**Chairpersons Report to Salmon and Riparian Support Trust Inc AGM, 6th July 2023.**

It seems like only yesterday that I was writing up material for my 2022 Annual report, the year has literately gone that quick. The first thing I must mention for my 2023 report is the unwavering support and work put in by our core group of volunteers who go out every week, without fail, to the hatchery and toil away on the myriad of jobs that are required to operate a professional fish hatchery. The continued success of the hatchery would not be possible without this group and also without the weekend teams and working bee helpers. The hatchery has been successful, no doubt about that.

How do you measure success in a hatchery like ours, after all we don’t return a profit to shareholders, we can’t claim a wage rise or shorten our working hours, and we haven’t increased our sales or profits. Success for us is measured in our passion to do something positive for the salmon fishery, and to have a mutual interest, that we as mostly retired folk can achieve something for the good of the community. Another measure is also that some anglers might catch a hatchery reared fish if not one of its wild cousins.

More adult fish returned to McKinnons creek in the last run that the previous 8 years. 200 passed through the trap, the majority being released back into McKinnon’s creek. A comparison of the last 2 years is as follows.

Adult returns. 2022 2023

Males Non clipped 6 18

Males clipped 6 22

Females Non clipped 7 15

Females clipped 18 50

55 fish this year, being approx. 50/50 returnees and Land based broodstock were processed returning approx. 120,000 eggs. Also 25 Land based adults were processed to produce 55,000 eggs to assist the Otago Harbour hatchery get up and running again. So far this year we have fin clipped and released 67,700 rising 1 year old fish with approx. 25,000 left to do.

All in all, a very busy and successful year. There are however a few headwinds on the horizon. The rising cost of fish food is a worry and putting increasing pressure on our limited budget. For example recently 12 bags of 4.5mm food cost us $1650.00 plus freight. 12 bags could last us 8 weeks. Keeping 3 different groups of land based brood stock has exacerbated the situation.

Our hatchery van is literally on its last legs and the committee will have to look at options to replace it somehow. Using our own vehicles continuously across the farm is not an option, and the continuing whispers and anti hatchery sentiment that one hears occasionally is a bit unnerving and not at all productive when we all agree that the salmon fishery is in crisis and positive steps need to be taken.

On another note, we need to sign off the 5 Year Hatchery agreement with Fish and Game as soon as possible and the new Committee will need to prioritise this.

Again, thank you all for your support, the hatchery could simply not operate without it.

Phil deJoux.

Chairperson (SRST)

McKinnons Creek Hatchery Group.