

River Kills Salmon, Trout

TRAPPED FISH DIE IN FEW MINUTES

Oregonian

Stream Purification League
Conducts Deadly Test

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Less than ten minutes in the bubbling, sludge-filled Willamette river yesterday was too much for a score of salmon fingerlings and mature trout, and the gasping "pollution guinea pigs" turned bellies up and died.

The salmon fingerlings were dumped into a wire crate in the river opposite the outlet of the gigantic open sewer at the east end of the Ross Island bridge.

Within three minutes the pink gills of half of them were showing, and all were making frantic trips to the scum-coated surface for gulps of fresh air. When seven minutes had passed not a one remained upright, and most of them were dead.

The experimenters, led by State Treasurer Rufus Holman, who is president of the Stream Purification league, and William L. Finley, Oregon naturalist, then shoved off for midstream.

Trout Killed Quickly

Harbor Master Prehn brought the boat to a halt opposite the battleship Oregon, in midstream, and ten fighting trout were lowered into the cage. The result was the same as with the fingerlings, and within nine minutes all were floating, bellies up, dead or dying.

"I always knew the condition of the river was bad, but I wouldn't have believed those fish would turn belly up in ten minutes," commented County Treasurer Lambert, representative of the Izaak Walton league.

Frank Franciscovich of Astoria, president of the state senate, surmised that the fish "probably would live longer in a frying pan or on dry land than in that oxygen-depleted filth."

"Our fall runs of chinook and silverside salmon, which came in December, have gone completely," said Finley. "No salmon or trout could live going through that section of the river between Sellwood and Swan island, where pollution is the worst.

"Our spring chinook come during high water, and the fingerlings return during flood time in the winter, or else they could not survive."

Sludge Coats River

There was no surface current in the river, the tide from the ocean even causing hunks of wood and other debris to float upstream slightly.

"Sewer gas all over the river indicates a heavy coating of sludge from the sewers all over the river bottom," said Dr. David B. Charlton, bacteriologist.



In went the fish alive, as shown in the above picture, and in less than ten minutes they came out dead from the Willamette river in a pollution test yesterday. State Treasurer Rufus Holman is holding one of the piscatorial victims, while others float bellies-up in the water.

"The public should know what the condition is," said Treasurer Holman. "Many agencies are continuously bringing more residents to Oregon, so consider the inconceivably filthy conditions that will prevail unless we take sensible steps to remedy it."

He will call another meeting of the Purification league as soon as a sub-committee headed by State Senator Carney of Clackamas county agrees on legislative proposals now being drafted.