

Volunteer Salmon Hatchery

Newsletter No 51.

March 2026.

The year is rapidly moving on. We are waiting for our Salmon to show up. With the river running very high and visibility being mostly unfishable because of the high flows. The last week was a classic, with the river flow fluctuating between 350- 650 daily for 5 cycles. It appears to have stabilised but for how long. ?

We must acknowledge our members and interested parties who have made donations since the last newsletter. They were Chris Main, Johnny Halverson, Brian Weller. Sincerest thanks to you all.

We must acknowledge our corporate sponsors who are actively supporting our Organisation. They are in no particular order;- Meridian power up Waitaki community fund; Waitaki Irrigators collective, Morven Glenavy Ikawai irrigation company. Oceania Dairy Ltd, and Mt Cook Alpine Salmon.

We are still processing firewood for sale but the last two southerly blasts have made a severe dent in our wood supply. The main problem we are facing is obtaining logs at a realistic price. Does anyone know of a supply of logs that may be available, for us to process.

We are still collecting old batteries to convert into fish food. Thanks to those that have dropped batteries into the collection pile. It is steadily growing.

There has been some developments at our welcome stream site. We have obtained three sheep to keep the grass down on site.

Our volunteers at Welcome stream, Mike, Baden, Ross and Peter have altered the water intake . This was so that the water is first delivered to tank number two and the settles then moves to tank number one, where it again can settle allowing the silt etc to sink to the bottom.

A filter tap has been inserted into the main delivery pipe, which is about 35cm above the floor of the tank, into the incubation shed to eliminate silt travelling down the pipe-way and into the shed. This is decanted on each site visit.

Each water tank has had a drain tap installed to their bases, allowing the tanks to be completely cleaned from the inside and removing any silt that has accumulated in the tank during the operation stage of the incubator shed.

This effort will reduce the problems with siltation of the incubation trays.

The salmon smolt being raised at Welcome stream , have gained sufficient size for transportation to Bells Pond. This is going to occur on Friday the 27th of March commencing at 1pm.

We have about 2,500 smolt to shift. We are going to fin clip them as we are loading them into the fish transporter. These fish will make up some of our future brood stock at bells pond and some will be released at a latter date into the Waitaki river for their journey to the sea.

If you can help out at welcome stream with the fin clip and transportation your help would be appreciated.

Our Web site has been updated and modified slightly. The newsletters are displayed on the web site and the draft minutes of our committee meetings are also displayed for members information, and for those interested parties who log into our site.

The web site is www.waitakiriparian.co

The brood stock at Bells Pond is thriving. Some of the stock in the raceway will be about 30lb in weight and five years old.

Because of the lack of salmon returning to the river in all areas of the east coast fisheries, CSI Fish and game is progressing a project to preserve the wild salmon milt.

This will be done by cryogenically freezing the milt and storing it for the future, thus saving the salmon genetics for the future. Our salmon brood stock have now become “Gold” to Fish and Game in an effort to save the species. It is believed that the freezing of the milt and correct storage will keep the milt viable for up to 15-18 years. It is intended to preserve the milt every spawning year.

Fish and Game are hoping that the preserving of the male milt may take place this year in June. Outside experts will be engaged to ensure that the correct procedures, in the collecting of the milt and freezing, and storage take place.

In April we need to purchase 1.2 tons of fish food for our stock. As you are aware this is a major cost. This will cost us \$7,500 odd dollars for this order.

The AGM for our organisation is going to be held on Tuesday the 31st March 2026. It has been advertised in the Waimate Trader and on our web site.(the first person to contact the secretary by phone on seeing this wins a bottle of wine)

The meeting commences at 7.30pm at the Glenavy Hall.

Supper is supplied and a gold coin donation is sought to defray expenses. (As with our constitution a quorum of 15 persons is required for the meeting to go ahead.) Please don't leave this important meeting to “ Someone else”.

An update for the salmon. Rumour has it a salmon was caught in the Waitaki. There have only been two salmon return to the McKinnon creek hatchery to date. This is very poor for this time of the year.

There have been several caught in the Rakia river. None in the fishing competition, and information received , was that the fish are small and very thin. Not good news.

There have been two known salmon caught in the Waimakariri river again small and in poor condition.

If you thought that last seasons run was bad, this years run appears, at this time, to be worse.

The sockeye salmon run in the Mackenzie country appears to be the largest run of sockeye salmon recorded. Final analysis will be released by CSI Fish and Game in due course.

This newsletter is sponsored by **Oamaru Sports and Outdoors**. Please when purchasing your sporting requirements please visit Richard and his team.

