

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

For Release to PMS May 15, 1969

Carroll 343-5634

UNITED STATES, SOVIET UNION CONSUMMATE LARGEST TRADE OF FISH, FISH EGGS

The United States and the Soviet Union are this month consummating the largest trade of fish and fish eggs ever made between the countries, the Department of the Interior announced today.

The trade, handled by Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and the Soviet All-Union Research Institute of Marine Fisheries and Oceanography, involves shipment to Russia of an estimated 50,000 striped bass fry (newly hatched fish) and 50,000 steelhead trout eggs in exchange for an estimated 60,000 Amur pike eggs.

Exchanges are taking place May 7, May 12, and either May 19 or May 26 on the weekly direct New York-Moscow flights of Pan American and Aeroflot airlines.

The Federal Government will turn over the Amur pike, the only species of pike foreign to North America, to Pennsylvania's Fish Commission for genetics research and related projects. Some of the pike will be placed in reservoirs, raising the possibility of a new American sport fish if the Amurs thrive in Pennsylvania waters.

Last year's trade involved Amur pike for the first time and resulted in 4,000 healthy fry in Pennsylvania--some of which have grown to 20 inches.

This species, related to North American muskellunge, occasionally

reaches 35 pounds and 40 inches in length. It exists naturally in the Amur River which forms the border between China and the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union is seeking striped bass and steelhead trout as additional food fishes.

Striped bass fry involved in the trade are coming from North Carolina's Weldon State Fish Hatchery, while the steelhead trout eggs are being flown to New York from Eagle Creek National Fish Hatchery in Oregon.

Because fish involved in the trade are unhatched or at early stages of development, large numbers can be transported in small plastic bags inside insulated styrofoam containers. For instance, 10,000 three-day-old striped bass fry, weighing only about an ounce in all, or 50,000 steelhead trout eggs can be shipped in a five-gallon container.

Limited exchanges of fish and fish eggs have occurred between the countries since 1965. A series of striped bass, steelhead trout, and smallmouth bass shipments were made to Russia in return for shipments of sockeye salmon and, the past two years, Amur pike.

Transportation problems (now apparently ironed out with direct flights instituted within the past year) previously caused mass mortalities in the fish, and other difficulties. For instance, most of last year's Amur pike shipment was lost during a layover in Montreal, and in 1966, 10,000 smallmouth bass intended for the Soviet Union ended up at London Aquarium.

Record of previous exchanges:

			<u>To Soviet Union</u>	
<u>Year</u>		<u>Species</u>		<u>Quantity</u>
1965		Steelhead trout eggs		102,000
		Striped bass fry		50,000
1966		Striped bass fry		190,000
1968		Striped bass fry		25,000
		Steelhead trout eggs		50,000
			<u>To United States</u>	
1965	Kamchatka	River Sockeye salmon eggs		100,000
1968		Amur pike eggs		125,000
		x x x		