

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
DIVISION OF INFORMATION NORTHWEST REGIONAL OFFICE  
P. O. BOX 3537  
PORTLAND 8, OREGON

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FINGERLING FISH SUCCESSFULLY AIR MAILED IN FWS EXPERIMENT

Air mail shipment of live fingerling fish of warm-water varieties may offer a potential solution to fish planting problems of the future, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay announced today.

One experiment in mailing largemouth bass and bluegill sunfish fingerlings has recently been concluded under the direction of John L. Farley, Director of Fish & Wildlife Service, and through the cooperation of FWS Regional Offices at Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Portland, Oregon.

The fingerlings were mailed from the U. S. Fish Cultural Station at Tishomingo, Oklahoma, to the FWS Regional Office at Portland in a double polyethylene plastic bag and were en route 44 hours.

The six bass and seven sunfish fingerlings arrived alive, and only one expired after being transferred to a small aquarium.

Prior to shipment, all air was expelled from the plastic bag and replaced with pure oxygen. The bag was then tightly packed in a small, corrugated cardboard box for mailing.

FWS officials said it is believed this method of shipping live warm-water fish has future possibilities in stocking farmers' ponds and other small bodies of water at lower costs.

The experiment indicated that 44 hours are approximately the limit of survival for fingerling fish transported by air mail. However, officials reported the package arrived in Portland in good shape, and that, except for one small sunfish, all the fingerlings seemed to have normal equilibrium. Water temperature in the bag on arrival was 65°, and biologists noted no obvious odors.

The outside of the polyethylene bag, which is sealed with a rubber band, was slightly moist on arrival. No moisture had penetrated to the outside of the cardboard box in which it was packed.

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