DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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SECOND ATLANTIC SALMON APPEARS IN CONNECTICUT

The second Atlantic salmon caught in the Connecticut River in recent weeks has brought new hope that the species can be restored to this part of its original range, the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today.

The 10-pound fish, found 86 miles upstream from the river's mouth, is in good condition and is being kept alive to ripen for spawning. The one caught in a net June 3 was dead when discovered. Previously, except for a few caught in the early 1950's, no Atlantic salmon are believed to have been taken in the Connecticut River in over a century.

Massachusetts State fishery biologists caught the salmon alive. State personnel and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fish biologists transported it to the Service's Berkshire National Fish Hatchery in Massachusetts where it will ripen.

The recent catch was spotted June 23 in the counting chamber of the Holyoke Water Power Company fish ladder on the Connecticut River in Massachusetts. The water temperature there was 75 degrees. After being transferred to the Berkshire Hatchery, the fish was gradually acclimated to 50 degree water.

The 33-inch fish, a male, will be kept in a pool with other salmon until it's ready for spawning in the fall. Then it will be used to fertilize eggs taken from female Atlantic salmon.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and several New England States have a cooperative salmon restoration program on four major rivers in the Northeastern United States.

Other major rivers involved in this restoration program which began in 1967 are the Penobscot and Union Rivers in Maine, and the Merrimack River in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Many thought rivers outside of Maine could never again support this hardy fish because they are south of the Gulf of Maine where cold ocean currents flow.

Of those four rivers, Atlantic salmon have only been reestablished in significant numbers in the cold clear waters of the Penobscot and Union Rivers.

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