

Smithers, B.  
Dec. 31st. 1946

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I. Urseth, Esq. Supervisor of Fisheries, Prince Rupert, B. C.

Herewith please find annual report of the Fisheries in Upper Skeena Area for the season of 1946.

(A) The escape of Sockeye and Springs was quite satisfactory not withstanding the light catch at the Coast. The runs of Pinks and Cohoes were both light and would not be considered as satisfactory. The run of steelhead was heavy as was the run of Dolly Vardons and would compare favorably with any year.

The Kispiox, Kitwanoos, and the Slangese areas were considerably less in Sockeye than the cycle year of 1942.

The Indian Food supply catch was considerably less than other years. This has been caused through the abundance of work with good wages. Sport fishing throughout the district was very good. More outside fishermen visited Babine Lake this season than for a number of years, and it is expected that the numbers will increase as time elapses.

(B) As practically all fishing done in this area is by set nets, we have no fishing fleet other than the flat bottomed boats of Babine Indians used for conveyance on the lake and up and down Babine River. There are always a few new boats each season as they are mostly built of unseasoned wood and have the rough wear of ice in the fall and spring.

(C) Owing to the prevalence of work and the shortage of man power more Indians were working for wages and there was less fishing done by them with a corresponding less amount of fish required by them.

(D) The only abuse in the fisheries is the debatable question as to whether the Indians at Morioctown are getting too many fish and the method in which they get their fish which is wasteful if proper supervision is not kept. The Fisheries Research have recommended the use of dip nets but in my opinion this will not meet the situation. The only way this can be eliminated is by making a longer fishway that will force the Indians to use nets. The next abuse that is going to require attention is river driving of timber. This is going to be a big problem in the future and not very distant. There is room for the two industries providing that there is commonsense used. Under the present setup a wait of five years has to be made before the Fisheries has a case and by that time the damage can be done. It is my recommendation that the Department have the law changed so that the driving can be stopped at certain periods. This is necessary as business in the pursuit of dollars will not use commonsense unless it is forced to do so. Have the law changed and leave the commonsense to the Department to be administered. There is no reason why the Fisheries should be destroyed and then have the taxpayer spend millions to restore it.

Owing to the prevalence of work there was not the incentive for commercialization in the area and this coupled with vigilance of the staff kept this to the minimum.

(E) The close seasons have been well kept.

(F) One permanent Inspector and six temporary guardians during the fishing season were used to prevent illegal fishing. The Guardians were posted at Woodcock, at Hazelton, Morioctown, Smithers and two Patrolmen at Babine Lake. The duties of these also include the inspection of spawning areas. The man at Smithers was being groomed with the idea of replacing the present Inspector upon superannuation. With this in view he was taken over the different areas that he did not know. The Guard at Woodcock is allowed auto mileage to cover his area as is the Hazel Guardian. The Guardian at Smithers has been allowed travelling expenses

I started work in this district on May 21st after completing Fisheries Inspector's Course at Vancouver. I have rented office accommodation in a private house owned by H. Sherwood.

During the season a great part of my time was spent getting acquainted with people in the area and visiting the streams and river for first hand information. Owing to very wet weather during the spawning season, some streams had to be visited several times and the information gained was not complete.

An exploratory trip was made into Allistair lake and Gitnadoix river, August 21st to 28th. A run of Sockeye was found in this lake that compares favorably with the run in Lakelse lake. This run was at it's peak at the time of inspection. A run of Pinks and Chums was in the river at this time but it was a little too early for the peak. There was also a light run of Springs, and numerous coho fry which would indicate a good run of coho on this area.

Estimates at time of inspection:

Sockeye	10,000
Chums	600
Pinks	500
Springs	20 past the peak.

A trip was made to the headwaters of the Zymoetz (Copper) river July 29th to 31st, to investigate reports of Spring Salmon on this area. This trip was made in company of Inspector Elliot of Smithers. No fish were found on the area at the time.

September 3rd to 11th a trip was made from the head of this river to its Junction with the Skeena. 1,500 Sockeye were found on the area above McDonnell lake. This was about half of last years run. Heavy rains encountered during the trip made visibility in the river very poor, and no other fish could be seen. A good run of Coho and a few Chums were found on the lower river at later dates.

A trip was made by plane to the head of the Kispiox River, Damdochax lake and to Slangeese river with J.R. Brett of Fisheries Research Board.

