



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

*office
file
4/10/56*

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to PM's APRIL 10, 1956

FWS FISH HATCHERIES ATTRACT A MILLION VISITORS IN 1955

One million persons visited the 90 fish hatcheries which the Fish and Wildlife Service operated in 1955, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay reported today. The hatcheries are particularly popular with college and high school students of biology, nature and similar subjects, the Secretary said, with entire classes visiting the hatcheries for on-the-spot demonstrations and lectures.

Most popular of the hatcheries is the one maintained by the Fish and Wildlife Service in Yellowstone Park. More than 250,000 persons inspected that hatchery and viewed the exhibits in the aquarium there.

Vying for second place were the Guttenberg, Iowa, hatchery and aquarium, which drew thousands of visitors from the Boy Scout summer camp on the hatchery property, and the Walhalla Hatchery in South Carolina. Each of these drew more than 70,000 visitors.

These were followed in turn by the hatcheries at Spearfish, North Dakota, with 60,000 visitors; LaCrosse, Wisconsin, with 55,000; Neosho, Missouri, 50,000; Northville, Michigan, 35,000 and Austin, Texas, with 30,000.

The salmon hatcheries in the Northwest attracted enthusiastic crowds but because most of these plants are some distance from the regular tourist routes only about 25,000 persons actually viewed the operations during the year. Most popular of this group was Spring Creek, near Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River, the only salmon hatchery near a beaten path. About 5,000 visitors were attracted there. Thousands more watched the fish go up the fish ladder at the dam. The Coleman hatchery near Shasta Dam in California and the Leavenworth hatchery near Grand Coulee Dam in Washington also drew many visitors considering the relative inaccessibility to the average tourist.

Those who visit trout and salmon hatcheries have an opportunity to see more hatchery work than do those who visit the warm-water rearing areas and hatcheries, officials point out. This is due to the difference in cultural methods and

the general lay-out of the hatcheries. Warm-water fish spend much of their time in large ponds and get away from the shore whenever visitors come near. Hence, wherever possible small aquaria are maintained to permit visitors to get a "close-up" of the fish. Salmon and trout are held in concrete ponds and are more readily seen by visitors. And since the rearing of trout and salmon is almost a continuous process these can be seen at practically any time of the year.

The Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a large aquarium in the Commerce Building in Washington, D. C. About half a million persons a year view the many exhibits there.

x x x