



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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In an effort to re-establish one of America's favorite game fishes in the rivers of the northern Atlantic coast, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has planted approximately 68,000 salmon in the rivers of Maine this fall, Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, director of the Service, reported today to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes.

The salmon were planted in the St. George river, the East Branch of the Penobscot, the Pemaquid, and the Ducktrap rivers, it was announced. The St. George and the Penobscot received Atlantic salmon, which formerly was abundant in the rivers of the entire New England coast, but now is reduced to runs of insignificant size in a few Main rivers. The pemaquid and the Ducktrap received silver salmon, a west coast species which is popular with sportsmen of the Pacific coast because of its gamey qualities. All of the salmon were reared from the egg stage at the hatchery maintained by the Fish and Wildlife Service at Craig Brook, Maine.

The salmon rehabilitation work is being carried out jointly with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game, which has given assistance in all phases of the program, and also with the cooperation of interested sportsmen.

In its current experiments in the propagation of salmon, the Fish and Wildlife Service is trying to discover the age at which salmon should be planted to yield the largest returns from stocking, Dr. Gabrielson said. Formerly, salmon were planted when very small, and many were perhaps eaten by natural enemies or from other causes failed to survive and mature. The Service hopes to discover whether holding the salmon longer will reduce this mortality.

The Atlantic salmon planted this year developed from eggs taken in 1943 in the Miramichi river in New Brunswick and in the Penobscot river. About a third of the fish were marked by fin clipping for the purpose of future identification. Returns from this year's plantings will be compared with those from the experiments of other years in which somewhat older or younger fish were planted.

Similar experiments are being made in the planting of the silver salmon in an effort to establish this species on the Atlantic coast. The first plantings in New England were made too recently for results to be apparent. The eggs of the Silver salmon were shipped east from Oregon for hatching at Craig brook.

The Craig Brook hatchery is located near the site of the pioneer salmon cultural operations in America which Charles G. Atkins undertook for the former U. S. Fish Commission in 1872. Atkins supervised the collection of adult salmon as brood

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stock from various Maine rivers, held the fish in Craig pond and pounds built in nearby Lake Alamoosook, and cared for the eggs in an improvised hatchery in the basement of an old mill at the mouth of Craig brook. Mr. and Mrs. Atkins lived in tents while the early buildings of the hatchery were under construction.

The first systematic marking of fish carried out in either the United States or Europe was done by Atkins, who in 1872 devised a metal tag with which he marked Atlantic salmon at Bucksport, Maine. This tag, with slight modifications, is still in use in Europe.

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