

A photograph of a creek flowing through a wooded area with autumn foliage. The water is turbulent and white with foam as it flows over rocks. The banks are covered in dense vegetation, including trees with yellow and orange leaves. A house with a gabled roof is visible in the background, partially obscured by the trees. The overall scene is a natural, somewhat overgrown landscape.

**Stoney Creek Trail Report  
No. 80 - November 2025**







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The long dry spell finally came to an end here on the first day of the month when over 40 mm of rain fell overnight. The salmon spawning run began as soon as the creek water level rose (*front page photo*). It peaked on the 23rd when the photo on Page 2 was taken. That day, all day, trail walkers were treated to the sight of an amazing number of salmon heading upstream. This issue features the salmon run, as well as two activities by ARPSES hatchery volunteers.

Recording information about the spawning run is just one of the many important tasks the hatchery volunteers have to perform while raising coho salmon to supplement the natural population in the creek. Below is a list of their yearly events which you can explore in more detail on the [ARPSES website](#).

- 1) the tally of spawners during the salmon runs from October to December,
- 2) the collection of coho brood stock in November,
- 3) the “egg take” (providing eggs for the incubator) in November or December,
- 4) the “egg shock” (separating infertile eggs from viable ones) in January,
- 5) the “ponding” (moving the fry from the incubator to a Cap trough in March,
- 6) the transfer of smolts (one-year-old fry) from the ravine pond to the creeks in May,
- 7) the clipping of adipose fins and transfer of fry to the ravine pond in June,
- 8) the tally of spawners again in the fall.

The pair of **coho** on the right are on their last legs (sorry, poor metaphor!). The tail of the female is in tatters from digging redds (egg pits) in the gravel. Both fish have probably finished spawning and will soon die.

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There are five benches situated along the trail. I often refer to one of them as Sadie’s Bench. I had my dog Sadie put down by our vet five years ago because of the violent seizures brought on by her old age.

For sentimental reasons, I’ve re-published the memorial page of November, 2020 for her and Moose. Those of you who have lived with, and lost, a beloved dog will understand.





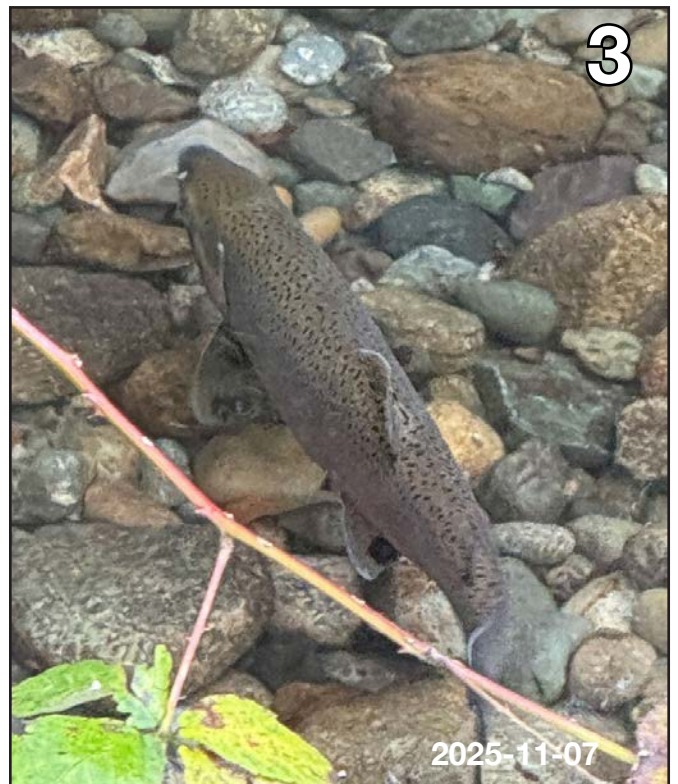
## Salmon Spawning 1/2

**1.** These coho have found a relatively deep and quiet patch of water near Bridge 4 (it's good place to view them). Every once in a while, one would make a dash, tail thrashing in the shallow water, to the next waypoint upstream.

