

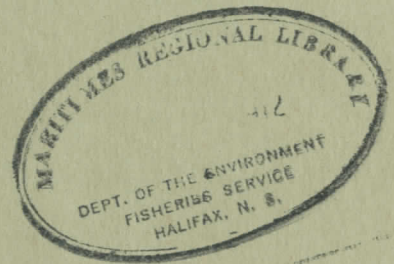


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# RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

## MANUSCRIPT REPORT

**No.** 54-1



Salmon Investigations 1954  
Preliminary Survey of the Rivers  
And Commercial Fishery of Northern  
Labrador  
Part 2

by

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**DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND FORESTRY OF CANADA**  
**HALIFAX, N.S.**

(D)

SALMON INVESTIGATIONS 1954  
PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF THE RIVERS  
AND COMMERCIAL FISHERY OF NORTHERN  
LABRADOR

PART 2

SALMON INVESTIGATIONS 1954  
PRELIMINARY

**SALMON INVESTIGATIONS 1954**

the protection of the salmon fishery should be extended to  
**PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF THE RIVERS**  
this section of the coast.

**AND COMMERCIAL FISHERY OF NORTHERN**

For this **LABRADOR** part of this report, the

North Labrador Coast from White Cockade Ivtol

**PART 2**

Nain Bay, has been divided, into two areas, particular

emphasis being placed on detailed surveys of

Area No. 1. BY extends from White Cockade  
individual rivers.

Island to and including Adlatok Bay. Area No. 2

**G.C. SOLLOWS**

extends from Adlatok Bay North to and including

**J.A. DALZIEL**

Nain Bay.

**G. SMITH**

This **NEPOTEELE** designated by the Sub-

Title, is the final part of a preliminary survey

of the salmon fishery and the rivers of the

Labrador Coast. The expedition this year was

undertaken with the idea of establishing, if

possible, the northern limit of the commercial

salmon run and also to determine whether or not

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the protection P R E V E A C H E could be extended to this section of the coast.

For the purpose of this report, the North Labrador Coast from White Cockade I to Nain Bay, has been divided into two areas. Particular emphasis being placed on detailed surveys of individual rivers. Area No.1 extends from White Cockade Island to and including Adlatok Bay. Area No.2 extends from Adlatok Bay North to and including Nain Bay.

This report, as designated by the Sub-Title, is the final part of a preliminary survey of the salmon fishery and the rivers of the Labrador Coast. The expedition this year was undertaken with the idea of establishing, if possible, the northern limit of the commercial salmon run and also to determine whether or not

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AREA (I)

the protection service should be extended to this section of the coast.

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It is hoped that investigations into

the salmon fishery on the Labrador coast will be continued in the future, etc., with particular emphasis being placed on detailed surveys of individual rivers.

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and ends by August 14th, the peak of the run usually being passed by the end of July. The run of char usually begins with the salmon, continuing on until the first week in September.

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The salmon run usually begins about July 15th and ends by August 14th, the peak of the run usually being passed by the end of July. The run of char usually begins with the salmon, continuing on until the first week in September.

The main AREA (1)

Shell Bird in Byron Bay, north of Red Rock Point, the Big River

Area (1) extends from White Cockade Island to Adlatok Bay. This is primarily a cod fishing district.

Little attempt is made by the local people to exploit the commercial possibilities of either the salmon or

Arctic char in this area. A few fishermen, probably no more than seven or eight in this area, fish full time

for salmon and char. Their catch is marketed in the

pickled state through the local government stores,

bringing \$40.00 a barrel for salmon and \$20.00 for

char. Further development of the salmon or char fishery in this area seems unlikely as there is no way of handling

the fish in the fresh state and the market for the pickled

variety is limited. Fish, cod, salmon and Arctic char

are plentiful in this area.

There are no known falls or obstructions on this river.

The salmon run usually begins about July 15th

and ends by August 14th, the peak of the run usually being

mostly of boulders, rocks, and coarse gravel while in passed by the end of July. The run of char usually begins

the pools and steadies gravel and sand predominate, with the salmon, continuing on until the first week in

September.

The main salmon rivers in the area are the Shell Bird in Byron Bay, north of Red Rock Point, the Big River, at Stag Bay, the Makkovik River, South West Brook, in Kaipokik Bay, the Kaipokok River, the Adlatok River.

