TRASH Food GAME

Fishermen use nets to trap trash fish and are shown here removing several hundred pounds of tench taken at one set near St. Maries. Rough fish were taken from Chatcolet and Hayden Lakes and slack water on the lower St. Joe River.

Trash fish, scourge of anglers and serious competitors with game fish for available food and space in Idaho fishing waters are serving a useful purpose as a hatchery food supplement.

Because of increasing difficulty in securing suitable fish feeds for hatchery fish production, the fish and game department is experimenting to determine if trash fish can fill food requirements. Horsemeat, for years a staple fish food, has practically disappeared from the market, and substitutes must be found.

To grind and process trash fish, the department has installed a machine at the Coeur d'Alene Fish Hatchery. This machine, known as a vertical pulp mill, grinds the material and separates bones, skin and scales from the flesh. The

Ed Rauser, left, and hatchery helper dump a barrel of tench into wire cage located immediately in front of grinding mill. Fish are then shoveled into mill for processing.

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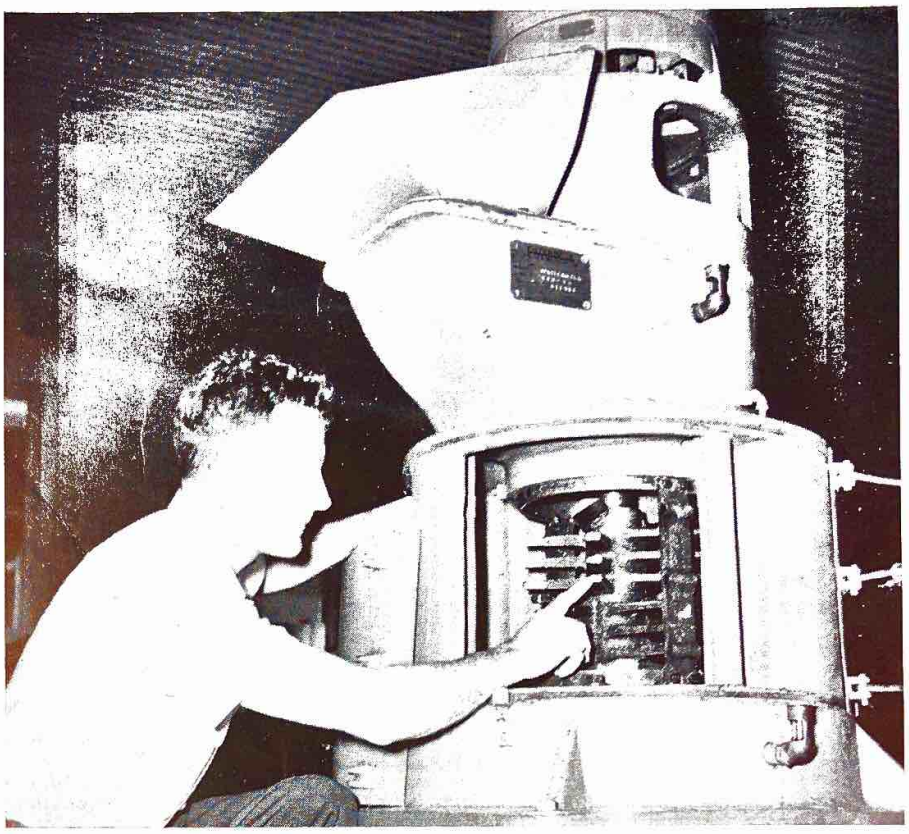
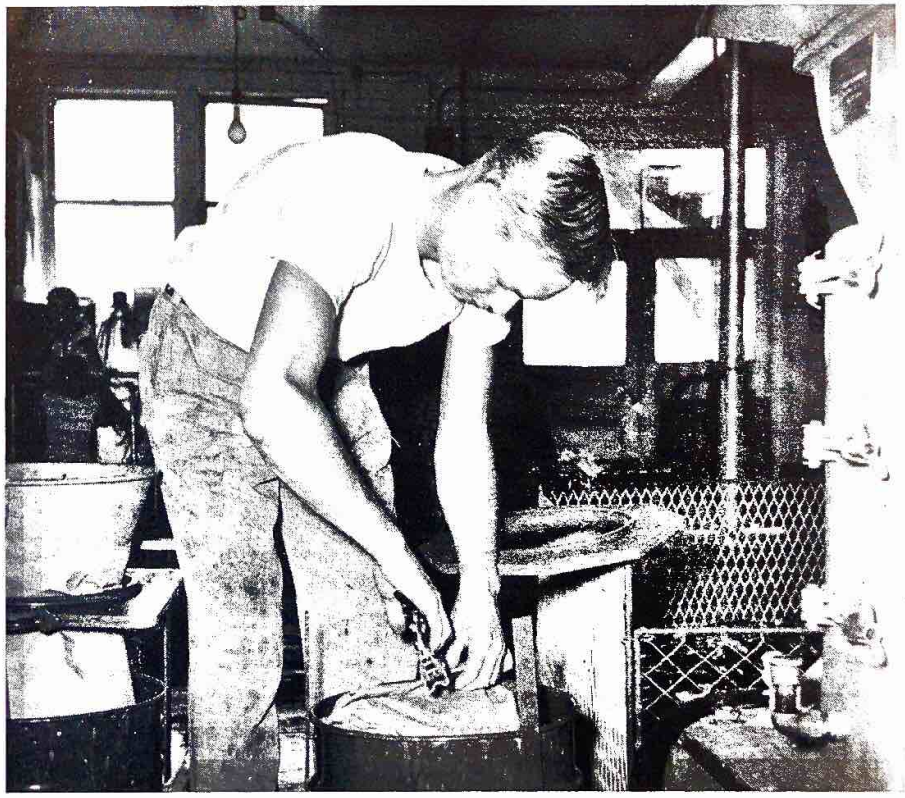
mill can handle approximately 1,000 pounds of trash fish per hour. Another machine has been placed in service at the Hagerman hatchery.

