inspected before by the local officer there are no figures for comparison. Other small streams showed a fair average run.

Cohoe.

Water conditions were unfavorable throughout the coho run and an accurate estimate of numbers was impossible. About 10,000 fish were found on that part of the Kispiox system on which we have no record for comparison. About 20,000 fish were found on the Lakelse river system, which is about equal to the 1951 run. Other streams that could be inspected accounted for about another 15,000 fish and the total run would be about the same as in 1951.

Pinks.

The pink run of about 500,000 fish was much lighter than in 1952 when there was about 1,000,000 fish on Lakelse river alone. Lakelse river accounted for about 300,000 this year, while Kitwanga river was down to about 100,000 compared to 150,000 in 1952. By observations at the mouth of the Kispiox river it would appear that the run was lighter than in either 1952 or 1953, but the part of the river inspected for the first time this year showed about 100,000 fish. This run while light as compared to 1952 can be considered in my opinion as a good seeding.

Chums.

A chum run of about 15,000 fish was found on the upper Kispiox System and although it was not inspected in the cycle year for comparison would think that it had a better than average seeding. Other chum streams were about equal to the cycle year.

Steelhead.

Steelhead run according to the Indian catch and catch by Sport fishermen is still on the increase. This has been the trend for the last few seasons.

Several steelhead of over 30 pounds weight were taken from the Kispiox river by Sportfishermen. The largest recorded was 36½ pounds.

Catches on the Kispiox and Copper rivers have been good while the numbers taken in the main Skeena and Bulkley rivers have been above average.

Sportfishing.

As previously mentioned steelhead fishing has been good throughout the area. Good catches of cutthroat and dollyvarden have been made throughout the season.

The coho catch by sportfishermen has been good and the spring salmon catch average.

INDIAN FISHERY.

The catch in the Indian Fishery was slightly higher than last year. The sockeye catch was down compared to last year but catches of spring, coho and steelhead more than made up for this. Approximate figures for this fishery are as follows.

	<u>1954</u>	<u>1953</u>
Sockeye	8,100	9,200
Spring.	1,690	1,125
Coho.	2,580	1,530
Steelhead	1,050	720
Pinks	1,750	1,120
Chums.	380	240
	<u>15,550</u>	<u>13,935</u>

Light sockeye run during the first part of the season accounts for the lighter catch of this species as well as the increase in the other varieties. Catch of Spring, Steelhead and Coho was heavier than normal at Hagwilget Canyon. Indians at Mitsequecla used spring salmon nets throughout the season as they had better luck with springs than sockeye.

In all 99 permits were issued covering 115 families.

VIOLATIONS.

Two charges were laid under the Fisheries Act for obstructing a salmon stream. Both parties were fined 20.00 and costs.

One net was confiscated but the owner could not be found.

The area was patrolled as often as possible by Guardian and Inspector, posters were put up and regulations discussed with fishermen and residents in course of patrols.

Guardians.

One Guardian was employed in the Hazelton area from June 1st until October 31st, who supervised the Indian Fishery and made routine patrols in that area.

LOGGING

Columbia Cellulose and other large operators remained in production throughout the year, but there has been a general slacking off by smaller companys.

Columbia Cellulose have continued with their access road as far as the Upper Kitsumgalum river (Beaver) and up to the present are still trucking logs to their spur. They have continued with their Kitsumgalum river surveys with the idea of driving the river if deemed possible.

Columbia Cellulose started working on their Whitebottom block of Timber late in the Fall, across the Skeena from Shames, but

closed down as soon as the river froze over. From reports I understand this company is going to attempt rafting or booming on the Skeena from this point next year.

WATER RIGHTS.

Reports were made in regards to six applications for water rights. Four of these applications if granted would have no adverse effect on salmon runs.

One, by The Columbia Cellulose Co. for a splash dam on the Kitsumgalum river, would definitely have an adverse effect on salmon runs and was so reported.

