

✓ Thorne River

Thorne River is probably the largest drainage on Prince of Wales Island and of approximately 150 sq. mi. It discharges into Thorne Bay and the fix on the mouth is N. Lat. 55°40'50" and W. Long. 132°30'45". The drainage is north of this fix toward the east side of Prince of Wales Island. The river is approximately 25 miles from source to mouth. Flow is 150 c.f.s. nominal, 900 c.f.s. average and in excess of 25,000 in flood. The river is paralleled by the main logging road from Thorne Bay for about 5 miles. The entire watershed lies within the Tongass National Forest. There are a number of lakes in the drainage. The gradient is mostly gradual and the stream bottom is largely gravel except where crossed by bedrock dikes. Grade is approximately 10 ft/mile. Pool-riffle distribution is excellent. Barriers to migratory fish exist only near the headwaters where grade steepens. There is excellent spawning gravel all through the system. Bank cover is largely pristine spruce-hemlock forest. The watershed is of glacial origin and steep sided. Fish hosted by the system include pink, chum, sockeye and coho salmon, cutthroat, Dolly Varden, rainbow and steelhead trout, stickleback and cottoids. This stream formerly hosted remarkable runs of salmon which have been over-fished. The stream has always been known for its excellent trout fishing. Most of the sport fishing pressure exerted now is by the logging community and the Forest Service. The stream hosts all the invertebrates the nutrients will support. In the slower sections of the stream and in the lakes there is considerable nuphar, potamogeton, vallisneria and ceratophyllum. There is no use made of the water nor is there appreciable industrial or domestic pollution.

Thorne River formerly hosted great runs of salmon and trout. However, at one time there were fish traps right up to the river mouth and the leads overlapped in Thorne Bay. The river has never recovered. There was an anglers camp, the Thorne River Club, near the river mouth which was abandoned with the advent of the clear-cut logging. Presently there are many millions of board-feet of logs rafted at the river mouth and the largest logging camp in the world is discharging its raw sewage into the head of the bay.

Staney Creek

Staney Creek is probably the largest drainage on Prince of Wales Island with no extensive lake system. The mouth lies on Tuxekan Passage at N. Lat. 55°48'20", W. Long. 132°9'0" and it is approximately 10 miles airline from the mouth to the most distant source.

West Plan No. 1 Special Pleasure Surveys of Sport Fishing: Pres. Life

Southeastern, Alaska

Ice fishing in the state of Southeastern Alaska is not attractive to very many people. Generally, there is considerable snow through the winter while the lakes are frozen over or the streams are open in the spring for steelhead fishing. This, in addition to the early fishing for King Salmon, makes ice fishing a very negligible part of the fishing pressure of Southeastern Alaska as a whole and of the Kotchikan - Petersburg - Wrangell area in particular. The only lakes I know of that were so fished are: Little Boatman Lake on Grewina Island opposite Kotchikan received five days (rain days) of ice fishing. There were two parties there and only one of them caught creditable amounts of fish. One party fished Talbot Lake in December and did well.

Spring fishing is very popular as the streams warm up and the weather is suitable for getting out on the salt water. Many large king salmon are taken in April, May and June. The steelhead fishing is at its height at this time and the rainbow fishing is good where they occur. The sea runs of cutthroat and Dolly Varden begin in this period and they come into the streams and lakes.

The winter and spring fishing is mostly a boat transportation set-up and once flying is done to lakes and streams where shelters are available or as a single flight proposition. Most of the lakes that are fished by airplane are not safely open during the winter. The locations of this spring stream and lake fishing are:

<u>Kotchikan area</u>	<u>% of Total Pressure</u>
Naba River	20
High Creek	10
Thorne River	10
Speakers Bay Creek	5
Kela Bay Lake	5
Ward Cove Creek	15
Kotchikan Creek	20
Hegen Creek	5
Others	10

All of the above named locations have good anchorage or moorings for boats.

<u>Petersburg Area</u>	<u>% of Total Pressure</u>
Petersburg Creek	40
Blind Slough	20
Castle River	20
Other	20

Wrangell Area

Little Virginia and outlet have most of the sport fishing pressure in the spring.

June 23, 1952

THORNS RIVER (Prince of Wales) - 1952

Type of stream - Typical small river, gravel bottom and lots of pools.

Grade - quite gentle with good dispersion of pools and riffles.

Surrounding cover - Timber and muskeg.

Flow - Maximum 15,000 ft³/sec.
Minimum 400 ft³/sec.
Normal 900 ft³/sec.

Bottom composition - mostly gravel with an occasional bedrock reef.

Barrier present - none known.

Tributaries - several, the first about at extreme high tide, 80 ft³/sec.

Lakes in the system - the map shows one way up.

Water temperature - Maximum 57°
Minimum 31°
Normal 38° (54° 6-22-52 1700)

Used by what species - Cutthroat, Steelhead, Dolly Varden, Coho,
Pinks, Chums, Cottoids, sticklebacks.

Resident species - Cottoids, Sticklebacks, Cutthroats?

Plants - None on record.

Food organisms present - Salmon fry and spawn, cottoids, insects and
larvae, sticklebacks.

Size and age of desired species - Cutthroat are sea-run and average
10 to 20 inches.

Fish diseases and parasites noted - Copepods.

Stomach contents - salmon fry, insects and larvae.

Remarks - Thorns River is a large river and can be run with a light
skiff. There is a camp at the mouth (private). Being
somewhat far from Ketchikan it is not overly fished.

Report No. 2
Dec 30, 1952
Ch 31, 1953