

NZ Salmon Anglers Newsletter

October 2018 Number 124

Index

Editorial	3
National Sea Run Salmon Committee.....	5
Annual General Meeting 2018.....	6
McIntosh's Catches 2017-18.....	9
Hatchet Job on Hatcheries.....	10
Fishy Rambling Questions.....	14
I Have Seen Armegeddon.....	16
Ova Planting 2018.....	19
Take a Kid Fishing.....	21
Indigenous Fish Bill.....	27
International Year of the Salmon.....	24
Lost Rivers of the South Island.....	25
Value of Freshwater Angling in NZ.....	26
Members Salmon Competition.....	27



**Official Newsletter of the New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association Incorporated
P.O. Box 1113, Christchurch 8140
www.nzsalmonanglers.co.nz**

**NEW ZEALAND SALMON ANGLERS ASSOCIATION (INC)
2018-19 OFFICE HOLDERS AND COMMITTEE**

President	Larry Burke	0274 916409	the.burkes@outlook.com
Vice President	Colin Eaton	027 2080063	colinanddieaton@xtra.co.nz
Secretary/ Treasurer	Tony Humphreys	021 02375746	tonyhumphreys6@gmail.com
Patron	Pam Ellis	021 2113293	pam.ellis41@hotmail.com
Committee	Mike Ager	021 02951190	
	Phil Ball	021 2656133	jeanettephilball@xtra.co.nz
	Kevin Belcher	021 625306	kbel209@gmail.com
	John Hodgson	351 5825	jmhodgson@xtra.co.nz
	Paul Hodgson	021 1965676	paul@ pjslawnmowingandgardening.co.nz
	Dave Leigh	0272862865	rae.dave92@gmail.com
	Dennis Long	352 2874	dennislong@xtra.co.nz
	Russell Mackay	021 02798628	russhaz@outlook.co.nz
	Neil McLean	0272109591	
	Greg Terras	0274 341737	gjterras@gmail.com
Honorary Auditor	Trevor Hayes		

Committee Meetings

The Committee meets on the first Monday each month (except January) at 7.30 pm. Members and supporters are welcome to attend these meetings. (Meetings are currently held at a private residence, so please check this with the Secretary if you wish to attend.)

Life Members

Lindsay Dell, Pam Ellis, Trevor Hayes, John Healy, John Hodgson, Ken Hughey, Dennis Long, Stephen Sparrow.

<p>Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in any letters and articles in this newsletter are the authors' own and are not necessarily those of the New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association (Inc) or the Editor.</p>



EDITORIAL

October 2018

This is my first report as President. Where to start? I have been 'addicted' to salmon fishing for about 30 years. Before that it was trout since 1957. It has become my life. So here goes.

First, the new fishing season has just started and, as always, there is hope for a good one. That would be great after the last one. Personally I take heart from the historical records of the salmon runs which often show that large returns have in the past resulted in very small runs three years previously.

However there is no doubt that the salmon run is in gradual decline since the government hatchery research and release programmes were stopped by the closing and sale of Glenariffe in the late 1990's and then Silverstream in 2009. This has meant that the funding for salmon enhancement and releases that have been needed to repair and boost the salmon runs from the aborted ocean ranching attempt of the 1980's has solely relied on licence fees and there has not been enough to go round all that Fish and Game do.

However there is hope for some change, starting with the salmon symposium in November last year when a National Salmon Action Committee was formed. They are currently looking at options. The good thing about salmon is that because

they have a relatively short life cycle there is a short turn around.

Meanwhile I would on behalf of the committee like to thank all the volunteers who constantly turn up for fin-clipping and ova planting and hatchery work. Special thanks go to Roger Tobin and Mike Ager who between them in the last year have at an under-estimation done at least 1500 hours between them.

There are also the many hours that Paul Hodgson is putting into fighting for effective fish screens on all irrigation intakes on our rivers, as well as leading our appeal against the granting of taking more water from the Rangitata. All up we estimate about 6,000 hours.

Without volunteers these things would not work. There will be a need for volunteers for fin-clipping of trout 27 October and fin-clipping salmon in January at a date to be announced .

It is also time to check your gear, maybe buy some new stuff and get your licence to be ready for when you hear the first report of a caught salmon.

Another important date is the Fish and Game Council elections. Voting has now closed and we hope you have voted as it is important for the next three years of our fisheries.

We can also report that at least 180,000 fin-clipped salmon smolt were released this winter with most in the Rakaia and 60,000 in the Waimakariri.

Your committee has also been challenging water usage and seeking redress for deteriorating rivers and lack of effective fish screens. We have lodged an appeal against the increased water take by the Rangitata Diversion Race on the Rangitata River.

We have also written to and received a reply from Environment Canterbury on 13+ concerns about the Rakaia River and at their suggestion have asked for a meeting with their staff to address them.

Finally it is with some sadness that we as a committee farewell Heather Saunders, our Secretary/Treasurer of the last 9 years. Heather feels it is time for a break and I am sure that husband Ian will be glad to have her back. Thank you Ian for the loan. Above all, thank you Heather for amazing work you have done. You will be missed. We wish you all the best.

We are now well into planning the 2019 Waimakariri Salmon Fishing Competition to be held on Saturday 23 March. Make a diary note to be there.

We now look forward to what the new season will bring and the hope that we will all benefit from a tight line sometime in the next 7 months.

Good luck.

Larry Burke
PRESIDENT

REMINDER ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

NZSAA subscription accounts for the current year that commenced 1 April have been sent to members either by email or post.

Thank you to all who have paid and a reminder to all others that their subs are now due and payable as follows:

Adult membership	\$25
Family membership	\$30
Junior membership (under 18 years)	\$10

Payment can be made by

- Mail to NZSAA P O Box 1113 Christchurch 8140; or
- Direct Credit to NZSAA Westpac account 03 0802 0099970 00.
(Please include your name on the DC payment details.)

Thank you for your continued support of NZSAA

National Sea Run Salmon Committee

Following on from the 2017 Salmon Symposium - Turning the Tide, The New Zealand Fish and Game Council has formed the National Sea Run Salmon Committee.