The other, an application for water rights on Deep creek, a stream that supports from 1,000 to 2,000 fish, made by the Village of Terrace has not been settled up to the end of the year.

Harbour Seals.

The annual Skeena river seal hunt was carried out by Inspectors, Gelley and Giraud.

A total of 186 seals were killed by departmental personnel this year. 181 were killed on the seal hunt and the others killed by the local inspector during patrols of the river. Only two claims were made through this office for bounty.

Stream Clearing.

Beaver dams were removed from four streams during the year. Three of these streams, Stevens, Falls, and Club creeks are at the head of the Kispiox river. The other was South End creek flowing into Allistair lake.

Beaver have increased rapidly on the Kispiox river system as they are not being trapped due to low fur prices and more of this type of stream clearing will have to be done in future. Cost of this stream clearing was \$ 16.00 for dynamite.

EQUIPMENT.

All equipment operated satisfactorily. A new outboard motor supplied for the seal hunt was definitely a help in making the hunt a success. A rubber life raft was used for exploratory work on the Kispiox river and found to be of great value on this type of work where weight of equipment is an issue. Steps are being taken to procure one for this area.

The panel truck used in this area operated successfully, although an unfortunate accident to the vehicle in the early season was expensive and tied it up for more than a month.

The heavy duty 12. gauge shotgun supplied for the seal hunt was stolen from the truck and although reported to all R.C.M.P. detachments and B.C. Game Department Officers in the district, has not been recovered to date.


GENERAL.

Work continued throughout the year on the Terrace to Kitimat Railway and the first work trains got through before the end of December. Passenger and freight service will start early in the new year. Mining was not very active. Red Rose mine at Hazelton was shut down before the end of the year due to a drop in ore prices, and the Silver Standard mine also in the Hazelton area has curtailed production due to lack of ore reserves.

A small lime quarry is in operation near Shames river, output going to The Columbia Cellulose plant at Port Edward.

An exploratory trip was made down the Kispiox river from its headwaters, by rubber raft, which greatly added to our knowledge of this river.

Terrace, B.C.,
March 4th 1955


V.H.B. Giraud
Fisheries Officer.

5511

Smithers, B.C.
January 14th. 1955.

The District Supervisor of Fisheries,
Prince Rupert, B.C.

Herewith please find my annual report of
the Fisheries in the Babine - Morice Area for the season
1954.

A. TREND OF THE SEVERAL FISHERIES.

At Moricetown Canyon the sum of 8,412 salmon were taken by the Indian Fishery, for food purposes only, in comparison with 3,825 in 1953 and 3,252 in 1952. This season the catch is more in line with the approximate average of 10,000 salmon taken over the past 10 years. Broken down the total catch this season was made up of 445 Sockeye, 1,885 Spring, 231 Steelhead, and 5,851 Coho. This shows a very small catch of Sockeye but an excellent catch of Coho. Because of adverse weather conditions an estimate was not made on the Nanika River. Often the Indian Sockeye catch at Moricetown will signify the extent of spawning on the Nanika River, but with the very low catch this season it is not known if this carried through. Water conditions were extremely high at the beginning of the run through Moricetown Canyon and the Indians did not have much success.

On Babine Lake the Indian Fishery for food purposes only amounted to 21,849 Sockeye compared to 27,019 in 1953 and 34,690 in 1952. In 1951, the year of the Babine River Rock Slide, the catch was at a low of 19,175. The lower than usual catch this year is attributed to the heavy rains. It was a very poor smoke dry-curing season and at the start Indians had some loss from the effects of blow flies and later from souring and mold. Because of this rain a longer period than usual was taken to put up their hay and therefore ~~that~~ that much less time remained for fishing. Except for the Upper part of Babine Lake during the early run the availability of Sockeye to the Indian Fishery was good throughout the season.

In the Bear Lake area there were a total of 27 Indians who took approximately 600 Sockeye and 800 Spring Salmon. The numbers of Coho, Steelhead and Charr is not known. This compares reasonably with the take in past years.

