

*Idaho Wildlife Review*

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BY

THE IDAHO STATE FISH AND  
GAME COMMISSION

BOISE, IDAHO

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## COVER

Salmon like these will soon be sliding into deep holes on Idaho's streams after a long trip up from the sea to their ancestral spawning grounds.

**Proof Is Stranger to Fiction . . .**

A petition to prevent the placing of any poison on public lands in Idaho has been prepared by the Idaho Outdoor Association, whose members are actively engaged in getting the 19,000 names necessary to have it placed on the ballot next fall. The petition makes it unlawful to place any poison for the control of any bird or mammal on any public land in the state of Idaho. On the surface, this would seem to be inspired by the highest idealism, designed to protect, conserve, and otherwise be of benefit to the people of the state.

However, even cursory investigation into the background of this petition, and examination of the motivation behind it reveals its impracticality, and chalks it up as the first step in a pattern to bring back the inefficiency and archaic practices of the bounty system.

The word poison is magic. It is a word to conjure with, to scare, to befuddle, to misrepresent. Proponents of the anti-poison measure will describe the Idaho landscape as nothing but a stinking mass of dead horse meat, dripping with deadly poison. Some charges which have been hurled have roamed so far afield as to border on the ludicrous. Seed-eating birds, vegetarian deer and elk and even the obvious scare-terms "women and children" have all been poisoned by coyote baits, according to claims made by the backers of this measure.

Actually, no proof has been offered that any other animals other than carnivores have ever been killed by poison put out for control of coyotes or magpies. An appeal to the sensitivity of prospective voters has been made by claims that poison is inhumane. Yet under the bounty system desired by this group, the most inhumane device ever used by mankind, the steel trap, would be paramount as a coyote-getter.

The plan is designed to knock out Idaho's cooperative predator control program (whose most effective methods of coyote and magpie control are poison and cyanide gas guns, both barred by the petition) and then set up a terrific clamor for restoration of the bounty system by claiming the coyotes and magpies are over-running the country.

We do not imagine that farmers of the state will be lulled into believing that the petition affects only wildlife and not their welfare. In 1949 the legislature appropriated \$20,000 as an emergency fund to battle jack-rabbits which were swarming over farmers' lands from sage-brush range land. An intensive poison campaign stopped the rabbit infestation. Most of this rabbit control work was done on public lands.

Under this petition, farmers would have no protection against an influx of rabbits or ground squirrels from nearby public land. Poisoning on private land would be permitted, but, like dandelions from the neighbor's lawn, rabbits and other rodents drift across land without regard to boundaries between public and private holdings. Idaho's vast acres of public grazing land form an immense breeding ground for hordes of rabbits and small rodents, which would roam uncontrolled over contiguous farm land . . . and nothing could be done about it!

The facts should decide this issue in the minds of Idaho's voting citizens. Propaganda for its passage may be exaggerated, unreal and designed to mislead or overwhelm. We invite the people of Idaho to ask for the facts, to stop effective predator control; to ask for the motivation behind the move of the measure; to ask for documentary proof that fur-bearers have been reduced in numbers because of predator control; and to ask themselves of Idaho's thousands of out-doors users can revert predator control back to rodents to benefit only a few.