Coho usually migrate under the cover of darkness (lower light helps reduce the risk of predation), so you will normally see (or hear) more of them if you walk the trail in late evenings or early mornings.

Coho are energetic fish, popular with fishers because of their reputation as fighters. Coho will swim upstream as far as possible to spawn: they have been seen near the Vicarro Ranch property above McKee Road, over 100 metres higher than Bateman Road.

**2, 3.** the male coho is much more colourful than the female.





## Salmon Spawning 2/2

**1:** the larger fish is a **chum salmon**, easily identified by the dark stripe along its side. The smaller fish in the background is probably a cutthroat trout.

Unlike coho, chum swim down to the ocean soon after they are born and spend three to five years in the North Pacific. (Coho normally spend a year in fresh water, then two in the ocean).

Chum spawners usually start arriving in Stoney Creek in October, earlier than the coho. Being less lively than coho, they prefer to spawn in the lower part of the creek.

This year, as the water level was so low during the early part of October, there have been fewer chum than usual. It is almost past their spawning season now.



**2: Cutthroat trout** are related to coho salmon: they belong to the same family (*Salmonidae*). They look somewhat similar, but cutthroat trout are smaller and have much different behaviour and lifestyle.

Cutthroats are opportunists: they will follow salmon upstream during a spawning run in order to snack on juicy, nutritious salmon eggs not safely buried in redds.



## ARPSES Salmon Survey 1/2

Now that the salmon are spawning, ARPSES volunteers are doing weekly surveys in both the lower and upper sections of Stoney Creek until the end of the run early in the new year.

Wearing waders and walking upstream, they count both live and dead fish (the number of dead being more reliable). The sex of each is noted, as well as whether the females have successfully spawned. They also look for those with the adipose fin missing, which indicates the fish were hatchery-raised. The dead ones are marked by a cut so they won't be counted twice.

**1. Doug and Alexandra** are starting at the Pond (Bridge 1) and will inspect up as far as Bridge 5, the lower section of Stoney.



**2. Alexandra** is holding a **coho jack** found between Bridges 2 and 3. Jacks are precocious males that return to freshwater to spawn after only one year in the ocean instead of the usual two. They are smaller than normal adults, but despite their size are sexually mature and able to fertilize eggs.

Some may find it sad that the salmon have to die after spawning. However, by doing so, the salmon are contributing to a great natural cycle. As their carcasses decay in the water they become food for invertebrates (juvenile insects) living in the creek. In turn, these tiny critters will be eaten by salmon fry, thus supporting the next generation of salmon.





1. Cutting open this **female coho** revealed that it had not spawned: the twin egg sacs were still full. Unfortunately, there have been many like this.

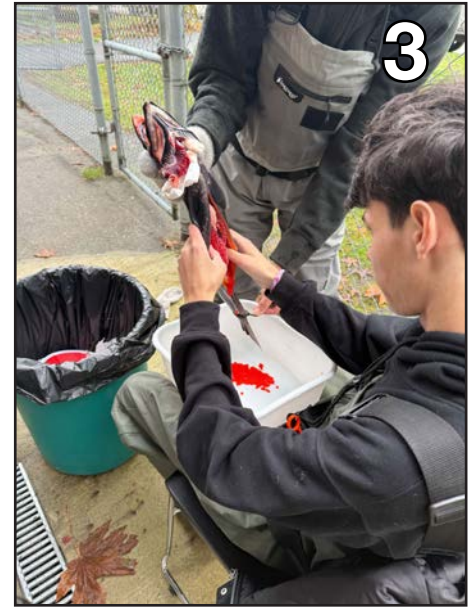
2. This is a closer look at a **dead jack** found near Bridge 4.

3. This **female coho** had been attacked by a predator near Bridge 3. The roe (eggs) scattered around it will not survive because they are not buried in a redd.