This committee is a sub-committee of the New Zealand Council and has members from the following Fish & Game Councils - New Zealand Council, Otago, West Coast, Central South Island, North Canterbury and Nelson Marlborough.

There is also a member each from the New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association (Paul Hodgson) and South Canterbury Salmon Anglers (Alan Brooks).

The National Sea Run Salmon Committee holds its meetings every couple of months, generally at the offices of North Canterbury Fish & Game ,595 Johns Road Christchurch.

The minutes, agendas and reports of the National Sea Run Salmon Committee are published on the Fish & Game website. Because of the time frame between meetings and the urgency of the crisis facing the salmon fishery, the committee has resolved to publish the draft minutes here as well so that anglers are aware of what is happening with the fishery.

Check out this link to the website to read what the Committee is doing:

<https://fishandgame.org.nz/northcanterbury/about/about-fish-and-game-council/sea-run-salmon-committee/>

Hamilton Jet 212 JET UNIT + the NEW 151 MODEL HULL

reairs and maintenance
jet unit refurbishment
engine tune-ups
insurance jobs
impeller reconditioning
hull repairs
service support
huge range of parts,
spares and
accessories

HamiltonJet
New Zealand

Providing excellent performance and greater accessibility, a Hamilton 212 jet unit with a 141/151 hull is the reliable choice.

Lunns Road Christchurch
PH 962 0505 FAX 962 0535
marine@hamjet.co.nz
www.hamiltonmarine.co.nz

Jetboats Waterjets Service and Support

2018 Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM was held on 15 May with all the previous year's committee plus one new member being elected.

After a term of 4 years, Tony Humphreys stood down as President. We thank Tony for "temporarily" taking on this role following the untimely death of President Bruce Moody in 2013. Always willing, Tony has now taken on the job of Acting Secretary-Treasurer until a permanent appointment can be found to fill the big shoes of Heather Saunders



We welcome Larry Burke as our new President after five years on the committee. As noted in his editorial, Larry has been a keen angler all his life and particularly a salmon fisherman for the past 30 years. He followed his passion for fishing at University with his studies on water science and salmon life cycles. These days Larry does most of his salmon fishing at the mouth of the Waimakariri River. Larry has become a vigilant observer and recorder of water flows on the Waimak and Rakaia Rivers and frequently challenges ECan on these matters. Larry is on the Executive of NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers representing South Island angling interests.



Newly elected to the committee is Neil McLean bringing angling experience and knowledge of over 30 years, mainly chasing salmon on the Waimakariri and Upper Rakaia Rivers. Neil enjoys following sport in general and in particular has been associated actively with rugby league as a player and referee, and touch rugby. Having retired from his butchery trade, Neil is now pursuing his angling with family and friends, and is keen to put some time back into the salmon fishery through NZSAA's activities.

Speakers at the AGM

Kevin Belcher, committee member, spoke to the meeting on NZSAA's representations to Environment Canterbury on fish screens that are not effective in preventing salmon passage or meeting the guidelines in consents. ECan is to undertake increased stream monitoring and plan a process for the review of consents in order to achieve compliance.

Steve McNeill, member and former F&G councillor, spoke of changes in salmon fishing over the years, and some interesting statistics. In 1973 smolt releases started at Silverstream; in 1985 the Acclimatisation Society annual report noted that 2849 salmon heads were handed in from tagged fish; reports on spawning from the Poulter, Grassmere Stream, Cora Lynn, Slovens Creek, Spring Creek, Turkey Flat, Bealey stream, Low Farm Creek, Cass Hill Stream and One Tree Swamp. Issues on habitat, swamps and wetlands in the headwaters being drained, irrigation demands and pollution - all sound rather familiar.

Athol Price Plaque

This trophy is awarded in recognition of outstanding service to the salmon sports fishery.

This year's recipient was Heather Saunders who had been Secretary and Treasurer for NZSAA since 2009. During this time Heather gave exceptional service, spending many more than her allotted hours in undertaking the Association's administration. She was meticulous in all aspects of her work, including precise financial records that were much appreciated by Auditor Trevor.

Heather's enthusiasm was all the more commendable because she is not an angler although she does have a strong family background in salmon fishing.

We wish Heather well in her "retirement" though we are sure this will continue to be an active one.



Members' Salmon Competition 2017-18

Congratulations to Colin Eaton for winning the Aquarius Trophy for heaviest salmon overall with his 5.01kg salmon caught on 14 March 2018 at McIntosh's, Waimakariri.

It may not have been the best salmon season, but only one entry was received into the members' competition. The trophy for the heaviest salmon overall was therefore the only one awarded, and the Waimakariri and Rakaia trophies and lucky draw were not.

This competition is open to all financial NZSAA members so, if you are fortunate enough to land a sea-run salmon this season, do take a little time to weigh it in at premises with government tested scales, fill in the form and send it to NZSAA. The Rules and Entry Form are on the inside back of this newsletter and on the website.



Barry Craig Earthquake Memorial Trophy

This trophy is given to a dedicated salmon angler seen as showing outstanding sportsmanship.

This year's winner is Percy Whyte. Percy lives in Kumara and was unable to be at the AGM to receive the award. Percy is a passionate salmon angler fishing often in the Waimakariri, Rakaia & Rangitata Rivers. His family, including his parents and grandparents, have all been keen anglers.

Percy made and carved this beautiful greenstone trophy and donated it to NZSAA to be awarded to the winner of our yearly Waimakariri Salmon Competition.



Obituaries

The AGM remembered those of our members who had passed away during the year: Martin Burke, Doug Roy, S Fisher, Kerry O'Neill, Paul Worley, George Tepania (2015 NZSAA Waimak Competition winner).

NZSAA monogrammed lapel badges and headwear available for purchase from the Secretary

Caps, Bucket Hats and Beanies - \$20 each

Lapel Badges - \$15 each

Salmon caught McIntosh's area 201-18 season

Compiled by Colin Eaton

If you thought the 2017-18 season was not good for salmon catches, you are correct, as shown in the following records compiled by Colin Eaton for the McIntosh's area on the Waimakariri River:

December 2017	15
January 2018	4
February 2018	8
March 2018	16
April 2018	1
Total	44

Due to the number of days that the river was unfishable, 74 days out of 120 from 1 January to 30 April, no wonder the count was down.