The Shell Bird River is roughly 55 miles long and empties into Byron Bay just north of Red Rock Point. This river was surveyed on July 20th, 1954. The river flows through low lying country mostly barrens and scrub spruce. The river is approximately 100 yards wide at the mouth, breaking up into three shallow channels at about three miles, each about 75 feet wide. The first rattle is situated about 1 1/2 miles from the mouth, easily passable at high tide. From this point on, the river breaks up into a series of shallow rattles and deep pools. There are no known falls or obstructions on this river. The river bottom in the rapids is composed mostly of boulders, rocks, and coarse gravel while in the pools and steadies gravel and sand predominate. There was no indication that any type of fishing was or is carried on in or around this river.

The water temperature was 18°C. and the air temperature 22°C. Predators, particularly mergansers, were very abundant, several hundred being observed in the first three miles of the river. Osprey were also present several being seen about the river. Bottom a narrow wooded valley with a range of fairly high hills fauna seemed scarce, consisting of a few May fly nymphs. on the true right bank, with comparatively low lying land on the left. Fish fauna on the other hand were plentiful consisting of salmon, Arctic char, and speckled trout, both sea run and residual. The river breaks up into a series of rapids and deep pools, portaging over rather difficult terrain.

Although obviously supporting a heavy run of salmon, char and trout, the river could not be considered a good angling river, nor could the Bay outside be considered an ideal spot for commercial fishing.

There are no settlements within twenty miles of this river. This river does however fill the bill ideally as a nursery area and if the mergansers were controlled should contribute greatly to the salmon and trout population of the Atlantic.

The Makkovik River was surveyed on July 26th, 1954. There was no indication that any type of fishing was or is carried on in or around this river.

Big River was surveyed on July 23rd, 1954.

The river is approximately 84 miles long and flows into Stag Bay near Porcupine Point. Other hand, was fairly

abundant consisting of salmon, speckled trout, both residual and anadromous, also Arctic char. The first six miles of the river flows through a narrow wooded valley with a range of fairly high hills on the true right bank, with comparatively low lying land on the left. The river is at least 300 yards wide at the mouth narrowing to approximately 100 yards about six miles up where the river breaks up into a series of rapids and deep pools. portaging over rather difficult terrain.

The river bottom is composed of mostly sand, mud, rocks and gravel near the mouth. After six miles, this gives way to rocks and gravel in the riffles, mud rocks, sand and gravel in the pools.

There are no settlements within twenty miles of this river; consequently, little or no fishing is done in the area. The river water was stained brown and turbid. Water temperature was 17°C. and the air temperature was 15°C. P.H. 6.3.

The Makkovik River was surveyed on July 26th, 1954. The river is approximately 110 miles long. Predators were very much in evidence consisting of bay seals and mergansers, both being very abundant in the early fall.

Bottom fauna seemed scarce in the portion of the river surveyed, only a few small May flies being observed. Fish fauna, on the other hand, was fairly abundant consisting of salmon, speckled trout, both residual and anadromous, also Arctic char.

The angling possibilities of this river seem fairly good from the first rapid (about six miles up) onward. It is possible to ascend beyond the first rapid with a light canoe. This would, however, entail a good deal of portaging over rather difficult terrain.

Insofar as we were able to ascertain, there are no large falls or major obstructions on the river.

There are no settlements within twenty miles of this river; consequently, little or no fishing is done in this area. A few people occasionally come down from Makkovik to hunt bay seals.

The Makkovik River was surveyed on July 26th, 1954. The river is approximately fifteen miles long and flows into the bottom of Makkovik Bay.

As in the case of Big River, the angling possibilities on this river seem good after reaching the a well timbered valley with high hills rising along both rapids. However, since there are no falls or major obstructions to hold the salmon up, it would be necessary to be on the river during the peak of the run in order to have any luck. Travel beyond the first rapid by canoe, although possible, is extremely difficult.

The river bottom is composed of sand and mud for the first two miles. Beyond this it gives way to gravel, rocks and boulders in the pools; boulders, rocks and coarse gravel in the rapids. The water in the river was light brown and clear. Water temperature was 17°C., the air temperature being 19°C. and the P.H. was 6.5.

