

(No. 34.)



1880.

T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SALMON COMMISSIONERS :

REPORT FOR 1879.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Moore, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
August 10, 1880.



To His Excellency SIR FRANCIS SMITH, Knight, the Chief Justice of the
Island of Tasmania, and Administrator of the Government thereof.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

The Salmon Commissioners have great pleasure in informing you that since last Report everything has gone on satisfactorily at the Salmon and Trout Breeding Establishment; and the *Salmonidæ*, both migratory and non-migratory, continue to multiply so rapidly that, if their increase be not checked by the occurrence of some such epidemic as that which has recently proved so fatal in certain British rivers, the streams in Tasmania must, in the course of a very few years, be thoroughly stocked.

Most of the streams on the north, south, and east coasts are already fairly stocked with the *Salmo fario*, and others contain the *Salmo trutta*; but, at present, the Derwent and its tributaries are the only rivers in Tasmania in which the true Salmon is believed to be present. The Commissioners will endeavour to remedy this partial distribution of the *Salmo salar* at the earliest opportunity.

For the last four years the Commissioners have had collected from the Spawning Beds in the Plenty certain large Ova, of a pink colour, much resembling those of the *Salmo salar* originally received from England, some of which have been sent to the different Colonies, and some have been placed in several of our own rivers. We think it more than probable that these Ova will prove to be of the *Salmo salar*; but, if any should prove to be *Salmo trutta*, it is satisfactory to know that, in general estimation, these rank as little, if at all, inferior to the former.

Last October, as has been the case about that period for the last five years, Smolts, dressed in their beautiful bright migratory scales, came down the water-race which supplies the Ponds, evidently making their way to the sea. Their numbers, however, on the last occasion were far greater than in any previous year,—in fact they came down in millions; and the rush continued for at least a fortnight. Many of them, notwithstanding the efforts of the Assistant to guide them into the Plenty, found their way into the Ponds; but their restlessness and anxiety to get to sea were such that they always immediately escaped when an opportunity was afforded them. The Trout, on the contrary, which happened to be present, never showed any anxiety to leave the Ponds.

Several captures of Salmon, of from 4 to 7 lbs. in weight, have been made by fishermen with nets; and a fine specimen, upwards of 7 lbs., was taken in Storm Bay, at a locality about twenty miles seaward of the mouth of the parent river, the Derwent. Fish (*Salmonidæ*), as to the exact variety of which various opinions have been entertained, of fully 20 lbs., have been caught with rod and line. In addition to these, a fine specimen of *Salmo ario*, of 28 lbs., was found dead in the Huon River.

Last year the licence fee for rod fishing was reduced from £1 to 10s., and has proved to be a step in the right direction, as it removes the excuse that the fishing licence was too high; and financially it has been a great success, as is proved by the increased number of licences which have been issued.

Number of Licences issued Season 1877-78	138
Ditto 1878-79	139
Ditto 1879-80	312

The total expenditure for the last year is as follows:—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Salaries	91	5	0			
Conservancy of the Derwent	95	13	2			
Clerical Assistance	25	0	0			
Rent of Ponds	40	0	0			
Repairs	28	6	0			
Stores, &c.	17	17	0			
Transport of Ova	8	7	0			
				306	8	2
The receipts:—						
Sale of Ova	90	0	0			
Trout Licences, 1879-80	156	0	0			
				246	0	0
Leaving the actual cost.....				£60	8	2

But, if the value of Ova and young fish produced and distributed be considered, the Ponds are not only self-supporting, but actually a gain to the General Revenue.

The Commissioners still consider it unadvisable to recommend any alteration in the existing restrictions as to netting in the Derwent, not only for the protection of the *Salmonidæ*, but also in the interests of the indigenous fish which come into the bays and shallows above Hobart Town to deposit their Ova,—these undisturbed retreats serving afterwards as a protection for the young fish until they are able to push out into deep water, and protect themselves. It is satisfactory to remark that since the prohibition of seine fishing the supply of fish for the market has been both more abundant and more regular than for many years previously,—an unanswerable argument against throwing open the protected portion of the Derwent.

The Commissioners regret to have to record the death of Mr. John Buckland, who was for many years an active and zealous member of the Commission.

ROB. CAR READ, *Chairman.*
 HENRY BUTLER.
 A. G. WEBSTER.
 THOS. GIBLIN.
 MATTHEW SEAL.
 J. W. AGNEW.
 W. A. B. JAMIESON.
 W. A. B. GELLIBRAND.
 H. WEEDON.

Hobart Town, 4th August, 1880.

RETURN of the Distribution of Ova and Fry from the Breeding Ponds, River Plenty, during 1879.

OVA.	
<i>Brown Trout.</i>	
South Australia	2000
New South Wales	5000
Victoria.....	11,000
FRY.	
<i>Brown Trout.</i>	
South Esk River, near Malahide	500
George's Bay and Gould's Country	900
North-west Coast	900
Sorell	300
Ross	300

PHILIP S. SEAGER, *Secretary to the Commission.*