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Published monthly by the Wisconsin Conservation Department
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EDWARD N. HEIN, *Editor.*

CARP REMOVAL OPERATIONS

By H. W. MACKENZIE

Conservation Director

When Old Mother Nature arranged her scheme of things on this great earth, including plant, animal, insect and fish life, for some reason or other she placed thereon weeds that are deemed obnoxious, animals and insects that are destructive to forests, shrubbery and other plant life, animals that are destructive also to animals and fish life, and fish that are predatory and harmful to other fishes and aquatic vegetation that is found in the waters they inhabit.

For many years mankind by various methods has attempted to combat the conditions that are brought about by these destructive plants, animals, birds and insects and has expended millions of dollars through governmental and private agencies for this purpose. In most instances there has been reached only what might be termed a partial control and never in the more destructive forms of such life has total elimination or extermination been accomplished.

In the United States alone, the federal bureaus of agriculture, biological survey and various others have attempted for years to conquer many forms of insect, animal and plant life that have destroyed large acreages of trees, farmers' crops, ranchmen's stock, fruit orchards, etc., and have received the aid of the various state departments carrying on similar activities in the endeavor to conquer the pests that have obstructed the honest progress and growth of proper and valuable plant and animal life.

In this connection they have only been fairly successful in accomplishing this control, for every day while driving along any highway, you will find by the roadside and in the farmers' fields adjacent to these roads, acres of Canada thistles, snapdragon, quack grass and many other noxious weeds that have not as yet been conquered or destroyed, even though they are above the ground where they can be seen and eliminated by the proper process.

There are also several varieties of native birds that have been extremely harmful to many forms of life on earth and these are still found in considerable numbers in all parts of the United States. There are also birds that were introduced from Europe, such as the English sparrow and the starling, which are exceptionally destructive, against which campaigns costing thousands of dollars have been inaugurated by both government and states for many years, and even in face of this fact, today, right at the seat of government in the city of Washington itself, millions of starlings are found creating great destruction to the buildings, trees, plants and bird life in that vicinity and neither the government nor any state apparently has found a possible way to eliminate them or the sparrow, and instead of their decreasing they are increasing as the years go by. These forms of animal life can also easily be seen, as they are above the ground, and their nests, eggs and young birds can be destroyed by intensive action and the old birds shot, snared and trapped.

There are also many varieties of insects, worms and reptiles that are dangerous and destructive, against which campaigns by both state and federal agencies have been carried on for years, and of which many species have never been exterminated or even controlled. This would include the rattlesnake right in our own state, and the moccasin, the cotton-mouth in many of the southern states, the boll weevil so dangerous to cotton, and the black widow spider that is so poisonous and found in many places in the South.

In spite of the efforts of governmental agencies and the millions of dollars which have been expended to exterminate them, they still inhabit our states, in places, in great numbers and apparently continue, to thrive.

Practically all of our inland waterways were originally inhabited by certain forms of predatory fish such as gars, dogfish, eels, lawyers, lizards, and many others that apparently were placed there by nature in the beginning to strike a balance in some way or other with all fishes. With the appearance of mankind in large numbers who began taking out quantities of game food fishes from these waters, and leaving the predatory fishes, nature did not have the opportunity to make preparations that would equalize conditions and as a consequence these destructive predatory fishes became great in number and threatened the existence of desirable game fishes. Finally, man, realizing this condition, commenced to do something about their elimination insofar as it was possible. These fish, however, did not increase with the rapidity that has occurred in connection with fish introduced into our waters from Europe, namely the German carp.

This first occurred in 1881 and they were distributed by the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries. Such distribution was continued until 1895 and a total of 136,409 fish were introduced into Wisconsin waters alone.

When the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries first imported carp from Germany in 1877, only 345 was brought into this country for propagation purposes.

Anyone can appreciate that it is not so difficult to eliminate a plant, a bird, an animal, or an insect, because they are, generally speaking, found above or just under the ground or in such a manner that contact can be made with them without a great deal of guess work as to their location.

