

# NZ Salmon Anglers Newsletter

**May 2019 Number 125**



## Index

Editorial .....	3
Annual General Meeting notice.....	4
President's Report to AGM.....	5
Subscriptions notice.....	7
2018 AGM minutes.....	8
Waimak Competition results .....	12
Otago Harbour Competition results.....	15
Fin Clipping.....	15
Rangitata River Appeal & Fundraising.....	16
Indigenous Fish Bill.....	19
Waimakariri Trifecta.....	22
Waimakariri Paradise Lost.....	25
Blasts from the Past.....	26
McIntosh landed salmon count.....	26

### Make a note in your diary:

**NZSAA Annual General Meeting**  
**Tuesday 28 May 2019**  
**At 7.30 pm**

**Save the Rangitata River.  
Support the Appeal  
Fundraising  
Details inside.**

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

<b>President</b>	Larry Burke	0274 916409	the.burkes@outlook.com
<b>Vice President</b>	Colin Eaton	027 2080063	colinanddieaton@xtra.co.nz
<b>Immediate Past President &amp; Secretary/Treasurer</b>	Tony Humphreys	021 02375746	tonyhumphreys6@gmail.com
<b>Patron</b>	Pam Ellis	021 2113293	pam.ellis41@hotmail.com
<b>Committee</b>	Mike Ager	021 02951190	
	Phil Ball	021 2656133	jeanettephilball@xtra.co.nz
	Kevin Belcher	021 625306	kbcl209@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	russnaz@outlook.co.nz
	Neil McLean	0272109591	
	Greg Terras	0274 341737	gjterras@gmail.com
<b>Honorary Auditor</b>	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.

**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.



## EDITORIAL

The 2018-19 season has ended: what we can say is that it seems at least one river, the Rakaia, has had a reasonable run from angler reports. Others all seem to have had their moments. The Waimak at McIntosh's had double the previous year but was still under 100 fish. Up river, anglers appear to have done a lot better.

Our Waimak salmon contest was very successful (173 entries of which 38 were juniors). We again acknowledge the generous sponsorship we receive from the Hunting & Fishing stores.

As we start thinking about the next season we are likely to see massive changes for the whole fishery in salmon fishing regions. Some of the drafts presented to Fish & Game, if adopted, will change how we fish: shorter seasons - some advocated are only 3 months long and around December to end of February. This is if a "traffic light" system is put into place. It is based on the average of the previous 3 years spawning count - if it gets below 400 there will be no salmon fishing. Above that there would be various restrictions resulting in part closures and other restrictions. Volunteer work will also be curtailed in that there will, it seems, be no more ova planting after this season.

Finclipping could possibly be put on hold for up to 3 years as the growing of brood stock will take that long before eggs can be harvested. Higher licence fees are also happening - don't know by how much as a figure was not given. It also seems that Fish & Game will want more input from volunteers to run the hatchery - but we have not been asked!!.

There is a Regulation change meeting on 15 May at the Fish & Game headquarters, Johns Road, at 6.30pm. If you want to put a submission in you will need to do so by 5pm on 10 May and indicate if you want to speak to it at the meeting.

We will also have a Fish & Game speaker at our Annual General Meeting on 28 May where you will have a chance to ask questions.

NZSAA as an organisation was set up to advocate for anglers and the fishery and we need to make our voice heard. Does it make a difference? I would have to say yes as shown by the gains we have made on our appeal on the Rangitata River consent issues. By the time of the AGM we will have had our final mediation on the last consent we are appealing which is the extra 10 cubic metres of water RDR irrigation want to take off the low flow. We will also hopefully have had our next meeting with Environment Canterbury staff on our concerns on the Rakaia River and some decisions on that.

It is a crucial time for the salmon fishery. We need to keep pushing so that we continue to have this fishery for our children and grandchildren.

So come along to the AGM and have your say.

**Larry Burke**  
**President**

## **NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**The 47th Annual General Meeting of  
New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association (Inc)  
will be held on Tuesday 28 May 2019 at 7.30 pm**

**Upstairs at the Canterbury Softball Headquarters  
220 Pages Road (behind Cowles Stadium) Christchurch**

### **Business for the Meeting**

1. Apologies
2. Confirmation of Minutes of AGM 15 May 2018
3. Matters arising from Minutes
4. President's Report
5. Auditor's Report and Adoption of Annual Accounts and Balance Sheet
6. Election of Officers and Committee
  - Patron
  - President
  - Vice Presidents (2)
  - Committee (6)
  - Secretary/Treasurer
  - Honorary Auditor
7. Fishing Competition Results and Awards
8. Athol Price Plaque presentation
9. Guest Speakers
10. General Business

A raffle will be run during the evening and supper served at the conclusion.

*Please bring this agenda, reports, accounts etc with you to the meeting.*

# **President's Report**

## **to the NZSAA 46th Annual General Meeting**

### **for the year ended 31 March 2019**

Hello and welcome to the 2019 AGM of the NZSAA.

I hope you all had plenty of time to get out on the rivers during the season and managed to get at least one of the elusive salmon. To those who ask me, I tell them that I caught 100% more than the previous season. They usually look at me and say “You got one”, and that is right. It has been a strange season: some reports say the Rakaia fished better than any time in about the last 10 years - others say they are not so sure. The main consensus is that the season has been better than the previous one but not that great. I guess time and spawning counts will let us know.

However your committee has been working hard for the fishery. Two committee members in particular have gone far beyond what you would expect:

Paul Hodgson has led our Rangitata appeal and organised and got together all the appellants, organised and obtained science we needed and enabled us to commission the sedimentation study that was necessary to prove what anglers and others could see was happening to the river. It is dying from the major irrigation takes down to the river mouth. Professor James Brasington and his crew have undertaken the 3D imaging required to prove our appeal.

The study has come at significant cost, especially to Paul, in the time and funds spent on your behalf to save the River. Thank you Paul for your dedication and tenacity.

The study cost is \$35,000 for the first 12 km of 3D imaging and another \$25,000 to 3D the 45 km of the River to the mouth. NZ Salmon Anglers Association has provided \$18,000 of this cost. Is it worth it? Yes. The study is such that it can be adapted for use in any river in the country.

