



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to PM's, AUGUST 3, 1960

FARM POND FISHING SURVEY COMPLETED

More than 20 million man-days of recreational fishing were provided in 1959 to at least five million persons as a result of the farm pond fish stocking program of the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of the Interior reports.

A recent survey conducted by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife indicates that one-fourth of all persons fishing in fresh water in 1959 fished at least once in a pond that had been stocked by the Bureau. Between 30 and 40 thousand ponds are stocked annually with fish produced at the national fish hatcheries. Largemouth bass and bluegill sunfish were the primary species used in the stocking program while redear sunfish were stocked in combination with the bluegills in the southeastern States and channel catfish were stocked in 155 ponds in the southwest.

One thousand ponds over a 25-State area which had been stocked in 1957, were selected at random and covered by the survey. The survey was conducted by personal interview with pond owners. About 958 of the 1,000 ponds were found to be providing some fishing in 1959.

Farm ponds provide a great deal of family-type recreational fishing in the United States. Twenty-three percent of the pond anglers were women and 25 percent were children 15 years old or under. Such factors as nearness to home, greater safety, and possible lower cost contributed to this high percentage.

The survey indicated that fishing success in farm ponds is unusually good. Among the 958 ponds that had fishing, the average catch of largemouth bass was 46 fish per acre in 1959. Since the bass were stocked as small fingerlings and at rates varying from 50 to 100 fish per acre, this average shows a very high return. The catch of bluegills and other sunfish averaged 228 fish per acre. Farm pond owners reported satisfactory to excellent fishing in 82 percent of the ponds covered by the survey.

Most farm ponds are built with several different purposes in mind. However, the survey showed that recreation uses were among the dominant reasons for constructing ponds, with fishing rating very high. Purposes other than fishing included livestock water, irrigation, swimming, and wildlife.

The survey found that stocking farm and ranch ponds with fish provided by national fish hatcheries is making a substantial contribution to outdoor recreation, and at a relatively low cost.

Technical workers and other interested persons can obtain copies of the survey report, Circular 86, from the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington 25, D. C.

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