

Balsam Hatchery Is Home Of Half Million Trout

So Thick They Turn The Water Black



This photograph was made by Miller Ingram of trout under water in one of the rearing troughs. The trout are just beginning to dart out of sight of the camera. When someone approaches a rearing pool the trout dart under one of the troughs. A Mountaineer photograph by Ingram's Studio.

General View Of The Trout Hatchery



The main buildings of the Balsam Trout Hatchery shows how clean everything is. Some of the sheltered pools can be seen between the houses, while the edge of the stream can be seen below the lower hatchery house. This is on Highway 19-A, about 5 miles from Waynesville. A Mountaineer photograph by Ingram's Studio.

Streams Of Ten Counties Stocked From Hatchery

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for mountain streams since 1924. Today, under the new program of the Wildlife Resources Commission, of which Clyde P. Patton is executive director, the program is increasing in importance and magnitude.

As more people turn to fishing for recreation, the demand for restocking streams also increases. The old saying that "good times are hard on fish" is running true in North Carolina, where more and more fishermen are taking up rod and reel daily.

The hatchery is operated on funds paid by fishermen for license, no tax money is used. As fishing increases, the number of fish produced for the streams is also increased. The program under Mr. Patton is meeting with approval, and sportsmen are cooperative, and like the idea of having their interest taken care of by replacing caught fish.

The Hatchery at Balsam get most of their eggs from commercial hatcheries in Pennsylvania and New England states.

The eggs are hatched in special troughs in the main hatchery house. A constant stream of 50-degree water from nearby mountain springs furnish the water for the hatching troughs. It takes 38 days to hatch rainbow trout, and 50 days to hatch brook trout. The little fish are kept inside the hatchery and fed 4 times daily. When about an inch long, the fish are transferred into outdoor pools.

There are two types of pools—oblong and round. There are 19 of the oblong ones, and 7 of the round.

The round ones are sixty feet in diameter, and range from 5 to 8 feet deep.

The Hatchery has two water supplies, one is the mountain springs which furnish water at 50 degrees in winter and 51 degrees in summer. The other source is Winchester Creek. The water is piped for a mile and three quarters through a special 6-inch pipe. This line was installed as a WPA project back in the late thirties. It takes thousands of gallons per day to supply the 26 pools containing the thousands upon thousands of fish.

After the fish get up several inches in length, they are constantly changed from pool to pool, and graded for size. They are kept at the hatchery for one year, and then carefully weighed, counted, and distributed to the many trout streams in the area. Accurate records are kept on the production of the hatchery, and exact number of fish in any pool at any given time is easily determined.

When the fish are fed, the water literally turns black as the trout come to the surface for food. The small fish are fed ground meat, while the larger ones get prepared fish food, bought in large cans.

One feeding daily is all that the larger trout get. Mr. Reiger compared them with a pig—they will eat just as long as you pour it to them he commented.

There is one special pool at the Hatchery that attracts more attention than any other. It is the pool with the large fish. They are used for eggs, and more especially for showing visitors to just what size trout can grow. Some of the larger ones in the pool are 24 or more inches in length. The number of visitors to the hatchery is steadily increasing.

The cost of food for the fish is

Never Miss Them This Way



The Balsam Trout Hatchery deals in trout in the half million lots, hence this dip net for mass hauling of the fish. When they are transferred from rearing pool to pool this method is used. They kick a lot about being disturbed, but settle down in a moment. A Mountaineer photograph by Ingram's Studio.

the largest single item of operational costs of the Hatchery.

"The more we feed the fish, the faster they grow, and larger they are when put into the streams," Mr. Reiger explained.

A plan has been inaugurated whereby the Hatchery will sell fish for restocking private lakes and streams. This method is followed when there is a surplus of fish. The money received from the sale of such fish is used to buy food.

The Hatchery is doing something which Mother Nature cannot do, it was learned. Only about 2 out of every 100 trout hatched in streams live to be a year old. The Hatchery, through scientific methods, are able to raise 90 out of every 100 hatched to the 8-inch size.

Mr. Reiger does not subscribe to the theory that trout are color blind. He explains, "I feel they can distinguish colors from an early age."

When asked about the activity of trout at night, he pointed out, "Trout are active at all times. They do quiet down some at night, but this is only slight."

Mr. Reiger has been associated with the Hatchery here since it was built in 1924. His father, Frank J. Reiger, was superintendent until 1935, when he resigned to take a government job. Leo Reiger was then named superintendent, and has been on the job ever since. And speaking of being on the job "this matter of keeping up with half a million fish is worse than being in the dairy business, as far as confinement is concerned," he said.

One would think that after working with a half million fishes day in and day out that the last thing one would want to hear about on days off would be fish. But not Mr. Reiger. He and Mrs. Reiger take to Glenville Lake, get into their boat, and ride and fish—then fish and ride.

For their annual vacation they really have a time—they go to Canada and fish. The only fish they ever eat is what they catch the hard way—"it is no fun picking them out of a pool," he said.

Mr. Reiger is an authority on

Weighing Out Trout For Shipping



This photograph shows Mr. Reiger carefully weighing a lot of trout preparing to take them to one of the many trout streams in ten counties of Western North Carolina. Each lot is carefully weighed and counted. An accurate check is kept of all trout at all times. A Mountaineer photograph by Ingram's Studio.

Wildlife Resources Commission or the Balsam Hatchery—both are doing their part to get trout in the streams for you.

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Picks Wrong Judge
CHICAGO (U.P.)—Bernard Fogel went to the wrong judge for an O. K. to reduce his alimony payments. The judge had Fogel's case at hand. He sentenced Fogel to the county jail after finding that his alimony was short \$230.

BIBLES HIS HOBBY
MORGANTOWN, W. Va. (U.P.)—Former Navy Chaplain Joseph Gluck as a hobby has collected 75 different versions of the Bible. His collection also includes nine different commentaries, with the oldest volume dating to 1774.

NOTE OF PROGRESS

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