Predators were observed in small numbers consisting mostly of bay seals and a few mergansers.

Bottom fauna seemed scarce, a few May flies and stone flies being observed. Fish fauna was abundant, however, salmon, grilse, and parr being plentiful. Speckled trout were also numerous. According to local trappers at Makkovik, large numbers of salmon are observed in the rivers in the early fall.

As in the case of Big River, the angling possibilities on this river seem good after reaching the rapids. However, since there are no falls or major obstructions to hold the salmon up, it would be necessary to be on the river during the peak of the run in order to have any luck. Travel beyond the first rapid by canoe, although possible, is extremely difficult.

The nearest settlement is at Makkovik about 16 miles away. There is a fairly extensive cod fishery near Makkovik. Most of the fishermen set one or two salmon and trout nets in the nearby bays. Most of them had caught from three to six tierces of salmon and trout since the run began. This is a fairly good quantity of fish considering the small amount of time and effort put into this particular fishery. Indications are that there is a fairly good run of salmon and trout in this area which would probably support considerably more fishing effort. However, in order to dispose of salmon and trout in this area, they must be pickled which probably accounts for the lack of interest in this fishery.

The water was heavily loaded with silt as far about ten miles out in the bay. This is a comparatively

The Kaipokok River was surveyed on July 29th, 1954. This river is approximately sixty miles long and flows into the bottom of Kaipokok Bay which runs in from the coast about 45 miles. The first seven miles of the river flows through a well timbered valley. A very heavy steep rapid makes up the first quarter of a mile of the river. The next five miles widen into a very shallow lake from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile wide. The river then narrows to about 125 feet and breaks up into a series of long steep rapids and large deep pools for the next two miles where Micmac Lake begins. This lake is about ten miles long and much the same as the first. The river then narrows considerably into long deep steadies until two fairly high falls are reached. No reliable information as to the height of these falls was available and, due to low water conditions, it was impossible to reach them during our stay in the area observed in this section of the river.

The river bottom in the rapids was mostly bedrock with rocks and boulders in the pools. The lake bottoms were chiefly mud and silt with some boulders.

The nearest settlement to the river is Postville

The water was heavily loaded with silt as far about ten miles out in the bay. This is a comparatively

as the head of Micmac Lake where it becomes clear. The new settlement of about 200 people. It is built up, the temperature of the water was 19°C.; the air temperature around a sawmill established by a Pentecostal Mission, is being 23°C. and P.H. 6.9.

Four of the families who are unable or unwilling to work in the mill. Predators did not appear to be too numerous, salmon

only a few bay seals being observed in the river which might be due to the fact that the local people from Postville hunt seals in this area for food and the bounty and hides.

seems to be a fairly heavy run of salmon and Arctic char in the bay. During the comparatively short period of the run, about two weeks, one fisherman reported taking lakes with May flies, stone flies and dragon fly nymphs over 2,000 pounds. As in the case of Makkovik, all salmon predominating. (Fish fauna). Even though salmon were reported as plentiful in the river, only a few were observed

in the first rapid. Due to the heavily silted condition of the water in the first 17 miles, it would appear to be a poor nursery area for young fish; in fact, none were

observed in this section of the river. The angling possibilities of the section of the river surveyed may

be considered practically nil. heavily timbered valley of spruce and some birch, with high hills on either side.

The nearest settlement to the river is Postville about ten miles out in the bay. This is a comparatively small, mostly for Arctic char, which are plentiful.

The Canairiktok River was surveyed on August 3rd, 1954. The river is about 150 miles long and is one of the larger rivers of Northern Labrador. It flows into the bottom of Canairiktok Bay which runs in about 28 miles from the coast. The first five miles of the river flows through a fairly heavily timbered valley of spruce and some birch, with high hills on either side. The river bottom is composed mostly of sand. The water was light brown and clear. Water temperature was 15°C. air temperature 20°C and the pH 6.8. The river widens above the falls to about 300 yards. Although this portion of the river is mostly sand, the water is mostly steady above this fall for some distance where another fall is found reported to be as high as the first. The river deepens and out of the run, about two weeks, one fisherman reported taking over 2,000 pounds. As in the case of Makkovik, all salmon and char are sold in the pickled state.

