

Idaho Wildlife Review

PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY

BY

THE IDAHO STATE FISH AND GAME COMMISSION
BOISE, IDAHO

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The Idaho Wildlife Review is an official publication of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission and is distributed free of charge to any resident of the State of Idaho. Send name and address to: Idaho Fish and Game Dept., 518 Front Street, Boise, Idaho.

Out of state subscription rates are 50 cents per year.

COVER

A sleek bull elk crosses the ice on the snow-bound upper St. Joe River.

Conservation: Weekly or Weakly?

Yes, even wildlife has its week, officially known as National Wildlife Restoration Week, and it comes March 19-25. We realize fully that the public is besieged with weeks galore, and is sometimes a little weary of trying to obey faithfully the mandates of zealous "week" committees. Witness the confusion when "Eat More Garlic Week" and "Stop Halitosis in Red Gulch Week" fall on the same calendar dates, to cause the populace no end of concern.

The displays, speeches and accompanying hullabaloo will do little toward furthering the cause of conservation, unless each citizen boils the problem down to one point of view: "What am I doing toward conservation?"

Maybe this special wildlife week is a good time to examine ourselves, and find out if a lot of our conservation practices aren't just conversation practices. One good bush planted to provide necessary cover is worth many hours of discussion, wrangling and moaning about upland bird populations.

Many proposed conservation practices are as senseless and impractical as trying to raise tomatoes on a pool table; but still "eminent conservationists" cling to them and expostulate their virtues in the face of adversity.

We think a good motto for conservation week is "Don't talk; do." What are you doing to promote conservation? Time is as valuable as money. Activity is the keystone. Conservation is an exceedingly democratic function. If a citizen is interested in wildlife, and doesn't have a philanthropic budget, he can donate some of his time and work. Every person can contribute something, even if it is no more than an honest adherence to game laws and limits, so that all can enjoy and share Idaho's wildlife.

We believe the word "conservation" itself should have an overhauling, at least in the public mind. When conservation is mentioned, many people immediately think of lack. "We must conserve our natural resources." To many, this means just one thing: cut down on the take. Perusal of early conservation measures shows that before research unveiled many new ways to help wildlife, the only way to conserve was to reduce the killing. Carried to extremes this policy proved disastrous.

Let's think of conservation as building wildlife stocks, not just saving what we have for posterity, or as frequently happens to game not harvested, a useless death from senility or predation.

Thousands of people each year are becoming interested in wildlife; hunting, fishing, camping, photography and a multitude of other uses of the wonderful outdoors. Let's build wildlife stocks so that these thousands can have a surplus to harvest each year.

A flamingo can't live on an iceberg; wildlife can't survive and increase in barren habitat. By cooperation, intelligent reasoning, and the desire to fully understand and aid wildlife restoration, we can build up our habitat and our wildlife with beneficial results for everyone. But it takes doing.

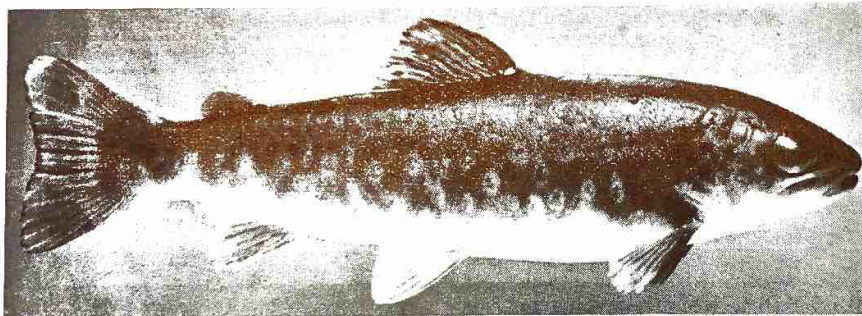
The steam that blows the whistle will never run the train.

—J.R.A.

FISHES OF IDAHO No. 9

BROWN TROUT*Salmo trutta fario*—LinnBy JAMES C. SIMPSON
Idaho Fish Culturist

The brown trout fortunately has not become established in many waters of Idaho, even though fish planting records indicate that it has been widely distributed. Since 1948 this species has been stocked in sections of three streams within the state: Lower Weiser River, Snake River below Minidoka Dam, and the Portneuf River below the falls near Lava Hot Springs. The success of failure of these releases is not definitely known. However, indications are that it has become established in the Portneuf and the Snake rivers.

*Brown, or Loch Leven Trout*

Brown trout are not a native fish of the United States. They were first introduced from Germany in 1883 by the U.S. Fish Commission. At the time of introduction, they were called German brown trout. Later, another strain of this species, known as the Loch Leven trout, were introduced from Scotland. Both strains have been cross-bred by fish culturists until a clear strain of either has almost completely vanished.

