

COQUITLAM RiverWatch

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NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 183



Coquitlam River W-9 by Mallee



Pacific ninebark in E-5 by David



Pond above Archery Pond in W-2 by Ian

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Daily Water Quality Checks *by Jeff*

I checked the river every morning this month. The river was low most mornings but medium or high on November 2-3, 7-9 and 16-20. The river was cloudy or silty when the level was medium or high, and clear when the level was low.

New signage in many areas along the Coquitlam River

Sensitive Salmon Habitat

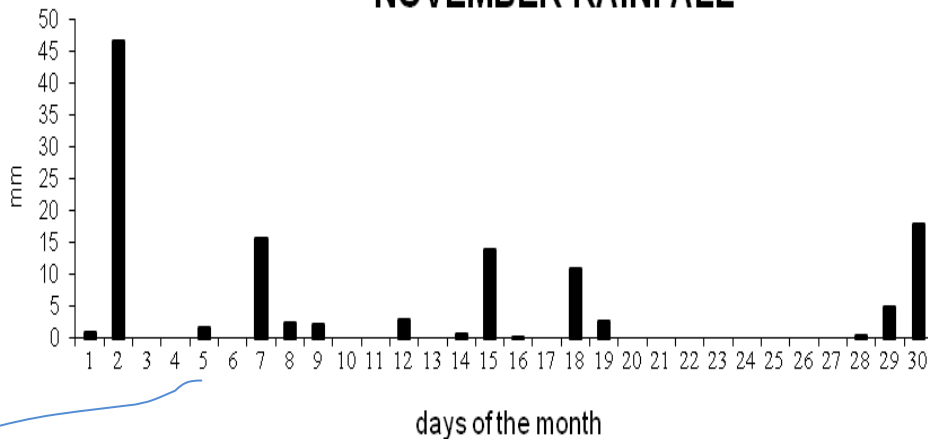
Salmon eggs are now growing in the river gravel. Please protect our salmon by not walking in the river and by keeping dogs out of shallow areas with gravel.

PORT COQUITLAM Above all... Coquitlam

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NOVEMBER RiverWatchers' REPORTS

NOVEMBER RAINFALL



Ian (W-1) Nov. 24

The River was clear and flowing at a normal level. Slade Creek was clear and flowing. There were at least 2 adult salmon in Slade Creek, but it was difficult to see as it was getting late and I was running out of daylight.

Ian (W-2) Nov. 24

There were many film crew trucks parked at UCRP and it looked like they were working in the gravel pit area. The River was clear above and below the gravel operations and it was at a normal level. The water level at the Galette gauge was .650 metres. Falacea (Fulawka) Creek (#4) was clear & flowing. Mantle Creek (#6) was clear and flowing. Partridge Creek was clear and flowing. Marquart Creek was almost clear & flowing well. Goodyear Creek (#11) was clear and flowing. No birds were spotted on this day. There were many spawning salmon in the new salmon enhancement area above the Archery Pond. There were many dead ones as well. I didn't see any salmon in the Archery Pond or in the outlet of the pond as I usually do, but I did see a few dead ones. A lot of vegetation planting has been done at the new enhancement area upstream from the Archery Pond. Some of the plants include hardhack, thimbleberry, cedar trees, and red osier dogwood.