Of the total, only 6 were fin clipped = 13.6%. My observation this year was that the numbers of fishermen was down compared with other years, many days only a handful sitting on the rocks and boats. It was also more difficult to get reliable information so this year's count could have a greater degree of error.

Of real interest is that in the 2013-14 season the count was 497, this year only 44!

Hunting & Fishing

**Major Sponsor
Waimakariri Salmon Fishing Competition**

Christchurch Region Stores

75 Clarence Street, Tower Junction, Christchurch: Phone 03 3430212

North Canterbury, 305 Flaxton Road, Rangiora: Phone 03 3131313

A Hatchet Job on Hatcheries?

By Rex N Gibson

Fish & Game have commissioned a report entitled “A review of contemporary salmonid stocking practices in New Zealand” by the Cawthron Institute.

Its key recommendations were:

- The practice of releasing juvenile life-history stage trout into rivers and streams should be discontinued.
- All hatchery release programmes should focus on creating put-and take style lake fisheries in waterbodies where it can be demonstrated that natural recruitment is limited.
- Releasing juvenile salmonids in open river systems has a high chance of failure and there **can** be negative consequences for wild fisheries.
- F & G should develop an inter-Regional peer-review process for all hatchery release programmes.
- The burden-of-proof that demonstrates benefits should be placed on all release programmes.

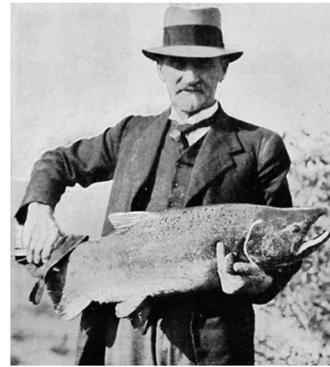
The arguments about the value of hatcheries seem to surface every decade or so. The thoughts of an “expert” or two have invariably been overwhelmed by the democracy of angler opinion; as expressed through their regional councils.

These recommendations, above, were greatly expanded upon in the document. That is where the fun started. This has to be the most poorly edited and convoluted piece of “scientific” reporting on New Zealand freshwater angling for some time. The regional case study on North Canterbury is eight pages of opinion founded on the writer’s apparent inability to understand the New Zealand salmon fishery. The North Canterbury staff has written a concise rebuttal but one wonders what damage has been done by what is, in effect, primarily a tirade of prejudices and opinion. The report and its rebuttal bring into doubt the writer’s ability to communicate effectively with the many Fish & Game staff and volunteers concerned. These are people with centuries of combined knowledge and expertise in salmonid enhancement husbandry whose competence and integrity is being doubted.

Be assured; the South island’s braided rivers and their salmon fisheries are “in crisis”. This report erroneously criticises almost every attempt made to salvage this fishery. The most unfortunate aspect of this is that the writer bases much of the criticism on comparisons between production/commercial hatchery data from North America (much of it outdated) with enhancement hatchery data in New Zealand. It is like comparing apples with artichokes.

The impartiality of Cawthron must now be an issue. The report digresses into the nebulous worlds of myth and politics. It states “*When people who support this principle [the introduced predator free movement] learn that trout are not a native species, and that they are predators, it is a short logical step to determine that this is undesirable.*”

Really! This deliberate *terminological inexactitude* (Winston Churchill's term) is a relic of the mentality of the former government's hired hands in DOC management and/or dairy industry spin doctors.



*Left: Montrose hatchery's Dirk Barr (right) on a recent Open Day
Right: A staff member at the Hakataramea (Waitaki) hatchery c 1907*

Nature is built on food chains where predators are a balancing mechanism. Trout are an established part of aquatic ecosystems from Northland to the Bluff in equilibria that date back well over 100 years. In the limited cases where trout present 'harmful' predation to any native species it is always where the habitat has been ravaged by the activities of settlement and agriculture by the ultimate predator – humans.

Why was this topic even broached? The writer admits “*Many of my scientific peers, as well as influential water managers, see the protected ‘sports fish’ status of salmonids as an inappropriate privilege afforded to the species largely by way of our colonial history*”.

Interestingly all of my scientific peers are anglers, or are highly appreciative of the role that anglers play as “eco warriors” in monitoring the rampant destruction of aquatic ecosystems that industrialised farming is inflicting on New Zealand’s environment. As for “influential water managers” it is very easy for non-scientists to read “irrigators”; again, enough said. The relevance of the full page (plus) attempt to intellectualise the anti-trout prejudice has little logical relevance in a report to Fish & Game, who know all this, on stocking practices (i.e. ‘hatcheries’). This section of the report aligns Cawthron with the anti-angling cohort. Why else would you waste so much verbage on it?

The report is equally notable for what it fails to address; the salmon crisis in the South Island, the dewatering of rivers across the country for irrigation and the dramatic increase in chemical additives into the trout waters in recent years; all of which impact on stocking practices.

The report’s consideration of salmon issues focusses on (often) outdated and foreign data, primarily from commercial hatcheries. It ignores completely the fact that smolt from the Montrose hatchery are imprinted in secondary streams that do not see wild

salmon returns; therefore negating much potential competition. It ignores the likely plight of returning salmon (currently used for stripping) in the degrading Rakaia spawning grounds. Assumptions on genetic differences in Montrose and 'wild' salmon in New Zealand have no evidential backing; nor have those about survival traits. It also produces only opinion, and not evidence, about percentage thresholds for intermingled wild and hatchery stocks to be genetically detrimentally affected. Evidence is also lacking on assertions/implications that there are detrimental effects on wild fishes spawning in New Zealand. What may have happened because of commercial hatcheries in North America has not been replicated in studies here.

Another real worry which is completely ignored, is the broad issue of agricultural chemicals influence on wild fisheries. The data is only starting to come in on the impact of run-off (and sometimes direct application) of glyphosate on river flora, including microflora, and insecticides on the invertebrates that salmon smolt feed on during their journey to the sea. Fertilizer and effluent run-off are equally ignored in the need for hatchery enhancement.