We applied to the Environmental Law Assistance Fund for support in our Environment Court appeal and they have granted us their maximum funding of \$50,000 and said, in part, “that what we are doing is of national importance”.

There will have been three mediations now (the last one 22-23 May) and we consider that we have made some good gains. At the time of writing this report, we cannot go into details as the court requires confidentiality until they release their decision.

The other committee member who has gone “beyond the call of duty” is Mike Ager who every day on his way to work calls in to Peacock Springs and makes sure the gravity races which hold trout and salmon for Take a Kid Fishing are clear of debris and the water is flowing freely. He does the same thing on the way home after completing his 12-hour work shift and on his days off cleans the raceways and makes sure the feeders etc have food and are working. Thank you Mike, you are doing a great job.

Other Committee members: Colin Eaton, organising ova planting and finclipping; Russell Mackay on up-land alevinators; Tony Humphreys our ‘TEMP’ Secretary/Treasurer in the absence of anyone being available for election at the last AGM; Pam Ellis our Patron and newsletter editor, and all other committee members. Thank you, it is a pleasure working together in fighting for our fishery as there seems to be so much against lately but we will win.

Other stuff the committee has been involved with over the year includes writing to Environment Canterbury on Rakaia River concerns. This has resulted in two good meetings with ECan staff with another one due in finding solutions. There is also ongoing communication with ECan on Waimakariri River flow recording and water-take restrictions.

Ova planting last year included 30,000 ova at Hacketts Creek, One Tree Swamp and Kiwi Stream. There was an 80+% hatch rate and 12 redds from Hacketts Creek returns.

Representations to the Christchurch City Council around poisoning weeds at the Groynes resulted in a stop and change of chemical which allowed Take a Kid Fishing to go ahead as planned.

Fin-clipping this season saw 265,000 fish clipped of which 25,000 were rainbow and brown trout. 114 volunteers on 7 days provided 987 hours of volunteer time. There were first-timers on each day which was good to see.

Our Waimakariri Salmon Fishing Competition had 173 entries this year, up from 133 the year before. What was interesting was that only 30 entries were from NZSAA members so the competition is gaining favour with the wider community. There was also an increased number of junior entries which is encouraging.

We have also put in submissions to the biennial Fish Regulation review held on 15 May. Finally I presented NZSAA’s submission to the Select Committee on the Conservation (Indigenous Fresh Water Fish) Bill and was given 15 minutes. They stopped me at 14 minutes as they might have wanted to ask questions. There was only one.

The year ahead is, to say the least, going to be interesting with a lot of proposed changes around our salmon fishing. We have been informed there will be no ova planting after this year. Fin-clipping also looks like it might be on hold for several years if the draft on changes to hatchery raising of brood stock are accepted. We have questions on some of the restrictions proposed mainly around the need for accurate spawning counts that will be needed to implement the restrictions. We all need to active on these things as some of the information being used is based on overseas activities where there are large commercial fisheries that distort the figures and system, whereas we in this country have basically what could be called a boutique salmon fishery that has different outcomes.

So thank you for being part of NZSAA. We value your membership and need your ongoing support to protect our rivers and our fishery for our children, grandchildren and the country.

**Larry Burke**

**President**

## **ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW DUE**

NZSAA member subscriptions for the current year that commenced on 1 April 2019 are now due (no increase from last year).

<b>Adult membership</b>	<b>\$25</b>
<b>Family membership</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b>Junior membership (under 18 years)</b>	<b>\$10</b>

Formal accounts will be sent out but it will greatly assist the Treasurer if payment can now 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.)
- or
- To the Treasurer at the AGM on 28 May 2019

**Thank you for your continued support of NZSAA**

## **NZSAA monogrammed lapel badges and headwear available for purchase at the AGM**

*Caps, Bucket Hats and Beanies - \$20 each*

*Lapel Badges - \$15 each*

**MINUTES OF THE 45th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF  
NEW ZEALAND SALMON ANGLERS' ASSOCIATION (INC)**

**Held at the Canterbury Softball Headquarters, Pages Road, Christchurch  
Tuesday 15 May 2018 at 7.30pm**

**PRESENT**

Approximately 40 members and invitees were present at the meeting, chaired by the President, Tony Humphreys.

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from: Peter Ellmers, Norm & Cathy Symons, Steve Terry, Alan Waters, Dianne Eaton, John Cumberpatch, & John Taylor

These apologies were accepted on a motion from Mike Ager and seconded by Russell Mackay.

**REMEMBRANCE**

The meeting stood in silence in remembrance of a member who had died during the year: Martin Burke, Doug Roy, S Fisher, Kerry O'Neill, Paul Worley, George Tepania (2015 NZSAA Waimak Competition winner).

**MINUTES**

The Minutes of the 44th Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Salmon Anglers' Association (Incorporated) held on 23 May 2017, as circulated to members, were approved and adopted as a correct record on the motion of Dave Leigh and seconded by Mike Ager. Carried.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Tony Humphreys moved that the President's Report for the year ended 31 March 2018 as circulated to members be adopted. This was seconded by Paul Hodgson. Carried.

Tony asked those present to agree with the two NZSAA policies on page 11. This was moved by Paul Hodges; seconded by Greg Terras. Carried.

**FINANCIAL AND AUDITOR'S REPORT**

Trevor Hayes said the NZSAA is very well off especially due to two legacies of \$5,000 each.

It was moved by Trevor Hayes, that the audited Financial Report, and Accounts & Balance Sheet for the year ended 31 March 2018 be received. Seconded by Peter Morgan. Carried. Tony extended a vote of thanks to Trevor for once again undertaking the audit.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

### **Officers and Committee:**

The following were nominated and duly declared elected:

		Moved / Seconded
<b>Patron</b>	Pam Ellis	T Humphreys / K Belcher
<b>President</b>	Larry Burke	D Leigh / M Ager
<b>Vice President</b>	Colin Eaton	W Mackie / D Long
<b>Committee</b>	Phil Ball	W Mackie / S McNeill
	Dave Leigh	P Ellis / M Ager
	Dennis Long	S McNeill / R Mackay
	Kevin Belcher	D Long/ C Eaton
	Mike Ager	K Belcher / C Eaton
	Greg Terras	P Hodgson / M Ager
	John Hodgson	D Long / M Ager
	Russell Mackay	G Terras / D Leigh
	Paul Hodgson	D Hodgson / D Leigh
	Neil McLean	C Eaton / M Ager
<b>Honorary Auditor</b>	Trevor Hayes	M Ager / P Hodgson

**Immediate Past President** Tony Humphreys

**Secretary / Treasurer** No nominations – Heather said she will carry on until someone else is found but definitely finishing the end of September 2018.

