

Forwarded to Mr. Higgins 9/11/46

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SALMON

(Summary for the meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, September 1946)

The report forwarded to Mr. Higgins on May 3, 1946, "The New England Salmon Restoration Program", covers the background of the salmon restoration work and an outline of the objectives, program, and progress made prior to the spring of 1946. This report has been read and approved by the Commissioners of the two Maine Departments which are cooperating in the program, and I have recommended that it be printed to provide an authoritative record of the early development of the salmon program. If copies can be provided to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission members, it will not be necessary to cover this background material in the current report to the Commission.

Further progress in salmon restoration work appears to hinge primarily on evaluation and control of the factors causing mortality in fresh water and formulation and adoption of more effective administrative procedures for controlling the taking of returning adult salmon by poaching and legal fishing in the mouths of salmon streams.

During the War, work on salmon, carried on by Louis Stringer, was limited principally to the marking and planting of young salmon produced at the Craig Brook hatchery. Most of the marked fish were planted in the Penobscot and in three experimental rivers where current conditions are much improved over those existing in past years when the salmon runs were wiped out. Up to the present, no returns have been observed from these experiments, indicating that mortality in fresh or salt water has been very heavy or perhaps total. It had been hoped that

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the study of stream mortality and its causes could be begun during the past summer, but limitations in funds, personnel, and the impossibility of obtaining delivery on equipment, made it impossible to do more than preliminary work. A limited amount of suitable equipment will be available by next spring so that if personnel and funds are available, it will be possible to begin a basic study of the factors causing stream mortality and methods for their control. Worth-while work on large, much-dammed rivers such as the Penobscot and Connecticut, will not be possible unless greater facilities are available than now appears possible. Granted adequate funds, it should be possible to determine the practicability and cost of getting adult migrating fish up over the succession of dams to the spawning grounds and young, seaward migrants down over the dams or through the turbines to the sea; and to determine the extent to which pollution is a limiting factor. However, this is a major problem and will require adequate financing to offer much hope of success.

Control of the taking of salmon by anglers, commercial fishermen, and poachers, is a function of the State authorities, but it is our opinion that these authorities have not been given an adequate administrative setup or legal authorization to exercise this control effectively. The Fish and Wildlife Service has cooperated with the Maine Commissioners of Inland Fisheries and Game and Sea and Shore Fisheries, and with other Maine representatives, in developing recommendations for improving these conditions. These recommendations are now being studied by the Special Salmon Committee appointed by Governor Hildreth, of which Mr. Frank Baker is Chairman. A copy of the recommendations is included with this report.