

The Department has decided to commence the systematic stocking of the Wanganui River. The erection of a hatchery is to be put in hand at once, and the eggs collected at Te Anau will be sent there and hatched out, and the young fish when ready will be liberated in the upper tributaries of that river.

There is no doubt but that the successful stocking of the Wairau and its tributaries with the "king of sport fish" will mean a great increase in the yearly number of visitors and tourists to Te Anau and Manapouri Lakes. The combination of salmon-fishing with the magnificent scenery of this region should in a short time make it the most-favoured resort in the Dominion for tourists.

In the same way stocking the Wanganui will undoubtedly mean a great increase in the number of visitors and tourists to the Tongariro National Park and district.

QUINNAT SALMON.

The quinnat salmon continue to increase steadily and rapidly. The run this season (1922-23) shows a very large increase on the previous year, which was the largest on record up to that time.

The first run came in to the Waitaki early in January, but, on account of the river being high and dirty, none were caught by anglers until well on in February. The largest runs came up from about the end of February to the end of April.

The snow-fed rivers along the coast from the Waitaki north to the Waiau (North Canterbury) were in good fishing-condition during most of that period, and anglers had splendid sport. The largest catches were made in the Rangitata and Rakaia Rivers, but on all the rivers anglers speak enthusiastically of the sport they have had. I append with this copies of reports which have been received from Constable Berry (of Glenavy), Inspector Main (of Temuka), Mr. Pigott (of Timaru), and Mr. Hope (of Christchurch). These reports give very interesting information regarding the run of salmon this season and the splendid sport which they had afforded to the large number of anglers who have fished for them in the different rivers.

Recognizing that these salmon were sufficiently plentiful to allow them to be taken for market, the Department made it legal for sea fishermen to take them for market at sea, with the exception of the close season from the 1st May to the 30th September.

It was also made legal for anglers holding a trout license to catch salmon in rivers, and, if they wished, to sell their catch. The Department also hired a vessel for a week to do some experimental "trolling" off the North Otago and Canterbury coast. The weather proved unfavourable, and no salmon were caught. Very few were taken by the sea fishermen during the autumn, but a good many of the men are sanguine of getting them in quantities during the early summer months.

A number of anglers took advantage of the regulations permitting them to sell their catches, and New Zealand salmon were sold in the market and shops of Christchurch, Timaru, and Dunedin for the first time. The wholesale price in Christchurch varied from 10d. to 1s. 4d. per pound, and the retail price averaged about 1s. 6d. for fresh and 2s. for smoked salmon.

These salmon now run up the rivers on the Otago and Canterbury coast in large numbers in the late summer and autumn months, and where it is possible quantities should be taken for market. This matter will receive attention before next fishing season.

The Dobson, Ahuriri, Hakataramea, and Otamatata Rivers were netted last spawning season. A total of 1,510,000 eggs were collected, and these were allotted as follows, viz.: The Wairau River, Marlborough, 600,000; Hokitika River, West Coast, 400,000; Upper Clutha, 200,000; Queenstown, 150,000; Tasmanian Government, 100,000; and the balance was hatched out at the Hakataramea hatchery.

The following is a summary of the information supplied by Collectors of Customs and Inspectors of Fisheries in their reports for the year:—

Whangaroa.—The principal market fish were plentiful throughout the year, and fishermen found a ready market for their catches both locally and at Auckland.

Mangonui.—Fishing locally is carried on only in a small way, but fish have been plentiful on all the fishing-grounds.

Hokianga.—On the fishing-grounds inside the Heads the usual market fish have been plentiful, and good catches made during the year, all the fish caught being sold locally.

Russell.—During the year market fish were plentiful on all the fishing-grounds, and fishermen found a ready market for their catches locally, and in the inland townships and also at the Auckland market. As a rule, satisfactory prices were obtained by fishermen for their catches, flounders and mullet bringing from 2s. 6d. to 3s. a dozen, snapper 4s. to 5s., and crayfish from 10s. to 12s. a dozen. The mullet-canning factory at Porerua has operated throughout the year, and the output both for quantity and quality has in every way been satisfactory. The number of whales killed at the Whangamumu whaling-station was considerably below the average of the last five seasons. The oyster-beds at Bay of Islands continue in a healthy condition. Last season 3,430 sacks were picked for market. Of these, 309 sacks were sold locally, and the balance was forwarded to the Government oyster-depot at Auckland. With the annual-increasing demand for oysters it is necessary that oyster-cultivation work should be continued year by year. During the summer months over three miles of rock walls were built in suitable bays in the Kerikeri. On the walls built the previous year there has been a good "fixing" of oyster-spat, and the result of the work done will in a few years give a substantial increase in the quantity of oysters from the Bay of Islands. The oyster-cultivation work which has been carried on at Whangaroa since 1917 is now showing very satisfactory results, and with strict protection these beds will in a few years yield a considerable quantity of oysters of the best quality for market.

Whangarei.—There has been a considerable decrease in the number of fishing-boats employed during the year. Fish have been plentiful on all the fishing-grounds, both inside the harbour and on the outside fishing-grounds as well, and the quantity of fish caught in proportion to the number