## **SPEAKERS**

### **Kevin Belcher**

NZSAA Committee Member

Kevin spoke of the alevin hatches in the high country. Fish & Game supplied the ova for these which were planted at One Tree Swamp and at a Porters tributary. Fish are spawning around local Christchurch streams.

Claxby Irrigation Scheme: There is no flow at the fish by-pass at the 1.8 metre wide fish screen as it is blocked by sticks etc. Those from Fish & Game at the meeting said that F&G are going to talk to ECan about this fish screen and others.

ECan is going to do Pilot Monitoring at 60 streams in the next couple of months. There is going to have to be a review of consents and guidelines. The Compliance Team is getting equipment. They want fish screens fixed in 18 months. There are 880 surface water takes at the moment. The onus should be on the owner of fish screens to be meeting guidelines.

Unfortunately due to power issues the power-point video was unable to be shown. Kevin said that Fish & Game are working on our behalf and if anyone sees an issue to let Fish & Game know. Paul Hodgson said there is an app you can get on your phone (Snap Send Solve) where you can take a photo, it will show on GPS where you are – you have to let your name known.

#### **Steve McNeill**

Member of NZSAA since 2002 and Fish & Game 2006–2015  
Frequent writer to The Press

Steve has put in a submission regarding the Rangitata. He has done several submissions over the years and likes to give his own opinions. He is not happy that farmers have not done their stock tracking – hence the spread of mycoplasma bovis virus in cattle.

A lot has changed in salmon fishing. In 1973 smolt releases started at Silverstream. The 1985 Acclimatisation Society Annual Report states 2849 salmon heads were handed in from tagged fish. Reports on spawning were from the Poulter, Grassmere Stream, Cora Lynn, Slovens Creek, Spring Creek, Turkey Flat, Bealey roadside stream, Low Farm Creek, Cass Hill Stream and One Tree Swamp. Conclusions for the Fisheries section of the 1985 report were: managing a fishery takes considerable time and expense; fish habitat issues; swamps and wetlands in the headwaters being drained; irrigation demands; pollution; Lake Ellesmere pollution (all sound rather familiar).

Steve said it was important we carry on with issues regarding irrigation, nitrates, ova planting etc. Most of us pay \$200-\$300 to ECan each year via our rates and he asks ‘are we getting value for money?’

#### **NZSAA FISHING COMPETITION**

This is open to all financial NZSAA members.

##### **Aquarius Trophy – Heaviest Salmon Overall**

Colin Eaton with a 5.01kg salmon caught on 14 March 2018 at McIntosh's, Waimakariri.

##### **Cromb & Merritt / Fisherman's Loft Trophy – Heaviest Salmon Waimakariri**

Not awarded this year.

##### **Alty Roscoe Memorial Trophy – Heaviest Salmon Rakaia**

Not awarded this year

##### **Lucky draw for remainder of entries**

None done as Colin was the only entrant this year

#### **ATHOL PRICE PLAQUE**

This is awarded for outstanding service to the salmon sports fishery.

##### **Heather Saunders**

Heather has been the Secretary & Treasurer for the NZ Salmon Anglers Assn since 2009.

Upon presenting her with this award, Colin Eaton mentioned that although Heather didn't fish, she had a strong family background in salmon fishing and also two of her uncles, Alf Long, was on the committee for a number of years, and Dennis Long, is still a committee member.

Heather replied that she had enjoyed her time on the committee and had learnt a lot about the fisheries. She thanked committee members for the flowers, wine and gift card and said that she admired the passion and work that the committee does on behalf of salmon anglers.

#### **BARRY CRAIG EARTHQUAKE MEMORIAL TROPHY**

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

This year's winner is Percy Whyte. Percy lives in Kumara and is unable to be here tonight. He is a passionate salmon angler fishing often in the Waimak, Rakaia & Rangitata Rivers. His family, including his parents and grandparents have all been keen anglers. Percy made and carved this greenstone trophy and donated it to the NZ Salmon Anglers Association to be awarded to the winner of our yearly Waimakariri Salmon Competition. The trophy will stay with the Association, with the winner's name being added each year.

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

Larry Burke said that in the Kaiapoi River, nitrates are getting pretty high and wonders if this is putting salmon off returning. He has concerns about spawning areas and irrigation. We generate a lot of economic activity out there and he says the Ngai Tahu see salmon as important now, which is beneficial to the fishery. Kevin Belcher said that there had been a vast amount of weed & sediment in the last couple of years. It has been worked on recently and is looking good but was concerned that it could be back in another six months.

#### **Acknowledgements and Close of Meeting**

Grateful thanks were made to the following sponsors of raffle prizes:

Ballinger's Hunting & Fishing

Amazing Baits

Fisherman's Loft

Wondercast

NZ Salmon Anglers Assn

Tony thanked all members and guests for their attendance and encouraged members to check out our website and that any new stories or photos would be appreciated.

The meeting closed at 10.10pm and was followed by supper served by Adrienne Dougherty and her daughter, and the drawing of raffles.

## NZSAA SALMON FISHING CONTEST WAIMAKARIRI RIVER 2019

This year's competition was held on Saturday 23 March in fine weather with excellent river conditions. Entries were up on the previous year, with a total of 173, comprising 135 adults and 38 juniors. Disappointingly only three salmon were caught. Again this year no salmon were caught by the juniors, but they had a lot of fun with the plentiful kahawai in the river.

**The winner was Tino Penei shown here with his 5.01kg salmon caught at McIntosh's.**



**Tino was also snapped with the Percy Whyte greenstone trophy and Jeremy and Simon from our Hunting & Fishing sponsors.**

In second place was **Mark Harris** with a 1.84kg salmon caught at Kainga.

Third place was **Rob Preston** with a 1.56kg salmon caught at Dunns Bank. Two "catches" for the day, Rob also won the \$100 Early Bird Draw sponsored by Coverit.