As far as fish life is concerned, however, they make their homes in waters of various depths, and at times among stumps, rocks and trees and the process of eliminating them can only be secured through the use of nets and in some cases spears, and then in all instances this activity must be carried on in what might be termed the dark, for no matter how small the body of water, if a net is used some fish would be bound to escape through the various holes and hiding places in the banks, weeds, stumps and stones and mud, which makes their entire elimination extremely difficult.

The conservation commission and department on various occasions have been taken to task very severely, because they have not totally eliminated the carp from all of the waters of the state that are invested by this variety of fish. Various expressions have been voiced by individuals and organizations, particularly by some persons in the southern

counties of the state, criticizing said commission and department for their rough fish removal activities. On that account we have believed that some expression from us is necessary to explain something of our position, particularly because of the fact that many misstatements have been printed in various newspapers relative to our procedure in connection with rough fish removal operations, even to the extent that we have been accused of planting, distributing, and farming carp and that said commission and department are not interested in the removal or elimination of these fish for the benefit of the sportsmen and that they were particularly interested in the fish because they would provide a certain amount of revenue which in turn could be used in some manner, and from some of the statements made unwisely.

The first carp removal operations known were authorized by the Wisconsin Conservation Commission under what is known as the license system. Persons wishing to remove rough fish from the various inland waters of the state were issued a license. This form of removal was wisely discontinued by the Wisconsin Conservation Commission in 1911, but similar licensed fishing operations are still carried on in outlying waters such as Lake Michigan and Green Bay and on the Mississippi river where it forms a common boundary between the states of Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

After the license system was abolished in the inland waters of the state by the conservation commission, contract fishing operations were introduced, which authorized individuals owning the necessary equipment and having the required personnel available to remove rough fish, principally carp, from the inland waters of the state of Wisconsin under a contract with the Wisconsin Conservation Commission and under their direct supervision. Such contracts are still issued to various individuals to remove rough fish from certain designated lakes within the boundaries of the state but under very strict conditions.

The following is a record of the number of pounds of fish removed by contract fishermen each year since 1912:

1912.....	1,321,100 lbs.	1926.....	2,944,609 lbs.
1913.....	1,214,000 lbs.	1927.....	2,468,822 lbs.
1914.....	1,335,324 lbs.	1928.....	2,944,609 lbs.
1916.....	610,523 lbs.	1929.....	3,005,405 lbs.
1917.....	583,573 lbs.	1930.....	1,726,340 lbs.
1918.....	1,190,000 lbs.	1931.....	1,822,527 lbs.
1919.....	2,605,224 lbs.	1932.....	1,365,401 lbs.
1920.....	2,159,000 lbs.	1933.....	3,378,846 lbs.
1921.....	1,834,582 lbs.	1934.....	6,005,488 lbs.
1922.....	1,027,950 lbs.		(State and contract fishermen)
1923.....	1,371,917 lbs.	1935.....	5,401,233 lbs.
1924.....	6,787,770 lbs.		(State and contract fishermen)
1925.....	4,118,978 lbs.		

During the past two years and even previous to that time the department has been besieged from time to time with petitions and requests protesting against their systems and procedure in connection with rough fish removal operations in some lakes. Many of these requests concerning such fishing come from various parts of central and southern Wisconsin, and there is a great variance in the time rough fishing activities

are desired by these people. Some request that we proceed in spring, some in fall, others during the winter months, and still others disapprove of rough fishing operations at any time. Very few offer any substantial advice that can be followed, which will be helpful in the destruction of these fish.

The conservation commission's program, which is in operation at the present time in various lakes and streams, will, we believe, eventually be successful, and includes the following methods of procedure:

1. Remove the large fish that are responsible for the production of the small ones, through the operations of seining crews using large nets during the fall and spring when such crews can successfully operate without causing wholesale destruction to game fishes, and also with other nets and traps when possible.
2. Remove the small carp by the use of small seines, traps and fyke nets during all times of the year when they can be successfully captured.
3. Distribute in the lakes infested by carp, great northern pike, muskellunge and white bass, which will use the small carp for food and as a consequence pursue them for this purpose into areas of the lake that cannot be reached through netting operations.

With these three systems it is the commission's belief that carp can eventually be eliminated to a great extent, if not absolutely exterminated. This procedure will be carefully carried on year after year and in connection with it, studies will be made by such experts as can be secured to find other ways and means if necessary that will be helpful in the successful culmination of this program or a more expanded one.