The wild populations of trout and salmon, especially in the Rakaia and other braided river catchments have also been subjected to significant temperature changes in the seaward migration sections of the river from two causes which will have reduced the survival rate of smolt. These are the temperature increases resulting from irrigation off-takes producing shallower braids which heat up much quicker than before; and the same effect from fluctuations in electricity providers diversions into Lake Coleridge. These justifications for salmon enhancement were inexplicably ignored.

Anglers are poorly served by reports which ignore decades of local research in favour of literature searches of foreign or largely dated data. We have an environmental crisis in New Zealand and it is not just in the Waikato and Canterbury that our waterways, and thus fisheries, are in trouble. A report such as this should have focussed on what can be done to enhance angling and thus the environment that supports salmonids. It needed more evidence and a lot less opinion.

It failed to substantiate any of the five "Potential consequences of stocking" listed in its Executive Summary. **It did not show** that releases of hatchery fish **in New Zealand:**

1. Reduced available resources for existing wild fish through competition.
2. Introduce domesticated fish genetics (thus reducing overall population fitness).
3. Retard the process of local adaption.
4. Place increased predation pressure on native fauna
5. Inflame negative perceptions towards Fish & Game (and salmonids in general) because of the perceived impact of stocking introduced fish on native fish.

Not one of these assertions about stocking and hatcheries in New Zealand was supported by evidential data. Unless Fish & Game were simply after verbage that could support a hatchet job on hatcheries, for reasons you can only speculate on, it is clear that they did not get value for money.

Rex N. Gibson



**359 Lincoln Road,
Christchurch
Phone (03) 338 3131 Fax (03) 338 3535**

Email: info@fishermansloft.co.nz
Website: www.fishermansloft.co.nz

HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION WESTLAND

Lake Kaniere via Hokitika Neil's Beach, Jackson Bay via Haast

Bruce Bay: Half-hour Drive South of Fox Glacier

All baches self-contained with pots/pans, cutlery, power, shower, washing machine, fridge, freezer, or fridge/freezer. All baches sleep 8 people.

You need to supply all disposable items including wood/coal for the Yunka type fire (except Kaniere, electric heating), linen etc. Upon leaving bach must be left clean, tidy and all rubbish removed.

Rates: **Kaniere:** \$120 per night (up to 4 people) \$20 per extra person
 Bruce Bay & Neil's Beach \$100 per night

For more information and bookings please contact Nelson or Cindy:

*The Hokitika Angling Club
C/o Hokitika Cycles & Sportsworld
Phone 03 755 8662 (9am—5pm)*

FISHY RAMBLING QUESTIONS

By Lindsay Dell, Life Member NZSAA

This is not an opinion piece, it is more of a question piece, just one old man's bewildered wonderings. (Well, probably some opinion which I figure we can all have.)

Salmon were first released in NZ in the 1870's and in 1918-19 in the Waitaki River the run was so very small "some people thought they had disappeared altogether". In 1920 the run was "quite large" and in 1921 "fish from 4 foot to 4 foot 6 inches have been reported right up to the southern alps" with the run "quite phenomenal". Something was done right for the fishery and the following decades saw the halcyon days of salmon runs despite the Acclimatisation Societies being described as "over enthusiastic amateurs" by one rather snobby scientist. Something or nothing was done right to get the runs going or did nature just intervene?

Uncle Google tells me that "hatchery salmon are far more genetically similar than wild populations", meaning that wild fish have a greater genetic diversity than hatchery with their own unique populations in different streams and catchments. Nature knows best, right? As an example, around the 1980's Slovens Creek in the Waimak basin received a lot of attention from the Acclimatisation Society. They failed trying to flatten a waterfall which, if they had been successful, would have extended the spawning grounds by several kilometres on that stream.

Why all the effort? Because that stream had more returns of 4 year-old fish than any other spawning stream in the Canterbury area. These were the big fish that anglers coveted, and Slovens was where they spawned. The Society wanted more of those big fish spawning in a greater space. Was it likely this local population being older and bigger than the norm was down to genetics?

What are the genetics of today's Slovens runs made up of compared to the old?

Is that 4 year old population still there?

What was/is in the water at Slovens?

What are the genetics of the hatchery releases these days? Has the "brood stock" been genetically tested against natural wild stock? Do we even have any pure wild stocks?

What are the genetics like between different rivers? Have they been diluted with smolt releases from the one source?

Where are the biggest and oldest salmon spawning? Are there any big old fish?

In the 1970's, one Acclimatisation Society had a vigorous trout stocking programme. there was a change in councillors and all trout stocking stopped as a policy change. In a short time some lakes had larger and more abundant fish because the lakes had been overstocked due to the fact that no research was done to establish if the lakes could support a larger population or in fact if the lakes needed more trout in the first place. But it had been a great "feel-good" factor, with the easy option of tipping lots of trout into the lakes regardless of if they needed it or not.

I think it was the same councillors who stopped a lot of fish salvaging during droughts. Why? It was not cost effective to salvage fish and the salvaged fish were being dumped onto another fishery upstream that was already stressed with low flows and warm water so the last thing they needed was more fish competing for space, cool water and food. Was this thinking right for the fishery but wrong for the anglers for not “saving” fish? Irresponsible or sound thinking?

In the 1980’s Low Farm Creek on the Waimak had been completely choked with weed making it useless for spawning salmon. At the end of that season the Acclimatisation Society annual report stated Low Farm had large numbers of spawning salmon that year as “cows had cleared the weed” from the stream. Sorry folks, it was one person with an approved aquatic remedy spending half an hour clearing the weed. If this can be done by one person on one stream, what could a well-planned and organised low cost effort on all the spawning streams achieve?

A senior Fishery scientist told me years ago that too much fisheries management is based on politics and not biology. By this he meant it is politic to be seen to be doing what anglers perceive as being best for them to catch more fish and not necessarily what is best for the fishery. Biology is rather boringly based on science and research and is not as wizzy for the anglers to see a truck full of fish being tipped into waters. What is best for the fishery, wizzy or science?

All around the world salmon fisheries are having problems and humans are enthusiastically rushing to try and correct the problems experienced by anglers by having “put and take” fisheries, like New Zealand largely has now.