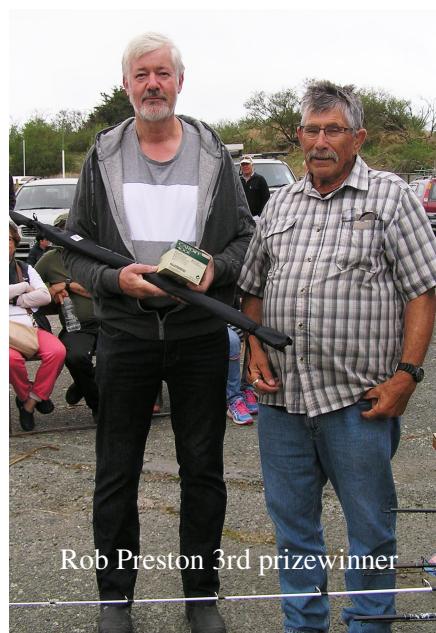
For the majority of entrants who didn't catch a salmon, there was opportunity after the close of the competition to lament their fishless day over a beer and sausage sizzle but also the opportunity to pick up one of the numerous lucky draw prizes.

### **Junior Prizes - Largest Other Species**

1st Corey Beecroft  
2nd Tanne Jones  
3rd Harper Robinson

2.45kg Kahawai  
2.05kg Kahawai  
0.61kg Kahawai

Caught at Kainga  
Caught at Kainga  
Caught at Dunns Bank





**Master of Ceremonies,  
Kevin Belcher**



**“Nothing much doing around here.....”**

We thank Hunting & Fishing for their major support of the competition again this year with an outstanding array of angling equipment prizes.

We also acknowledge the support of the following organisations: Complete Angler, Fisherman's Loft, Anglers Warehouse, Kairaki Beach Camp, Kaiapoi Alignment & Tyres, Industrial Radiators, Hamills North Canterbury, Pinnacle & Co, Amazing Baits Belfast Engraving Shoe & Key, Repco, Caltex Hornby, Coverit (Woods & Moulin).S

Please support these businesses when you are buying goods and services. They generously support our angling interests and they will appreciate your custom in return.

## **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

## Otago Harbour Salmon Fishing Competition

From Peter Coory, Otago Branch NZSAA

The 2019 event was held over the weekend 9-10 March. There were 195 entries of which 30 were juniors. This year the competition was opened to kahawai and kingfish to create a bit more interest as the salmon fishery had been a bit slow. Fishing was limited to the Otago Harbour area and 6 salmon and 1 kahawai were caught over the weekend.

Prizewinners were:

Salmon	1st	Lofi	5.780kg
	2nd	Lofi	4.740kg
	3rd	Lance Moore	4.685kg
	4th	Nick Love	4.590kg
	5th	Dave Taylor	1.690kg
	6th	Cara Luxmoore	1.260kg
Kahawai		Jason Gillam	2.175kg



Photo right: The winning salmon family

## Fin Clipping

By Colin Eaton, NZSAA Vice President

This season's effort for fin clipping at Montrose was as follows:

27 October 2018	7 volunteers	10,000 brown trout
31 October 2018	13 volunteers	15,000 rainbow trout
8 December 2018	23 volunteers	40,000 smolt/fry
9 December 2018	14 volunteers	30,000 smolt/fry
6 April 2019	26 volunteers	70,000 smolt/fry
7 April 2019	30 volunteers	75,000 smolt/fry
14 April 2019	28 volunteers	25,000 smolt/fry

In summary, there were 141 personnel involved even though many were the same individual people, at 7 hours each = 987 hours of volunteer work. Further, the numbers can add up to 24.6 weeks' work at a 40-hour week - just on six months' effort. We fin clipped 10,000 brown trout, 15,000 rainbow trout and 240,000 smolt/fry. Not a bad effort for a season.

I thank everyone who participated - it is much appreciated. May some of you catch the returning adults in three years' time

## Save the Rangitata River Appeal

*The iconic Rangitata River is dying: we need your help.  
The River is giving its all -  
We need to ask when is enough enough?  
How much water should a river give before we say no more?  
Please help fund the fight to keep water in this river.*

Bit by bit our river is disappearing down irrigation takes, a new 10 cumec take has been consented and we, along with other groups, are appealing this new irrigation take in the Environment Court.

Yet the Rangitata's outstanding values are supposed to be protected by a Water Conservation Order. Since the Conservation Order came into effect an additional 20 cumecs has been consented for abstraction from the river, and this proposed new take adds a further 10 cumecs, bringing the combined potential instantaneous take to about 65 cumecs a second from the river at flows of 142 cumecs. That's just a little shy of 50% and there is nothing to stop the next person from coming along and applying for the next 10 cumecs and so on... Currently there is no upper limit on the volume that can be taken.

Observations indicate sediment build-ups in the lower river, disappearing birds, fish and invertebrates point to a changing environment. A lack of any hard supporting data has seen our group commission its own sediment study to provide evidence for the appeal.

**To fund the appeal, we need 1000+ people to give \$100 - but any amount you can afford will be greatly appreciated.**

Every \$\$ will help, please give as much as you can afford. The funds will be held in the Future Rivers Trust will be used to support the appeal process as it continues, to produce evidence, and ultimately protect the outstanding values of the Rangitata River.

A Give-a-Little page has been set up by Future Rivers to receive donations. To make a donation use the link to

**<https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/help-us-in-the-fight-to-save-the-rangitata-river>**

Alternatively you can make a donation directly to :

NZ Salmon Anglers Association at Westpac account 03 0802 0099970 00; or  
South Canterbury Salmon Anglers Association at Westpac account 03-0887-0244494-00  
(If you use the banking method please use the reference RDR Appeal and your name.)

