

Volunteer Salmon Hatchery

News Letter Edition 46

June 24.

Welcome to our latest news letter. The Salmon season has come and gone. At the time of writing , the salmon season will be the worst ever , and by a long way. Both in number and size.

The importance of the Volunteer Salmon Hatchery , to enhance the wild salmon run has never been so needed.

Should the volunteer salmon hatchery cease to function, and the wild Salmon run go into extinction you can be guaranteed that with the future politics , we will not see the salmon species reintroduced into New Zealand. We have to keep it here.

We must acknowledge the our members who have made donations to our organisation. Since the last news letter the following persons have made a donation. Chris Main (several); Rob Watson; Jerry Walton; J M & M Chetwin. We thank you all for your gratefully received donations.

We must also acknowledge our corporate sponsors who are our backbone, and without their support we would be hard pressed to maintain our presence. They are in no particular order the following, Meridian Energy Community Fund, The morven Glenavy Ikawai Irrigation Company, The Waitaki Irrigators Collective, Oceania Dairy Ltd.

A lot has happened since the last News Letter. The AGM was held on the 26th of March. We thank those that made the effort to attend, or at least put in an apology.

The chairman is Trevor Hill, Secretary /Treasurer Linn Koevoet, Incubation shed representative, Peter Anderson. Fish and Game Representative, Nikki Dellaway and committee member Russell Franks. The committee has the authority to second further committee members and we would ask for one or two members that are available for the committee to please make contact. We have about 4-5 meetings a year to ensure the smooth operation of the hatchery facilities.

As earlier mentioned the salmon run was very poor. What fish that were around were in the 3 to 8lb range and were in generally poor condition. We have only received one report of a fin clipped salmon being caught and this was unverified as it was released in the hope of getting a bigger salmon. Suggestion was that this fish was 4.5lb.

We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Dianne Landrebe on the south side of the Waitaki. Dianne took it upon herself to try and keep the Kawhai Fishermen on the South side at least honest, while she was present, by ensuring that any salmon caught by these fishermen , without a Fishing Licence , was returned forwith alive to the river. We understand that four Salmon where released alive. Dianne thank you for a job well done.

The salmon raceway in Welcome stream suffered damage in January when an upstream farmer caused a large amount of water weeds to come down stream and overpower our raceway. It took four volunteers 15 hours work to remove the water weed from the raceway and a further 8 hrs to reset the race way. As a result 3,000 smolt where released before time. Lost to us but not to the system. The remaining 2,000 fish were transported to the Waitaki River just below the bridge and released.

On the 20th April the volunteer salmon Hatchery lost a committee member and a hard working volunteer when he failed to return from a fishing trip. Les Crosbie was involved in many of the Hatcheries engineering projects. The hours he put in working on various metals and welders making items both big and small for the hatchery will be missed.

We were approached by a group called the “Wednesday Walkers” from Oamaru, who had earlier been to a visit to our facility in Bells Pond. They offered to come out and help with a fin clipping working bee. This was immediately taken up and a team of 15 Wednesday Walkers and 6 volunteers clipped and released some 8,000 smolt. Most of the Wednesday Walkers were females and this was their first experience in handling fish. The rain held off and the help was really appreciated. A BBQ followed the completion of the time segment, and was enjoyed by all.

A following working bee was called and about 35 emails were forwarded to members to assist if possible. This working bee was attended by 10 members which included two children. A solid 2.5hrs was worked in near freezing conditions and a further 5,000 fish were clipped and released. A BBQ was held at the completion of the allotted time. A Further 3,000 smolt were later released. Making the total release into the Waitaki of 21,000 salmon Smolt. The largest number released in our history.

The last two spawning seasons we have harvested our fish on the 17th of May. This year we decided to harvest the fish, two weeks later. On the first stock checking we seperated the males and females from the rising three and four year old Batch. We harvested 6 hens and milked sufficient males for fertilisation of the eggs. 5 of the harvested females eggs made it to the incubation trays and a guesstimate of 15,000 eggs was obtained.

The following week a further 33 females were Harvested . While harvesting the females the fish that were not displaying a tendency to spawn/mature, the silver fish , where shifted to a temporary location in the empty new raceway. 97 silver salmon have been retained for inclusion with the rising two year old brood stock to be the brood stock for the 2025 spawning year. The bulk of these will be 4 year old fish at spawning 2025. The hens transported to the incubation trays, gave us approx 105,000 eggs.

The following week a further 31 hens where harvested and sufficient milt obtained for fertilisation. At the end of the harvest session the rising two year olds where sorted through and 33 early maturing fish where released into the river, and the remaining silver fish kept for brood stock, for possible harvest in 2025. of the 31 hens 24 made it to the incubation trays. This giving approx 60,000 eggs for incubation. Approximately 180,000 eggs at fertilisation.

We would like to thank the volunteers who assisted on these egg harvests and the shifting of stock. We also acknowledge those that just came to watch and take photographs. Please talk with your friends, about what you saw and how you could help.

As you can see, the incubation shed is now in operation. We have 32 incubator trays available for egg raising with 2 females per tray that gives us 64 viable females to fill the incubator trays with eggs. We have two trays yet to fill and our first harvest is due to eye up on Thursday the 20th June. We can calculate this as from fertilisation it takes 250 thermal units to get to the eyed up stage. A thermal unit is one degree celcius for 24 hrs. If the water temperature is 11 degrees over 24hrs it will take 22.7 days to eye up. That works out to the 20th June.

The looking after the eggs has started and the incubation team is again active. If you wish to help out on occasions, for an hour or two please contact Mike Hutchings ph 431-3934 or Peter Anderson ph 034260423 as I am sure your assistance will be appreciated. The team works most days.

This News Letter is sponsored by **Oamaru Sports and outdoors**, please if you are looking to purchase your sporting equipment please visit Richard and his team. - Tight lines.

