

If it is found that salmon are spawning there, it would be possible next season to net the Upukuroro and Whitestone Rivers, and secure as many eggs as possible for the purpose of stocking suitable rivers in other parts of the Dominion. The Department's hatchery at Te Anau is in good order, and will be available for incubating the eggs collected.

QUINNAT SALMON.

The run of quinnat salmon last season (1921) was the largest on record up to that time, and this season there has been a decided increase on last year's run in the Waitaki and other rivers on the east coast as far north as the Waiau (North Canterbury).

The Department is indebted to Constable Berry, at Glenavy, for keeping a careful lookout on the lower reaches of the Waitaki, and recording the dates of the runs of salmon from the commencement to the end of the season; and I attach a report from him, for publication with this report, which gives interesting information with regard to the first appearance of salmon this season, on the 5th January, to the last run, which came in on the 9th June.

He reports that the catch of salmon by anglers this season has been disappointing. This, he says, is accounted for by the state of the river, which was in fresh and discoloured condition from the 1st January to the end of April. The best catches were made in the Rangitata, and some very fine fish were also taken by anglers in the Rakaia, and some good fish were taken from the Waimakariri, Hurunui, and Waiau.

The results obtained in stocking the Hokitika River on the west coast with salmon have not been as successful as could be wished. I think, however, that the work should be persevered with for another season at least. The work of stocking the Molyneux River has been attended with satisfactory results. A good run of fish went up the Clutha branch during the last two seasons, and from reports this season it would seem that there is a good run of large fish in tributaries of Wanaka Lake at the present time. So far none have been seen in the Kawarau branch. This season arrangements have been made with the Lakes District Acclimatization Society to hatch out a quantity of eggs at its new hatchery at Queenstown, and liberate the fish in tributaries of Lake Wakatipu and the Kawarau.

Satisfactory results have been obtained in stocking the Wairau, in Marlborough. Reports have come to hand that specimens have been seen and caught in the Wairau, and during the last summer specimens have been taken in the Lower Wairarapa Lake and in the Rangitikei River. The fact that these salmon have now spread through and across Cook Strait is an interesting development in the Department's salmon work, and is undoubtedly the result of stocking the Wairau River on the south side of the strait with these fish. The hundreds of thousands of young salmon which have been liberated in the Wairau since 1917 would, when they reached the sea in Cloudy Bay, spread along the coastal waters east and west. Those which travelled eastward would find abundance of feed in the strong ocean current which sets northward of Cape Campbell, and which strikes into Palliser Bay, and the fish would find their way into the brackish water of the lake which empties into the bay. Those which travelled west and northward would meet strong tidal currents in the strait, and would be liable to be carried through and past the entrance to the Sounds, and across to the northern coast off the mouths of the Manawatu, Rangitikei, and Wanganui Rivers. It would thus seem that, by systematically continuing the liberation of young salmon in the Wairau, it may be possible to stock suitable rivers flowing into the north side of the strait as well.

As already stated, this season's run has been decidedly the largest we have experienced not only in the Waitaki, but also in all the rivers as far north as the Waiau (North Canterbury).

The quantity of eggs collected exceeds last year's take by over two hundred thousand. River conditions were unfavourable at the commencement of the netting in the Dobson and Ahuriri Rivers; the first pound nets put in were washed out by floods. The Hakataramea River, which a few years ago was our mainstay for getting eggs from, was again very low all through the season, and on that account the run of spawning salmon was disappointing. Four rivers were netted—viz., the Hakataramea, Otematata, Ahuriri, and Dobson.

Some very fine specimens of salmon were handled this season; while the average weight was about 18 lb., yet quite a number running from 30 lb. to 40 lb were taken, and several went from 45 lb. to over 50 lb.

The total number of eggs collected is 1,510,000, and the number of fish handled at all the collecting-stations was about 920. The total allocation of the eggs collected this season has been approved: Tasmanian Government, 100,000; Kawarau River (Queenstown), 150,000; Upper Clutha (Pembroke), 200,000; Wairau (Marlborough), 600,000; Hokitika, 400,000; the balance to be hatched out at the Hakataramea Hatchery.

These salmon are now so solidly established in New Zealand waters that the time has come when large quantities should be put on the market, and I would recommend that next season fishermen should be encouraged to catch them for market, and also that the Department should either hire a suitable vessel or use its ketch "Te Waipounamu" to prospect for schools of salmon off the north Otago and Canterbury coasts, and, by using the proper trolling-gear, demonstrate to fishermen how salmon are caught off the Pacific coast of Canada and America in the sea for market. I am convinced that once fishermen find out how the schools of salmon travel along the coastal waters at certain seasons they will be able to catch them in large quantities.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS OF COLLECTORS OF CUSTOMS AND INSPECTORS OF FISHERIES.

The following is a summary of the information contained in the annual reports supplied by the Collectors of Customs and Inspectors of Fisheries at the various fishing-ports:—

Whangaroa.—Fish of all kinds can be caught in abundance off this coast. The greatest drawback to the industry at Whangaroa is that the fishermen cannot get an outside market for their fish, most of which is sold locally, with the exception of crayfish, which is shipped to Auckland.