Thank you, on behalf of the Appeal Group



<http://www.futurerivers.co.nz/>

New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association <http://www.nzsalmonanglers.co.nz>

South Canterbury Salmon Anglers <http://www.scsalmonanglers.co.nz>

## **Summary of what has been happening**

The group comprising spokesperson Paul Hodgson, the NZ Salmon Anglers Association, South Canterbury Salmon Anglers Association and Future Rivers is appealing a 10 cumec water take from the Rangitata River. Based on the history of failures to monitor river changes and continued consent applications, we believe that the deed and intent of the Water Conservation Order decision in 2002 and subsequent WCO in 2006 have not been honoured, nor have the required land plan changes to deal with additional water abstraction detailed in the final decision. Since the Order was signed a further 30 cumecs has been granted, bringing the total able to be taken out of the River to 63 cumecs when flows are at 140 cumecs. And this is what is happening - it's filling up with silt.

The appeal has one more mediation session, then we will need to make a decision on whether to continue the appeal or not. The feeling of the group is that if we had the money then we would do it!

A good start is that the Government ELA fund has granted \$50,000, saying:

1. The case raises issues of national regional significance as this impacts New Zealand's most iconic braided river systems, which has cultural, recreational and environmental values.
2. The case raises Part 2 matters of the Resource Management Act 1991.
3. The Panel consider there to be imbalance of expert evidence if not presented.
4. The Panel noted the group is committed and shows a promising degree of collaboration.

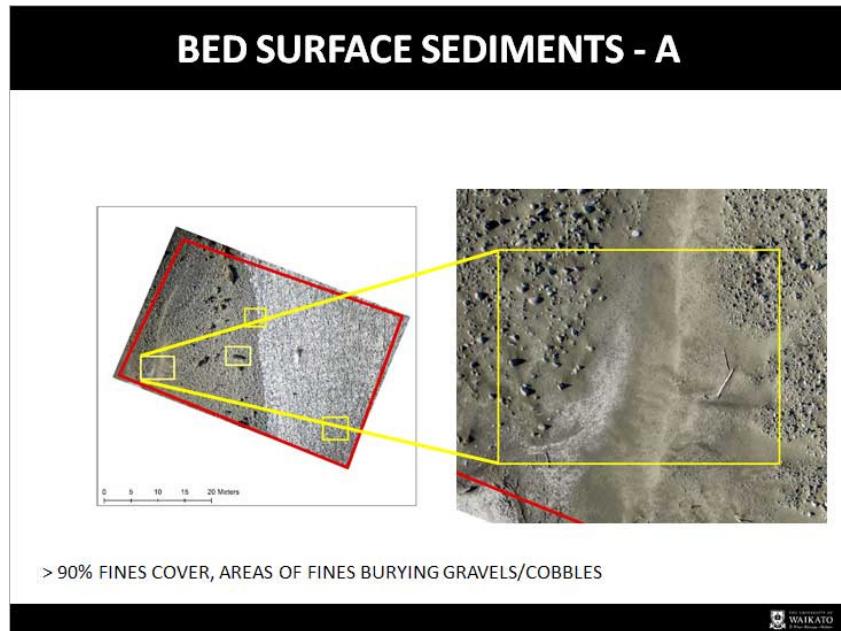
The lower river is silting up badly - which impacts on the fishing and the ecology of the river, and that's what happens when you take so much water out. Unfortunately there's been no monitoring so there is no science to back this up.

Since no one else that could or should be doing the monitoring has fronted up, the Salmon Anglers group has arranged a monitoring program with the expertise of Professor James Brasington from the Waikato University and his state of art Lidar scanner. This is an intensive recording of the lower river below the irrigation takes.. It will give precise data that can be used in many different ways to model changes in the sediment and geomorphology of the river. The sediment study is vitally important as without it there will be no evidence to fight this or subsequent water take applications.

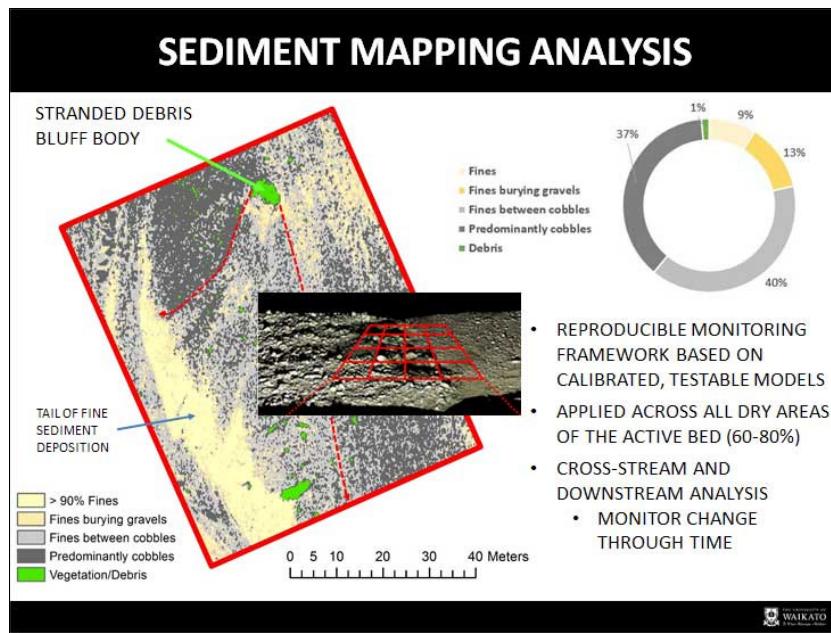
Compared to the old methods of physically surveying individual reaches in a riverbed that is very complex and regularly changing, as these braided river do, James can record in incredible detail the many aspects that make up the structure of the braided features and map very accurately the sediment depositions in the river. It provides a vastly superior amount of data that can then be analysed in many different ways to accurately show how the river structure may or may not be changing over time.

And it's not just about salmon: the brown trout fishery has also declined, the indigenous birds are disappearing, as are the indigenous fish - the whole ecosystem is changing.

If you care about rivers, please help and let's send a message to all that we have had enough.



An image of sediments in the Rangitata River



The Lidar analysis of the same area can provide incredible detail

## **Indigenous Fish Bill - Amendment to Conservation Act**

### **NZSAA submission to the Select Committee:**

New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association (NZSAA) are submitting to this Bill as we have several concerns about some of the clauses in it relating to sports fishing and the lack of consultation with Fish and Game and fresh water anglers. We are also concerned at the eroding of Fish and Game's statutory management of the sports fishery and the eroding of over 100,000 freshwater licence holders democratic rights to set regulations around sports fishing through the elected Fish and Game councils.

