

title **THE RUN OF THE RIVER**
Portraits of Eleven British Columbia Rivers

author **Mark Hume**
B.C. writer; award winning writer for the
Vancouver Sun

category Commentary; Impacts to Rivers; Fishing

publisher New Star Books Ltd
1992 trade paperback edition, 215 pages
ISBN 0-921586-00-0
<http://www.newstarbooks.com/>

who will be interested in this book?

Anyone interested in BC rivers, the impacts to fish from industry, and to readers who are fishers of BC rivers.

why read this book?

An “at home” writer known for his outdoor writing, Hume gives a concise review of eleven BC rivers, celebrating them while considering how industrial developments have impacted both rivers and fish. He looks at recent BC history, the politics of developments, our lack of knowledge of what was being done, and puts into question planned future developments. Each river profile contains a story of people who frequent, fish, live, or otherwise are connected to the river. These personal stories hit home as to the impacts or changes the rivers have, or are experiencing.

There is a selected chapter-by-chapter bibliography for further reading.

review / outline by Lance Brown, vistadelsol@telus.net

Overview

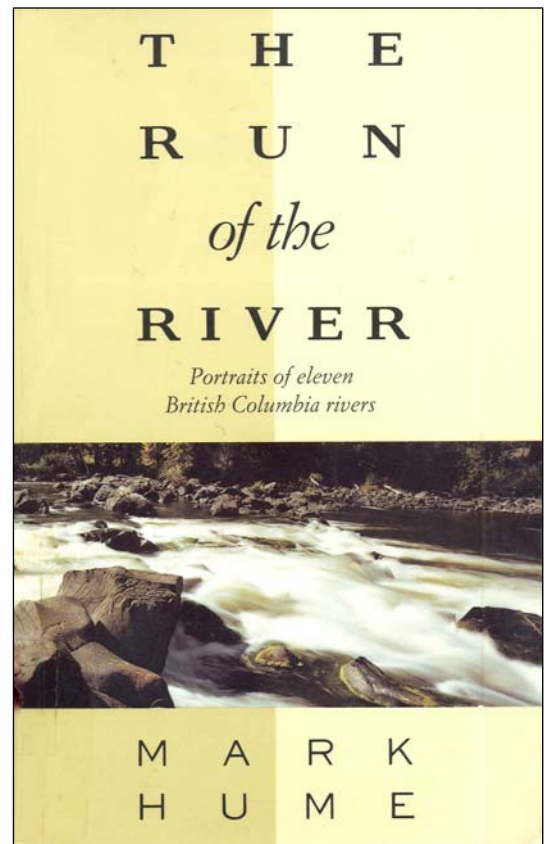
Industrial work in and around rivers causes impacts, and often we learn their extent well after the fact. In many cases, we question in hindsight why this or that was done. Hume gives us a review of the politics of Alcan and the Nechako River; dam building on the Columbia and Peace Rivers; turn of the last century logging practices on the Upper Adams River; what we only recently found out about steelhead in the Thompson and Deadman Rivers; etc. All presented through the experiences of people directly involved or affected by these rivers, or those who fish these rivers.

As a side Note: for those who enjoy fishing and are interested in stories of fish and fishing, try this BC-based web site that Mark Hume is involved with: <http://www.arivernever sleeps.com/>

Chapters & Points of Interest

1. The 17 Year Cicada – The Columbia

- 2,000 km long, second only to the Fraser River, twice the length of the Peace River
- smelter at Trail, pulp mill at Castlegar
- in the US, Grand Coulee Dam (1940), Chief Joseph (1954)



- in Canada, Mica (1973), Revelstoke (1979)
 - by 1975 Columbia River Power System consisted of 28 dams; fish losses
 - introduced rainbow fish into Lake Roosevelt behind Grand Coulee migrate up to Trail and become the most productive trout fishery in North America
 - issues with river water surges with releases from dams
2. Ingenika Drowning – The Peace
 - Bennett Dam (1967) backs up 362 km long Williston Lake
 - native people flooded out – compensation?
 - in 1968 Federal government start new reserve at Mackenzie
 - by 1990 land claims issues arise
 3. An Acceptable Level of Certainty – Taking Down The Nechako
 - Alcan Kenny dam, Kemano aluminum production and low cost electricity
 - native people flooded out, low river flows and fish concerns
 4. Moon In It's House – The Thompson
 - Thompson and Nicola rivers
 - uniqueness of steelhead – trout or salmon?
 - stories of steelhead at Spences Bridge – their “discovery” in 1947
 5. Swimming At Night – The Deadman
 - steelhead traced from Thompson to Deadman river in late 1970's – it was not known they where there
 - concern of loss of steelhead as incidental catch with salmon at mouth of Fraser
 - low water flow issues
 6. Extinction and The Genetic Code – The Salmon and Adams
 - sockeye lost from Salmon with series of rock slides in Hells Gate in 1913
 - Salmon River habitat loss, erosion, low flows, agricultural water use
 - many late-run salmon got by the Hells Gate slides so Adams less affected
 - Upper Adams salmon lost due to use of river to move logs from 1907 – re-stocking efforts mostly unsuccessful – genetic code of fish lost
 7. The Great River – The Stikine
 - flows into Alaska – Canada / US fishing issues
 - issues of proposed mines and their supply roads
 - possible dam at Grand Canyon
 8. The Colour of Copper – The Tatshenshini
 - issue of possible copper mine and access roads
 - Royal BC Museum species survey in 1991
 9. Valley of Grizzlies – The Khutzeymateen
 - grizzly bears being studied – how they interact with the river and surrounding land
 - logging issues
 10. The River Guardians – The Cowichan
 - problem of managing for multiple fish species
 - major water license of Crofton pulp mill and weir at Cowichan Lake
 11. The Way The World Was – The Megin
 - west coast logging issues
 - keeping intact ecosystems versus economical returns of logging

other review

Canadian Materials Archive

Hugh Cook, a retired elementary resource librarian in Maple, Ontario.

This is a worthwhile publication for adults interested in the preservation of our natural resources, especially the salmon fisheries of the west coast of Canada.

The author, Mark Hume, is obviously a naturalist, fisherman, author and realist. The above are not necessarily in that order, but his writings show his love for nature and his regret at the loss of the beauty and bounty of the B.C. river systems. He has no love for Alcan Aluminum, B.C. Hydro, the B.C. government, or the federal government because of their narrow economic view of the worth of the great British Columbia rivers and their tributaries.

Hume believes clear-cut logging, mining, and shoreline farming all have contributed to the destruction of the spawning grounds of what were once the greatest salmon and steelhead reserves in the world. Silt and extreme high and low water levels have drastically reduced the reproduction of fish. Based on personal observations and dialogue with natural resources personnel, Hume states that B.C. fishing has been plagued by laws that allow anyone to use the waters of the great rivers without regard for flow levels, toxic contamination or spawning fish. Hume writes that the abuse of the rivers and the empty promises of those who said they would build adequate fisheries if their use of the river caused any problems can be readily documented.

The writer sees very little hope for the recovery of B.C.'s river systems and their spawning grounds unless the citizens of the province rise up and condemn those responsible. He hopes that people across Canada will also raise their voices in protest at the rape of our natural environment and will rebuke those *prominent* individuals who seek financial gain at the expense of our resources.

The book has eleven chapters, each dealing with a major B.C. river system. It also includes an index. Unfortunately, it is lacking in illustrations, which would have assisted the reader in seeing how various dams, flow levels, etc., affect the fish populations and those who are dependent on these natural resources. This is, however, a worthwhile publication and would be an asset to any library resource area.