Babine Lake did not have the expected number of Sport Fishermen this season, the main reason being that adverse weather conditions caused the Topley-Babine Road to be almost impassable most of the season. Sporting accommodations have been improved by the addition of several cabins and small fishing boats. The bulk of the fishermen arrived by plane.

Due to the reduced fishing efforts by Sports fishermen the catch on Babine Lake is estimated at approximately 60 % of normal years.

Cont.... on Page 2.

A. TREND OF THE SEVERAL FISHERIES. Cont....

There appeared to be more sports fishermen along the Morice, Bulkley and Kispiox Rivers than usual. However the total catch was slightly lower than last year. The fish were generally larger but not as abundant. Record sized steelhead were taken from the Kispiox River.

The more inaccessible lakes and rivers are now being fished more intensely by the use of planes. it is almost impossible to check on these catches.

B. CONDITION OF THE FLEET OF FISHING VESSELS.

As there is no commercial fishing in this area we have no conventional fishing craft. Most boats used are of the flat bottom or river type peculiar to this area and Indian dug out canoes. There were a few new boats added this season while a few more of the old boats were discarded. There is a gradual improvement in the condition of these boats with an increase in their numbers.

C. DEVELOPMENT OR CHANGES.

1. Forestry and Watersheds.

In the past year there has been an expansion in Forest Industries with bigger and more efficient machinery being used. In order to keep these machines in operation timber will have to be hauled greater distances. The B.C. Forest Service policy to date has been to issue short term leases but are now contemplating Forest Management Licences. This should simplify the supervision of spawning streams in these areas. However there may be more danger from the cutting out of watersheds to such an extent that flash floods will occur.

2. Fisheries Research Board.

(a) The Fisheries Research Board operated the Salmon Counting Fence on the Lower Babine River making the following counts of Salmon passing into Babine Lake this season.

Sockeye	503,442
Spring	5,925
Pink	4,604
Coho	3,094
Chum	66
Steelhead	286
	<u>517,417</u>

(b) The Counting fence on Wiggins or Six Mile Creek was operated this season for the Fry count.

Cont.... on Page 3.

C. DEVELOPMENT OR CHANGES. Cont....

2. (a) Mr. F.C. Withler, in charge of operations on Babine Lake, was appointed Director of the Skeena River Investigations.

3. Fishery Culture and Development Branch.

(a) Opened up the road into the Babine River Rock Slide and removed much of the equipment from the camp site. Two cabins with sufficient equipment remain to make camping quite easy.

(b) This fall an inspection was made of the Slide Area, some rocks have come down but nothing to my knowledge should hinder the passage of salmon.

(c) Mr. B. Hamer has taken over as District Engineer. Painting and repair of fishways at Moricetown Canyon is about to take place.

4. F.P.L. Branta.

Mr. T. Dahle and crew from The Fisheries Marine Station in Prince Rupert worked on the F.P.L. Branta this fall erecting the new steel carriage to haul the boat in and out of the water. They also built a new canopy to replace the old canvass canopy, changed the wiring in places (but not the ignition system) lined and tuned the engine, repacked pumps, and changed the propeller.

5. Babine 1.

A new 10 H.P. Johnson Outboard motor was placed in service on the Babine 1. this season.

D. ABUSEMENTS.

There was a certain amount of selling of salmon by Indians. It is almost impossible to stop this practise entirely. There were rumors that steelhead fishermen were taking more than their limit but to date nothing has been learned to warrant any action.

E. CLOSE SEASONS.

Close seasons in the Babine Lake area are kept without much enforcement. At Moricetown no close seasons were kept as the Indians complained about the few salmon.

F. STEPS TAKEN FOR PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL FISHING.

A Master-Engineer was employed on the F.P.L. Branta.

Cont.... on Page 4.

F. STEPS TAKEN FOR PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL FISHING Cont...

A Guardian was stationed at Moricetown Canyon with the following duties.