NZSAA also have some reservations on the Department of Conservation to be able to manage it any better if the evidence of how low land waterways and our main rivers in Canterbury have deteriorated in the last 18 years. The decline since the sacking of the democratically elected Environment Canterbury Council in 2010 is self evident. NZSAA have since 2010 have had meetings with the appointed commissioners on issues around the deterioration of Canterbury water ways and come away feeling that they were "just scratching an itch", meanwhile we saw very little DOC presence on waterways issues.

NZSAA agree that amendments are needed to protect indigenous fish. NZSAA don't agree and ask you to remove clauses 5, 6 and 17 as these are adequately looked after by Fish and Game.

By leaving clauses 5,6 and 17 in the Bill the country runs the possibility of losing thousands of volunteer hours by freshwater anglers in looking after rivers. NZSAA often pay for environmental work on waterways and fighting for the protection of rivers out of their own pockets. For example NZSAA conservatively put in 6000 hours a year and have been involved in the WCO's for the Rakaia and Rangitata Rivers.

NZSAA have helped and put some finance into:

- Fencing, weed extraction and clearing of wetlands and spring fed streams of main rivers.
- Fish salvaging which always includes any indigenous fish.
- Appeal against the RDR recent granted consents on the Rangitata River. We along with other groups are leading the challenge of these consents at the cost of thousands of dollars of the combined groups' reserves.
- Challenged Environment Canterbury about concerns on the Rakaia River. Both these rivers, in our and a lot of anglers opinion, are slowly dying in spite of having a Water Conservation Order on them.

In our opinion if clauses 5, 6 and 17 are left in this Bill it will have the potential to cause loss of many thousands of hours of volunteer environmental work in our rivers, streams and lakes from the 100,000+ freshwater licence holders that showed in total there were 1,274,000 days fishing in freshwater lakes and rivers. (*NIWA Angler Usage New Zealand Lake and Rivers Fisheries- Results 2014/15 Angling Survey July 2016*)

Clause 17 with its potential to open up commercialisation of trout will also impact on the many millions of dollars freshwater angling generates around the country especially in regional areas.

NZSAA urges the select committee, while passing this Bill to protect indigenous fish, that they remove Clauses 5, 6 and 17 to allow Fish and Game and freshwater licensed anglers to carry on with the work they are doing with the knowledge that the organisation and anglers have. As well as the passion for their pastime they also have a passion for the environment and our indigenous fish and will continue to do their best to preserve it for future generations.

Some of the volunteer work NZSAA is involved in currently: Our main one is in the Environment Court as we have appealed consents granted to RDR Irrigation on a new water take and the flushing of sediment and their fish screen. We along with other organisations and individuals submitted against the granting of these consents but though acknowledge were not considered as we had no scientific evidence, only years of observing the deterioration of the lower river that it is dying.

We decided to appeal and one of our committee members called a meeting of all the appellants - NZSAA, South Canterbury Salmon Anglers, Living Rivers Trust, Forest and Bird and several other individual appellants. We then sorted out where or what we could do to prove our evidence. We decided to commission a study by Professor James Brasington of Waikato University to use Lidar imaging to produce a 3D image of the river for the 12 km below the irrigation intakes. This was done earlier this year and preliminary results show we are right.

Meantime we have been in mediation in the Environment Court on the other granted consents which has resulted in some being withdrawn and others where we will work with RDR to find the best solution. This has come at a cost so far of \$35,000 with another \$25,000 approved this month to 3D image the 45 km to the mouth of the river. This has been paid for by the 3 main organisations and others.

We now have only one consent left and that is the water take. We have mediation on that 2 days in May. If there is no solution we will go to the full Court which our lawyers have informed us carries a \$150,000 price tag. We have applied to the Environmental Legal Assistance Fund and have been granted \$50,000 towards the cost. One of the comments from the ELA is that what we are doing is of national importance. We are raising the rest if needed through a Give-a-Little page that The Living Rivers Trust has set up. It must be noted that this also has the effect of protecting and promoting the protection of indigenous fish as well as salmon and trout.

NZSAA are also working with Environment Canterbury staff on concerns we have for the Rakaia River. We have in the past helped fund fencing of high country spring creeks and the removal of unwanted plants there as well. One of the major concerns we have on all our rivers which NZSAA is working on are fish screens. None of them work. There are 1,500 in Canterbury. Some water take consents, though requiring them, says nothing about actually putting them in the water. These have a major effect on native fish survival as well as salmon and trout.

The removing of trout and salmon from Fish & Game, as in Clause 5 and 6, could have a major impact on the amount of volunteer work on rivers, streams and lakes that fresh water anglers do in fighting for and protecting our waterways for our children and grandchildren. That is why we are asking that Fish & Game retain governance of salmon and trout. At times it seems that there is very little coming from DOC on Canterbury rivers and what is happening to them. NIWA came down when they were informed of the 3D imaging and reevaluated to areas of the river they had done prior to the Water Conservation Order becoming law in 2006.

DOC want to protect indigenous fish but they appear to be going about it the wrong way. Habitat restoration is what is needed. We have a very good example of that in Canterbury but cannot get DOC interested. Since the earthquakes some ground around our rivers has sunk up to a metre, especially around the Waimakariri and the Avon and the Heathcote. The upshot of that is that a lot of wetlands have appeared or reappeared. This has caused a massive explosion of indigenous fish and, in spite of some large catches in recent years, keep growing in size. We see indigenous fish moving up the river all season, and at this time of the year the adults coming down to spawn in the newly created wetlands, native plants and bird numbers have reappeared and increased.

Finally we also want to see the removal of clause 17 as that appears to give an opening to trout farming which, going by overseas examples, is at best marginal and would have the effect of putting in danger the estimated 500 million to 1 billion dollars of economic activity that freshwater angling generates each year.

**Larry Burke**  
**President, NZ Salmon Anglers Association**



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

Email: [info@fishermansloft.co.nz](mailto:info@fishermansloft.co.nz)  
Website: [www.fishermansloft.co.nz](http://www.fishermansloft.co.nz)

## **Winning the Waimakariri trifecta**

**Rex N. Gibson**

On a week day in March this year I made one of my pilgrimages to the Waimakariri mouth area, salmon rod in hand, to try my chuck and chance technique across the sandy watery abyss that is the river mouth. As usual I went for the narrowest part; still too far to cast across, and flicked out the Z spinner.

