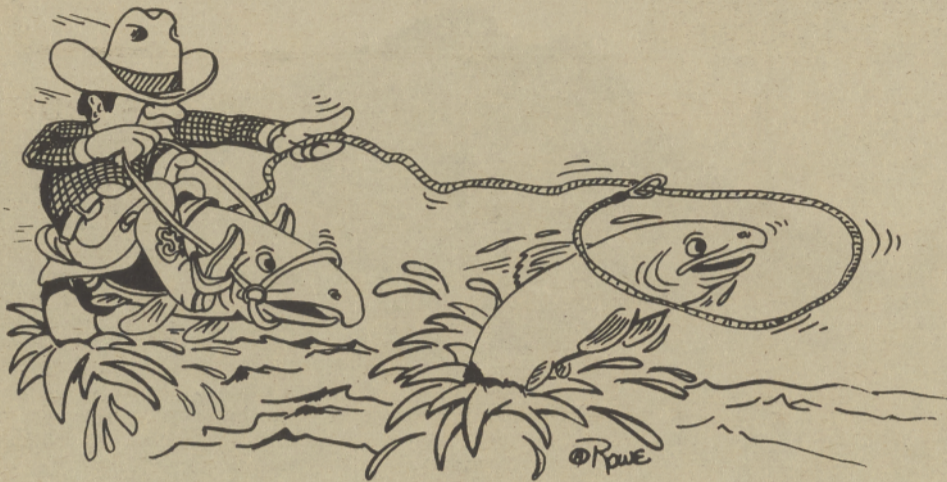


Salmon reared, ranch-style



by Marsha Shewczyk

To the Indian, salmon is not only food but is traditionally a part of this culture. The salmon swimming upstream is a gift. In the past it was only after ceremonies were complete that the Indian fisherman could pursue the salmon.

But salmon, as a basic source of sustenance, is becoming more and more important as time goes on. Fishing the river as the early Sahaptin people did continues but without thought for ceremony. Fishing has become a competitive business. The number of salmon has diminished due to dams, fluctuating water levels, heat and chemical pollution, and sport and commercial fishermen.

Too, the salmon must survive two to three years in the Pacific Ocean foraging for food amongst predators and fishermen. Approximately one percent of the salmon survive to return to the river.

Hatcheries have been constructed by state and federal agencies in an effort to increase the number of salmon returning to spawn in order to meet the demands. But this does not seem to be enough. Fishermen are looking to increase their catch.

Salmon have come to be looked upon as a resource, a controllable resource. An increased production of salmon would be profitable, especially to private hatchery owners.

With the salmon's natural instinct to return to its rearing site it wouldn't be difficult to make a profit and at the same time increase the number of salmon in ocean waters for public use according to supporters of privately owned hatcheries located on the coast.

This system of releasing salmon at ocean hatcheries, having them return to complete their natural cycle, has come to be known as salmon ranching.

Salmon ranchers operate their own hatcheries with their own funds. They rear the salmon in ponds and then release them into the sea. The ranchers then catch the adult fish in traps once homing instincts bring them back to the hatchery to spawn. Private hatcheries have been permitted only on the coast, not upriver.

These aquaculture facilities subtract the river from the salmon's life cycle. At these plants the fish are reared to the smolt state, growing at an

accelerated rate through the use of warm water and intensified nutrition.

But because of competition for food in the ocean, predators and sports and commercial fishermen, less than one percent return to their place of origin. One aquaculture plant at Newport reports a .5% return last year, much below anticipated.

Aquaculture hopes to improve nature's efficiency in the production of salmon. But the existence of these ranches produces fear in the hearts of some.

With large companies such as Weyerhaeuser and Campbell's Soup Company owning these million-dollar facilities coastal fishermen feel these companies will soon control the fishing industry. Some of the fears run along the lines that ranchers will be able to produce salmon at a low cost and reduce the price to the point where fishermen can't make a profit.

This type of enterprise "is a positive contribution"

Ocean fishermen also fear that these companies will drive the fisherman out of business by manipulating fishing seasons and the fish themselves.

Because salmon ranching is actually still at an experimental stage environmentalists also express fears about ranching salmon. They are afraid that the salmon produced at the ranches will threaten the endangered native fish by interbreeding and competing with them for food. Taxing the ocean's capacity might contribute to decreased salmon runs.

Upriver state and federally owned hatcheries have recently shown a decline in the number of returning adult salmon despite the increased number released. Records for coho salmon indicate a 9 to 20 percent annual decrease. It is not known whether or not private coastal hatcheries have had an effect in contributing to this decline.

The first private hatchery permit was issued by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in 1971. Twenty

permits to 12 different companies have been issued to date. A permit is required for each species of salmon reared

"all private salmon propagation programs shall be carefully monitored..."

for release, that is, pink, coho and chum. Chinook have not been allowed to be reared at these hatcheries. The permit allows the ranch to release 180 million salmon annually.

The eggs used at these hatcheries require state approval after inspection. Ideally, the eggs come from the surplus at state hatcheries. But because of limited supplies some eggs have been imported. Chum eggs have been imported from the Soviet Union while some pink eggs have been brought into Oregon coastal hatcheries from Washington.

Biologists express some fear at importing eggs with the spread of disease in mind. They also have some concern that the capacity of the ocean has already been reached because of state and federal hatchery production.