There are different types of equipment used in conducting the removal of rough fish, principally carp. The greatest portion of them are removed by what is known as a drag seine. These nets range in length from a few hundred feet to 10,000 feet in length, with a depth of from 4 or 5 feet to 50 feet, depending upon the water area in which the operations are being conducted.

Hoop or trap nets are also used in various waters but the operation of such nets is not satisfactory because, with the exception of the spring of the year when the carp are migrating to their spawning grounds, they will not enter nets of this type in any great numbers.

As the results obtained by licensed and contract fishermen failed to satisfy the public demand for the removal of rough fish, the conservation commission in 1934 created what is known as the division of commercial fishing. New contracts were issued to fishermen, which contained more stringent rules and regulations and called for an intensive operation on the part of each operator to destroy undesirable rough fish whenever it was possible to do so, and in any reasonable manner. The legislature, realizing the growing demand for the removal of certain species of rough fish, in 1935 authorized the conservation commission to conduct a state operated removal program with its own equipment and personnel and appropriated funds with which to carry on work of this nature. Since this has occurred the results of the cooperation of contract fishermen and state crews are very apparent, and it is believed that by the contin-

uation of the program before mentioned, successful results will eventually be accomplished.

It should be noted that in 1934 over six million pounds of rough fish, mostly carp, were removed from the inland waters of the state of Wisconsin and that in 1935 over five million pounds were taken. Critics of conservation commission policies point out that in 1924 over four million pounds of fish were removed from one lake. They do not, however, mention that this particular lake was closed by an act of the legislature for a period of time from 1913 to 1923 to all commercial fishing operations.

Since carp are a very prolific fish and, with an abundance of aquatic vegetation, grow to a very large size in a few years, this large poundage removed from the waters of this one particular lake, after a ten years closed season, should not be compared with the catch under the present operations wherein removal work is carried on almost continually during the spring, early summer and fall months of each year in all waters where it is possible.

With the department entering into the field of rough fish removal with its own equipment and personnel, considerable time has been required to secure an organization with the proper equipment and technically trained personnel to carry on this work. Practically all the equipment needed must be made and arranged by experienced men, and the nets required to conduct these operations must be constructed under special order at the factory by individuals who know something of the waters they are being arranged for. Practically every lake requires a different depth of seine if it is properly fished and, in many instances, a different mesh. Eight state fishing camps have been established and equipped by the department during 1935, but the necessary personnel to work with these different types of nets operated out of these camps is far below the requirements of the conservation commission at the present time. Personnel is being trained as rapidly as possible to intelligently carry on this work in future years. As practically every operation of a seine in a lake or stream causes considerable damage to the net from contacts with snags and other obstacles found in the water, experienced personnel must be available at all times to make such repairs as are necessary.

Since the conservation department has entered the rough fish removal program with its own equipment and crews, trapping operations have been inaugurated to remove carp when they are in the ninnow stage. Up to the present time in 1936 over ten million of these small fry have been destroyed by means of traps, hoop nets, and fine mesh seines.

The present equipment and personnel available to the department are not sufficient to meet all public requests for this type of operation in every locality at the same time. Therefore, the conservation commission is providing this service in territories wherein it feels that an overabundance of carp or other rough fish is exceedingly detrimental at this time, and as rapidly as the territories in which removal operations is most urgent, are taken care of, crews will move into other areas where needed and all the projects expanded when finances allow it.

As stated before, we receive much advice from interested citizens throughout the state as to how and when our fishing operations should be conducted, that provide for us a serious problem. Duck hunters on certain lakes infested by rough fish are determined that no fishing operations are to be carried on in any manner during the hunting season because it is responsible at times for disturbing their hunting; many fishermen criticize us for removal work when it is done during the spring and early summer because they claim it effects their fishing efforts and they believe that it will also be responsible for destroying aquatic vegetation. As it is impossible to operate large nets in the summer time in exceedingly hot weather due to the fact that it would kill thousands of game fish, which fishing experience has shown, and it is impossible to operate large seines and similar nets through the ice during the winter months in most of our inland lakes because of serious mortality to game fish, it can be appreciated the complications arising from satisfying all of the public demands at present presents a serious problem.