The river bottom to the first fall is mostly sand. The water was light brown and clear. Water temperature was 15°C. air temperature 20°C and the pH 6.8. The river widens above the falls to about 300 yards. Although this portion of the river is mostly sand, the water is mostly steady above this fall for some distance where another fall is found reported to be as high as the first. The river deepens and out of the run, about two weeks, one fisherman reported taking over 2,000 pounds. As in the case of Makkovik, all salmon and char are sold in the pickled state.

The Adlatok River was surveyed on August 3rd, 1954. A large wooded island at the mouth divides the river into two channels. The river beyond the island is approximately 300 yards wide with a deep channel running along the true right bank.

The river was surveyed as far as the first fall a distance of five miles. This fall is about 61 feet 4 inches high, about 150 feet wide, with a gradient of about 1:2 making this a complete barrier insofar as anadromous fish are concerned. The river deepens and steadies above this fall for some distance where another fall is found reported to be as high as the first. chute approximately 300 yards long. Although this portion of the river is not navigable by canoe, there is a sand. The water was light brown and clear. Water temperature was 15°C. air temperature 20° and the pH 6.8.

A few mergansers above the falls seemed to constitute the predator population in the portion of the river visited. No fish were observed in the river although salmon and char are reported to run in the small brooks flowing into the bay. One family is known to fish the bay each fall, mostly for Arctic char, which are plentiful.

The Adlatok River was surveyed on August 3rd, 1954. The river is about 140 miles long with branches flowing into Ujutok and Adlatok bays. The river should

The water was light brown and clear with a temperature of 13°C. the air temperature being 15°C. and shallow and full of foul ground, also a high fall is reported on the Ujutok branch.

Above the falls mergansers were observed in not fairlly large numbers. anglers although an occasional party through a steep gorge about 100 feet wide. This portion of the river is abundantly dotted with small deep pools which afford excellent salmon and sea run speckled trout angling. Near the head of the gorge, there is a series

of two small falls about seven feet high and a narrow chute approximately 300 yards long. Although this portion of the river is not navigable by canoe, there is a fairly good trail as far as the first fall.

Fish fauna was very plentiful consisting of large numbers of very large and small salmon, speckled trout, both sea run and residual, Arctic char and fresh water sculpins. Very large numbers of salmon parr and speckled trout. The river widens above the falls to about falls.

250 yards in places, with fairly deep steady water to

The nearest settlement to the river is Hopedale, the foot of the next fall about 30 miles distant, near about thirty miles out in the bay. This is a fairly large village of about 300 people with an American military

establishment nearby.

The river bottom is composed mostly of bed

rock, rocks and boulders for the first two miles, depending giving way to sands and gravel, in the steadies above.

men fish Adlatok Bay commercially for salmon and trout. The water was light brown and clear with a temperature of 13°C. the air temperature being 15°C. and of salmon so far this season, as well as a good quantity of char. The salmon run begins in this area about July 20th

continuing Above the falls mergansers were observed in not fairly large numbers, anglers although an occasional party necessary or desirable to establish a Protection Service of service personnel manage to get in from nearby bases.

Bottom fauna was very plentiful consisting mainly of May fly, caddis fly, stone fly, nymphs, black fly larva and others yet to be determined. fact that the local R.C.M. Police take an interest in the fishery and Fish fauna was very plentiful consisting of large numbers of very large and small salmon, speckled trout, both sea run and residual, Arctic char and fresh water sculpins. Very large numbers of salmon parr and speckled trout fingerlings were observed above the falls.

commercial fishing are concerned. The nearest settlement to the river is Hopedale, about thirty miles out in the bay. This is a fairly large village of about 300 people with an American military establishment nearby.

Most of the population of the village depend on the military base for work, consequently, only two men fish Adlatok Bay commercially for salmon and trout. One of the fishermen reported landing over 2,500 pounds of salmon so far this season, as well as a good quantity of char. The salmon run begins in this area about July 20th continuing for from two to three weeks. The river is not

From our observations, it does not seem either fished extensively by anglers although an occasional party of service personnel manage to get in from nearby bases. in this area, at least until fishing becomes much more

There doesn't seem to be any abuses to the fishery in this area probably due to the fact that the local R.C.M. Police take an interest in the fishery and make frequent patrols in the area.

are by far the most numerous. Considerable effort was made to take char SUMMARY AREA 1 spinners, etc., all

Of the six rivers surveyed in Area 1, the Adlatok shows the most promise insofar as angling and commercial fishing are concerned.

