

QISES 2017 FISH COUNTS

Fall salmon returns are counted at each of the streams listed below, once per week for the entire run, usually totalling 6 weeks or more. By doing this annually we get comparative statistics which enable us and the DFO scientists to evaluate the health of the salmon populations and the entire system. Chum and coho returns in fall of 2017 were much lower than 2016 numbers. In all cases except Village Bay Creek, numbers were also lower than average for the previous few years.

Open Bay Creek count - 1879 chum, coho n/o (none observed)

Granite Bay Creek - 129 chum, 2 coho

Drew Creek - 15 chum, coho n/o

Village Bay Creek and fence – 1460 chum, 153 coho, 236 jacks

Hyacinthe Creek – 2208 chum, coho n/o

Klunis Creek (Heriot Bay) – chum n/o

After a very dry summer and early fall, substantial rain arrived later than usual, not beginning until October 14, while chum and coho waited at the mouths of the streams. In addition, the rains were not heavy enough to allow the salmon to get upstream as far as in 2016.

There were two unexplainable phenomena: a plague of leeches on the chum salmon at the mouth of Hyacinthe Creek, and the increased number of jacks in Village Bay Creek. Jacks are precocious two-year-old coho which have shown up a year early to spawn. The small black leeches on Hyacinthe Creek chum only, could have been due to the fish having to wait an inordinate amount of time in the warm waters of the shallow estuary, creating ideal conditions for the leech explosion. Leeches are a natural occurrence and usually latch on to spawned out salmon, but in this case they were attacking pre-spawn adults in very large numbers. This can have a detrimental effect on the health of the salmon.

The upper reaches of Granite, Open Bay and Drew Creeks involve difficult bushwhacking, and October and November weather conditions are often unpleasant to downright nasty. Thank you to the tremendous dedication of the fish counters:

Granite Creek – Carol, Judith, Ted, Vicki and Doug

Hyacinthe Creek – Al and Dale

Open Bay Creek – Doug, Mark, Grant, Stephen, Randy, Rob, Carol Ann and David

Drew Creek – Theresa

Village Bay Creek – Frank and Brenda

Village Bay Lakes fence – Larry, Lauren and Pete

Klunis - Linda