Is a put and take fishery a perceived solution for the angler or in fact a problem for the wild fishery?

Where is the balance between enhancing the fishery and smothering it?

Would a good farmer put 1,000 stock units on a pasture that can only support 300?

Would a good farmer introduce stock of an unknown different genetic makeup into his herd or flock?

Would a good farmer dump stock on a pasture without knowing how nutritious the pasture was?

Salmon are now getting smaller and fewer despite smolt releases and ova plantings at record levels. What would happen if all human ‘help’ stopped altogether other than maximising the quality of the spawning areas?

It could be an interesting experiment on a single catchment for 3 or 4 years, but would there be the political stomach for such a trial that may appear to be a “do nothing” option?

Interesting the findings of the Salmon Symposium last year and it will be even more interesting to see what comes out of the Cawthron Institute report on Genetics.

I need a lie down now

Lindsay Dell

I have seen Armageddon!

(At least where Canterbury's sea-run trout and salmon fisheries fate will be decided) - by Rex N Gibson

An environmental "Armageddon" will be fought on the bed of the Rakaia River - the battle between the "forces of evil" vs common sense and common good. This river has had a mean flow at around 200+ cumecs in past decades, with floods over 2,000 cumecs being common, and over 5,500 cumecs being reached every couple of years. This flow and the floods produced the most iconic of the country's braided riverbeds.

The general public saw Rakaia's unique value as a phenomenon worth preserving, and the National Water (Rakaia River) Conservation Order (NWCO) was put in place in 1988. As a result this pristine environment, with its flourishing wildlife and world famous salmon fishery, was preserved for generations to come – YEAH RIGHT!!

In the last decade we saw classic post-war neo-Fascism intervene. Is that term too dramatic? You judge from this Wikipedia definition. **Neo-Fascism** = A system of government marked by centralization of authority, a capitalist economy subject to stringent governmental controls and suppression of opposition. *Does this ring a bell?*

Many people in Canterbury saw the removal of democratically elected councillors from Environment Canterbury, and their replacement by central government appointees, as exactly that (fascism)! The "nationalism" aspect of fascism was delineated as allegiance to **dairying profit at any cost**; including environmental. The primary concerns of recreational groups were of course in conflict with that; water flow and water quality.

As a consequence of ECan's subjugation to their political masters, the combination of ECan, Trustpower and the Central Plains Irrigation Scheme backers has found ways to get around the NWCO to such an extent that the river is now ecologically dead! Bold words, I think not? Their abstractions of water from this river are the same, to most New Zealanders, as mining in a national park. In July I spent some hours on the lower Rakaia, in the company of a fellow scientist, examining the downstream effects of recent attempts to circumvent the NWCO. We travelled by jet boat and explored further on foot.

My contacts in the "ECO" community all seem horrified by what is happening in the Rakaia, and to its NWCO. It is interesting as to how many different concerns they have. Forest and Bird are particularly worried about the 73% of the country's wry bills which live there (plus the endangered black bill gulls, black fronted terns and banded dotterels). The area has even drawn recognition for its avian fauna from Bird Life International.

Rafters and kayakers are concerned with the lower flows, salmon anglers with the significant increases in water temperature downstream of the off-take areas (salmon cannot tolerate water over 17 degrees, and shallower braids heat up quickly) and diversion of spawning rivers, trout fisherfolk with the damage to spawning streams near the North Branch, hut holders with the lagoon pollution from cattle, farmers from the rising river bed level, and so on. All of these concerns can be traced back to the reduced water flows resulting from dairy irrigation off-takes and Trust Power's manipulation of spawning rivers.

The Rakaia hut-holders community have a unique concern. Low flows actually result in flooding of the land around the tidal lagoon. The river moves many tonnes of gravel to the sea each day under mean flows. When that level drops however, the force of the river is insufficient to open the mouth wide enough to let the river water out to the sea. As a result the lagoon backs up into the village and nearby farmland. This is something that locals never experienced in past decades.

They are also nervous, with photos to support their trepidations, about the Rakaia's gravel bar. The lack of gravel being pushed out to sea has resulted in a steady lowering of the height of the bar between the lagoon and the open sea. Waves are crashing right over far more often than ever before. If the sea breaks through the whole coastline north of that point will be opened to significant erosion; probably including Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere. Can you see ECan, Trustpower, and the CPIS lining up to pay compensation?

We waded across braid after braid in the lower Rakaia. They were devoid of life; smothered.



Acres of "naked" vegetation



Flattened Rakaia riverbed flood plain

Is this the environmental **Apocalypse**? Definitions: (1) a prophetic revelation, especially concerning a cataclysm in which the forces of good permanently triumph over the forces of evil. (2) Any universal or widespread destruction or disaster. *It all sounds very "biblical". I guess my forced attendance at bible class all those years ago is showing through.*

Hebrew Old Testament the 'end of the age' saw images of the judgment of the wicked and the glorification of those who were given righteousness before God (read "environment"?). They await the final judgment. The wicked will then be consigned to eternal suffering in the fires where the Kings of Judah sacrificed some of their children by fire. *Are the "wicked" the ECan appointees and their hired hands? Were the "children" being sacrificed here our environmental values?*

According to the New Testament, **Armageddon** is the prophesied location of a gathering of armies for a battle during the end times, variously interpreted as either a literal or a symbolic location. From an environmental perspective the Rakaia situation is shaping up to be an Armageddon.

Back to evidential things: under ECan's watch over the last few years increased water extraction means that gravel build up has occurred along the riverbed. The lower river had cut channels into this. Lupin, broom and other legumes have flourished on the islands between the braids. These plants were blamed for failure of the gravel to head out to sea, thus ignoring the effect of lower flows. To counter this problem, mass use of chemical sprays (I am advised glyphosate is the main culprit) by aerial methods reminiscent of Agent Orange defoliation in the Vietnam War, has turned the riverbed into an ecological desert. Glyphosate and allied chemicals not only kill macro flora above ground but destroy algae and phyto-plankton normally occurring under water. Say goodbye to all the food chains there, and thus the fish (native and introduced) and bird life.

