

Kyuquot- Part 4 "BIG TROUT"

Bob Kissinger [basherbob@outlook.com]

Many years ago I was talking "fish" with a fellow, whose name I have forgotten. We were chatting about fishing in the Kyuquot Sound when he told me about some people he knew that fished the Artlish. They would go in late September and fish above the logging bridge where they would catch "large trout". At the time he didn't know what specie of trout they were, but like me, felt that they were probably large sea run cutties after the loose salmon eggs.

About 3 year ago my son, Mark, told me about his friend Gary who had purchased a trap line along one of streams in Kyuquot Sound. Reportedly Gary and another friend spent a few days, around the middle of August, exploring this stream to check out its potential. While there they had caught some "big trout". Knowing that very few west coast streams had any resident trout, let alone "big" ones, I suggested maybe they were catching sea run cutties or dollies. Mark thought Gary said they were rainbows and that he had a picture. Well getting a look at that picture



took almost 2 years. In the interim I started my on-line research and chatted to our up-island friend, Norm, as well as a few others.

The 1980 report on the salmon streams and spawning escapement of Kyuquot Sound didn't address trout but it did contain a 1957 reference to the Tashish as being "heavily fished by trout fishermen" It also sporadically recorded some observations of steelhead but mostly in small numbers with the exception of the Kaouk. In 1955 there were 3500 steelhead observed in this stream, in 1956, 1500 and in 1957, 750 were recorded. There was another notation from 1976 that "this river was inspected by Environcon" and " both summer and winter run steelhead were present in this river". In addition to the Kaouk there at least 6 other streams in the Kyuquot Sound which also had that notation of "having both summer and winter steelhead".

After reading the on-line 1996 Strathcona TSA Stream Inventory on the Artlish, which recorded "Summer run steelhead were observed at Site 7 (12.6 km. upstream) and at Site 8 (14.2km. upstream) and a further "4 summer steelhead were observed in the lower 7.5 km. on the 21st of September 1995", . The fish observed in this report were not large. They ranged from about 1 to 4 & 1/2 pounds. As a result I now believe that the "large trout" being caught above the logging bridge, so many years ago, were not cutties but in all likelihood summer run steelies.

Norm, our up island friend, reported that in about the mid 90's he and a friend spent some time exploring the Tashish. This was around his birthday, the 10th of August. At that time Norm said he hooked and landed a number of summer steelhead including some that were quite large. This time, the middle of August is about the same time that Gary reported catching his "big trout". It also coincided with the 1980 Kyuquot report which noted that August was the time for the summer steelhead.

Although there was a 1990's logging road which went on the far side of Atluck lake to the Artlish estuary, any recent on-line reference to it, indicated that it may no longer be usable. (If anyone has any current info about this road I would love to hear about it.)

Access to Kyuquot Sound is still difficult. The lumpy, bumpy Woss, Zeballos, to Fair Harbour is still lumpy and bumpy as one of my sources (who used it just last year) said it is definitely NOT suitable for large trailer with fibreglass boats.

If someone wanted to find these summer steelies I would recommend they take a 14 to 16 foot aluminum boat to Fair Harbour for a week, around the middle of August. Establish a base camp at Fair Harbour and day trip to the various rivers. Hiking a few kilometres upstream from the estuaries will probably be required as well.

Cheers
Basher