

## ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT - TERRACE-LAKELSE AREA

1959.

Weather Conditions.

The winter of 1958-59 was very mild with only a few days of near zero temperatures in the immediate Terrace area. Snowfall was light and water levels were fairly well up throughout the winter. There was no unusual high water in the spring. Water levels were a little above normal throughout the summer and well above normal during the fall. There was one severe flash flood in the Lakelse area in December that could have caused some damage to spawning grounds on Williams Creek. Weather was mild up until the new year.

Spawning Ground Summary.Sockeye.

The Allistair Lake and Lakelse Lake systems showed an increase over the cycle year. Kitsumgalum Lake system was about average and equal to the cycle year. Kispiox River system was very lightly seeded with all its streams showing a decrease on the cycle year. The overall picture would show a slightly better than cycle year seeding.

Springs.

Spring escapement to the area was good with a heavy run found on the Kispiox River. Kitsumgalum River appeared to be well up to average but the silty condition of the water in this system prevents any accurate estimate. Springs were observed spawning in the main Skeena River in the vicinity of the mouth of the Kitsumgalum. Overall seeding in the area would be above the cycle years.

Cohoe.

Cohoe run to the Terrace-Lakelse was very light compared to the cycle year. The Kispiox run was especially light and one of the lightest on record. Two trips were made to Lakelse River for Cohoe inspection but water levels were too high both times for making any counts. Fisheries Research Board personnel, who were on the River every day counting Pinks, reported an average Cohoe escapement to this River. All small streams that could be inspected had a very light seeding.

Pinks.

Only the main pink streams were inspected by the writer this year because of other duties. Kispiox and Kitwanga Rivers were much better seeded than they were in the cycle year. Lakelse River showed a slight decrease over the cycle year but the increase on the other two brought the total seeding for the area well above the cycle year. Fisheries Research Board, who did a lot of work on the main Skeena River this year, estimated that about 200,000 Pinks spawned in the main stem.

Chums.

During the regular spawning ground inspections in late August and the first week of September a very light run of Chums was found on the spawning grounds. Only a few hundred fish were found on Kispiox

River which in some years carries several thousand. A very late run of Chums was reported on the Kispiox River by the Indian Fishery and by the Hazelton Guardian. Unfortunately these reports did not reach me in the Lower Skeena area until well after spawning had taken place and an inspection was not made. All indications are that this late run was fairly extensive and the area instead of being very lightly seeded could instead have been about average and about equal to the cycle year.

#### Steelhead.

Catches of steelhead in the Indian Fishery and by Sportfishermen would indicate an average escapement.

#### Sportfishing.

Sportfishing appears to be still on the increase in the Terrace-Lakelse area and no doubt there will be a further increase in the fishing effort for spring salmon in the vicinity of Kitsumgalum River.

A 92 lb. spring salmon was taken by a 14 year old Terrace youth from the Skeena River near the mouth of the Kitsumgalum this year. This fisherman, Mr. H. Wichman, registered the fish with Field and Stream Magazine and it has now been confirmed as a world record on sporting tackle.

Steelhead catches by sportfishermen were about average but coho catches were well below average.

The usual good catches of dollyvarden and cutthroat were taken in the area.

#### Indian Fishery.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Sookeye</u>	<u>Springs</u>	<u>Coho</u>	<u>Steelhead</u>	<u>Pinks</u>	<u>Chums</u>	<u>No. of Familie</u>
1959	24,716	5,541	8,396	637	2,856	1,004	181
1958	31,000	2,400	8,750	1,330	11,400	900	204
1957	34,700	3,170	8,750	980	17,500	600	208
1956	10,750	2,000	3,100	1,350	1,200	200	162
1955	5,275	1,310	2,330	1,010	1,550	140	132
1954	8,100	1,690	2,580	1,050	1,750	380	115

The number of permits issued and the number of families taking part in the fishery varies from year to year and is governed somewhat by the general economy of the district. For instance fishermen that had not been down for the commercial fishing at the coast for years came down this year for the expected big Pink run. When logging and cedar pole making are going full swing fewer natives are dependent on the Indian Fishery.

Very few fish were taken at Hagwilget Canyon this year. Removal of the obstructions at this point by Fish Culture Branch stopped the usual build up of fish in the canyon so that fish were harder to get. Many of the natives that usually took their fish in the canyon were given permits to take fish from the Skeena at 4 Mile Canyon and at the Bulkley River mouth. Indians of Hagwilget are not happy.

about this turn of the fishery at the canyon where they used to be able to take their fish with gaff or dipnet. Now they have to travel a few miles to the Skeena and need a boat and short gillnet.

#### Violations.

One charge was laid before the Stipendiary Magistrate in Terrace. The case, one of a native fishing for other than his own use, was dismissed.