It was a “usual” day at the mouth. There was the regular assemblage of retirees escaping their chores (and their wives constant reminders), shift workers, farmers and other workers with flexible hours, etc.

Some become conversational zombies in this environment. A few act like they would run away if you spoke to them, many fish and chat with a “select” group of old mates and others, like butterflies, flit up and down the line of 40 – 100 fishers that frequent the hallowed sands of Kairaki, espousing their views on the state of the fishery, the weather, EQC, ECan, DOC, our politicians, and whether the fishing is better on the South Side; in that order.

I fished for an hour and, with a new sensibility I have developed this year, took a break. A small cuppa from the thermos, and a biscuit, replenished the blood sugar and I sauntered back to “my spot”. It is important not to be seen to be too eager I was told as a beginner by an old sage. A few casts later there was a tug on the line. It did not fight too hard so I wound in what I thought was a herring or something similar. It was however a pied shag.

The unfortunate bird had seen the Z spinner underwater and attacked the lure. It was hooked through the lower bill. Once ashore I covered its eyes with a handkerchief. Its agitation stopped and it stood there docile as a schoolboy of yesteryear waiting for the cane. The hook came out smoothly, I removed the handkerchief and the shag just stood there for about 20 seconds; eyeing me up. Then it shook its head and wandered off. I am not sure if he was thinking “I’ll remember you”, or silently saying “thank you”.

Every season several shags get pulled ashore. This is mostly because they got tangled with a lure being cast across their flight path. A colony roosts on the spit adjoining nearby Brooklands lagoon. The river mouth lies in their flight path. This hook-up of mine is the first time I personally have heard of an underwater take. The last time I pulled one in was on February 14<sup>th</sup> several years ago. It earned me a “most unusual catch” award. Keeping a straight face reading a citation, about getting a shag on Valentine’s Day, takes some decorum control.

As the tide recedes, so does the narrowest section of the mouth area. So shortly after that I moved downstream to a gap between two anglers. Part way into my first retrieve there was a solid resistance and I struck – a couple of times, just to be sure of the hook-up. The late angling guru, John Morton, always promoted striking three times; once for him, once for “the wife” and once for the mother-in-law. I was never sure why the latter was included.

My new fishing “neighbours” thought that I had just arrived and were impressed with me hooking a salmon first cast. It was not of course. After a moderate struggle I steered a 14lb gleaming silver salmon onto the bank. I had seen two others caught that day; one by a bait fisherman which our intrepid ranger, Brian Smart, immediately ordered to be returned, and once by a person without a licence. Thank goodness for the rangers. In the river mouth area such individuals can claim they were only fishing for kahawai; which he did. Nevertheless the salmon went back. Mine, fortunately, went home with me.

I sauntered back to the edge in the style of nonchalant successful salmon fisherman and continued my chatting and casting. My third hook-up of the day produced an exciting battle with a good sized kahawai. (**The Waimakariri trifecta! – a shag, salmon and kahawai.**) I have not kept one for about a year so it was bled and provided two meals that week.



The fishery is so depleted that perhaps I should feel guilty about taking the salmon. It was a wild fish and not a hatchery release but, after no salmon last season, the temptation was too great. (*I generally avoid temptation unless I can't resist it: Mae West*)

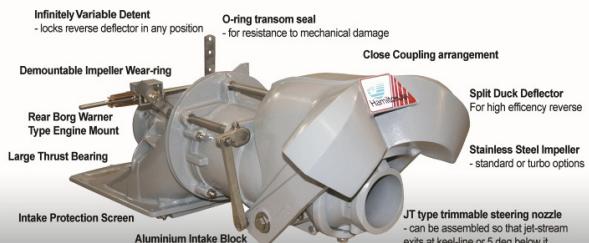
At the time of writing both Central South Island and North Canterbury Fish and Game Councils are treating the salmon fishery as one in crisis. As a “regular salmon angler” I accept that remediation will involve some regulations that will not be universally popular. Restriction or extinction is the choice. The number of spawning pairs in Canterbury last season, as shown by redds, was below the internationally recognised number for an endangered species!

Flooding the waterways with fertilized ova, or fingerlings, from commercial salmon farms has not, and will not work. There is a ton of scientific data from North America to show this. Changing land use in the spawning areas, water abstraction volumes, grossly inadequate fish screens at off-takes, a regional council that has been AWOL on water abstraction compliance issues, and changes in the east coast marine environment are all conspiring against salmon angling.

A regular Waimakariri Mouth angler advised me that my fish was the last one caught on the north side for two weeks; such a contrast to past years. Salmon were caught in the Kaiapoi River (on pilchards) and upstream in the main river, but the crisis is obvious to those of us who, collectively, have millennia of experience fishing from the Kairaki (north) side.

The newly elected North Canterbury Fish & Game Council has made salmon recovery their number one priority. I say “bring it on”, even if it means some regulation restrictions.

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## **Waimakariri's Paradise Lost**

**By Rex N. Gibson**

As the world, well the rich nations anyway, stages protests about the warming effect of carbon dioxide emissions, the issue of human activity actively poisoning the planet fades a little from the news media spotlight. Much of that poisoning is unfortunately terminal, and other examples will take generations to fix. Ask any Kiwi angler and you will get a dozen examples of "Paradise Lost". The 17<sup>th</sup> Century writer of the epic "Paradise Lost", John Milton, would have a field day in Aotearoa with our lost (freshwater) paradise. He was concerned about mankind being cast of of the Garden of Eden. For most of us that garden existed when we had swimmable waterways.

After the Mackenzie hydro canals, the most fished waterway in New Zealand is the Lower Waimakariri River system. Most of its catchment is overseen by the Waimakariri District Council in collaboration with the regional council (Environment Canterbury, or ECan). This council probably leads the way with poisonings of its own waterways. Chemical warfare on the environment is rife in both the Waimakariri and adjacent Selwyn districts.