- a. Prevention of illegal fishing and sale of salmon by Indians.
- b. To regulate fishing, and count Indian catch.
- c. Inspect several spawning grounds.
- d. To repair and keep buildings and equipment in order.

A Patrolman was stationed at Fort Babine to prevent illegal fishing, count Indian Food supply catch, repair equipment and buildings and to make creek inspections.

Two Inspectors carried out patrols by foot, car, boat and aircraft.

G. THE PROTECTION OF WATERS FREQUENTED BY FISH.

A check of sawmills throughout the whole area is constantly being made with most emphasis being made during the winter months when roads are better to those sawmills which may be close to any salmon streams. There was only the Silver Standard Mine in operation near Hazelton this year. All others have closed down.

H. CONDITION OF FISHWAYS.

The Fishways at Moricetown Canyon appear to be in good condition. High water prevailed and a few of the grates on the fishways have been bent one or two inches from ice or logs hitting them.

I. SPAWNING CONDITIONS.

SOCKEYE.

In the Morice Lake and Bulkley River systems high water prevailed all season making counts very difficult. An estimate was not made on the Nanika River as all signs had been washed out by the high water.

In the Babine River and Lake area the run began very slowly but increased considerably (the results of the Fishermen's Strike) ending up with a high average of salmon passing through the Counting Fence. The early streams therefore received a medium to light seeding whereas the late streams received a heavy seeding with some wastage of eggs in certain places. Water levels were very high and at times hindered observation but ensured adequate spawning levels in all areas.

In the Bear Lake area water levels were very high and hindered observation considerably. Sockeye were about the same as last year with an estimated 10,000. Lake spawning did not appear much different from last year but very few dead were observed. In Sustut Lake and Johanson Lake unidentified salmon were seen from the air.

Cont... on Page 5.

I. SPAWNING CONDITIONS. Cont....

The total escapement of sockeye this season compares fairly well with cycle years. Total being 515,142 this year plus those on the Manika River for which no estimate was made. In 1949 the total was 561,225 and in 1950 a total of 595,958.

SPRING.

There was a medium run of Spring on the Bear River with an estimated 12,000 mostly large fish with sexes about even. Water levels for spawning were excellent. There was a medium seeding in the Babine River, 5,925 were counted through the fence. Sexes were about even and the sizes were mostly large. Water conditions were such on the Upper Bulkley River that springs passed through into Maxan Creek which they have seldom done before. Observation was very difficult. On the Morice River an estimated 110,000 spawned giving a medium to heavy seeding. There was therefore a medium run of Springs to the area. In 1949 there were an estimated 71,000 spring spawned in this area compared to 30,025 estimated this season showing a large drop.

PINKS.

On the Babine River Pinks have approximately doubled since their set back of the slide years. They are still, however, quite a small run for the area, i.e. in 1950 a total of 38,728 passed through the Counting Fence. In the Bulkley River and Morice River several dead were found but water conditions were such that they could not be counted. At Bear Lake the run was very light with an estimated 1,500 spawning. Sexes appeared to be about even. The total estimated for this year for the whole area being only 7,604 compared to about 3,000 in 1952.

COHO.

In the Babine River 3,094 Coho passed through the fence compared to 2,122 in 1951. This shows an increase over the cycle year and slide year. At Bear Lake Coho had not started to spawn at the time of our last visit. In the Bulkley System the Indian Food supply catch of 5,851 Coho indicated a heavy run, however water conditions made it impossible to get accurate counts. Spawning conditions were excellent and it is thought that there was a medium to heavy run. Indians have reported that owing to water conditions in the Upper Morice and Manika Rivers Coho were very difficult to see. For the Babine-Morice Area an estimated 23,164 spawned while in 1951 an estimated 13,210 spawned.

CHUMS.

This year a total of 66 Chum passed through the counting fence on the Babine River.

Cont.... on Page 6.