As a sport fish, the brown trout is not nearly so gamey as are the rainbow and cutthroat. However, it will survive in waters of higher temperature (70° to 80° F. if oxygen content of water is sufficient) and greater turbidity (if pollution is not too great) than will our native trout. It, therefore, is of value in stocking some waters which are now barren of trout or waters having a low trout population. Its food consists of fish, aquatic and terrestrial insects, fresh-water shrimp and small molluscs. Brown trout tend, to some extent, to be a

night feeder. It is not so readily "fished out" as are other trouts. Dr. Paul R. Needham, in his book, "Trout Streams," points out that brown trout feed more regularly at the surface than do brook or rainbow, and show a preference for a dry fly.

The size of brown trout often runs four to seven pounds, although specimens have been taken which weigh as much as 34 pounds. The scales are medium in size for trout, running 115 to 150 along the lateral line with the average about 125. The color is generally brownish with red spots interspersed with black spots on the sides. In the young the red spots are within a bluish circle, while in older specimens the bright spots are often ringed with white or pale pink. In young fish the adipose fin usually has an orange tip and may have one or two orange spots. The tail is without black spots or at most a few along the upper margin. Old fish often develop hooked jaws.

Spawning takes place from October to February, the season varying with different waters. It is relatively non-migratory except for some upstream movements during spawning season and subsequent return to larger waters after spawning. A stream with a gravel bed is the preferred habitat for spawning.

Payette Club Begins New Program System

The Payette Lakes Wildlife Federation at McCall has inaugurated a new club meeting plan. Instead of holding a general meeting each month, the club specializes on one subject each meeting, such as "Big Game," "Upland Birds," or maybe "Predators." Speakers and illustrative movies are lined up well in advance of meetings, enabling the club to get authorities on the various subjects as speakers.

Game Head Urges Hunt Fee Return

Fees should be returned to special hunts. That was the opinion of Idaho game management workers unanimously expressed following one of the most ragged special hunt years since the permit system was inaugurated.

Last year the state legislature, in an attempt to give more equitable distribution of special hunt permits, passed a law removing fees from special hunts, and providing that a successful hunter couldn't draw for the same species for three years.

Nearly a fourth of the 9,480 permit holders didn't go hunting in special hunt areas this year, P. J. McDermott, Jr., big game supervisor reported. The 2,270 persons failing to utilize their hunting permits deprived that many hunters, with serious intentions of hunting, of getting permits.

McDermott said the failure to remove more than 2,000 animals seriously affected some critical range areas, where controlled harvesting is vitally necessary to keep the herd commensurate with available range.

Interviews with hunters revealed that many were reluctant to go into special hunt areas because of the three-year penalty clause, and preferred to take their chances each year outside of special hunt areas. Some permittees admitted applying for hunts because they were free and "we just wanted to see if we could draw or not."

Game management is not a haphazard system. It depends upon operation of several factors; on weather, freedom from disease, harvest and other affecting conditions. Many factors cannot be controlled, but harvest is one that can be rigidly set, providing the game department has the necessary freedom of action to regulate the take.

McDermott pointed out that when hunters had an investment in the special hunt permit they were more likely to use it. Former year's figures show that only a very small percentage of permittees failed to go hunting under the fee system.

Special hunts entail added expense. Checking stations must be maintained, more office work results from checking licenses, handling permits and compiling lists. Since special hunts are the only way the department can open legislative game pre-

Fish Tagging Helps Determine Percentage Of Hatchery Trout in Fishermen's Creels

Fishermen everywhere are interested in what happens to hatchery reared and planted fish. They may well ask how many of these trout reach the fisherman's creel the first season after the plant? How many survive to the next year? How many the third year? What is the best size to plant, fry fingerlings, or legal size? Do spring plantings provide better fishing than fall plantings?

These are problems of the stream and must be answered on the stream. The practical method to obtain the answers is to mark fish when they are released, and check the fisherman's creel during the following seasons.

The results will naturally vary with lakes, reservoirs, creeks, and rivers. Winter conditions may change from year to year. The flow of the water will vary, and stream beds may become altered by floods or domestic practice. Different trout species will show widely separated results in waters that may appear to the casual observer to be identical.