Realizing that undesirable rough fish in Wisconsin must be controlled to insure the necessary perpetuation of game fish and aquatic vegetation, the commission is proceeding with the best known methods at hand, which are more thorough than those being used by any other state, and it is the intention to continue and expand such line of procedure as rapidly and as far as equipment, personnel and funds will allow.

Realizing that approximately sixty million pounds of carp have been removed from the inland waters of the state of Wisconsin since 1912 and that there are thousands of pounds of these fish still in our lakes and streams, it is evident that a serious situation still confronts the commission in its efforts to reduce this undesirable fish population to a minimum.

As carp do not spawn until they are in their third year, the removal of these fish during the early stages of their life, which is now being done by the commission, should aid materially in keeping the number of adult carp reduced, as the small carp are more easily captured and will lead into nets in greater quantities than the mature ones who are a very intelligent fish and more net-wise than any other species.

Neither are carp the only undesirable fish inhabiting the inland waters of the state of Wisconsin. Urgent requests are received by the conservation commission from citizens in various localities for the removal of other species. The taking of sheepshead from the waters of Lake Winnebago is a serious problem at this time. This is especially true with regard to many thousands of pounds which should be removed from the waters of that vicinity, as the character of the lake is such, because of heavy seas and a great share of the bottom covered with debris and rocks, that it has been impossible to remove rough fish except at times of the year when they appear in certain areas that are not affected in this manner and on days when high seas are not in evidence.

During the spawning season for sheepshead these fish have practically no commercial value and their disposal has been a serious problem, even as to the question of finding places to bury those that are caught.

Every effort, however, is being made by the commission to have them utilized for food to all extent possible.

Because of the fact that there is some value connected with these fish at certain times of the year, the commission is conducting a new type operation in those areas this fall which it is hoped will be successful. New devices have been constructed so that nets can be operated in much deeper water and several miles from shore wherein at times these fish congregate in considerable numbers after their spawning seasons.

A canning factory for the disposal of all unmarketable rough fish taken by state crews from inland waters has been constructed during the summer of 1936. The product from this cannery is being used as food for mink, fox and other fur bearing animals propagated on the state experimental game and fur farm at Poynette. It is also used as food for adult trout, bass and other fish which are kept for propagating purposes in the state fish hatcheries.

Experiments have shown that even fry of game fishes which are being held in the trays and ponds at the hatcheries will eat this product and further experiments are being carried on to ascertain if they will show progress on a diet of this kind between the fry and fingerling stage.

The removal of garfish is requested by many individuals in various localities and this type of fishing operation can be conducted successfully only at certain times of the year when the gars congregate. The removal of eelpout or lawyers is another problem, as they can be captured only in large numbers during the winter months under the ice and with stationary fyke and hoop nets.

With the many thousands of lakes and miles of streams in the state of Wisconsin inhabited by rough fish, it is very evident that an annual substantial fund will be necessary to completely meet the numerous requests received to carry on rough fish removal operations.

The commission and department need public cooperation to further their plans for proceeding on a sound, sensible, business-like basis with this work, destroying all the rough fish possible, but at the same time utilizing them for food wherein it can be done, and marketing such fish as can be sold, so that the funds derived therefrom can be used for the purpose of the removal of more fish.

Mistakes will undoubtedly be made, as no one can be perfect in any line of endeavor, but the commission and its personnel will correct any that may happen as rapidly as possible.

Again, please keep in mind the fact that practically every other state and also the federal government, with the expenditure of millions of dollars for the purpose, over a period of years, have not been entirely successful at any time in the removal and destruction of many undesirable varieties of animals, birds, insects and plants and that in connection with rough fish, no state has been able to present a program up to date that compares at all with that being put into practice by the Wisconsin Conservation Commission at this time.

I know you will not expect your conservation commission and department to accomplish the impossible in connection with rough fish removal and that you will see the sensible side of our procedure and the

methods that we are using, and realizing the amount of funds we have available for this purpose, and also considering the areas it is necessary to cover and the many other difficulties to be encountered in the work. The commission is not failing in any way in its efforts in comparison with many other agencies who have attacked similar problems with far more funds and expert personnel to accomplish the purpose.