Tench is the chief source of supply for the Coeur d'Alene operation. Roughly 27 tons were processed at this hatchery in the period May 8-July 31 this year. The fish were taken from the lower St. Joe River and from Chatcolet and Hayden lakes.

Netting is done with a series of bullhead traps set at an average depth of six to eight feet. The traps are checked every other day and moved as the yield indicates. During the past summer, two commercial fishermen supplied about 35 tons of trash fish to the hatchery at Coeur d'Alene.

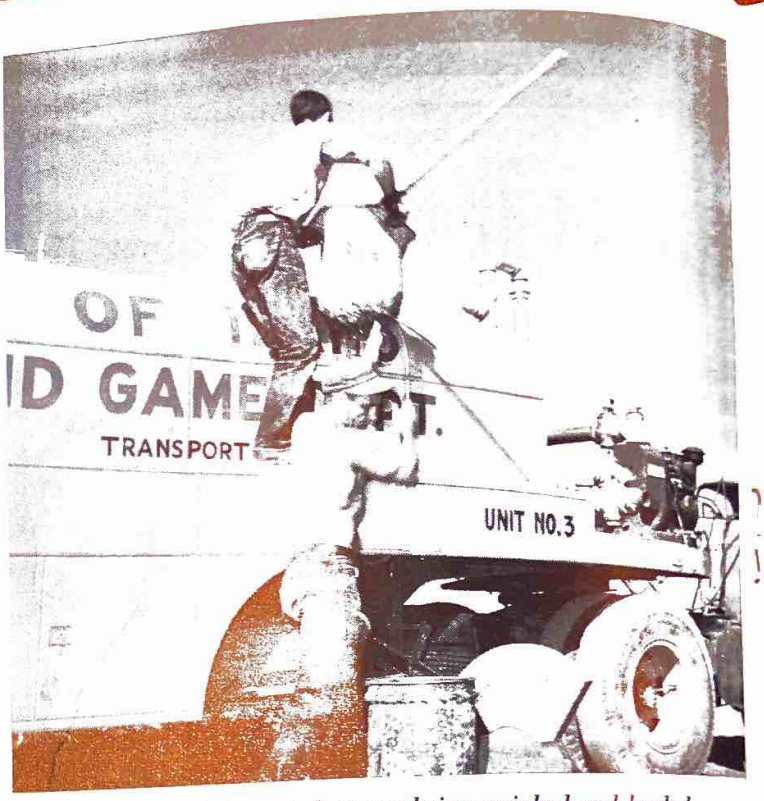


Ed Langworthy, superintendent at the Coeur d'Alene hatchery station shows the blades that grind the fish in the vertical mill presently in operation at the hatchery. Mill separates bones and skin from the flesh which drops below to be sacked.



Processed fish pulp is placed in waterproof paper bag and helper staples top after folding upper edge to prevent leakage. The fish food is frozen immediately and stored in a cold storage holding room before trucking to other hatcheries around the state.

Workmen start to gather trout in one of the large holding ponds at the Hagerman hatchery in preparation for loading into the huge transport. Trucks are loaded three times a week during the summer fish planting season. Fish are seined from this pond into concrete runway for netting and weighing.