Today there are acres of dead lupin, etc., all across the river bed. They lie alongside a wide variety of decaying trees and shrubs that formerly held the banks of the river together. A slight pull easily lifts the dead plants from the ground. Therein lies another story; the need of neighbouring farmers to bull-doze artificial groynes to replace the once relatively stable banks. A process that locals believe went under the consenting radar. These groynes rarely outlast the next flood; yet another ecologically damaging folly.

Where once clear channels and islands featured on the riverscape, we now have an almost flat flood plain. With the destruction of the flora we saw the rapid erosion of the rudimentary soil, often over 10 cms thick. It is very fine silt (snow flour) which has subsequently been spread across the whole width of the lower river bed. It forms a tarmac-like surface after a few Canterbury nor'westers. This bed is up to 1km wide.

Silt settles over the stones, especially when spread by the river's "bank to bank" floods, and then sets like concrete when the flow drops. The silt suffocates all remnants of life. It has its parallels in the biblical plagues of the Old Testament; a proverbial "blight upon the land".



Are we the victims of incompetence layered on to greed? Are we who valued the special qualities of the Rakaia and its NWCO, being treated like mushrooms? As my old aunt once said to a young pair peddling their brand of religion at the door "I believe in Armageddon! I believe Armageddon getting sick and tired of hearing people who peddle bullxxxx!".

We found a few tributary spring creeks where aquatic life still existed. Under stones there were still caddis and other larvae and we even saw bullies and a couple of trout. However we found areas around the North Branch dying, for other disturbing reasons inexorably linked to demise of the sea-run trout fishery, but that is a story for another article.

Rex N. Gibson

Ova Planting 2018

By Colin Eaton and Russell Mackay

The 2018 season salmon ova planting carried out by New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association was rather small in comparison to other years but nevertheless our contribution will help. Here is a diary of events;

5 May: Russell Mackay and Warren Mackie went to One Tree Swamp, spent 1½ hours clearing watercress and then placed four in-stream incubators (lockers) into the stream. Some weed was left above the planting area as a filter for silt and also some weed handy to the lockers with the idea that the alevin should have some cover from hungry trout. They then went to Kiwi Stream and located some great looking spots in which to place the lockers. From there they went to the Porter River where two lockers were placed in the stream. The water was really clean and cold. No weed needed to be removed.

12 May: A team comprising Kevin Belcher, Phil Ball, Warren Mackie and Russell Mackay made the trip up to the Kiwi to ready the lockers for the upcoming ova planting season - made the obligatory stop at the Sheffield Pie Shop and then headed on up to place the two new lockers into the stream and prepared them ready for the ova. They followed the stream down to the Waimak and all agreed that this is a great little stream for ova planting.

9 June: The first planting on 9 June involved 15,000 ova split between One Tree Swamp (10,000) and Kiwi stream (5000). Team Russell Mackay, Warren Mackie, Kevin Belcher, Greg Terras, Neil McLean, and Colin Eaton.

16 June: The second planting, when 14,000 eggs were loaded into Scotty boxes and placed into the Alevinator at Hackett's Creek. Team Neil, Lesley, and Jarrod Mclean, Diarmuid Toman, Ron Stuart, Dave Leigh, Tyler McBeth, Larry Burke, Phil Ball, Wayne and Lara Henwood, Colin and Dia Eaton and Roy Knight.

11 July: Trip to Hackett's creek to check up on hatching progress in the Alevinator. Healthy progress, moderate amount of silt but looking good. Water temperature was 9.1 degrees Celsius.

4 August: Russell Mackay and Warren Mackie went up to Lake Pearson to do it a bit of fishing and checked up on the lockers at One Tree Swamp and the Kiwi. There had been a lot of water coming down the Hawdon recently. Some of the wash-outs were over 1m deep so care was needed in crossing. The lockers had quite a lot of silt built up in them so were lifted out of the stream. After doing a rough estimate of the dead eggs it was reckoned the upper locker had a hatch rate of 85 to 90%. The lower locker had a lot more silt present, and the hatch rate was maybe 75%.

The Kiwi lockers still had heaps of youngsters in them - many still had not absorbed their sacs. There were very few dead eggs in those, estimated hatch rate 90%. There had been a good water flow through there and not much silt in the lockers. To be lifted later in the month.

A quick check on The Porter lockers showed there had been a huge amount of water through there at some stage. One of the lockers had been lifted and turned on its side, and the other was OK. Quite glad we had not planted in them.

Hacketts Creek: The analyses from the dead egg count was a 81.5% hatch rate. Again the percentage hatch rate was a little bit down from other years.

Many thanks to all volunteers who helped this year. Without your help these activities would not take place and it's great that our small but important contribution helps the salmon fishery survive and carry on.

Colin Eaton & Russell MacKay



Russell Mackay, Phil Ball & Warren Mackie at the Kiwi
(Also there: Kevin Belcher - the photographer)

Take a Kid Fishing



In the months leading up to this year's Take a Kid Fishing, there were concerns that the choking weed infestation of the ponds would make angling difficult or even impossible causing cancellation of the event and great disappointment for kids and organisers.



Environment Canterbury undertook aquatic herbicide spraying of the ponds in August and followed up with mechanical harvesting to cut and clear the weed and enable the event to proceed on 14 October.



The photos tell the story:

Top: The weed infested ponds before.

Centre: Clear water with the "Swamp Monster" at work.

Lower: Volunteers stocking the ponds with fish.

Indigenous Fish Bill - Amendment to Conservation Act

The Conservation (Indigenous Freshwater Fish) Amendment Bill was tabled in parliament in September and has had its first reading. Public submissions are now being called before the Bill goes to a Select Committee.

NZFFA President Graham Carter says that if this bill goes through as is, it could spell the end of Freshwater Sports Fishing in New Zealand, as it exempts residents who are authorised under the Treaty of Waitangi Act from restrictions on taking, possessing or selling sports fish” “Next thing we know there will be wholesale netting of trout as they will be worth money and there will be no fish left for the angler who enjoys the activity of sports fishing. This Bill effectively takes any authority away from Fish and Game and surplants it with the Department of Conservation. Fish and Game are responsible for the fishing and hunting licences but if this bill goes through, they will have no jurisdiction on the fisheries.