#### Logging.

There were five applications for timber sales in the vicinity of salmon streams referred to this office. The usual conditions of logging on salmon streams were asked for on these applications.

One application for tightlining logs across the Skeena River was approved.

Logging and pole making camps were active during the year. Columbia Cellulose brought a fair number of logs down the Kitsumgalum River. The same company again towed logs from Shames to their Port Edward Plant.

Work on Columbia Cellulose Crescent Booming Grounds in a slough of the Skeena River across from Exstew was approved. A booming ground at the mouth of Lakelse River was approved with conditions that it would be shut down during any season of the year that it interfered with migrating fish.

One small sawmill operator has set up a mill on the banks of the Kispiox River about 40 miles above Hazelton. His timber limits are situated well away from the river but this operation will have to be watched as the operator intended to cross the river with his logs. Situated as the mill is the operator will have to be very careful of sawdust and debris will be in the river.

#### Water Rights.

Only three applications for water rights were investigated in the area this year. None of these were on salmon streams.

#### Predators.

No Skeena River seal hunt was carried out this year as the writer was busy in another area. A few seal noses were turned in for bounty by Indians.

There is still a lot of damage done to sockeye salmon runs on the upper Kispiox system by grizzly bear. Bear can take fish at will from these small streams and it may be that an organized hunt for about two weeks or so at the time of the sockeye runs would prove beneficial. No one hunts bear in this isolated spot so there is nothing to keep their number down.

#### Stream Clearing.

No stream clearing was done in the area this year.

#### Equipment.

The panel truck now has about 35,000 miles on it and although in fair shape now should perhaps be replaced next year. This machine was used this year for work in both Terrace-Lakelse area and the Lower Skeena and was especially useful in travelling back and forth between the two areas. Other equipment was not used this year.

Aircraft.

Aircraft were used to transport personnel to outlying spawning grounds. Services were satisfactory.

Fisheries Research Board.

Fisheries Research operated their hatchery on Kleanza Creek this year. They were given permission to take 10 million pink eggs from Kitwanga River for their hatchery this year.

Research Board personnel carried out an extensive program of pink fry counting and spawning ground work on Kispiox, Kitwanga and Lakelse Rivers this year.

The Lakelse Lake counting fence, that has not been used for some years, was removed from the River.

General.

The writer transferred to the Lower Skeena area in May this year but continued to look after the Terrace-Lakelse area as well until July when Inspector Engelson from Babine-Morice area took over the supervision of the upper part of the area from Cedarvale to Hazelton. The writer continued to supervise the area from Scotia River to Cedarvale and made the spawning ground inspections on the important streams.

There was a general improvement in the main highways this year with another 20 miles of blacktop built between Terrace and prince Rupert and about 20 miles of gravel road rebuilt and ready for blacktopping in the Cedarvale to Hazelton area. In connection with the proposed rebuilding of the highway between Terrace and Cedarvale, a list of the salmon streams in that area was submitted to the Department of Highways at their request in order that they could anticipate the type of bridge and culverts that they would be required to build.

Mr. R. Skoglund is further developing the Hotsprings Resort at Lakelse Lake. He now has two large swimming pools, coffee bar, bath houses and accommodations for overnight guests. He has cleared several acres in the immediate vicinity of the pools with the intention of establishing a camp ground and tourist cabins.

There was little or no mining activity in the area this year.

  
V. H. B. Giraud  
Fisheries Officer.

To: R. C. Edwards, Esq.  
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P.O. Box 218  
Prince Rupert, B. C.

Prince Rupert, B. C.  
Mar. 4, 1960.

ANNUAL NARRATIVE - BABINE-MORICE AREAA TREND OF THE SEVERAL FISHERIES.

1. No commercial Fishing in Area.
2. Indian Fishery taking a large percentage of salmon going through Moricetown. More young Indians taking an active part in gaffing salmon who will increase as the Indian population rises.
3. Sports Fishery. High waters this year kept the amount of salmon caught to a minimum.

B FISHING VESSELS

1. No commercial fishing vessels in area, both Indians and Sport Fishermen using larger outboards and boats with increasing numbers of boats coming to area by trailer for sport fishing.

C DEVELOPMENT and CHANGES

1. Fish Culture and development Branch Hagwilget Canyon obstructions removed now allows salmon good passage through. Hagwilget Indians not able to gaff salmon at this point any longer. Will show good results in few years provided other Indian Fisheries on Bulkley can be kept down to a reasonable level or prohibited until the salmon runs are built up again. A Fish count was made of fish using the fishways at Moricetown.
2. Skeena River Salmon Investigation continues with Biologist J. McDonald i/c of the survey.
3. Fisheries Research Board conducted a fish count at the Babine fence for smolt and salmon. Dr. W. Johnson continued the sockeye fry density and distribution estimation program and collected data on fish food potential of Babine Lake, also worked on finding means of making a kokanee count in or to separate kokanee from sockeye at certain stages. Some work was done at Morice Lake as well regards sockeye population.
4. B.C. Forest Service maintaining Babine Slide road as far as Kisgegas Indian Village. A good road was completed to Morice Lake. Logging operations fell off this year owing to heavy rains making poor roads.