Local environmental warrior (& worrier) is Mike Bate. He lives there and constantly raises the issues resulting from the deliberate environmental ravaging that results from his district council's "chemical war on pests". In this case it is not 1080 but glyphosate, diquat, and other herbicides that they are painting the catchment with. Both the elected councillors and senior council staff have seen Mike's professional video and power point presentations which dramatically show the effects of their actions on local waterways. The effects on fish and other life have been equally dramatic.

He quotes examples, with supporting photos and videos:

The Halswell River; devoid of all water plants from above Tai Tapu down to Lake Ellesmere/Waihora

Five kilometres of the lower Styx River, once healthy, now has almost no plants, bullies, trout or eels.

Large areas of the Cam River have lost almost all of their insect life

Numerous other drains and tributaries of the Kaiapoi and Cam, and thus the Waimakariri, rivers are either ecologically dead or are clouded by algal blooms. The evidence is both colourful and dramatic.

All of his very visual evidence has been presented to the councils. Mike is unaware of a single positive response to these concerns.

It appears that the councillors and their staff either do not understand the environmental consequences of their actions, or favour some other unspoken priority. The mighty dollar of industry comes to mind, or perhaps it is a perception that plant free areas "look tidy". Whatever it is, it is ecologically disastrous for the waterways and the recreational values that most New Zealanders share.

The runoff from such spraying kills the entire plant biome; and thus the whole food chain dies. The rotting plant and animal material depletes the oxygen in the water and soon the only life forms able to survive are the blooming algae (excuse the pun).

Milton stated “*do they only stand by ignorance, is that their happy state, the proof of their obedience and their faith?*” (4.518-520). It is “obedience and faith” based on the need to poison anything that is deemed “untidy”.

Spawning streams, and thus “paradise lost”.

The classic expression is “It is not rocket science”; glyphosate, diquat, etc., will wash into the stream with the first shower of rain with long-term consequences. The Cam River is interesting. Part of the river is fine, allowing for recolonization of the poisoned areas by the fauna and flora over a few years, but even they have had dramatic drops in observed galaxiids, shrimps, and other aquatic invertebrates. As New Zealand’s Radway-Allen famously showed the world of science all those years ago, aquatic invertebrates make up 90%+ of a trout’s diet. The regions sea-run trout population has almost died; coincidence or connection?

The district’s waterways are sporting a growing number of dead eels. Over 20 in one count on one waterway; but that is another story of local council incompetence. The dead eels lie alongside the carcasses of hundreds of dead waterfowl. Botulism “fermented” in the local sewage ponds is the cause. When viewing Mike’s data and visual evidence one easily gets the impression that this district suffers from environmental blindness.

Industry and commerce too often dominate the mind-sets and operations of local government. Concepts of “Well-being”, as defined in the local Bodies Act” are subject only to peripheral consideration. Many of us, like Mike Bate, feel that poisoned environments take something very important away from our well-being. The boosting of unsustainable commercial priorities because “it is good for the economy” is not an excuse for destroying the environment for future generations.

As Milton said in Paradise Lost: “*Was she thy God, lovely to attract, thy love not thy subjection*” (10.145, 152-3). She (Eve) in such cases is the mighty dollar. The clear interpretation to classical scholars is that councils are choosing to make this choice and “casting out” environmental concerns.

A final quote from Milton surely describes this council’s approach to “chemical warfare”; *Greedily she engorged without restraint, and knew not eating death.* (9.791-2)

*Footnote:* Rex N. Gibson is an ecologist with a deep personal interest in healthy rivers and outdoor recreation. He is a freshwater spokesperson for the N.Z, Federation of Freshwater Anglers.

## Blast from the Past

*NZSAA President's Annual report: Salmon Angler magazine June 1978*

**Big Salmon:** *The season 1977/78 will be known as the season of big salmon. From newspaper reports throughout New Zealand one would have thought that limit bags of monster fish were being caught every day. There has been a steady run of salmon since November, but none of the daily big runs of days gone by, just some every day. The rivers have been clear over a good period until April when they were mostly dirty.*

*Ray French landed a 21.1kg (46.5 lb) salmon in the lagoon at Rakaia and is having it mounted and made available to our Association for display purposes. Ross Lightfoot caught a 19.5kg (45 lb) salmon in the surf at the Ashburton mouth. Peter Osbourne landed a 13.6kg (34 lb) from the Waimakariri, but there were some bigger ones taken too. Neville Hanson of Oamaru landed a 21kg (46 lb) from the Waitaki. The biggest salmon recorded was a 65 lb specimen taken from the Maryburn Stream in the Mackenzie Country about 50 years ago. (1920's?).*

*This year has seen some big ones taken from the Rangitata too. The big salmon were 4 year olds but 3 year olds were larger than usual, the 12.05kg (27 lb) I landed was a 3 year old.*

*The thought is that there was an abundance of feed available and this could be borne out by the fact that there was some large krill was being washed up, it was 3 to 4 times larger than other years. Another interesting point is that I caught a 9 kg (20 lb) salmon in the lagoon at Waimakariri and it still had a number of krill in its stomach – I haven't had this happen before, even with salmon taken in the surf.*

*Our efforts with stream improvement over the last 4 years is certainly well worthwhile and we can take credit for increasing the run in the Waimakariri. This is a very important part of our programme. As mentioned in earlier reports, we have carried out work in 1977 on the Percival Stream, with two visits to Grassmere Stream and it is encouraging to see the spawning increase in One Tree Swamp and Bullock Track Creek. The increased run of adult salmon is certainly due in no small way to our work since 1974. We will be moving into other areas during 1978.*

## McIntosh's 2018/2019 salmon landed count

Colin Eaton reports that with the best intention of accuracy and the help of others, especially Neil McLean, the number of salmon landed at McIntosh's area this 2018/2019 season was better than last year but way short of a good year.

Dec 2018 = 4 fish landed, 2 were finned clipped.

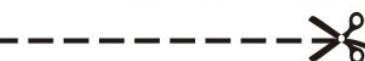
Jan 2019 = 4 fish landed, nil were finned clipped.

Feb 2019 = 24 fish were landed, 5 were finned clipped

Mar 2019 = 44 fish were landed, 5 were finned clipped.

April 2019 = 2 fish were landed, 1 was finned clipped.

The total for this year was 78 fish landed and 13 were finned clipped. given a 16.66% (17)% of fish caught were hatchery released fish.



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