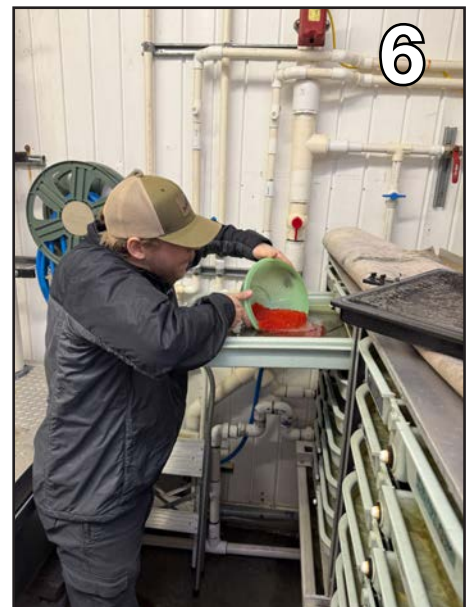




## Annual Egg Take at the ARPSES Hatchery: November 26th



1. The coho brood stock, [taken from Clayburn Creek](#) on November 19th, were removed one at a time from the large holding tank behind the hatchery.
2. After being “bonked” (killed), the females had their gills cut so they would bleed out. This is necessary, as the presence of blood would contaminate the eggs.
3. Her belly was sliced open with a special tool, exposing the two egg sacs. The eggs were stripped out of the sacs and collected in a bucket.
4. Small bags of milt (sperm) which had been extracted from the male coho were emptied into the buckets. Water was then added to the mixture of eggs and milt. This is necessary in order bring about fertilization.
5. Using a simple procedure involving weighing and counting, the number of eggs was determined to be over 6,300 (not enough, though—a second egg take will be needed).
6. Finally, after being treated with a disinfectant to eliminate the possibility of fungal infection, the eggs were placed in the fresh, natural water flowing through an incubator tray where they will stay for about eight weeks until they have developed into alevins.