5.

D. AB USES None.E. CLOSE SEASONS

1. Indians at Moricetown observed a one day closure throughout the Season each week.

F. STEPS TAKEN FOR PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL FISHING

1. One guardian at Moricetown to prevent illegal fishing and count salmon taken by Indians for food purposes.  
One patrolman at Fort Babine, same duties as the guardian plus assisting in stream inspection work, uses the Babine 1' outboard boat & engine.  
Master-Engineer i/c of the F.P.L. Branta on Babine Lake also acts as patrolman and maintains the boat for transportation purposes for Insp. Gelley in the conservation and protection of the fisheries.  
Inspector Engelson covered balance of Babine-Morice Area by foot, truck, boat and aircraft.

G. PROTECTION OF WATERS FREQUENTED BY FISH

1. Rivers, Lakes and creeks periodically inspected for obstruction and pollution.

H. CONDITION OF FISHWAYS

Fishways at Moricetown in good condition but believe another look should be taken by the engineers to increase its efficiency which is urgently required.

I. SPAWNING CONDITIONS

Water levels were satisfactory by the time the salmon were entering their spawning grounds, conditions became very good.

SOCKEYE

The only spawning sockeye seen on the Bulkley System were approximately 1200 on the Nanika River.

Bear Lake system had 3,850 sockeye.

The Babine had approximately 783,000 plus 32,000 jacks. The Fishermen's strike helped considerably in increasing the sockeye escapement. Good spawning conditions prevailed on the creeks and rivers during spawning time.

SPRINGS

Good water conditions helped the springs up the Bulkley and we had approximately 500 above Houston, with 10,000 to the Morice River of which 90% were females. Only 75 were seen in the Nanika River. Close to 10,000 springs reached the Babine Fence with also a large percentage of females.

A surprisingly heavy escapement of Springs, approximately 65,000 were seen on Bear River and were of good size.

PINKS

Approximately 750 pinks were observed in Toboggan creek above Moricetown Fishways for the first time in years and probably made possible by the removal of the Hagwilget obstruction. We had 350 spawners on the bar below the fishways and 2,500 to the Morice River.

A good escapement of 30,000 to the Bear River and 57,000 approximately through the Babine fence.

COHOE

Approximately 7,125 coho spawners came to the Bulkley system, namely 2,000 to Gosnell Creek, 2,000 Morice River and 2,300 above Houston to Maxan Creek.

Only 400 coho were observed on the Bear Lake system as I was too early for the main 11,000 coho went through the Babine fence to Oct. 3rd. Good spawning conditions throughout and the above normal water made it easier for the coho to reach their streams.

CHUM

This area not noted for chum but 20 went through the Babine Fence.

STEELHEAD

Conditions for sport fishing were not good this year owing to the almost continuous high water. It is expected that there will be good returns from their spawning as reports of large number of steelhead at the headwaters of the Skeena were received. The small size of the steelhead caught, on the average, in the Morice River was noticeable and could very well mean the steelhead run to this river is getting less.

J. GUARDIAN SERVICE

Guardian service for Babine-Morice Area was provided by a guardian at Moricetown, a patrolman at Fort Babine and a Master-Engineer on the F.P.L. Branta on Babine Lake

K. SUMMARY

The Skeena Salmon Management Committee since being formed has done good work bringing back the salmon runs to Babine by maintaining control of the Fishing near the Skeena. During the same period the salmon runs to the Bulkley system has been falling off. This year we had a fishermen's strike which allowed more salmon than would have ordinarily to reach the Bulkley, but according to the large potential spawning ground area it should be termed a failure. We had approximately 25,000 salmon escapement to the Bulkley system. It appears impossible at present to bring the Bulkley River runs back using the same methods due to the intermingling of the salmon between the Bulkley and Babine systems enroute to the entrance of the Skeena River. It must be apparent that some drastic action will have to be taken, probably at Moricetown Fishways where the Indians take and kill approximately half the salmon that go through. Another solution and maybe an easier one is to re-design the Fishways. At present the salmon go above the mouth of the Fishway to just below the Falls in large numbers where they are very vulnerable to the Indians gaffing. Although the Indians do not want pink salmon they kill a great many by gaffing as they gaff by feel and sometime just blindly thereby wounding too many without being able to land the salmon.

*H. J. Engelson*  
H. J. Engelson,  
Fishery Officer-i/c  
Morice-Babine Area.

