



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 1941.

KNOCKOUT DROPS AIDS IN SALMON SALVAGE WORK

Chemically induced "twilight sleep," to facilitate handling of salmon at Grand Coulee Dam, has become part of the practical field work in connection with salvage operations conducted there by the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

These operations are all aimed primarily to aid the fish in reaching fresh-water streams to spawn. Immediate purpose of the present work, Dr. Frederick F. Fish, Service biologist at the Seattle Pathology Laboratory, explains, is to discover by closer inspection of the salmon whether lowered oxygen content of the water and possibility of carbon dioxide poisoning—resulting from shipment in aerated tank-trucks from traps at Rock Island to Leavenworth—may "become limiting factors in the routine operations" at the latter point.

Anaesthetizing the fish, by blowing bubbles of carbon dioxide through the water in the taxiing trucks, slows the fish down and makes possible an appraisal of its physical condition upon arrival at Leavenworth in the trucks. It likewise enables Service scientists both to keep an accurate check on the reports turned in by Rock Island fish counters, and to sort the fish out

by species in different holding pools for subsequent spawning, and thus avoid the frequent handling which heretofore has resulted in considerable mortality.

By use of the new "slumber system," also, this sorting time for loads of fish from the Rock Island traps has been greatly reduced, and thus, too, identification of species is made considerably more accurate as compared with results obtained by previous handling methods. An average of seven to eight fish per minute can now be examined with the light carbon dioxide concentration used which puts the fish "not quite out."

"No evidence has appeared," says Fish, "that the anaesthesia administered is in any way detrimental to these fish."