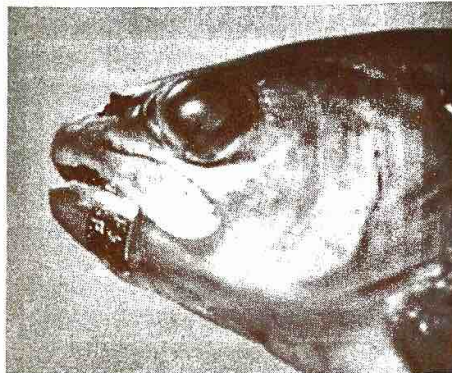
Tagging studies have been made in Idaho on a limited basis. Adult fish were tagged in the dorsal fin at the spawn-taking station above the Mackay Reservoir in 1942. The trout averaged 14 inches in length and half male and half female fish were marked. Two hundred trout were tagged and released after being spawned at the traps on Warm Springs and Parsons creeks.

Twenty-two tags were returned to the game department the same season. All but one of the trout were caught in the reservoir and waters within two miles of the release site. One trout was caught in the Copper Basin area on the upper Big Lost River where it had migrated upstream a distance of 50 miles. No banded fish were caught the following year. Department biologists were of the opinion that many of the bands had pulled loose from the dorsal fin, as they were susceptible to rubbing action, and could not be securely anchored.

One truck load of cutthroat trout were marked by clipping their fins and released in Coeur d'Alene Lake during the summer of 1948. A number were reported caught the same season from the lake. As a clipped fin could easily go unrecognized, however, many of the anglers failed to

report any marked trout that might have been in their creel.

During the early summer of 1949 approximately 600 rainbow trout from 8 to 10 inches in length were tagged and released in Big Wood River waters. Prizes were offered by local concerns for the return of certain numbered tags, in effort to get all possible tag returns. Complete re-



Jaw-tagged trout. Metal tag doesn't interfere with fish feeding, stays put on jaw better than on gill cover.

turns have not been compiled to date, however, over 50 per cent of the tags have been returned by fishermen during the past summer. These figures indicate a substantial survival of legal size hatchery reared fish for at least during the same season as the plant. Tags returned from fish caught during the coming 1950 season will indicate winter survival.

The New York Division of Fish and Game made a study of brown trout survivals on two of their most important trout streams. Tagged or fin clipped trout were planted each spring and fall during the experimental period. The spring planted fish were 6.8 inches in length—the fall planted trout were 10 inches in length. Information derived from this experiment conducted over a three-year period showed:

- (1) Hatchery trout made up 85.5 to 90 per cent of the anglers' catches.
- (2) Fall planted trout showed up better in the early season catches.
- (3) Spring planted trout showed up better in the late season catches.
- (4) The most recently stocked trout were not always the first caught.
- (5) Survival of yearling and older trout beyond the first year after planting is negligible.

(6) Over 60 per cent of the stocked trout stayed in approximately the same spot as planted.

The facts show that the carryover of hatchery plantings into subsequent years is very small, should place an important limitation on the large, expensive to raise trout. It was also brought out that about the time these fish are sexually mature, they are present in such small numbers that they contribute little to the maintenance of the stream.

New York continued their studies with marking and stocking of fingerlings and recent samplings of anglers' creels have shown that these fingerlings stream grown to legal size can contribute to a large part of the angler's catch, at less expense and over a longer period of time.

Research on any phase of wildlife is costly and usually such a slow process that many times the public either loses interest or demands results that will show as increased populations. The tagging or marking of planted fish will give biologists the answer to some questions. It certainly will not provide all the answers, and the studies should be confined to the problem waters on a priority basis.

Multiflora Needs Early Cultivation

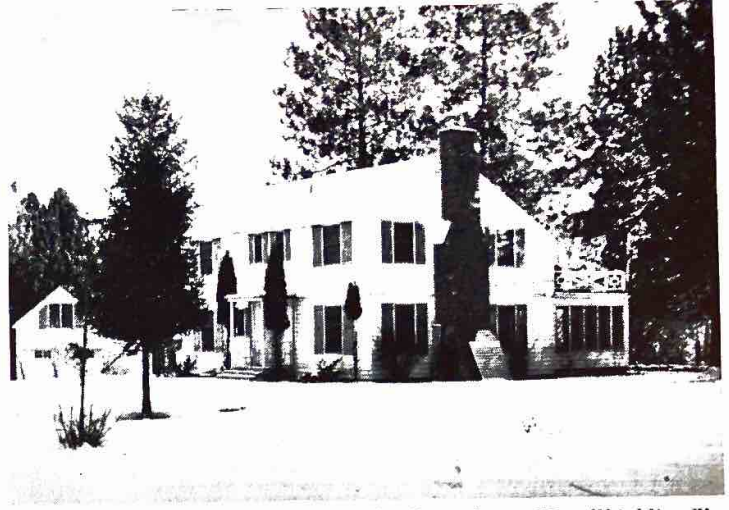
The up and coming multiflora rose, hailed by upland bird biologists as a major cover plant to aid wildlife populations, is a hardy plant, but cultivation will assist growth to nearly double their size in one season.