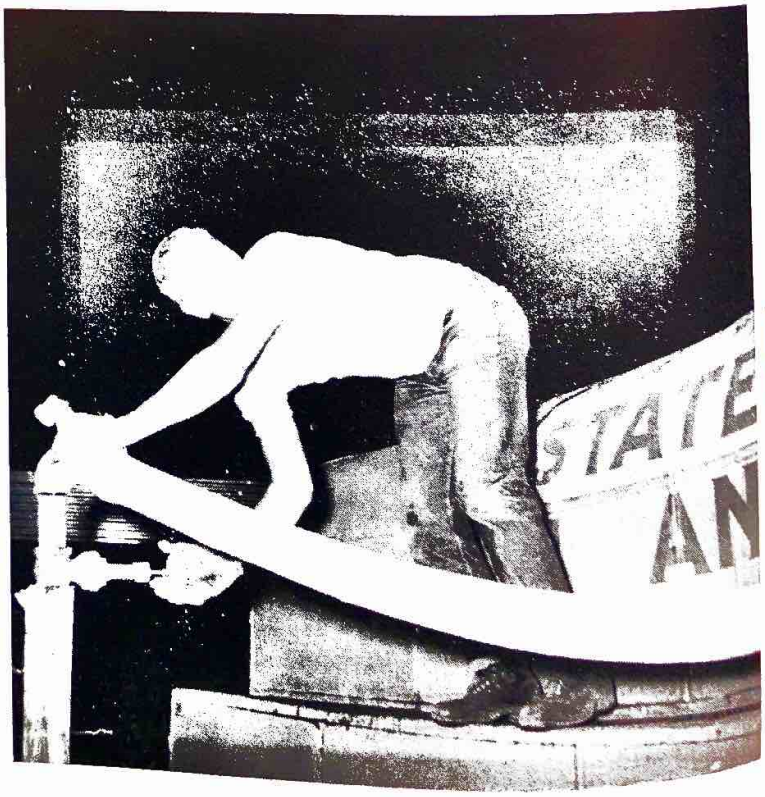


Legal size rainbow are being weighed and loaded into the transport for the first stage of the long trip to north Idaho. Transport tank is divided into two sections to prevent crowding. Water is aerated by motor and pumps through intake at upper right center. An auxiliary motor may be used if one unit fails.

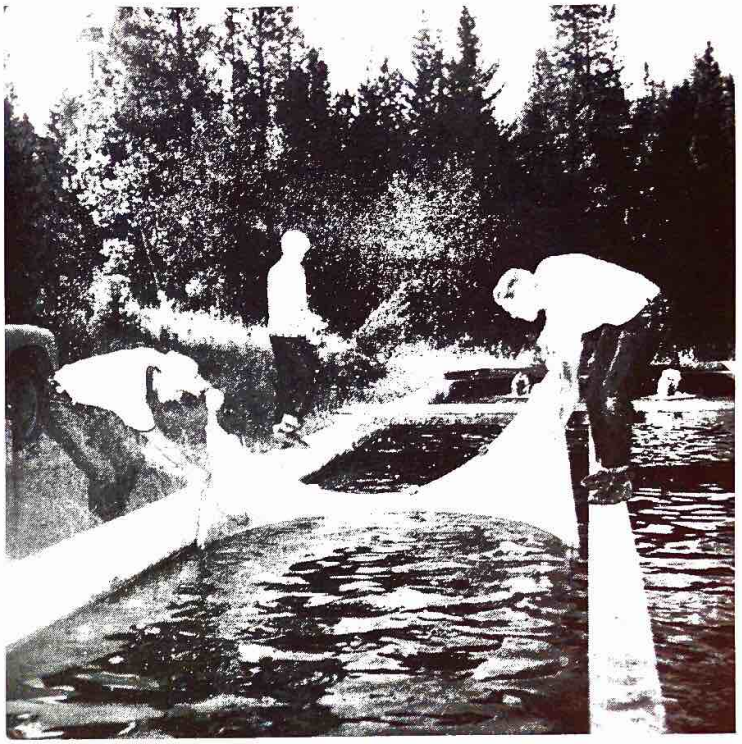
Trout Transpor

Frank Wilson, right, transport driver, and volunteer helper, start up portable loading steps to top of tank with tub of "keepers." It takes approximately 30 minutes to load to capacity with crew moving at a fast pace. Load is iced before leaving McCall and again at Lewiston en route north.

Frank Wilson stops at the Grangeville city water supply tank to replace water with fresh, cold water. The driver drains old water from left side of unit at same rate fresh water enters. A new driver takes over at Grangeville and finishes the run into redistribution stations or other hatcheries in the north end of the state.



Crew loads 1,800 pounds of ice to keep water cool and oxygen content at proper level during first stage of the run to McCall. Transport holds 1,500 pounds of trout and 1,500 gallons of water. Fish are moved to McCall where they are unloaded to "rest" several days before moving on north.



Trout are again seined from holding ponds at McCall as evening shadows move across the hatchery grounds. Fish are loaded late in the day so that the haul may be made during cool hours of the night. Many trout are planted by small truck direct from the McCall station going to lakes and streams in the Payette and Salmon River drainages.

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Mrs. Cecil Martin helps her hatcheryman husband at the Fernwood redistribution ponds where the trout are weighed and loaded for the final ride to a planting site in some river or stream. Small trucks are used for this work to permit access and use of mountain roads.

In they go! Five hundred miles from their rearing site, and approximately fifteen months after they hatched from tiny eggs, the legal sized rainbow are on their own. The rest of the story is up to the fisherman.