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NEW LAKES ADD A MILLION POUNDS ANNUALLY TO SPORT FISH SUPPLY IN UNITED STATES

A permanent additional supply of gamefish amounting to more than a million pounds a year has been provided by the man-made lakes created with Federal assistance, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay pointed out today. Fish and Wildlife Service experts predict that each of the nearly 8,000 acres of public fishing waters so far completed under the Federal Aid program may be expected to produce at least 150 pounds of game fish annually.

The first Federal Aid lake was completed in 1953, a 32-acre impounded area on Virgin Run, near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The latest and largest is Arkansas' Atkin Lake, 652 acres of water backed up behind a dam 2,500 feet in length.

These fishing waters and 79 others like them have been built by the respective States with the help of Federal funds made available by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The "Dingell-Johnson" fish restoration money involved comes from a Federal excise tax on sport fishing tackle. Since important waterfowl and fur animal usage is expected to be made of 22 of the lakes, some of the money was made available under the Pittman-Robertson Act which levies an excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition to provide funds for game restoration projects.

The 81 lakes are located in 27 States and represent a total of 7,908 acres of new fishing waters. The cost of these new areas averages from \$1,000 to \$3,000 per acre of water.

Federal participation in the lake construction program is new. Only nine lakes have been fished for two years and some of them are storing their first water. But the possibilities are clearly indicated by the early returns. On the lake created at Oak Mountain State Park in Alabama, where a dam 825 feet in length impounds 250 acres of fine angling water, 2,308 fishermen caught more than 5,000 pounds of bass and sunfish in three days. On Yellowstone Lake in Wisconsin, where 456 acres of water accommodate thousands of anglers every week, a sample of 226 fishermen shows 1,661 fish in the creel with a catch rate of 3.2 fish per hour. Approximately one-half fish an hour is considered good fishing while an average catch of one fish an hour is considered excellent.

Arizona's Luna Lake, while only 32 acres in extent, has had a terrific economic impact on the adjacent town which has become a hustling mecca for anglers.

Of the 81 lakes created to date, 22 are set up for joint use by fish and waterfowl. On the other 59 any waterfowl use is merely incidental. Many of the lakes have other values—but these values are subordinate to the whip of the fly when fishing season is open. No other use is permitted to damage the fishing values of the waters.

The complete list of States which have engaged in this Federal Aid program with the number of ponds and total acreage follows: Alabama, 3--448; Arizona, 9--583; Arkansas, 1--752; Colorado, 5--482; Connecticut, 1--150; Delaware, 1--40; Idaho, 1--9; Illinois, 4--284; Iowa, 6--1,651; Kansas, 3--325; Kentucky, 2--89; Maryland, 8--45; Mississippi, 1--140; Missouri, 1--228; Nebraska, 1--49; New Mexico, 3--192; North Dakota, 1--152; Oklahoma, 5--496; Pennsylvania, 3--336; South Carolina, 5--500; Utah, 1--4; Vermont, 1--111; Virginia, 2--137; Washington, 10--196; West Virginia, 1--41; Wisconsin, 1--456; Wyoming, 1--12.

In addition, Minnesota, Nevada and Wisconsin have constructed experimental ponds not listed here and many States have purchased private lakes to guarantee permanent public availability.

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