Several of the others show signs of limited developed. Char up to 7 pounds were taken in our nets angling and commercial fishing possibilities but appear with the average weight running around four pounds. These

to afford excellent spawning and nursery areas for fish run in the rivers along with the salmon with the anadromous fishes. The only serious abuse to the fishery peak of the run reportedly occurring around the latter in this area is due to natural rather than human causes. part of August.

Mergansers and bay seals being the principal offenders with mergansers doing the most damage due to the very great numbers in the rivers, apparently good sized brooks and small rivers which have not been mentioned. A good

From our observations, it does not seem either number of the larger of these shown were visited and necessary or desirable to establish a Protection Service found to be nothing more than small mountain streams. in this area, at least until fishing becomes much more intensive than at present.

It was, therefore, decided that, due to the limited time available for the survey, these relatively unimportant streams would

The Arctic char seems to offer the best possibilities for development along commercial lines as they

We were greatly impressed with the terrific are by far the most numerous. Considerable effort was quantity of codfish all along this portion of the coast. made to take char on flies, bait, spinners, etc., all Most of the bays visited seemed full of them right up of which proved unsuccessful. We have, however, heard to fresh water in many instances. Squid, caplin, and reports of char being taken by anglers using some type whales were also plentiful; however, the lack of interest of artificial lure. If this is true, then there is a in any of these fish by the natives was quite striking. marvellous sport fishery in this area waiting to be

developed. Char up to 7 pounds were taken in our nets with the average weight running around four pounds. These

the southern side of Voiseys Bay. The first four miles

AREA II

fish run in the rivers along with the salmon with the peak of the run reportedly occurring around the latter part of August.

It will be noted by referring to maps that there are a number of apparently good sized brooks and small rivers which have not been mentioned. A good number of the larger of these shown were visited and found to be nothing more than small mountain streams. It was, therefore, decided that, due to the limited time available for the survey, these relatively unimportant streams would be by-passed.

We were greatly impressed with the terrific quantity of codfish all along this portion of the coast. Most of the bays visited seemed full of them right up to fresh water in many instances. Squid, caplin, and whales were also plentiful; however, the lack of interest in any of these fish by the natives was quite striking.

The Koraluk River was surveyed on August 9th, 1954. It is about 120 miles long and empties into the southern side of Voiseys Bay. The first four miles

fish fauna AREA II consisted of sea run of the river flow through well timbered low lying land. speckled trout which were in abundance below the falls. The river Area II extends from Hopedale north to and wing including Nain Bay. What fishing is done in this area is confined mostly to cod fishing which is carried on from the islands scattered off the coasts near Nain. A few Arctic char are netted in the bays for local domestic use and dog food. Indications are that there is little or no possibility of a salmon fishery, either commercial or sport, ever being established in this area. 6 Large numbers of sea run speckled trout were found below the falls in the Koraluk River. These provided a few hours' excellent fishing. However, except for Arctic char which seemed plentiful, they constituted the sum total of 75 anadromous fish encountered in this area. We did hear of one fisherman who had caught  $1\frac{1}{2}$  barrels of salmon one season in Nain Bay. Above the falls, the river widens and continues in large d. The two largest rivers in the area were surveyed; namely the Fraser and the Koraluk. Except for a short distance below the falls, the river The Koraluk River was surveyed on August 9th, 1954. It is about 120 miles long and empties into the southern side of Voiseys Bay. The first four miles

Fish fauna observed consisted of sea run of the river flow through well timbered low lying land. speckled trout which were in abundance below the falls. The river is about 100 yards wide at the mouth narrowing to about 200 feet or so about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile in. The true left bank is steep and sandy while the right bank is low and heavily overgrown with spruce and willows.

