

COQUITLAM RiverWatch

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NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 184



Photos on this page clockwise from top left
Debris dam E-5 by David
Ice formations W-4 by Jeff
Coho salmon carcass W-4 by Jeff
Salmon skeleton E-7 by Ian
Sensitive salmon habitat sign W-4 by Jeff
Snowy river W-4 by Jeff
Conifers replacing knotweed E-7 by Ian



DECEMBER RiverWatchers' REPORTS

Ian (W-1) Dec. 29

The River was clear and at a normal level. Slade creek was clear and flowing very well. Birds included Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, American Dipper (not dipping), and a gull. When the Bald Eagle flew down the River, it sent the American Dipper into hiding. There were salmon carcasses in Slade Creek above the culvert under Pipeline Road and there were spawning salmon at the mouth of Slade Creek in the Coquitlam River.

Ian (W-2) Dec. 29

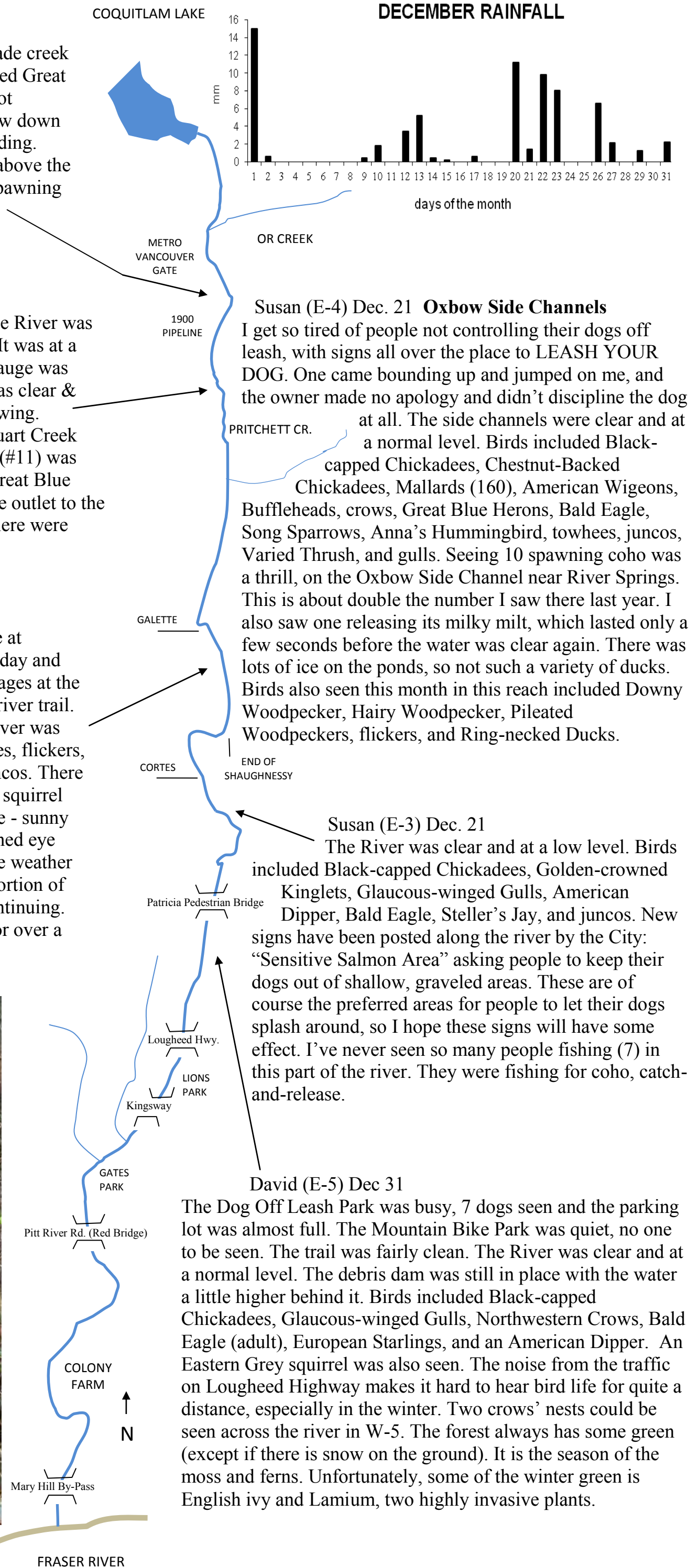
It was getting dark so the area was vacant. The River was clear above and below the gravel operations. It was at a normal level. The water level at the Galette gauge was .700 metres. Falacea (Fulawka) Creek (#4) was clear & flowing. Mantle Creek (#6) was clear and flowing. Partridge Creek was clear and flowing. Marquart Creek was cloudy & flowing well. Goodyear Creek (#11) was silty and flowing. The only bird seen was a Great Blue Heron. There was still spawning salmon in the outlet to the Archery Pond and in the Coquitlam River. There were many carcasses around the Archery Pond.

Dave (W-3) Dec. 5

It was a nice sunny day but quiet. Two people at McTavish Park were sitting and enjoying the day and watching the river. There were cigarette packages at the foot of Hockaday and potato chip bag on the river trail. Otherwise, the reach was pretty clean. The River was running nice and clear. Birds included thrushes, flickers, starlings, crows, two Mallards, and lots of juncos. There was a swarm of Bushtits and an Eastern Grey squirrel was spotted. Another perfect day to be outside - sunny but cool. Not much has changed to my untrained eye along this stretch for several months. Even the weather has been consistently good. A washout of a portion of the debris island behind McTavish Park is continuing. It's a slow process that has been happening for over a year.