## A TREND OF THE SEVERAL FISHERIES

1. There is no commercial fishery in the Area

## 2. Indian Fishery

The following is a table of the Indian food supply catch at Moricetown Canyon for the period 1946 to 1960

Year	Sock.	Spring	Coho	Pink	Chum	Steelhead	Total
	8,673						
1946	8,673	759	3,255	5		516	13,208
1947	3,279	1,145	2,501	537		436	7,898
1948	9,829	1,122	1,892	1		206	13,050
1949	7,590	1,500	2,284			169	11,543
1950	5,735	1,437	1,654			225	9,051 9,051
1951	2,805	780	419	19		244	4,267
1952	1,097	1,196	487	81		411	3,252
1953	727	1,271	5,747	151		925	8,822
1954	445	1,885	5,351			231	8,412
1955	575	1,320	1,941	259		226	4,321
1956	1,429	3,200	1,517			296	6,532
1957	175	2,450	461	22		52	3,160
1958	185	2,874	244	4		112	3,399
1959	624	2,613	1,237	985		315	5,714
1960	472	677	892	236	4	107	2,390

49 permits were issued to the Moricetown Indians. The figures show a considerable drop in Spring Salmon catch while the sockeye remains low. The Hagwilget Rock removal brought about a large change last year in Indian Food Fishing for the Hagwilget Indians as they can no longer use the obstruction of rocks to fish from. They refused to attempt to fish in the Skeena for food fish on their own so this year the Fish Culture Branch ostensibly carried on a scientific study of salmon fishing methods in the vicinity of Hagwilget on the Skeena and hired the Chief councillor for the Hagwilget Indians to assist. Salmon caught in the several nets set in various places were given to the Chief Councillor for distribution to the Hagwilget Indians. There was some opposition to this fishing which came from other Indian Villages above the Junction of the Bulkley and Skeena. There was also some complaints from the Indians of the Hagwilget Band regards the method of distribution by the Chief Councillor. It appears now that the Hagwilget Indians will be able to catch their food fish in the Skeena River instead of the Bulkley R. thus allowing more escapement to the Bulkley system. It might take some time to get them used to the different type of fishing by net rather than gaff hooks.

Another trend is indicated by the use of dip net at Moricetown which proved successful under certain water conditions. We will continue to try keep this method of fishing going and increase the dip net's use as the mortality and loss from gaffing salmon is very high.

A two day closure was instituted at Moricetown and proved successful in allowing more salmon to escape to the spawning grounds. The percentage of catch to escapement is still very high especially regards sockeye, being over one third.

A few chum salmon went through Moricetown (this is very unusual) due to the Hagwilget rock removal most likely; also a few sockeye were seen below Maxan Lake on the Upper Bulkley, this is what we hope is the start of an old run returning once again.

## 3. Sport Fishery

Some good coho fishing was had in August in the pool below Moricetown. Peak of fishing was around the 20th of August and dropped off from then on. The Morice River fishing was not as good as usual as the Springs did not enter Morice River until later and were then in poor condition. Steelhead fishing this year was poor generally, except at Sustat and Johansen Lakes where Americans continue to go by seaplane and limits were caught on the fly easily.

PINKS

Only 550 were observed on the Bulkley just below Telkwa.  
Bear River - none were seen on the Bear River being the off year.

COHO

A better than usual escapement of Coho to the Bulkley System of around 12,000 while the McDonnell Lakes system had approx 1,200.  
Bear Lake approx 1000.

CHUM

A few chum were observed above Moricetown and we may have a new run on the way; this can be attributed to the removal of the Hagwilget obstruction.  
Indians at Moricetown caught four in very good condition.

STEELHEAD

Run continues to be weak on the Bulkley system.  
The Sustat and Johansen Lakes had a fair escapement.

J. GUARDIAN SERVICE Comprised of one only guardian stationed at Moricetown Canyon.

K. SUMMARY

We had a small sockeye escapement to the Bulkley System. This salmon is at a dangerously low number. It is hoped the hatchery on the Hanika R. will prove successful in bringing the run back. I believe we should maintain a strict control of the Indian food fishing and make certain the percentage of catch to escapement is not too high.  
Spring Salmon escapement to the Bulkley showed a large drop to a new low. I trust this is not an indication of poor runs to follow. The Indian Fishery should be carefully watched for taking and destroying too many Springs in order not to lose this important run. Bear Lake had a normal Spring run. One bright spot regards the Bulkley was the unexpectedly higher number of coho observed on the spawning grounds. Due to the higher water level, the coho did not have to use the fishways this year.  
Water conditions on the Bulkley above Morice River were fairly low during the Summer but rains came in time to allow escapement. If low water continued here the salmon would not get through in many places, especially over the Bulkley Falls except during the early part of the Spring run. The Morice River remained high due to the melting glaciers and seemed to affect the entrance of the spring and coho to the Morice.  
Inspector L.J. Gellay will submit a narrative in connection with the Babine Lake Fishery and Spawning.

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