

Census Covers Umpqua River Steelhead Take

1946-47 Run Higher Than 1945-46 Count, Biologist Of Game Board Reports

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Oregon State Game Commission intensive creel census operations in the lower and upper Umpqua River sections, by the cooperating biologists of the Game Commission and the Fish Commission, coupled with the assistance of many anglers who returned voluntary catch record cards, indicate that an estimated 4,100 steelhead were caught during the period November 1, 1946 through March 9, 1947. This catch of 4,100 fish required 11,000 days of angler effort.

Some interesting items have been brought out by the investigation which was carried out by Leonard M. Mathisen and John T. Gharrett in the lower river area and by Hugh Ross Newcomb and Robert L. Borovicka in the upper river section. It seems that nearly everything done by the lower river anglers was on a slightly grander scale than by those who fished above the vicinity of Elkton. For example, fishermen devoting 7,300 angler days in the area below Elkton caught 2,900 fish and 3,700 upstream anglers took 1,200 fish. While 35 per cent of the anglers of the lower river returned catch record cards, only 27.7 per cent of the upper river anglers did so. The fishermen from the latter group were more cooperative in one respect for they returned cards indicating unsuccessful trips as readily as when their luck was good. Down river anglers were definitely reluctant to report when no fish were taken. The lower river boys spent 6.5 hours per day as compared to 5.0 hours for the average upper river anglers. There were 2.3 anglers per party below Elkton and 1.8 anglers per party in the upstream portion of the census area. During the entire season the downstream boys caught 0.4 fish per angler while the upriver Waltonians succeeded in getting only 0.33 fish. In one department, however, the upriver fishermen were rewarded by Dame Fortune for they spent 15.5 hours to take one fish while the downstream anglers required 16.3 hours to accomplish this feat. At one time, 81 per cent of the lower river anglers were from the vicinity of Cottage Grove and Eugene.

Gripping Contradicted
All winter long the creel census operators heard nothing but good, old-fashioned, American griping at the alleged dearth of fish in the river. This was in direct contrast to the comments of the previous season of winter angling. But here's the rub: At no comparable period during the 1946-47 run were there fewer fish present in the river than there were the previous year as measured by the numbers of fish passing through the counting station at Winchester dam on the North Umpqua River. The 1946-47 run has maintained a ratio of more than two to one over the count during 1945-46. It is possible that there was a smaller run into the South Umpqua River than during the previous year but it is unlikely that the total run was not distributed in the same proportions as in former years. For a man who has patiently (or otherwise) sat beside his favorite hole day after day, it is understandably difficult to convince him that there is any good reason why he didn't catch fish—except that they weren't there. He might console himself with the thought that more than 35 per cent of the known possible migrants into the North Umpqua, prior to March 9, were caught by some lucky anglers.

Cooperation Essential
The creel census work has been carried on under the handicap of too little manpower and transportation for the tremendous area and number of anglers involved. It should be readily understandable to all interested sportsmen that in order for sound management regulations to be devised and placed into operation it is essential that factual knowledge concerning the catch must be determined. By continuing the study and learning the relationship between catch and spawning escapement, the condition of the various runs may be evaluated.

(Continued on page 8.)

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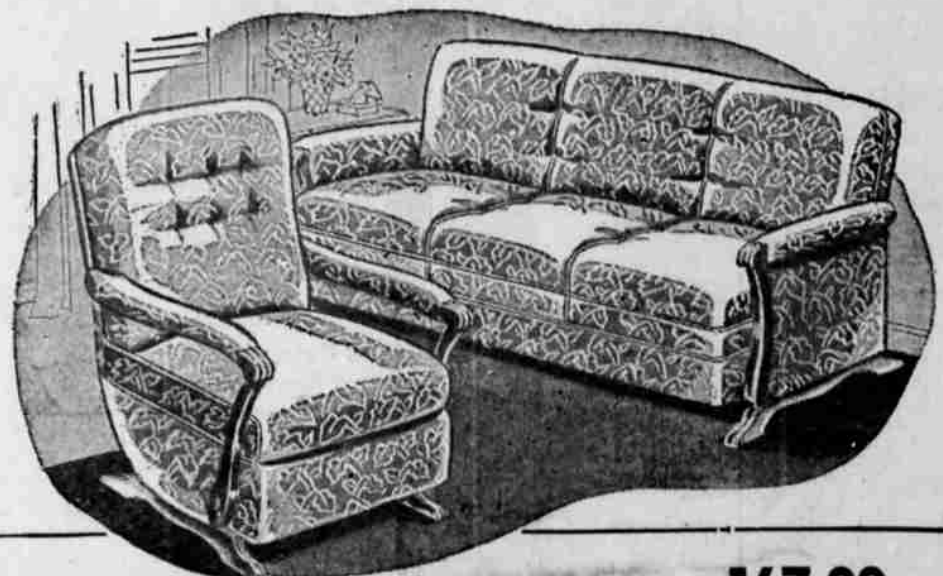
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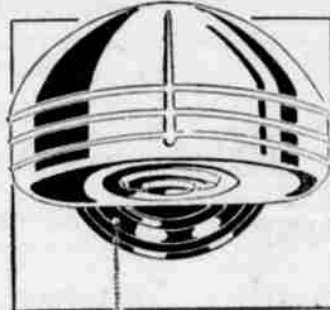


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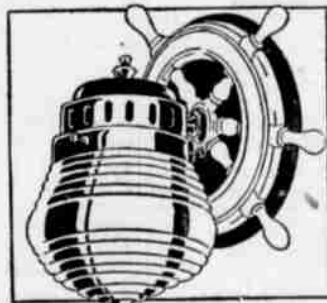
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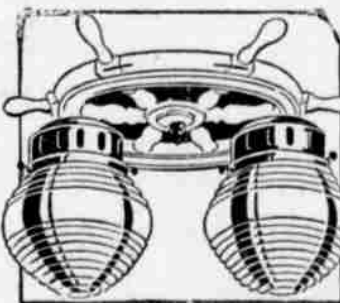
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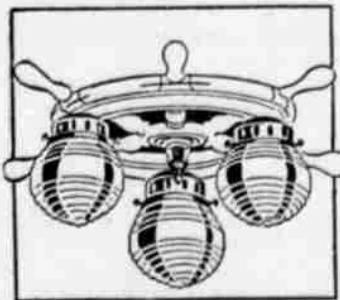
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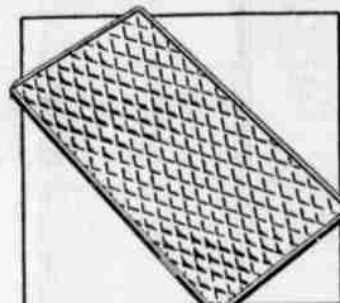
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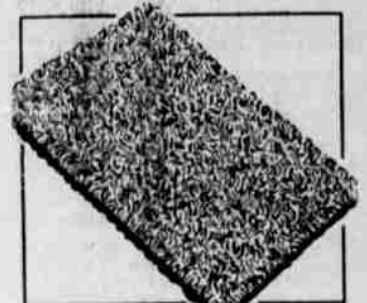
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