I. SPAWNING CONDITIONS. Cont....

STEELHEAD.

The Bulkley and Morice Rivers did not have as many steelhead this year as last although the run has been almost constant all season. Good catches have been taken this January. There was only a fair run of Steelhead into Babine Lake 286 being counted through the counting fence, however many spawn below.

DOLLY VANDON.

This predator abounds in the Lakes and streams of this area. They become good sized and many sports fishermen prefer them to rainbow trout when taken in good condition.

J. GUARDIAN SERVICE.

The Guardian Service in the Babine - Morice Area is comprised of a Guardian at Moricetown Canyon, a Patrolman at Fort Babine on Babine Lake and a Master-Engineer on the F.P.L. Branta.

K. SUMMARY.

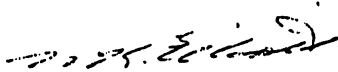
This year high water made observation extremely difficult throughout most of the season. It washed out dead and signs of spawning, necessitating repeated checks. These conditions also made travel difficult.

Sockeye on Babine Lake had a light run at the beginning of the season but later developed into a heavy run in the fall, assumed to be the result of the Fishermen's Strike. In general the Babine watershed had an adequate seeding.

Over the whole area there was a medium run of Sockeye, Spring, Coho and Steelhead. The Pink run was considered light.

The Indian Food Supply catch was satisfactory and no complaints have been received.

Fisheries equipment on the whole functioned satisfactorily with no serious difficulties. The aerial for the portable radio was not adequate and resulted in poor reception.


W.K. Elliott
Fishery Officer.

Smithers, B.C.
November 27th. 1954.

SPAWNING REPORT

BEAR LAKE AREA FOR SEASON 1954.

Two spawning inspection trips were made into the Bear Lake Area this season on Sept. 7 and Sept. 22nd. Water levels were much higher than usual making inspections more difficult, weather was only fair with the result that we were unable to accomplish as much as intended. On the second trip we were able to make a flight over the Asitka River and Lake, Johanson Lake and Creek, Sustut Lake and River and on both Johanson and Sustut Lakes schools of Salmon were observed from the air. There were a great number of sea gulls present showing that there was a population of salmon present. No estimates could be made.

Also on the second trip we returned via Motase Lake and Nilkitwa River, both of which were very silty and nothing could be seen.

SPRING

Spring Salmon on the Bear River were some better than 1953 but much lighter than the cycle year when an estimated 25,000 spawned. Their large size was particularly noticeable with sexes about even.

Sockeye

Sockeye salmon were about the same as last year with an estimated 10,000. Lake spawning did not appear much different from last year but very few dead were observed.

Pinks

Pinks were very poor in the Bear River and do not compare with the cycle year.

Coho

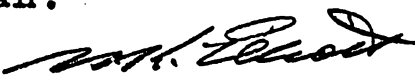
Coho had just begun entering this area on last inspection and so no estimate can be given of total numbers.

Indians There were 27 Indians present and their food supply catch amounted to 500 Sockeye and 800 Springs. They said that there was a medium run of Sockeye and that a number of Coho had been seen on the Sustut River below Bear River.

Stream	Variety	No.	Intens.	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954
Azaklots Cr.	Sockeye	1,000	Lt.	F	H	E		B	E
	Coho	200	Lt.	C	C	C		C	C
Bear River	Sockeye				C	nil	nil	nil	nil
	Spring	12,000	Med.	L	L	G	H	K	K
	Pink	1,500	Lt.	G	H	G	H	F	F
	Steelhead				few	few	few	D	N.O.
Bear Lake Beach Spawning	Sockeye	9,000	Lt.	H	K	E	K	H	H
	Coho				few	nil	N.O.	B	N.O.
Salix Creek	Sockeye	200	Lt.		E	E		D	C
	Coho					few		few	N.O.

Johanson Lake Schools of salmon seen from the air.

Sustut Lake Schools of salmon seen from the air.


W.K. Elliott
Fishery Officer.