Cultivation during the first year or two will materially aid the rose in its start toward becoming a refuge for many forms of small wildlife, the technicians advise. Field checks have shown this simple practice more than pays with increased plant growth and all cooperators are urged to benefit by the findings.

Approximately 33,000 multiflora rose seedlings have been planted to provide future cover and aid in controlling soil erosion on Idaho farms during the past two years. The plantings are a part of a habitat development project under provisions of the Wildlife Restoration Act.



Buttonhook Bay, part of the fish and game department's land acquisition at the Farragut Naval base. Area will be used for wildlife studies and public access property.



One of residences included in land purchase. Note "highlined" arbor vitae bushes in front of dwelling which deer have used for winter feed.

Farragut Property Acquired

The Idaho State Fish and Game Commission during their December special session, gave final approval for plans to acquire land and improvements located at the former Farragut Naval Training Center, from the General Services Administration.

The commission approved the purchase of 37.9 acres of land at a price of \$9,695.00 during the October session. The purchase of an additional 95.5 acres lying adjacent to Idlewild Bay along the north shore line, was sanctioned by the commission. The approved price for this parcel of land was \$49,985.00.

Under terms of the proposal, the fish and game department will receive in addition 3,816 acres of land, all roads, the perimeter fence, thirteen buildings, pumphouse No. 8 with

its equipment, and all underground facilities at the Married Officers Quarters Area.

Certain properties on the north side of the base that were formerly included in the original townsite of Bayview, and a small area along the south shore of Bayview Bay proper, were retained by General Services Administration for disposal to the public.

This sizable acquisition by the game department is for fish and wildlife conservation purposes. The area has been a game refuge since it was established by the navy in the early years of the war. The facilities may be required in the future for research and study programs as a part of the Idaho Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Idaho.



The brig, which formerly held unruly gobs, may be used for a district warehouse by the fish and game department. Huge cement-floored building is ideal for storage and equipment dispersal center.

Farm-Game Plan Helps Relations

Idaho's first year of farm-game cooperative plans in various sections of the southern portion of the state produced generally good results. Al Kiler, bird biologist operating out of Boise, has reported.

Farmers were sent a number of questions, and asked to give frank, straight-from-the-shoulder answers. Most were well satisfied, and some very enthusiastic over the first-year results. Glen Harper of Payette reported that the half-mile lane to his house was always full of cars road hunting in previous years, but this year, very little road hunting was noticed.

"Of course there was the usual small bit of vandalism, committed by thoughtless hunters who didn't care to perpetuate theirs or anyone else's hunting," Kiler said. He predicted an increase in the number of cooperators this year. The game department is going to exert every effort to expand the farm-game plan, which this year has proved effective in decreasing trespass, careless shooting and disregard for the farmer's rights.

Kiler complimented the sportsmen using farm-game projects on their strict observance of safety zones and asking for permission to hunt.

Half the farm-game cooperators want wildlife cover plantings on their farms, the bird biologist reported. "Our cover program is cooperative in every sense; it provides small game with food and cover, and helps the farmer hold his soil, fence his stock and add to the appearance of his farm," Kiler explained.

LETTERS

to the editor . . .

DEAR SIR: I would like to receive the *Wildlife Review*. In your August issue you say the mule deer have straight, and the white-tail have forked antlers. I claim the opposite is the case.

C. T. HODGSON, Culatesac, Idaho.

ED. NOTE: Reader Hodgson and several other sharp-eyed observers discovered the turnabout description of deer antlers given in the August issue. We want to thank Mr. Hodgson for "horning in" on the antler question; award a batch of onions to our near-sighted proofreader.

DEAR SIR: Please send me a copy of the *Wildlife Review*. I am a mailman and don't get to read all of it as I deliver them to other people. The magazine is very interesting.

D. S., Pocatello.

DEAR SIR: Why doesn't the game department plant pike or pickerel in Payette and some other Idaho lakes? They are a good game fish in the east.