The river was surveyed as far as the first fall, a distance of about five miles. trout, there doesn't seem to be any fish running in this vicinity. heavy flow

The first fall has a total height of 66 feet 6 inches made up of five benches, the highest of which is 30 feet. The second fall is approximately 300 feet from the top of the first. It has a sheer drop of about 35 feet. The width of the river at the falls is about 75 to 80 feet. The river was carrying a heavy flow of water at the time of our visit. about two miles. Beyond

this lies Tessisoak Lake which is about thirty miles long

Above the falls, the river widens and continues and from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile wide. It lies in a narrow canyon in large deep steadies. with sheer rock walls on either side rising to 1,000 feet

in places. Except for a short distance below the falls, the river bottom is composed mostly of fine sand and our gravel bars. river due to lack of gasoline and heavy wind

Fish fauna observed consisted of sea run speckled trout which were in abundance below the falls.

The water was light brown and clear with a temperature of 14°C. and a pH of 6.7. The air temperature at this time was 13°C.

The only predators observed were one merganser. Except for the sea run speckled trout, there doesn't seem to be any fish running in this vicinity.

The Fraser River was surveyed on August 5th, 1954. It is approximately 75 miles long and empties into the bottom of Nain Bay. The first five or six miles of the river is composed of eight small ponds or lakes separated by short rapids. The smallest pond is about 100 yards long and the longest about two miles. Beyond this lies Tessisoak Lake which is about thirty miles long and from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile wide. It lies in a narrow canyon with sheer rock walls on either side rising to 1,000 feet in places. There is a high falls reported in the river above the lake. We were unable to reach the falls on our trip up the river due to lack of gasoline and heavy wind

in Tessisoak Lake. The river bottom was too far down to see but, considering the general terrain, it was probably mostly bed rock and boulders. The water was very light green and clear with a temperature of 8°C. and a pH of 6.7. The air temperature at this time was 11°C.

There was no bottom fauna or fish fauna observed in the river. A few char were seen out in the Bay near the mouth. Although carrying a heavy flow of clear water, this river seemed completely devoid of fish. It seems obvious that the salmon run cuts off quite abruptly at Hopedale. Since little effort is made

#### SUMMARY OF AREA II

From our observations and from local information, it would appear that there is very few, if any, salmon running in the rivers in this area. Arctic char is plentiful in the bays. However, little effort is made by the natives to fish them. As in Area 1, the coastal waters were abounding in codfish which are taken by a few fishermen on the islands.

In conclusion, we feel that enough information is now available to go ahead with more detailed work if such is deemed necessary.

We would GENERAL SUMMARY and, however, that

the guardians employed in this area be put on duty at

This survey, as the one carried out last year, least by June 1st and kept on until the end of September. should be considered as of a preliminary nature; very little more detail being possible in the time available. This would appear to be necessary due to the fact that nets are put out as soon as the ice breaks up in the

spring. Before expending any more time on salmon investigations

along this part of the Labrador coast, it

would seem to be advisable to carry out more detailed

surveys of the better rivers in Southern Labrador.

of warden material, should be appointed in the following

years. It seems obvious that the salmon run cuts off quite abruptly at Hopedale. Since little effort is made

to fish salmon from Hopedale South to Hamilton Inlet, it

would appear that further work in this area will be un-

necessary for a number of years. I easily supervise the

work on the whole coast. In view of the above, we would

From information gathered during this trip, again draw your attention to our recommendations made

it would seem that the Protection Service inaugurated on

last year concerning the requirements and equipment

the Southern Labrador this year, has been very well

necessary to a Fishery Officer undertaking this type of

received by the local inhabitants and successful in cur-

service.

tailing many of the abuses to the fishery.

In conclusion, we feel that enough information

is now available to go ahead with more detailed work if

such is deemed necessary.

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We would strongly recommend, however, that the guardians employed in this area be put on duty at least by June 1st and kept on until the end of September. This would appear to be necessary due to the fact that nets are put out as soon as the ice breaks up in the spring. Considerable netting is also done in the rivers early in the fall to obtain the winter's supply of dog food. We might also add that any guardian found satisfactory this year and, especially those showing promise of warden material, should be appointed in the following years.

It is quite possible that if the right type of guardian is obtained and trained, that one Fishery Officer, properly equipped, could easily supervise the work on the whole coast. In view of the above, we would again draw your attention to our recommendations made last year concerning the requirements and equipment necessary to a Fishery Officer undertaking this type of service.

In conclusion, we feel that enough information is now available to go ahead with more detailed work if such is deemed necessary.