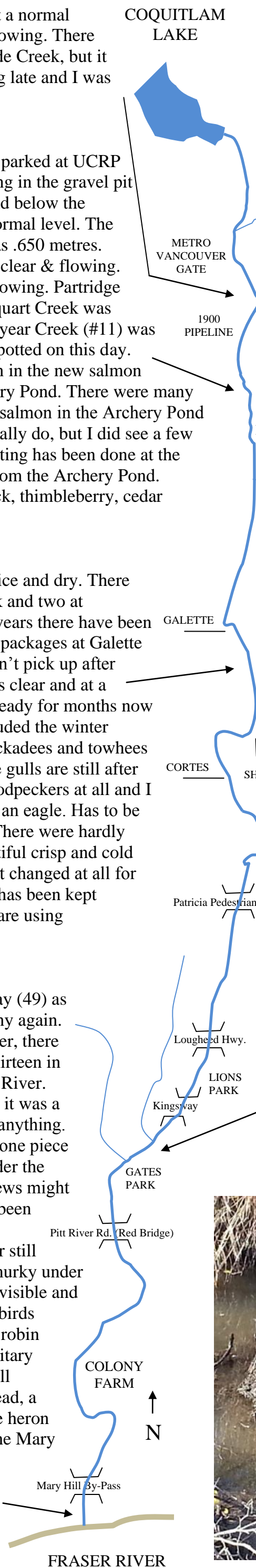
Dave (W-3) Nov. 20

It was a quiet mid-week day, but nice and dry. There were two fishermen at Galette Park and two at McTavish. For the last number of years there have been the wrappings from fishing supply packages at Galette Park left by the riverbank. They can't pick up after themselves it seems. The River was clear and at a normal level. The level has been steady for months now despite the dry weather. Birds included the winter residents like thrushes, juncos, chickadees and towhees are back and in good numbers. The gulls are still after salmon carcasses. No Pileated Woodpeckers at all and I can't remember the last time I saw an eagle. Has to be the Burk Mountain development. There were hardly any squirrels again this year. Beautiful crisp and cold day. The path along the river hasn't changed at all for the last several months. The reach has been kept cleaner by the local residents who are using the parks regularly.

Mallee (W-8 & 9) Nov. 3

There were lots of walkers out today (49) as after a few days of rain, it was sunny again. At the junction with the Fraser River, there were a record number of fishers, thirteen in all, on both sides of the Coquitlam River. However, one of them told me that it was a very slow day as he hadn't caught anything. This was the first time I didn't see one piece of garbage along the trail, even under the Mary Hill Bridge. I'm guessing crews might have cleared it as all the trails had been newly cut back and mowed.

Consequently only a few red clover still flourished. The River was a little murky under the bridge but the bottom was still visible and slow moving. I only spotted a few birds though I heard chickadees. I saw a robin with something in its beak, two solitary ducks in different channels, one gull floating in the river and one overhead, a chickadee danced by, and lastly the heron was still on its pipe (not far from the Mary Hill overpass) as last month as if it hadn't moved since then. I suspect a beaver is busy in one of the side channels.



OR CREEK

Susan (E-4) Nov. 23 **Oxbow Side Channels**

One dog was on leash and nine were off leash. The reach was very clean. The River was clear and at a normal level. Birds included Black-capped Chickadees, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Mallards, Gadwalls, American Wigeons, Common Merganser, Wood Duck, Buffleheads, American Dipper, crows, kingfisher, Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, flicker, Song Sparrow, Anna's Hummingbirds, towhees, and juncos. Birds also seen this month in this reach included Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpeckers, and Bushtits. The side channel streams were chock full of dead salmon, dozens if not hundreds, and the stench was VERY strong in places. The still ponds had lots of ice. My sight of the day was a flock of gadwalls and wigeons flapping up off the pond, probably spooked by my intrusion, and then landing a short distance away on the ice. They were so comical slipping and sliding their way back to open water – a delightful little ice dance.

Susan (E-3) Nov. 23

3 dogs were on leash and 12 were off leash. The River was clear and at a normal level. Birds included Black-capped chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Common Merganser, Glaucous-winged Gulls, American Dipper, Brown Creepers, Bald Eagle, and Mallards. I've never seen so many gulls and Mallards actually on the river. A little group of young brown creepers were climbing up tree trunks. I was surprised that they were so much smaller than adults at this time of year. The smell of dead salmon lingers on, and lots of gulls were scavenging on them in shallow spots with lots of rocks. A fisherman told me that he has been catching and releasing quite a few wild coho, but I didn't see any.

Ian (E-7) Nov. 30

The River was clear and at a normal level. Maple and Scott Creeks appeared clear and flowing. Birds included gulls, Belted Kingfisher, and Mallards. There were a few spawning salmon splashing around in the River. There were many carcasses. The high pressure sewer line right of way, near the Red Bridge, looks like it has been mowed. White snowberries were very visible.