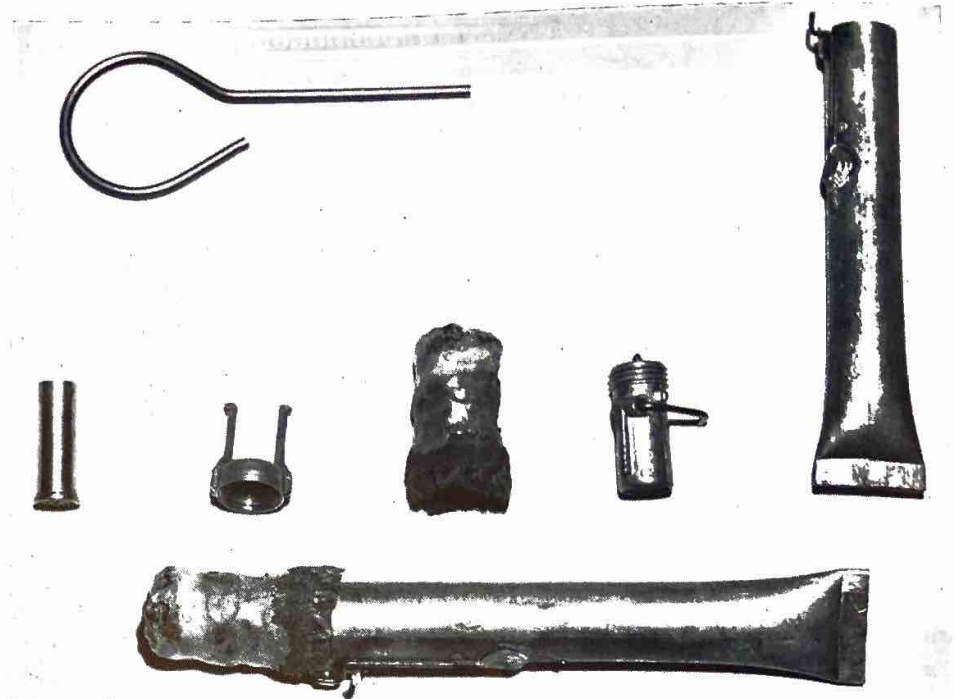
G. B. Weiser.

Ans. Pike and pickerel tend to spread rapidly once introduced to a watershed. They would soon infest nearly every water of the state if introduced in a connecting watershed such as the Payette river drainage. Idaho has much trout water which would be permanently ruined by the pickerel, which do not grow as big, are not as good eating, and are not in the same class as game fish. If an isolated watershed of sufficient size could be found, experimental plantings could be kept under control. Idaho's waters are interconnected by a web of rivers and streams. Carp have spread from one end of the state to another after their introduction near Boise many years ago.

DEAR SIR: I am a fifth grader, and I want to know how mountain goats jump off cliffs and land on their horns.

DONNY K., Twin Falls, Idaho.

Ans. They don't; that would be using their heads—but the wrong way. Mountain goat have soft, rubbery hoofs with a built-in pad to absorb shock. The soft hoofs enable mountain billies to clamber up steep rocks. The pad inside the hoof reduces the shock of jumping from rock to rock.



Getter-gun is shown above. Bottom: Completely assembled gun. Above: Cyanide cartridge, holder, scented wadding, trigger mechanism and tube. Cocking rod at top sets delicate trigger assembly. Coyote pulling on wad discharges cyanide gas from .38 shell into mouth, causing almost instant death.

Coyotes, Magpies and Bobcats Hunted by Predator Trappers

(Continued from page five)

break down if not taken during the first few days, depending upon the weather, and are harmless.

Question. Are the poison stations left out permanently.

Answer. No, a definite part of the control program is collection and burning of lethal baits after a set has completed its work.

Question. Does the game department pay a bounty on bears? I have heard that payment is made in some sections of the state for bear heads.

Answer. No. Some stockmen's groups pay cooperative trappers for bear protection in grazing areas, but the fish and game department contributes no money toward any fund used to kill bears.

Question. Our discussion has centered largely on the coyote. Is that the only predator you control?

Answer. No. The cougar is controlled to some extent by a bounty in the northern half of the state. Cougar populations are generally at a low ebb, and their breeding potential is not high. Bobcats are taken regularly by our predatory trappers.

Magpies will be trapped and nests destroyed under a new program started this winter.

Question. Mr. Murray, what would you summarize the predator control program's importance to be in game management?

Answer. I believe predator control is a necessary and important function of the state fish and game department. It does not, and should not occupy as much time or money as some other functions, but it will always be necessary and an integral part of management.

RETRIBUTION

We heard the other day of a farmer who caught a hawk alive and decided to do away with the bird by tying a stick of dynamite to one leg, lighting a short fuse, and releasing the bird. Everything came off according to schedule—except:

1. The hawk landed on the farmer's barn;
2. The explosion blew off the corner of the barn roof.

Moral: Man's misdeeds frequently come home to roost.