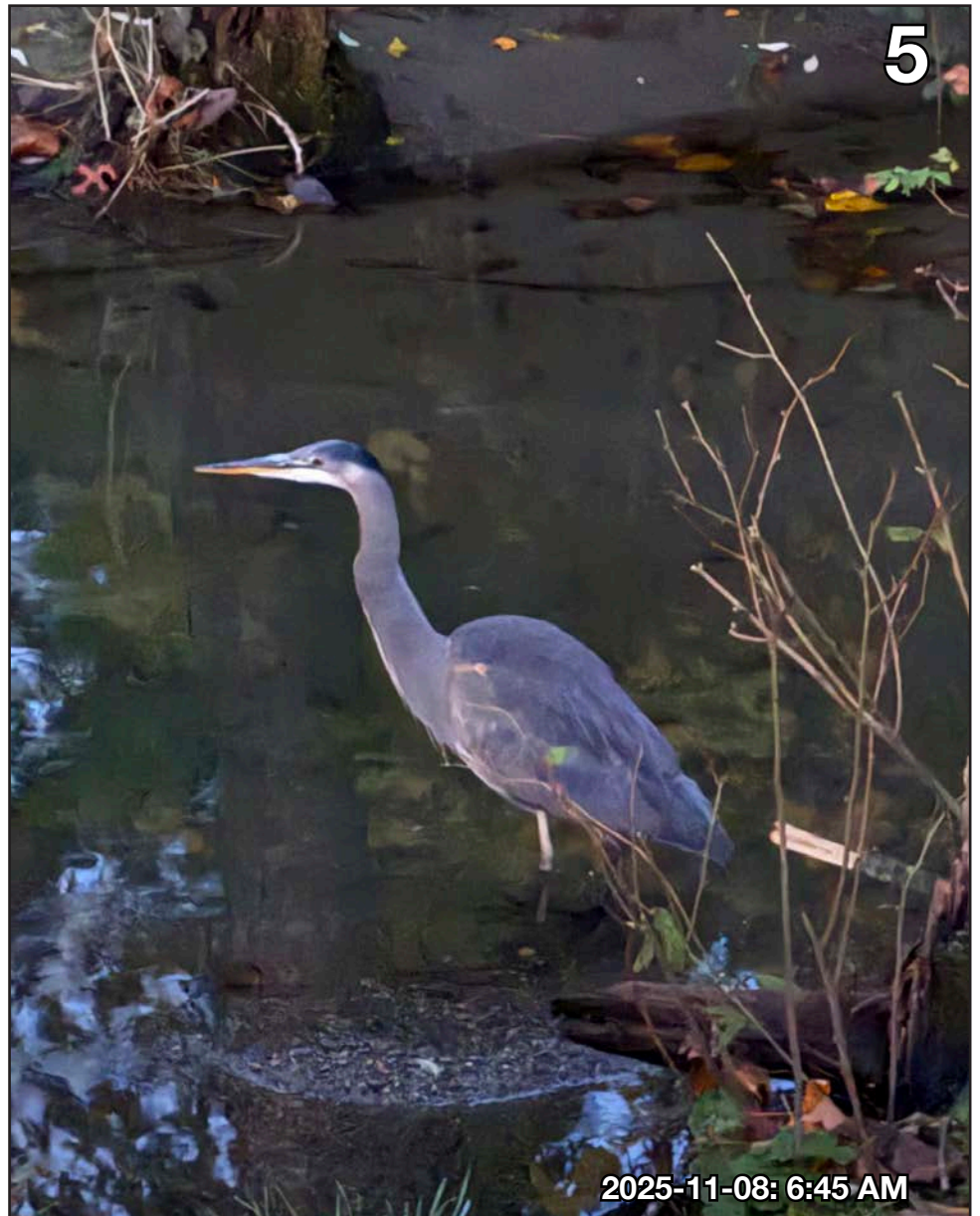


## Odds & Ends



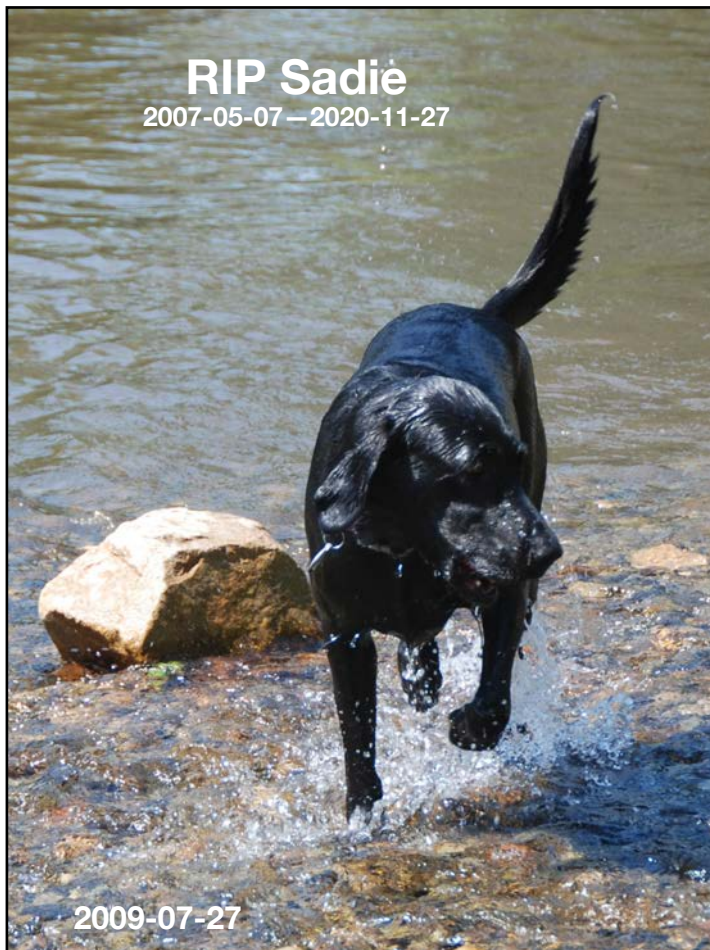
1-4. These items were probably left behind by young visitors over the past three months. (The pink object is a bubble wand).