Anglers are urged to read the Bill and make a submission by closing date 25 October. Information on the Bill and how to make a submission can be found on https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/bills-and-laws/bills-proposed-laws/document/BILL_79000/conservation-indigenous-freshwater-fish-amendment-bill

NZ Salmon Anglers Association has written to the Prime Minister with its concerns. Here is our letter of 9 October:

Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern,

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association Inc to express our concerns about the Conservation (Indigenous Freshwater Fish) Amendment bill.

Our concerns are over both the content and lack of consultation on it. We are disturbed especially by the secrecy under which the bill was prepared and the failure to consult Fish and Game who are the statutory managers of sports fishing responsible for the maintaining and protection of salmon and trout in this country on behalf of the government, which it has continued to do under various names for 153 years since sports fish were introduced.

New Zealand Salmon Anglers represent some of the 100,00 freshwater licence holders as is noted in the latest - NIWA Angler Usage New Zealand Lake and rivers Fisheries – Results 2014/15 Angling Survey July 2016 (ASNZLRF).

Freshwater anglers spent 1,274,000 days fishing lakes, streams and rivers (ASNZLRF) and are very concerned and object to the proposed changes that this bill seeks in regard to salmon and trout in our rivers, streams and lakes. Trout (1865) and salmon (1907) have been in our rivers and lakes for 153 years and have developed an eco system where they all survive.

Both are in decline for the same reasons. Science and observation have shown that the cause of that decline is in

The changing land use, intensified industrial farming.

Farm run off and overuse of nitrogen fertilizer polluting waterways.

Draining of wetland native fish spawning areas.

The removal of too much water from waterways that leads to over heating and oxygen saturation loss.

The lack of effective fish screens irrigation canal intakes and other in stream obstructions.

All of these contribute to declining freshwater fish numbers.

We are objecting to clauses 5, 6 and 17 in the Conservation (Indigenous Freshwater Fish) Amendment Bill. In spite of the regulatory impact statement maintaining “ It won’t directly affect sports fish”, it will do that as it takes management away from the current statutory body (Fish & Game) and therefore impact on all Sports Fishing Licence holders and decrease their democratic rights to have some input into the sports fishery. This is available to licence holders through the ability to propose and vote on amendments to rules and regulations governing the fisheries. This has been freshwater licence holders rights for 153 years.

New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association has, and is currently involved in many restoration projects on braided rivers and low land streams in Canterbury, and as such represent river salmon anglers who fish 201,000 angler days fishing for salmon (ASNZLRF) a season. The Environment Canterbury Council area has a total of 475,000 freshwater angler days (ASNZLRF)

New Zealand Salmon Anglers volunteers contribute at least 6000 volunteer hours a year on various projects and meetings. We have been and are involved in sometimes funding fencing, removal of weeds around headwater springs and wetlands, consulting and advocating for better environment and water flows, less pollution, effective fish screens, salvaging both native and sports fish from drying rivers and streams and irrigation canals. We also challenge where we are concerned with degradation and decline of iconic rivers and environments.

We believe therefore that the current Conservation Act around sports fishing is working well and does not need the changes as set in clauses 5,6 and 17. We support the other parts of the Conservation (Indigenous Freshwater Fish) Amendment Bill.

We ask that you change the Bill as it now stands to ensure native fish get the protection they deserve but that it is not to the detriment of salmon and trout or the enjoyment that the 100,000 freshwater licence holders get from the sports fishery.

Yours sincerely

Larry Burke,

President NZSAA

International Year of the Salmon

Vancouver, 11 October, 2018

Wild salmon are an iconic species that hold significant cultural value to Canadians. The International Year of the Salmon aims to raise awareness, and inspire action to protect salmon populations around the world.

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard launched Canada's celebration of the International Year of the Salmon in Vancouver, where he delivered an address to an audience of national and international partners, First Nations and non-government organisations.

As part of the launch of the International Year of the Salmon, the Minister introduced the Government of Canada's *Wild Salmon Policy 2018-2022 Implementation Plan*. This five-year plan outlines concrete actions the Department of Fisheries and Oceans will take to help rebuild Pacific wild salmon populations and their habitats.

The Minister also announced that Fisheries and Oceans Canada has acted on all of the recommendations of the Cohen Commission of Inquiry into the Decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans released its third and final Cohen Status, which details actions taken to address each recommendation.

Quote: "Throughout 2019 and beyond, our government will continue to take action to support salmon conservation on the Pacific coast.

"Our government will continue to protect this species, which has such cultural, social and economic significance for Canadians. Today, as we launch the International Year of the Salmon, I invite all Canadians to work together to help us protect the health and biological diversity of salmon populations in Canada, beginning here in B.C. The actions taken to address all the recommendations of the Cohen Commission are a significant step toward protecting Fraser River sockeye salmon. We, along with the Province of British Columbia and our partners, will build on this work to conserve all Pacific salmon species through the Wild Salmon Policy 2018-2022 Implementation Plan. Together, we can help rebuild these stocks for the benefit of our entire ecosystem, and for generations to come."

Quick Facts

The *Wild Salmon Policy 2018-2022 Implementation Plan* is a result of extensive input gathered over two years through 45 consultations sessions across British Columbia and the Yukon, hundreds of online submissions and further work with external partners.

The Government of Canada has acted on all 75 recommendations of the Cohen Commission.

The five species of Pacific salmon are Chinook, Chum, Coho, Pink, and Sockeye.

The International Year of the Salmon is an outreach and research initiative organised by the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization.

Lost Rivers - South Island New Zealand

Source: NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers

Lost Rivers represents a decline of the 'intergenerational equity' every New Zealander shares in our freshwater resources.

This mapping shown on the NZFFA website lists rivers where a significant loss of opportunity to catch fish has been identified, and highlights the significant decline in our freshwater fisheries. The causes generally relate to developments within catchments that have impacted on those river environments.

This mapping has been compiled using NIWA angler usage and perception surveys and expert angler input. Only rivers where there was an obvious decline have been listed. There remain a significant number of others where there wasn't enough collaborating information to include them.

