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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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PROPOSED MILES CITY HATCHERY WILL BE ANOTHER STEP IN FWS WARM-WATER FISH PROGRAM

Recent legislation enacted by the Congress has authorized the Fish and Wildlife Service to construct a \$465,000 warm-water fish hatchery at Miles City, Montana, John L. Farley, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, reports. No appropriation of funds for the project has been made as yet. The hatchery, when built, will be another step in the Service's program for the development of hatcheries to meet the increasing demand for warm-water fishing.

In Montana alone there are 50,000 farm ponds, according to Soil Conservation Service estimates. Mr. Farley pointed out facilities of the present hatchery at Miles City are very inadequate in the face of current demands and rehabilitation of the old plant to meet present and future requirements is impossible. The present hatchery was constructed in 1927.

At the proposed hatchery, there will be 40 acres of ponds, 16 one-acre each and eight three acres each. Provision is also made for a service building which will include a hatchery room for pike eggs, three residences, a water supply development and all other necessary facilities.

In 1955, the Montana Fish and Game Department and the Fish and Wildlife Service made a comprehensive survey of prospective hatchery sites below the Fort Peck Dam as well as at Miles City. From the survey, it was evident that the water which would be released from Port Peck Dam would be too cold to assure the propagation of warm-water fish. Tests showed that the water from the dam would range from 35 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter to 56 degrees in the summer. Large-mouth bass spawn at temperatures between 55 degrees and 60 degrees, while bluegill require water temperatures near 80 degrees for reproduction.

The farm pond is becoming increasingly important in the realm of sport fishing. Besides offering a source of food to a farm family, it also provides angling for many others who for various reasons cannot enjoy stream or lake fishing. It also takes a lot of pressure from natural game fishing areas.

Last year alone, the Fish and Wildlife Service filled applications for fish for approximately 25,000 federally created farm ponds and it still had a large number of applications pending at the end of the year.

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