Outlet of water from dam debris in E-5 by David



Susan (E-4) Dec. 21 **Oxbow Side Channels**

I get so tired of people not controlling their dogs off leash, with signs all over the place to LEASH YOUR DOG. One came bounding up and jumped on me, and the owner made no apology and didn't discipline the dog at all. The side channels were clear and at a normal level. Birds included Black-capped Chickadees, Chestnut-Backed Chickadees, Mallards (160), American Wigeons, Buffleheads, crows, Great Blue Herons, Bald Eagle, Song Sparrows, Anna's Hummingbird, towhees, juncos, Varied Thrush, and gulls. Seeing 10 spawning coho was a thrill, on the Oxbow Side Channel near River Springs. This is about double the number I saw there last year. I also saw one releasing its milky milt, which lasted only a few seconds before the water was clear again. There was lots of ice on the ponds, so not such a variety of ducks. Birds also seen this month in this reach included Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpeckers, flickers, and Ring-necked Ducks.

Susan (E-3) Dec. 21

The River was clear and at a low level. Birds included Black-capped Chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Glaucous-winged Gulls, American Dipper, Bald Eagle, Steller's Jay, and juncos. New signs have been posted along the river by the City: "Sensitive Salmon Area" asking people to keep their dogs out of shallow, graveled areas. These are of course the preferred areas for people to let their dogs splash around, so I hope these signs will have some effect. I've never seen so many people fishing (7) in this part of the river. They were fishing for coho, catch-and-release.

David (E-5) Dec 31

The Dog Off Leash Park was busy, 7 dogs seen and the parking lot was almost full. The Mountain Bike Park was quiet, no one to be seen. The trail was fairly clean. The River was clear and at a normal level. The debris dam was still in place with the water a little higher behind it. Birds included Black-capped Chickadees, Glaucous-winged Gulls, Northwestern Crows, Bald Eagle (adult), European Starlings, and an American Dipper. An Eastern Grey squirrel was also seen. The noise from the traffic on Loughheed Highway makes it hard to hear bird life for quite a distance, especially in the winter. Two crows' nests could be seen across the river in W-5. The forest always has some green (except if there is snow on the ground). It is the season of the moss and ferns. Unfortunately, some of the winter green is English ivy and Lamium, two highly invasive plants.

DECEMBER RiverWatches' REPORTS

Jeff (W-4) Dec. 1

The river was very high, and silty, as it usually is when at this level. Beaches were almost completely under water. Deciduous trees are now almost leafless which gives clear views through the forest and shows just how narrow the strip of trees is along much of the reach. There were still some mushrooms including some bird's nest fungi complete with spore 'eggs'. A kingfisher was at its regular spot by the Gabriola storm sewer outfall. More than 13 gulls were congregated on the bouldery island above Dunkirk. A dipper was in the River and another in Grist Creek. Mallards and mergansers were seen along the reach. I saw no salmon in the River or in Grist Creek, but did see two coho in Maple Creek at the end of Ozada. Salmon carcasses were decomposing. The Gabriola outfall had foam as it almost always does these days. Other outfalls on the reach were clear. The Maple Creek well was running. Sometime around December 20, the city posted signs at 5 places along the reach reading "Sensitive Salmon Habitat" "Salmon eggs are now growing in the river gravel. Please protect our salmon by keeping dogs out of shallow areas with gravel". On December 24, I saw 14 coho in Grist Creek, the first salmon I have seen in Grist Creek this year.

Daily Water Quality Checks

by Jeff

I checked the river 30 mornings this month. The river was very high December 1 and 23; medium December 2-4, 14-18 and 24-31; and low the remaining days. The river was clear except silty/murky on December 1 and 23 and cloudy December 2, 12 and 24.

Dave (E-6) Dec. 8

Eight dogs seen were on leash. Is this a record? The reach was pretty clean with only a few plastic bags near Lions Park. Perhaps the recent cold weather has reduced the number of walkers. The River was clear and at a normal level. It was flowing fast. I could smell salmon carcasses, but it was being masked by the train exhaust! I didn't see any salmon spawning. There were about a 100 crows on the grass at Lions Park. 20 to 30 Mallards on a quiet area of the River. Chickadees and junco were also seen. There were two groups of gulls near the salmon carcasses. It was quite windy and around 0 Celsius. Not many people were out, but a good day for a brisk walk. Cyclists looked like commuters, not guys looking for cans!

GALETTE
CORTES
END OF SHAUGHNESSY

Patricia Pedestrian Bridge

Lougheed Hwy.

LIONS PARK

Kingsway

GATES PARK

Pitt River Rd. (Red Bridge)

COLONY FARM

Mary Hill By-Pass



FRASER RIVER

Ian (E-7) Dec. 31

The River was clear and at a normal level. Maple and Scott Creeks appeared clear, but there was not much of a flow. Birds included Hooded Merganser, Wood Ducks, Buffleheads, Common Mergansers (all female), Pacific Wren, Mallards, Spotted Towhee, crows, and gulls. It was a very peaceful day to be out by the River.

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