Runs found on these areas:

Kispiox	Sockeye	3,118
	Coho	100 the first of run in area.
Slangeese	Sockeye	868
	Coho	34 first of run.
	Pinks	20 dead fish run long; finished
	Springs	4 " " " " "
Damdochax	Sockeye	279
	Springs	400

An inspection trip was made into the Kitsumgallum Lake Area, October 3rd to 7th. Although I was a little too late for this area and the river was very silty from rains, some information was obtained. There were 1300 Sockeye and a few Coho on the area at the time of inspection. A run of Spring Salmon reported in the lake

could not be estimated due to water conditions. This water is of glacial origin and it is only under extremely dry conditions that anything can be seen. Pinks, Chums and Coho were found on the lower Kitsumgallum river.

Periodic visits were made to Lakelse lake. The Sockeye run in of about 10,000 fish was light. The Coho run of about 6,000 fish was the heaviest ever seen in this area by old time residents. The pink run of 15,000 fish was light.

376,000 Sockeye yearlings were counted leaving the lake by the Fisheries Research Board. An Adult counting fence installed this year was not successful.

I cut about 3 miles of trail on Lakelse river and about the same along Williams creek.

I have been keeping some records and taking samples at the lake, for Fisheries Research Board, since they left in September. Accommodations and transportation for this work has been supplied by the Board.

The following is the complete picture for the District as far as spawning is concerned.

Sockeye	---- ---	light.
Springs	-----	light
Pinks 1	-----	light
Chums		medium
Coho		Heavy
Steelhead		Average.

Indian Fishing for food in the district has been light, and only 9 permits were issued. Indians, owing to wages in logging camps and mills do not depend so much on fishing for food as they did in other years. 185 Springs, 1,050 Sockeye, 210 Coho and 95 steelheads were taken in this fishery.

Fisheries Notices were posted at Kitsumgallum lake, Lakelse lake Terrace and Cedarvale.

No arrests were made. Only one report of illegal fishing was made, which when investigated was found to be untrue. Two instances of flashing being left in streams were found but in both cases a note to the operators concerned was sufficient to remedy the situation.

The Harbour (Hair) Seal are numerous in this district. They appear with the first spring Salmon run in May and stay in the river until the Coho run is over.

Experiments were carried out with different rifles and ammunition to find out the best allaround weapon for their destruction.

12 gauge shotgun loaded with AAA or Buckshot is effective at close ranges but beyond 40 yards the pattern is not heavy enough for a sure kill. Lighter shot gives a heavier pattern but this cuts down the killing power.

Best results were obtained with an 8mm. but as ammunition for this calibre is hard to obtain and is also expensive its use had to be discontinued.

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A 22 using the long rifle ammunition was used and proved very effective up to 65 yards, but as most shots have to be taken beyond this range it's usefulness is limited.

In all 20 seals were killed outright while many others were hit but could not be claimed as destroyed.

A good shot with a highpowered rifle and telescope sight could cut down their numbers considerably.

The best time to hunt them would be early in the spring at the time of pupping season and shortly after. The young are not able to travel well at this time and seem to have a certain amount of curiosity that brings them up to close range. This leaves them as they develop and they become more timid and hard to stalk.

Late in the fall they follow the Coho up the smaller streams to the lakes and are easier to shoot than in the middle of the summer as they are confined to smaller bodies of water.

An application was made for a rifle and ammunition for use in the control of these predators.

A few cases of destruction of fish on small streams by bears are seen, but damage from this source is not heavy enough to be important.

Transportation has been my worst problem. Train times are such that all traveling by this means has to be done at night. As there is only one train a day, and a lapse of a day before a return train together with the fact that there are only a few hotels and stopping places along the line, they can not be used to any advantage.

Taxis can be used for oneway and short trips but as there is very little communication along the line and road can not be called for return trips.

Public Works Department drivers and Logging Operators were very helpful this season but can not be depended on at all times.

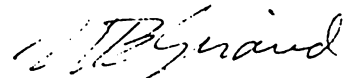
A light delivery or panel truck, equipped with a rack for carrying a canoe and motor, containing a sleeping bag and provisions would be the ideal transportation for this district.

A man could stop where he had business if there was no hotel and could be more or less selfsupporting.

A canoe is a necessity as in many instances the river has to be crossed and lakes are used considerably. Several instances of fishing boats being found across the river that could not be examined, have been encountered this season.

The high cost of cars and mileage rate allowed, makes it impossible for me to purchase one and operate one on my own.

A Fisheries Meeting was attended at the Office of the Supervisor in Prince Rupert, December 6th. Many problems and points of interest were discussed and think if this could be made a yearly meeting it would be of great value, to all concerned.



V.H.B. Giraud  
Fisheries Inspector.