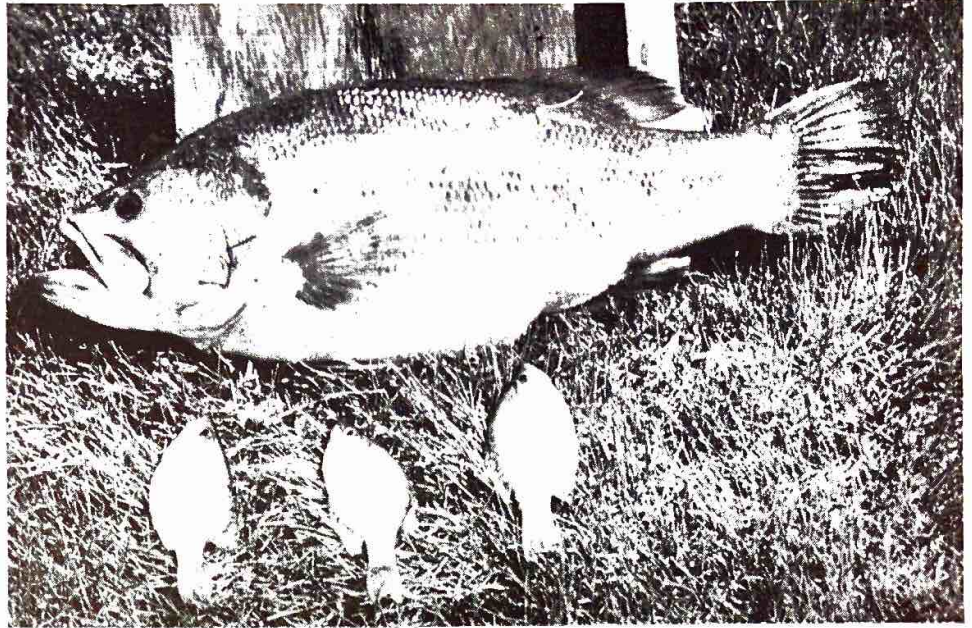
We invite Idaho's citizenry to contemplate the future effects of such a law on agriculture, livestock and game.

## White Bass Should Be Studied Prior To Introduction

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Several inquiries have been received at the Fish and Game Department regarding the feasibility of introducing white bass into certain Idaho waters. John C. Gatlin, Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, New Mexico, has advised us in the following letter of their experience with the white bass species.)

"We recommend that one proceed carefully in introducing the white bass into new waters. As to the fishing of this species in the Colorado river in Texas, the black bass continues to be the main source of sport fishing and the State Game Fish and Oyster Commission is making considerable effort to keep a large population of the black bass.

"White bass tend to overpopulate lakes having a suitable habitat. They soon become stunted and fishermen seldom take more than 9-inch or 10-inch specimens. They die in about three or four years and, being extremely prolific, it apparently is well to establish a large bag limit, or no limit at all. The fish deteriorate



*Fish life in small ponds may be unbalanced. This 21-inch largemouth bass was one of only four large game fish found in an overpopulated pond. The 7-pound lunker had plenty of feed. Stunted crappies (note the three adult fish above) a few perch and bullheads and many carp were the only other fish population in the pond.*

rapidly in warm weather. It is probable that in Oklahoma and Texas, more of the fish are thrown away by the fishermen as being spoiled, than are utilized for food.

"The Service does not propagate the species and plantings are made from adults procured by nets. Only a few fish are required to stock a large body of water, as a female will produce up to one-half million eggs.

"The fry are minute in size and once the white bass are established in a water source, they are next to impossible to exclude from adjoining areas by screening.

"Very truly yours,  
"JOHN C. GATLIN,  
"Regional Director."

## Anglers Harvesting Trout at Reservoir

Fishermen are reaping the harvest of a constructive rehabilitation program on Sublett reservoir, Forrest Hauck, fisheries biologist, reported. The 60-acre lake was treated with a fish toxicant in 1948. Thousands of trash fish were killed, and the reservoir re-stocked with trout.

After a year's closure to allow the newly-planted trout an opportunity to grow, Sublett was reopened to public fishing this season on June 4. A total of 680 persons turned out to try their luck. The fish proved reluctant to bite under such heavy fishing pressure, but gave ample evidence that they had grown considerably, and weren't being eaten out of house and home as they had been in former years. The 800 fish taken on opening day averaged three-fourths of a pound each.

Several other small lakes have been treated and replanted during the past two years, and are expected to provide good fishing in succeeding seasons.



*Survey of small lakes to determine surface area, depth and approximate water content insures an effective job of trash fish eradication. Many such fishing holes are on the game department's rehabilitation schedule. Lakes treated and restocked can produce tons of game fish instead of worthless species now overcrowding their waters.*

*A basketful of Beauties! Catches like this await ambitious anglers who hike into Idaho's top fishing spots . . . back country lakes.*

BACH PHOTO

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