5. In the relatively calm water below the Bowl path, a great blue heron stands stock-still, waiting for salmon passing by.





## A Memorial Page (re-print):



“**Moose** was a rescue purebred pug. He absolutely loved his frequent walks at Stoney Creek. He was such an optimist. Everyone he met could be a source of treats and he would turn those beautiful brown eyes upward in entreaty. He was often rewarded. If not, he would move on to the next — after all, he was a pug. He was also an “old soul” and not easily excitable, just a solid happy old man. He was my safe harbour in times of turmoil, my constant companion. During his 14th year he became blind, deaf and tired, and started to have seizures. On August 16, at 3:00 PM I helped him cross the “Bridge” to his safe harbour where I am sure he is still enjoying his walks, seeing the creek and trails, hearing the squirrels and, yes, turning on the Moose charm for those forbidden extra treats once again. RIP sweet Boy.”

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### The Dog:

The truth I do not stretch or shove  
When I state that the dog is full of love.  
I’ve also found, by actual test,  
A wet dog is the lovingest.

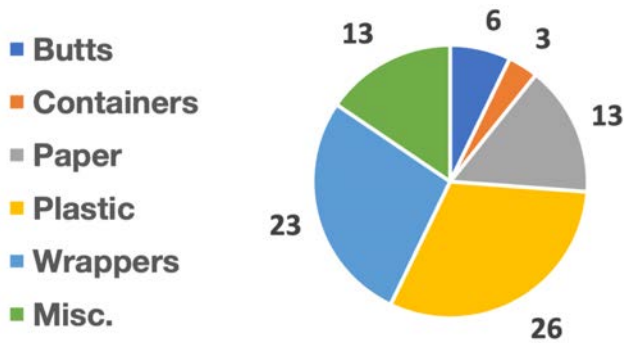
**Ogden Nash**

**Sadie**, a purebred American Labrador, was born in Merritt and came to Abbotsford at the age of six weeks. Stoney Creek Trail was her second back yard. She was always eager for a game of fetch or a swim, going full-tilt at whatever she did. She had a tail-wag for everyone and enjoyed going for walks or riding in the car, but was happiest when she was wet.





### Litter Tally November 2025



Total litter items = 84

**Containers:** bottles, bottle tops, cans, coffee cups, lids, juice boxes.

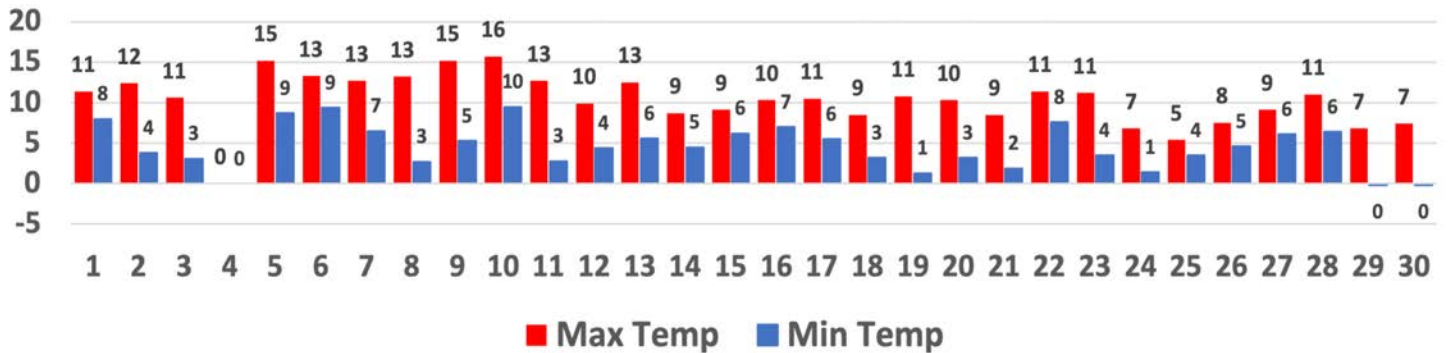
**Paper:** tissues, napkins, posters, newspaper, receipts, cardboard, etc.

