



# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### ANGLERS' QUERIES

"What is the most vulnerable spot on an octopus?"

"What is a whale worth?"

"What are 'Federal' waters?"

Well, what are the answers to these questions?

Supplying the proper responses to each interrogation is all part of the job of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior. The posers roll in with every mail and it is usually up to Talbott Denmead, a veteran of many years with the Service, to answer them as accurately as possible.

Some of the more recent near "stumpers" have included this choice lot:

"How fast can a fish swim?" and for answer to this one, Denmead, mails the inquirer I-48 and supplements this with more up-to-date information on the same subject. No two fish swim at the same rate, seems to be the situation.

A minister, wishing to make some sort of telling point in his Sabbath polemical, inquired (he did not divulge why): "Do salmon bite only when mad?" Incidentally, the answer to this is "No--but bass do."

"When will the striped bass bite best--ebb or flood tide?" runs another query. The answer is, "Nobody knows--not even the bass. They change their minds almost as often as the tides."

In answer to "What is the Federal size limit on black bass?", Denmead wrote, "There are no Federal laws covering size limits, creel limits, or open season. These are State-law controlled matters." Incidentally, this is one of the most frequent queries.

The State has control over all matters pertaining to fishing in the waters within its limits. Therefore, the answer to another popular question: "Can a State make me take out a fishing license on Federal waters?" is, "Yes, but there are no Federal waters, as such." The Federal Government takes jurisdiction only in matters which affect navigation.

The experts really were stumped by these three questions to which no accurate answer could be given:

"Where will the rock bite on Chesapeake Bay next Sunday?"

"What percentage of the United States knows how to swim?"

"What kind of a boat do you fish from on the Atlantic Ocean?"

The answer to one high official's question, "Where can I catch a 7-pound brook trout?", elicited the reply, "Try the waters of Sault Ste. Marie, where it is reported may be caught the largest trout this side of the Canadian border."

"It depends--"; that more or less is the answer to another query, "Can you tell when fish will bite by the barometer?" Experts disagree so widely on this subject, that only scattered reference to authorities is possible for an answer.

The value of a whale runs from simple nuisance value (in case where it may have been stranded, died, and thereafter become, to say the least, odoriferous) up to \$10,000. If one has proper equipment, an adult sei whale, entirely utilized, may yield this gross amount.

In answer to the first question propounded here, in case you have been wondering, is--Nobody knows the answer--at least, no one spot is known to be any more vulnerable on an octopus than any other.

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