Flanagan or Sater - Int. 2879

# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

*INFORMATION SERVICE*

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to PM's, FEBRUARY 18, 1957

FWS REPORT LISTS ACTIVITIES IN FISCAL 1956

According to the annual report of the Fish and Wildlife Service for the year ending June 30, 1956, released today by Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton, the Service, among other things--

Acquired 41,152 acres of land for wildlife conservation purposes with another 15,422 acres pending title conveyance--

Aided in the establishment of the first voluntary standard of grade and condition for fishery products--

Increased its salmon, trout and warm-water fish production 31 percent by weight--

Continued its vigorous salmon restoration program in Alaska--

Began large-scale testing of several electronic devices used in fish guiding, counting and other fishery research--

Made numerous studies relative to shellfish--

Found two promising selective poisons for use in sea lamprey control out of 4,600 compounds tested over a period of time--

Conducted numerous oceanic research problems for the benefit of the fishing industry--

Was host to nearly seven million visitors at the various wildlife refuges--

Continued the protection of agricultural and livestock economic values in the face of a predator menace which is growing in some localities and--

Conducted the first national survey of sport hunting and fishing expenditures. (Results announced after fiscal year covered by the report)--

Reported on the fish and wildlife aspects of 344 water development projects proposed by other Federal agencies--

Reported the results of a four-year study on the relationship of prairie potholes to duck production--

Through the Federal Aid in the Fish and Wildlife Restoration program helped 17 States create 23 new fishing lakes and, in line with the congressional amendment to the Pittman-Robertson Act authorizing the distribution of the $13,500,000 backlog of the game restoration funds in five equal annual installments--apportioned the first such installment to the States.

Concluded 209 sport fish and game violations in Alaska; terminated 1,407 cases in the United States Federal Courts (exclusive of Alaska); assisted (with Service game agents acting as deputy State game wardens) in the apprehension of 4,444 persons who violated State game laws--

Through exploratory fishing cruises discovered a yellowfin tuna resource in the southern part of the Gulf of Mexico, located a red shrimp resource in the deep waters of the South Atlantic and a fishing ground for large lobsters in New England deep water, found a new ocean perch fishing area and made special studies of the Maine sardine fishery--

Conducted numerous research projects on the effect of insecticides and pesticides on fish and wildlife, worked on the development and improvements of repellents as a management tool; explored for newer and better methods of warehouse and field rodent control; studied mosquito control methods consistent with duck marsh preservation--

Through a technological research program the Service isolated certain chemical components of fish oil which may pave the way for the creation of many new products.

Two fishery motion pictures in sound and color were completed during the year and a third started. These films are financed by interested segments of the fishing industry.

Daily fish market reports were released in key areas from seven strategically located reporting offices. Fish transportation and importation problems were studied. Monthly bulletins were issued on landings in 12 coastal States and Ohio on Lake Erie.

Vigorous restoration measures were continued in the Alaska salmon fisheries. The pink salmon fishery in Prince William Sound was closed completely and trap fishing in southeastern Alaska reduced by 50 percent; more protection was given salmon in the various bays, and the stream guard program was intensified.

Restrictions were invoked and lake fertilization experiments conducted in red salmon areas.

The Pribilof seal harvest was 65,638 skins; 52,957 skins were sold at auction for $4,849,610.

Research on the Atlantic salmon, shad and striped bass continued in eastern waters. In the Northwest considerable laboratory research was done on electrical fish guiding devices to divert salmon into bypass channels, and on other devices to protect young salmon from squawfish.

Instruments which record the passage of fish through underwater orifices, giving the direction of the movement, were perfected and put into commercial production. Intensive studies of fish behavior during migration were made at the Fisheries-Engineering Research Facility established at Bonneville Dam with the cooperation of the Corps of Engineers. A "sonic tracker," which when attached to a fish sends signals by which the path of the fish can be followed, was developed.

Extensive studies of salmon races were made in accordance with the program outlined by the North Pacific Fisheries Commission.

Studies of the king crab in Bristol Bay, the oyster in Long Island Sound, raft culture for oysters in Massachusetts, soft clams in New England and the role of chemical elements in the metabolism of marine organism were among the other research projects.

Major attack on the sea lamprey which has ruined fisheries in three of the Great Lakes was centered in Lake Superior where lake trout are still commercially important. All lamprey work was done in accordance with the general program of the International Great Lakes Fisheries Commission.

A new research unit, Ocean Research, located at Stanford University, was opened in September 1955, to study the relationships of climate and ocean conditions to the sudden fluctuations in numbers of commercial fish.

Research continued on sockeye salmon "virus" and on the blue-sac disease.

Management practice begun at Yellowstone Lake in 1953 resulted in 1955 in the highest fishing success since 1949. There were 349,757 fish caught in 520,898 hours of fishing, or one fish for each hour and a half of effort.

To meet the growing demand for sport fishing on Federal lands and for fish for federally sponsored farm ponds the Service produced 22 species of fish at 91 hatcheries during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1956.