**Plastic:** dog waste bags & shreds, other items made of plastic.

**Wrappers:** candy wrappers, foil, cellophane.

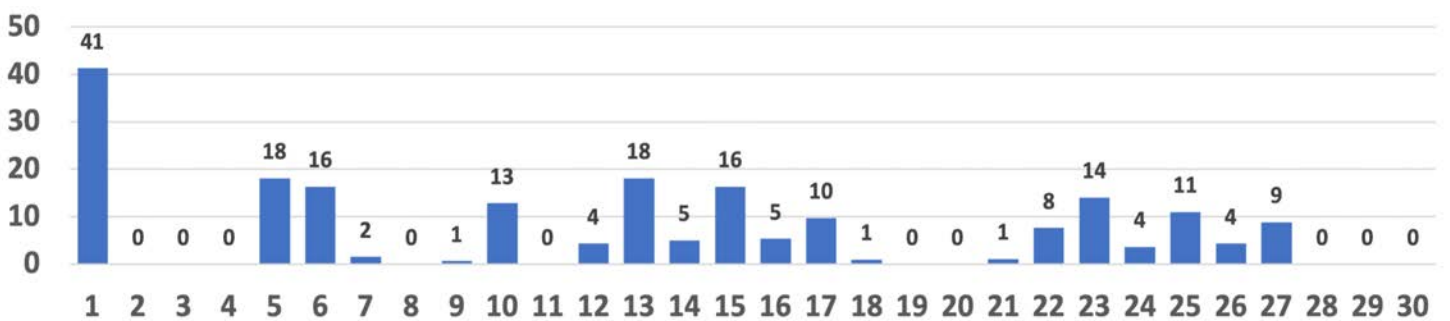
**Miscellaneous:** clothing, glass, chewing gum, dog balls & oddities, etc.

### Air temperatures at YXX November 2025 (°C)



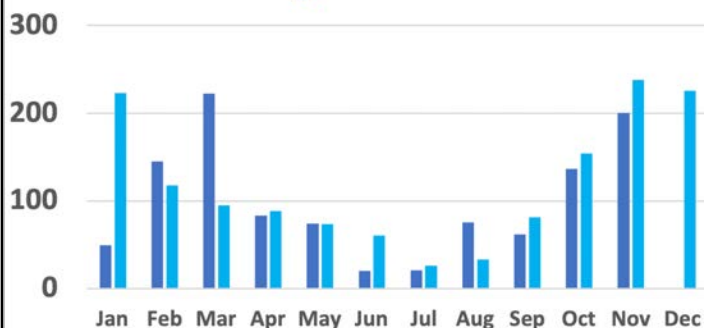
### Precipitation at YXX November 2025

Total = 200.6 mm



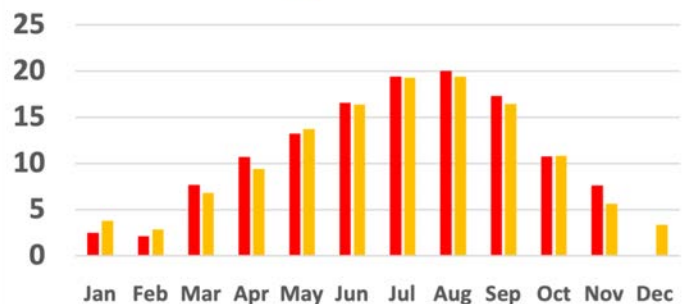
### Precipitation in 2025 (mm)

Average: 2019-2024



### Average Temperatures in 2025

Average: 2019-2024





For convenience, I use these custom place-names:

