



Jim Lind, regional park supervisor, says this year's salmon run on the Sandy River is the biggest he has seen.

Staff photos by Steve Gibbons

Salmon come home in large numbers

by DAVE PINSON
Staff writer

OXBOW PARK — With loud splashes and slapping of tails, the natives are returning home to their Sandy River beds sooner than expected.

And in larger than normal numbers.

After a three-year voyage in the Pacific Ocean, the fall Chinook salmon are coming home to the spawning beds of the quiet Sandy River. The large, 10- to 40-pound fish are returning to propagate and die.

Jim Lind, regional park supervisor, says that he's never seen so many fish spawning so early in the year. In fact, Lind hopes the salmon still will be spawning during the park's annual salmon festival scheduled for Oct. 17 and 18.

"This is early for the peak of the run," Lind said Tuesday as he stood on the river bank. In the water below, hundreds of fish conducted the ages-old ritual of reproduction. The usual count of returning fish is between 800 and 900. This year's run is certain to be higher than that, Lind said.

"Generally, the peak of the run is

in the second or third week of October," Lind said. "I've never seen anywhere near this number of fish before."

Park workers saw the first fish about three weeks ago, he said. And, now, fish are filling the stream's numerous spawning beds.

Sadly, many dead salmon also are lining the river's edges. Once they arrive, the salmon spend about two weeks working the gravel into nests, laying or fertilizing eggs, and then covering the eggs with light gravel.

After that, the dying fish are covered with a yellow-colored fungus. All of their energy is used in their reproductive chore and it's just a matter of days before they die.

Lind says most of the male and female fish are about 3 years old when they return, although some of the fish are 2-year-old immature, or infertile, males.

Kneeling down, Lind picked up a dead Chinook and pointed to the torn and tattered tail. He explained that when the females find a suitable spot to lay their eggs, they turn on their side and flap their tails to make a nest or a "redd." Then the male fish fertilize the eggs



Dead fish already are turning up in the river.

and the female flips gravel on top of the eggs to protect them.

And in two to five months, the tiny fish emerge from the eggs and begin their journey to the ocean.

They begin, that is, unless something happens to destroy the eggs, Lind said. For example, a fisherman walking through the spawning grounds could crush the eggs, he said.

"Our efforts are aimed at educating the public and fishermen," Lind said.

A large part of the education effort will start Saturday when the

first of a month-long series of nature walks begins at the 1,000-acre Multnomah County park. The guided salmon-viewing walks will be held twice a day on Saturdays and Sundays through October. The walks start at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. and are free.

The walks are guided by Deb Kauper, park naturalist, and are suitable for all ages.

"The main purpose of the walks is to let people know about the native salmon, and let people know it's important to (support) them," Lind said.

Birth announcements

Cameron Curtis

Richard and Paula Curtis of Welches welcomed Cameron James to the family on Aug. 5. He weighed 8 pounds, 10 ounces and measured 20 and 3/4 inches.

He has a sister, Amaria Camille, 3 1/2.

Grandparents are Juanita and Wes Post of Welches, Ralph Curtis of Vancouver, Wash., Ellen and Walt Vail of Central Point, Ore., and Jerry Igo of Mosier, Ore.

Great-grandmother is Jennie Lawless of Central Point.

Jeremy Bowe

A son, Jeremy Ryan, was born at 3:10 a.m. July 30 to Mary E. and Glen "Andy" Bowe of Sandy. He joins a brother, Jonathan, 4.

He weighed 8 pounds and was 20 1/4 inches long. He was born at Portland Adventist Medical Center.

Grandparents are Virgil and Alice Wells of Boring and Henry and Muriel Bowe of North Miami Beach, Fla.

Engagements

Howell-Walterman

Coral Howell of Boring and Wesley Walterman of Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, announced their engagement in July at at the groom's church in Coeur D'Alene.

The couple, who attend Northwest College of the Assemblies of God in

Kirkland, Wash., plan to be married on Nov. 28 at Mount Hood Christian Center in Gresham.

The bride-elect is the daughter of Gene and Kay Howell of Boring. She is a 1986 graduate of Sandy Union High School.

The groom-elect is the son of Paul and Joan Walterman of Coeur D'Alene.

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