The Lower Columbia River Fisheries Development Program, in its eighth year, brought more evidence of the soundness of that program. Eleven hatcheries have been completed since the program started and two more--at Eagle Creek, Oregon, and Carson, Washington--were nearing completion when the fiscal year closed.

The Service hatcheries produced 1,805,711 pounds of fish during the calendar year 1955, 31 percent more than in 1954. Of this amount, 1,060,000 were six inches long or longer. Most of these were trout.

Snake Creek National Wildlife Refuge on Garrison Reservoir in North Dakota, a 24,430 acre refuge, was the largest unit of the 41,152 acres acquired for wildlife purposes during the fiscal year, the report shows. (A later survey placed Snake Creek acreage at 24,623). Of the 41,152 acres, 13,783 represented purchases and 27,369 were acquisitions other than purchases. McNary National Wildlife Refuge in Washington, 2,849 acres, was acquired during the year; Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge in Florida was increased by 71 acres; small acreages were added at Lower Souris in North Dakota and Marrowstone Wildlife Management Area in Washington. Other large purchases for existing refuges include; 5,942 acres for the Columbia Refuge in Washington; 1,990 for Malheur in Oregon, and 1,336 for Tewaukon in North Dakota. The lands acquired by purchase or otherwise are in 15 States.

Extensive laboratory and field experiments have been carried on in the South and in the Northwest on the development of methods to protect seeds from birds and rodents. Considerable success is reported.

The insecticide studies have been aimed at developing products, formulae and procedures which will give the farmer the most help with the least damage to fish and wildlife.

Seal studies indicated that the fur seal is not a salmon predator. Out of 205 stomachs studied during the project only one of them showed any evidence of salmon. Seal hookworm studies were continued.

There were 451 fish and game law violation cases pending in Federal Courts other than Alaska at the start of the fiscal year July 1, 1955 and only 247 at the end of the fiscal year. During the 12-month period, 1,203 cases were added and 1,407 terminated. Most of the cases were for violation of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act. Fines and costs amounted to $69,033; jail-days totaled 5,474 and probation days 22,918.

Service and other Federal officials, operating on a special project in Texas, arrested 44 persons and had warrants for 10 more in the greatest roundup of market hunters in the history of United States game law enforcement.

Service game agents, acting as State deputy wardens assisted in the arrests and conviction of 4,444 persons charged with violations of the State fish and game laws. Fines in these cases aggregated $146,447 ($3,703 suspended); jail days, 3,795 (3,110 suspended); probation days, 227,820.

In Alaska there were 209 cases involving violation of Federal sport fish and game laws. These resulted in 153 convictions, two dismissals, four acquittals and 50 cases settled by seizure of contraband articles. Seizure included 50 guns, 31 traps and numerous game animals, fish and furbearers.

A study made by the University of Alaska showed that sport fishing is a multimillion dollar annual business in Alaska. The big problem facing fish and wildlife management there is to spread the hunting and fishing pressures which are concentrating on the more accessible areas.

Of the 344 reports issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service during the fiscal year relative to the fish and wildlife aspects of water projects planned by other Federal agencies, 131 were on Corps of Engineers work, 58 on Bureau of Reclamation projects, 100 on various developments planned by the Department of Agriculture, 39 on Federal Power Commission applications and 16 special investigations.

In accordance with the Coordination Act, as amended in 1946, plans were completed for the use of six water development areas for wildlife management.

The creation of six large federally financed impoundments on the Missouri River is creating many fishery management opportunities and responsibilities.

The 900 mile Upper Mississippi navigation pool system has created many fishery problems.

Fiscal 56 marked the completion of the fifth year of operation of the Dingell-Johnson Act for the Restoration of Fish. The year was marked by the States giving special attention to management, evaluation of projects, development of techniques, and studies on specific problems.

Seventeen States created 23 new fishing lakes; five States undertook stream development including bank control, fencing and shrub planting; 12 States had trash fish elimination projects; 14 States worked on land-use facilities for public access and parking; 19 States acquired 6,300 acres of land and leased 57,000 acres more for lake sites and another 10,600 acres for both hunting and fishing use.

Waterfowl activities received a large share of the States attention on wildlife restoration, with 44 States working on 150 projects. Thirty-four States spent $2,500,000 on farm-game habitat improvement; 16 States and Alaska trapped and transplanted numerous animals such as deer, antelope, snowshoe hares; 32 States purchased 135,000 acres of big game range and leased another 114,000. Forty-four States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands conducted investigations on many of their respective problems.

The report also indicates that Western United States generally has suffered increased damage to game and livestock during the past year because of predators.

The current interest in uranium and the accompanying influx of prospectors into desert areas has seriously interfered with predator control work in those areas.

A surplus number of bears have destroyed considerable young timber in the Pacific Northwest. Coyotes were getting "weeder" geese in California until the Service did some control work.

The Service has also been able to help in clean grain campaigns by rodent control work and to work closely with State and local authorities in these places where rabies in wild animals is a threat.

x x x