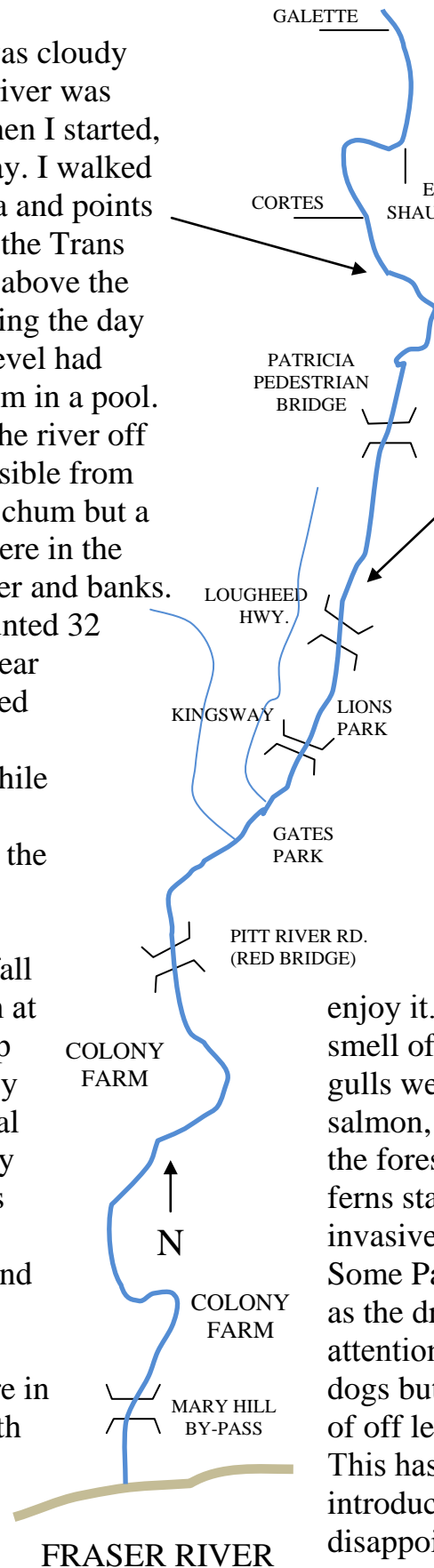


Beaver activity in Colony Farm by Mallee

NOVEMBER RiverWatches' REPORTS

Jeff (W-4) Nov. 9

After rain overnight, the day was cloudy with patches of blue sky. The river was clear and at a medium level when I started, the level dropped during the day. I walked south along the river to Patricia and points beyond before returning along the Trans Canada trail. The side channel above the Gabriola outfall had been flowing the day before but the dropping river level had trapped a spawning pair of chum in a pool. More than 18 salmon were in the river off Cooper beach. Salmon were visible from the Patricia Bridge. I saw only chum but a fisherman claimed that coho were in the river. Carcasses littered the river and banks. At a spot below Dunkirk, I counted 32 carcasses from one position. Near Saltspring 31 carcasses had piled up in a small backwater. Some carcasses were almost fresh, while others were almost completely decomposed. Coho fry were in the Gabriola outfall. Three fry had been stranded when the river dropped, 2 at the Gabriola outfall and 1 below Dunkirk. "Salmon at Work" signs, with "Please keep dogs out of the river" written by hand, had been posted at several locations along the reach. Many gulls, Mallards and mergansers were in the river. Other birds included a crow, a kingfisher and various songbirds. Mushrooms were still plentiful, including a large boletus. Snowberries were in berry. Most trees were bare with many leaves on the ground. The Maple Creek well was running.



David (E-5) Nov. 23

It was quieter than expected for a sunny Saturday afternoon. Dog Off Leash Park was busy with the parking lot almost full. I saw one person fishing at the beach just before you come to the Patricia Walking Bridge. This is just a casual observation but it seems that in general there are more people fishing on the river every year with the largest concentration around downtown and Lions Park. Although there was an increase in types of litter the trail was still fairly clean. The River was clear and at a low level. Not much rain in the last week and cold up higher so the flow seems to be down. Birds included Mallards, Glaucous-winged Gulls, Common Mergansers, and an American Dipper. Nice to see our winter visitor the American Dipper. I'm always amazed at their ability to withstand the cold waters of the river; they almost look like they enjoy it. I couldn't see any salmon but the smell of dead salmon permeated the air. The gulls were enjoying some tasty snacks of salmon, quite a feast. As the leaves fall and the forest goes into hibernation the Sword ferns stand out. Another evergreen plant, the invasive English Ivy also is prominent. Some Pacific Ninebark was clearly visible as the dried seed heads attracted ones attention. I feel like I'm harping on about dogs but it seems that most days the number of off leash dogs outnumbers those on leash. This hasn't changed significantly since the introduction of the Dog Off Leash Park, disappointing.