

All fish life dead

New Plymouth health authorities were mystified today by the death of all fish life in the Mangaotuku Stream.

Hundreds of dead trout and eels were found littering the bed of the stream this morning.

A quick inspection of the stream along its twisting route through the city failed to reveal why the fish died.

The chief city health inspector, Mr W. J. McNicholas, came early this afternoon but anyone living near the stream should keep children well away from it.

Behind club

He received a telephone call from the caretaker of the Paritutu Bowling Club late this morning, telling him of the large numbers of dead fish in the stream behind the club.

Mr McNicholas went to the club and found numerous eels and baby trout dead in the water.

The caretaker said the growth on the stream bottom had changed colour and foam was floating on the top of the water.

He said there were no dead fish in the Mangaotuku earlier this morning. He first noticed them about 10 o'clock.

Mr McNicholas followed the Mangaotuku upstream from the club and inspected it at various points.

He found dead fish as far upstream as Botany PI in the Marfell area but could not find any source of pollution or a reason for the deaths of the fish.

Toxic substance?

He said it was possible a toxic substance had been dumped in the stream but this was by no means certain.

It was possible that in the

present dry conditions anything put into the river would cause loss of oxygen and kill the fish.

He said his department would take samples from the stream to try to establish any toxic content. However, it was likely that anything discharged into the stream would have dissipated after an hour or two and there was unlikely to be anything in the samples.

He said no dead fish had been found above Botany PI and a thorough inspection of the water would be made below this point. It was difficult to say when the stream would be safe or if the cause of death would be established.

Groom (74); bride (63)



Gallipoli veteran Mr Len

REMOVING DEAD EELS

New Plymouth City Council works department staff today cleaned out hundreds of dead eels, which had begun to rot in Mangaotuku Stream.

The eels died on Friday when a toxic waste entered the stream from the Pioneer Rd rubbish dump.

POLLUTION OF MANGAOTUKU TRACED



Pollution which yesterday killed fish in the Mangaotuku Stream has been traced by New Plymouth City Council chief health inspector, Mr W. J. McNicholas.

The exact nature of the material which caused the pollution is still uncertain and has been described as a mixture of liquids and solids.

Mr McNicholas today released the following statement:

"Further investigations last night and early this morning resulted in the discovery of what appears to be the source of pollution in the Mangaotuku Stream over the past 24 hours.

"A quantity of industrial waste, legally disposed of at the city dump in Cook St on Thursday, appears to have seeped through the tip face to a nearby swamp and drained a further half mile to the stream, affecting fish life below this point.

"Fingerling trout found above the outlet which originally led authorities to believe that pollution was from further afield appear to have died in an endeavour to escape the toxic waters.

"The wastes have now been removed and as this area is thought to be the most likely source, steps have been taken to ensure that there is no repetition of

this dumping in the future."

Yesterday Mr McNicholas warned parents to keep children away from the stream, and today he added that it was difficult to estimate how long the stream would take to recover from the pollution, but that "a good fresh would restore normal conditions."

Similar material had been disposed of at the dump in the past without incident, said Mr McNicholas.

PET EEL

One victim of the pollution is the Paritutu Bowling Club's pet eel. The eel had been a resident of a deep hole in the stream near the club for a considerable time.

Mr A. Mowatt said the eel would faithfully appear at the surface of the stream almost every afternoon.

"We used to feed him bits of cheese and leftovers from afternoon tea," he said.

The eel was very popular with children and people from outside the province on big tournament days. He was always of great interest to people visiting the bowling club.

DEAD EELS floating in the Mangaotuku Stream in New Plymouth yesterday.