FISH FOOD

The conservation department is preparing its own food for the fish that are being held for breeders at the various state hatcheries which it believes will eventually be very helpful in reducing food costs.

This program has been worked out by Mr. H. W. MacKenzie, Conservation Director, who believes it will be of great aid in solving a dual problem in connection with the removal and utilization of a considerable amount of rough fish, particularly carp.

A small canning plant has been built on the grounds of the Madison fish hatchery and is already in operation, processing approximately eight hundred pounds of carp daily, which has become one of the chief items of diet for the fish at the state hatchery as well as for some of the animals at the state experimental game and fur farm.

For the present only carp are being utilized, but Director MacKenzie believes that this canning experiment can be extended to sheephead, smelt and possibly some other varieties of rough fish.

When the department has complete knowledge of all the angles of processing rough fish by canning methods, plans have been made for stepping up the production in a marked way whereby cooperators throughout the state having charge of bass and flatfish ponds can also be provided with this product to feed their fish.

There are possibilities that other states will be interested because of the economy with which this food can be prepared.

Adult fish at the Madison hatchery are now being fed on an exclusive diet of this new food. The superintendent, Mr. Frank Meade, is enthusiastic over this system and says that the fish eat the prepared carp greedily and are thriving on the diet. He believes it will require possibly a year to determine the full results of feeding this canned food exclusively and he is particularly interested in noting what the results will be in fish spawn production. From the evidence he already has he believes that the new food fully meets all of the requirements of that which was formerly used.

Shipments of the product have been made to other state hatcheries and experimental feedings to animals are also being carried on at the state game farm at Poynette. As the supply is increased, this new fish and animal food will be distributed generally to state stations where fish and animals are being propagated.

The cost of food has been an increasingly serious item as the state has been stepping up its production of game and fish, and rears more fish to larger size before distributing them in lakes and streams. On the other hand, removing larger numbers of rough fish from Wisconsin inland

waters under the expanded program undertaken this year has brought on a more acute disposal problem. It is thought that the preparation of this food in the manner which is being done will be a helpful and economic solution of both problems.

FOREST FIRES

R. B. Goodman, chairman of the Wisconsin Conservation commission, points out what the forest protection division of the conservation department means to the people of the state.

Analyzing fire suppression work during the present drought year, he says:

"The entire cost of fire suppression, including patrol, in the 13,000,000 acres of protection districts, involved a direct expenditure of \$167,000.

"There were throughout this unprecedented drought some 1,928 (only in districts) reported forest fires, detected, restrained and eventually extinguished. Any one of these fires could have caused a property damage in excess of \$200,000.

"The conservation department has expended \$167,000 to protect forest cover having a commercial value in excess of \$50,000,000 and recreational and resort improvements having a value of at least \$200,000,000. The forest cover destroyed by fire on large areas may not be restored by natural regeneration for a century.

"Another way of stating the cost of forest fire protection is that it is less than one-tenth of one per cent of the annual revenue that the state derives from recreation in the area protected."

HEADQUARTERS MOVED

Headquarters of the supervisor of the northeastern area of the forest protection service has been moved from Wausaukee to Antigo. The area is in charge of P. A. McDonald. E. J. Vandervall, chief state forest ranger, announces the change became effective on October 1.

X FORESTRY

Selective cutting by some of the lumber companies and production methods applied to forests by pulp and paper companies are cited as marks of progress in Wisconsin in an article written by H. W. MacKenzie, conservation director, appearing in "Forestry News Digest".

"The remarkable record for plantations confirms what foresters of this department have long contended; that if investments in forestry were made, not only would more effective protection be secured but local interest would result in fewer fires," he said. "It is human nature to appreciate values resulting from human effort and to overlook the free gifts of nature. It is also axiomatic that the man who has planted trees is thereafter personally interested in their survival and growth."

Pointing out that farm timber lots constitute the greatest class of privately owned forest land, Mr. MacKenzie declares that with the increased acreage of legume forage crops, grazing of farm wood lots will be reduced. State appreciation of the need of fencing woodlots against grazing, he said, was shown by the last legislature when it enacted a tax exemption provision to protect farm wood-producing areas.