A moratorium has been enacted halting the issuance of private hatchery permits until

1985. During this five year moratorium environmentalists have the opportunity to observe the impact of these hatcheries on wild fish and the ocean.

In allowing salmon ranching to exist and issuing permits to these companies, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has made a policy statement regarding these aquaculture facilities: It is the policy of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission that private salmon release and recapture facilities...shall be sited in close proximity to the ocean and utilize stocks of fish that are disease free and genetically compatible with native stocks of salmon, and shall be limited in size to the capabilities of the permittees and/or the subject government...and that all private salmon propagation programs shall be carefully monitored to determine the economic and biologic feasibility of existing operation and the opportunity of expansion of such programs."

Many conditions are placed on the permittees in the establishment of aquaculture plants. The Oregon State Legislature passed the Private Hatchery Act amidst the concern that ocean ranching might adversely affect other stocks of fish and traditional commercial and recreational salmon fisheries. As is stated in a published release by ODFW, the law says, "the young salmon must be examined for disease by an approved pathologist" prior to release. The law goes on to state, "if the department finds that a private operation, within the waters covered by its permit, has caused deterioration of the natural run of anadromous fish or any population of resident

game fish, it may require the operator to return the fish population to the same condition that previously existed."

Despite the fears and the many objections to salmon ranches by both fishermen and environmentalists there are

those in both groups that favor the existence of aquaculture plants.

According to Jim Lannan at the Oregon State University Marine Science Center at Newport, Oregon, the greatest fear towards salmon ranches is expressed by those who fear big business will regulate the fishing industry and its laws.

Lannan feels the state has good control over it now. He feels, too, that salmon ranching encourages the free enterprise concept.

Lannan expressed the opinion that this type of enterprise "is a positive contribution to commercial and recreational fishing." These fish are raised by private hatcheries at no cost to the people. They are released into the ocean where both commercial and recreational fishermen can catch them. Those that are not caught return to the hatcheries. It is only then that the salmon becomes the property of the hatchery once again.

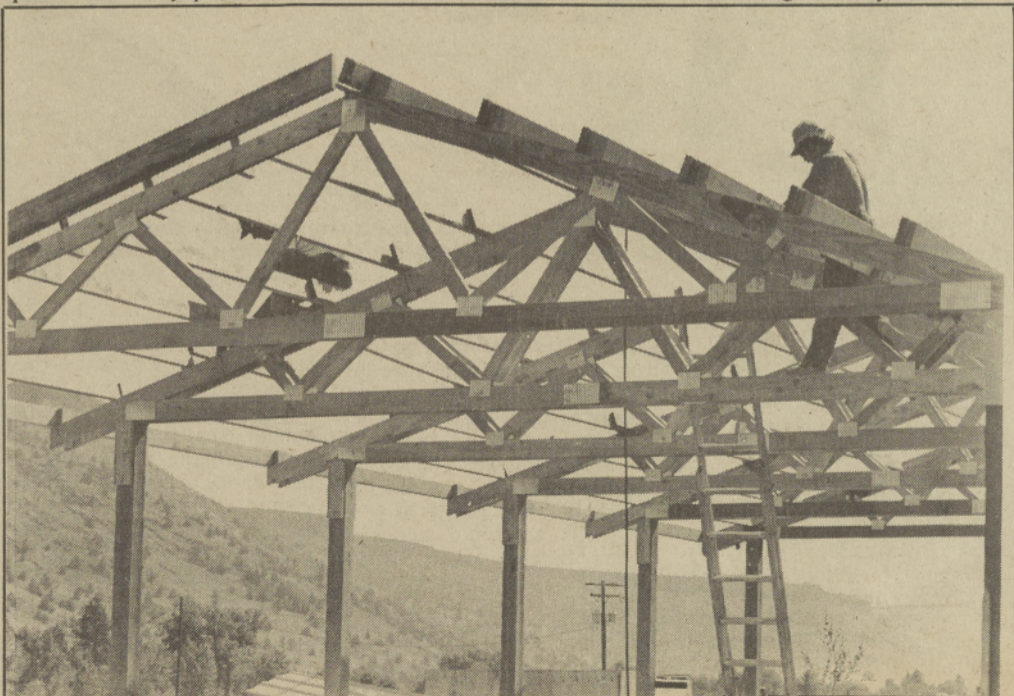
The ODFW states in their regulations for salmon ranching: the ranches "enhance the production of salmon for utilization by public recreational and commercial fisheries and/or increase the supply of wholesome fish products available to consumers."

"We are responsible for all salmon"

—ODFW—

Close watch over these ranches is emphasized by state law and enacted by the ODFW. There use of Oregon stocks is preferred. Ken Durbin at the ODFW office in Portland states, "We are responsible for all salmon."

Salmon ranching is an industry that is being closely watched and regulated. The potential for increasing the ocean's supply of salmon is tremendous unless just the opposite should occur. It is Oregon's final frontier, according to many.



Replacing the old picnic shelter used during Pi-Ume-Sha and other activities is a much sturdier structure. The Pi-Ume-Sha committee requested a new shelter as the old one was rotting out and required approximately \$600 every year to make it usable. The new shelter is 24 x 50 feet and is being constructed by Del Kennel Construction Co. from Bend at a cost of \$3700.

Spilyay Tymoo photo by Shewczyk