



OUTDOORS

with Alec Merriman

Biologists on board the federal fisheries department tagging vessel the *Naughty Lady* last week estimated there were 100,000 grilse in Saanich Inlet last week.

They tagged 1,000 fish in the Inlet during their week of operations, and then carried on to continue the tagging program in Cowichan Bay and off Qualicum.

Watch out for icing conditions if you plan to fish the Inlet this weekend. If it is cold, better not get up too early. Wait until the skim of early morning ice has disappeared. That skim can badly damage a boat.

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There are still plenty of winter springs from Sooke to Oak Bay and on around to Sidney waters but it has been pretty cold fishing for open sports boats.

Springs are being taken pretty well all over Saanich Inlet and Finlayson Arm.

Cowichan Bay has been good for big grilse.

A late run of big coho is reported from the Qualicum area and they are being taken close to the river mouths.

Lake fishing has dropped off sharply, but river fishing is coming into its peak. This cold weather is dropping the swollen rivers rapidly. If it keeps up they will be too low to fish. Hit the rivers this weekend for good steelheading prospects.

Harris Creek was red hot at the weekend. Upper Cowichan River has been giving good trout fishing and some steelies are reported from lower reaches. Koksilah River is giving up steelies, but some are the dark summer runs. Nanaimo, Englishman, Little Qualicum, Ash, Stamp, China, Little Qualicum are all producing some steelies.

Fishing closure on lower portion of the Sooke River will be lifted at midnight today.

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Victoria-Saanich Inlet Anglers' Association Holiday Contest ends Dec. 21. Top prize in the draw . . . each membership and each salmon more than three pounds gave another ticket on the draw . . . will be a choice of a cartop boat and motor, \$500 cash, or a trip to Hawaii. Winner will be announced at the January-general meeting.

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Pollution, resulting from the mine cave-in at Jordan River, may have almost wiped out this year's coho production in the river. Fisheries department officials expect the loss to be high, but fortunately the Jordan River is not an important coho river. Probably less than 100 coho spawned there this year.

Next year would have been a different story. Unlike most other west coast rivers, Jordan River has a run of pink salmon in the even-numbered years and the spawning of some 1,500 or more pinks could have been threatened.

The Jordan River disaster in its small way points up the need for concern by conservationists over mining in areas like Buttle Lake.

It also points up the dangers of conflicts of interest that will have to be faced Mines and Recreation Minister Kiernan.

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