"Several small wood-using industries drawing their raw material from the farms have persisted in the agricultural sections of Wisconsin," he added. "Our department is interested in improved forestry practices on farm woodlands. A sustained yield of forest products is vital to the farmers themselves as well as to the plants which provide them with a market for their timber."

SAUK COUNTY

Sauk county sportsmen have raised about four acres of food patches to provide bird food during the coming winter, according to Walter Hillmer, Baraboo. One concern of the sportsmen is to help through the winter the wild turkeys recently planted in the Baraboo hill country.

NONRESIDENT FISHING

Records of the conservation department show that up to September 12 of this year there were 20,422 more licensed nonresident fishermen in Wisconsin than up to the same date a year ago.

Up to September 12, 1935, a total of 53,542 nonresidents had been licensed to fish in Wisconsin. Up to the same date this year there were 73,964 licensed nonresidents. The increase over 1935 is 38.14 per cent.

CLUB MEMBERS

Wisconsin has 259 sportsmen's clubs in 215 communities of 68 counties, according to records of the conservation department. On the basis of reports from 42 counties, club membership averages about 560 per county. If this average can be applied to the rest of the 68 counties it means a total membership of nearly 40,000.

Many of the counties have a number of organizations and there is a growing movement to federate all groups within a county into a single unit to avoid duplication and to handle county-wide conservation problems. Several counties are now undertaking federation plans, including Sheboygan county.

Some of the counties report that they have not yet regained the memberships that they once held but many of them report new clubs and a growing list of total members.

Among the counties reporting an increasing membership are Racine, Richland, Lincoln, Shawano, Ashland, Dodge, Buffalo, Oconto, Winnebago, Monroe, Green Lake, Marquette, Walworth, Bayfield, Brown and Waupaca.

Marinette reports a total club membership of about 3,000, Marathon and Racine each 2,000, Monroe, 1,800 and Sauk, 1,000.

The clubs are an important force in Wisconsin conservation progress. Club members devote much time and money to advancing a number of projects. Many of the clubs conduct fish rearing ponds to raise state produced fish to larger sizes before planting them. They hatch pheasant eggs and rear the birds; they also take young birds produced at the State Experimental Game and Fur farm, Poynette, and care for them until they have become mature and able to shift for themselves.

Club members last winter were a mighty force in putting over a record bird feeding campaign. It has been estimated that there were about 35,000 bird feeding stations in operation in Wisconsin last winter and that meant a succession of long trips through the snow during intense weather. Much of the bird feed used was obtained through the conservation department. Other feed was produced or purchased by the clubs.

The clubs are a decided force in conservation education and in furthering law enforcement. Many of the club members make periodic inspection trips of the nearby outdoors to check on wild life conditions. Some clubs are showing an intense interest in fundamental conservation progress and several have been instrumental in the restoration of lakes or the creation of new ones.

Organization support for conservation also comes from other clubs. Women's clubs and Garden clubs have been particularly active.

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

The task of protecting Wisconsin forests from fire destruction has been advanced from 20 to 25 years by the work made possible through the Works Progress administration program, according to E. J. Vanderwall, Tomahawk, chief ranger of the conservation department.

WPA projects sponsored by the state department of conservation have made possible the construction of a steel and concrete airplane hangar and garage, and reconstruction of an old railroad car barn at Tomahawk as the first units in the centralized fire fighting force.

Initial steps for establishing state headquarters were taken in 1934, according to Mr. Vanderwall, when 40 acres of abandoned lake shore mill property in the city of Tomahawk and an old railroad roundhouse and repair barn were purchased by the conservation department. Lack of funds prevented the launching of building operations until the autumn of 1935 when federal assistance through WPA was made available.

The old repair shop now houses the office of the state administrative, engineering and construction corps, and under the high skylighted roof, subdivided now and transformed by repairs and paint, there is space to answer the department's need for storage room.

Offices have been set aside for drafting, map and stenographic units. Construction heads and the departments of fisheries and forestry are also given space. All of these departments are functioning under one roof to reduce costs.