The purpose of the mapping is to further raise awareness of just how big an issue this really is, and is a work in progress. The map will continue to be updated as more information is compiled.

You can help: send information about any degraded rivers that should be included to: maps@nzffa.co.nz

jet boat base

Unit 3 - 1055 Main North Road, Chaney's Corner, Christchurch. Ph: 03 323 9040



- engine building
- tuning
- trouble shooting
- hull repairs
- impeller rebuilds
- protective stripping
- jet boat modifications
- second-hand parts
- trailer repairs
- stockists of Endurant Batteries
- new & second hand jet boats

Suppliers of...



The Home of...



RAPID RUNNER BOATS LTD
ALLOY FAMILY ADVENTURE JET BOATS

popular turnkey packages include:
Mercury sports jet 175, 210 or 240HP
Lexus 4.0L Alloy V8 and Scott junior 2 stage jet unit.
Chev LSG/Ls 1 All alloy V8 and Scott 2 stage jet unit.
Chev 350 and Hamilton 212 jet unit.
Transplanting from existing boat is also an option.



The Value of Freshwater Angling in NZ

The New Zealand Federation of Freshwater Anglers is looking at undertaking a research project to

1. Determine the recreational and commercial value of freshwater fishing in waterways and lakes within New Zealand; and
2. If we lose our waterways (through degradation or loss of access) what impact will this have on the economy of towns and the national economy.

A joint venture project agreement is proposed with Southwick Associates to undertake the research and report on the outcomes. The outcome would be presented to lobby those government agencies with a view to resolving the issues on the use of our waterways and the relative economic effects of not taking into account the recreational value. There have been scientific reports done on the specific value of individual regions' waterways but nothing on a national scale. Southwick and Associates have a globally recognised process and are a market research, statistics and economics firm, specialising in the hunting, shooting, sports fishing and outdoor recreation markets. Southwick compiled an extremely valuable report on the value of saltwater fishing in New Zealand which changed government attitudes in the recognition of our inshore fishery in particular.

A year-round activity, sport fishing generates significant economic output. Research on Sportfishing in America in 2016, reported that 49 million recreational anglers in the United States 6 years of age and older, nearly 1 in 7 Americans take to the water with rod and reel each year. Recreational sportfishing expenditures supported more than 800,000 jobs in the U.S. and paid out \$16 billion in federal, state and local tax revenues. If sportfishing was its own corporation, it would rank #54 on the Fortune 500 list.

Environmentalists in NZ also attempt to put a \$ value on broader (aquatic) ecosystem services - drinking water, clearing pollution, transport, aesthetics/tourism, wildlife and other recreational uses as well as fishing. The idea is to provide water managers a more accurate/commercial view of the economics of mining water, i.e. balance sheet approach and the resulting damage when only one sector of the economic pie is considered.

There are associated business activities associated with freshwater fishing. It is suspected that by far the biggest commercial activity in NZ is that of guiding and of DOC concessions.

A belligerent attitude by farming groups such as Federated Farmers e.g. The "lock the gate" campaign, coupled with some of the most draconian trespass laws on the planet, and the commercialisation of DOC, make access to freshwater fisheries in NZ quite unique, and an increasing problem. This is being compounded by the increasing sale of our land to overseas interests for farming or forestry, whose new owners have quite different attitudes to angler access than traditional Kiwi owners. The issues with degradation and over-extraction are much better known, but they are putting off an increasing number of high-spending tourist anglers from visiting our shores.

Source: NZFFA

**NZSAA ANNUAL SALMON FISHING COMPETITION
(MEMBERS ONLY)**

The NZSAA Annual Salmon Fishing Competition will be run for the current 2018-19 season. Vouchers will be awarded to the winner of each of the following categories (one trophy per person):

- Heaviest Salmon Overall - Aquarius Trophy
 - Heaviest Salmon Rakaia - Alty Roscoe Trophy
 - Heaviest Salmon Waimakariri - Cromb & Merritt/Fisherman's Loft Trophy
 - Lucky Draw from Remainder of Entries
- Trophies and prizes will be awarded at the NZSAA AGM in May 2019.

COMPETITION RULES

1. Entrants must be financial members of NZSAA and hold a current sport fishing licence.
2. Fish must be caught in accordance with current Fish & Game regulations.
3. Only sea-run salmon may be entered in the competition.
4. All fish must be gutted and gilled with the head on. Frozen fish not permitted.
5. Fish must be weighed at premises where Government tested scales are in use, or at the Rakaia River Holiday Park, or at the Kairaki Beach Motor Camp.
6. Declaration form must be completed and forwarded to reach the Secretary, NZSAA, P O Box 1113, Christchurch 8140, no later than 1 May 2019.
7. All panels on the entry form must be completed and the declaration signed.
8. In the event of a dispute the final arbitrators will be the NZSAA Committee. No correspondence will be entered into regarding the results.

ENTRY FORM AND DECLARATION

Name.....
Angler's Address.....
Licence Number.....Date Fish Caught.....
Weight of Fish (Gutted and Gilled with Head On).....kg.....gms
River and Location where Caught.....
Premises Where Weighed.....
Name and Signature of Person Weighing.....

**I certify that all the above information is correct,
and that I am the Angler who caught this fish**
Signature of Angler



**YOU'RE INVITED
JOIN**

NZ Salmon Anglers Association (Inc)

- ▶ YOUR SUPPORT WILL ENSURE CONTINUATION OF OUR SALMON FISHERY.
- ▶ PROTECT OUR WATER RESOURCES
- ▶ ENSURE APPROPRIATE LICENSING REGULATIONS
- ▶ ASSIST BREEDING PROGRAMS



**Post To: N.Z. Salmon Anglers Association (Inc)
P. O. Box 1113 Christchurch 8140 New Zealand**

I wish to become a member of the NZ Salmon Anglers Association Inc
and agree to be bound by the Rules and Constitution of the Association

Name _____

Address _____

Contact details _____ Email _____

Available to assist with volunteer work weekdays/weekends?

Subscription enclosed

- Adult membership \$25pa
- Family membership \$30pa
- Junior membership (under 18yrs) \$10pa

Signature of Applicant _____

