

# Volunteer Salmon Hatchery Newsletter.

## Edition 42, December 2022.

Welcome to our 42<sup>nd</sup> Edition of our news letter. Christmas is just around the corner, and we wish you all a safe and enjoyable Christmas season.

As is usual practice we must acknowledge our Major sponsors, which are recorded in no particular order. These are ; Morven Glenavy Ikawai Irrigation Company, Meridian Energy Community Fund, Waitaki Irrigators collective, Oceania/Yilli Dairy Ltd, Mt Cook Alpine Salmon, Youthtown, Pub Charity, Otago community Trust and the Waimate district council community trust. Without these organisations assisting us with sponsorship we would be unable to proceed as we have over the years.

We must also acknowledge our members who have contributed with donations to our organisation. The following members have made donations since the last newsletter. They are , Chris Main , Graeme Bennett, and Harry Janda, We are truly greatfull.

A reminder to all members, We are still collecting old batteries as a fund raising conduit. Please help us by donating all your old batteries to our organisation. If you can please speak with your friends and acquaintences over the christmas period to try and obtain other batteries for our organisation. If you cannot deliver the batteries at our collection point in Glenavy please contact a committee member who can arrange for the battery (s) to be uplifted.

We are looking for volunteers to also assist with the general duties at bells Pond. This is a relatively simple task and if a pair of volunteers team up together and offer their services for a period of one month, checking and restocking the fish feeders, mowing the lawn and vacuuming out the raceway. This can be done at anytime during the day, and would only be required once a year. A few more helpers in this field would greatly assist those already doing the volunteer work. Firewood is still our staple fund raising. We have plenty available but please dont leave it until winter to get it. It is \$80 per Cubic meter or \$280 for a 3.75M3 trailer load. A small donation is requested for delivery.

Now a very big thank you and acknowledgement for the team of volunteers who looked after the incubation shed from reciept of eggs until transportation of the smolt from the shed to the Raceways.

This was a very time consuming job over the winter months. It was also very heart breaking work removing literally thousands of dead eggs from the incubators. This was due to the unavailability of Hydrogenperoxide because of Covid. Hydrogenperoxide is a dangerous chemical and can only be used on a perscription, and also must be covered by a resource consent to use. The distribution of this chemical is servrely restricted. We started with 240,000 eggs and 60-70,000 hatched. The heart break and disappointment to the volunteers was palpable. Further heart break was soon to follow, when approximately 13,000 smolt died from one stainless steel trough, and then a further 12,000 died in another stainless steel trough.

The volunteer group stuck to their efforts and finally 10,000 smolt where transferred into the blue raceway at Welcome stream and about 15,000 smolt where transferred to the new raceway at Bells pond. A bacterial or Virus issue was discounted by Ministry of Primary Industries scientists. It was decided to transfer the smolt. These smolt where slightly smaller that in past years because of this. It is estimated that about 1500 smolt escaped to the Waitaki river from Bells pond by swimming through the fish screens. About the same amount escaped into the main raceway, and are resident amongst the rising three year olds pen and the rising two year old pen and the vacant pen. These

will ultimately be our rising 1 year old brook stock.

About three weeks after the smolt were transported to Bells Pond the fish started dying in increasing daily numbers. All the usual suspects were checked and finally attention shifted to the fish food that they had been introduced to. It appears that the fish food had gone off and as a result close to 8,000 smolt had died. The deaths have now declined as a result of the food being removed from their diet and replaced by a different and fresh batch. Again Ministry of Primary Industries scientists have been involved in a viral and bacterial study but no evidence of either has been identified.



The photo (right) shows the new purpose fish transporter. This is loaded onto a trailer and it can hold 1000 litres of water. Very efficient fish mover. The photo (left) shows some of the team at Haka with fish and game staff.

A team of volunteers, 6, assisted three fish and Game staff members, in going to the Hakataramea river. To trap, by electric fishing, some salmon smolt for raising as brood stock, thus keeping the genetic variations fresh. The team met at the Haka river bridge at 10am and were kept busy till 2pm. Fish and Game managed to obtain 48 smolt from the Haka and these were transported to our incubation shed at Welcome stream. These have all survived the ordeal, of electric fishing and then transportation. They will be fin clipped, to signify that they are wild stock and then placed with our rising 1 year old brood stock in Bells Pond.

We have had our own solar panel installed for the operation of our security camera.

Here is a lesson on what doing a good turn for someone, results in. During our last reasonable sized fresh in the Waitaki, the MGI irrigation intake was washed out in the 1500m<sup>3</sup> flood. This resulted in very minimal water intake for our Bells Pond raceway and the brood stock, and no water for the irrigation company. Water was re-diverted to the intake race using two bulldozers and a digger, and the debris dam on the Weir was cleared of logs and debris.

The contractor decided to do us a good turn and went to remove the debris in the holding pond above our water intake, not realising that our intake was buried in gravel and then approx 400mm of mud and debris. He unfortunately dug up our pipe by mistake. And our raceway was inundated in mud and debris. Fortunately some quick work by MGI and the contractor, and an emergency water set up, by volunteers resulted in the water intake and fish screen being re-established within 24hrs, with no losses to our brood stock, just a very muddy raceway. A very big thank you to the staff of the Morven Glenavy Ikawai Irrigation Company for saving the day. It could have gone so, so wrong.

**Final word. Salmon** have been reported seen in the mouth, (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December), although none have been known to be caught. Till next year, Tight Lines and Merry Christmas from your Committee.

