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Conservation Dept. Phases Out 4 State Fish Hatcheries

The Department of Conservation will phase out production of fish at four state hatcheries by the end of next year, Director Ralph A. MacMullan announced.

Two of the stations — at Paris ant Grayling—will be converted to multiple-use field offices with expanded work forces. The others, at Watersmeet and Benton Harbor, will be shut down.

In all cases employees now assigned to hatchery work will be given other duties. In all but one instance, the affected workers will remain in the communities where they now live.

MacMullan said the curtailment of hatchery operations reflects recommendations made in the "new look" fisheries management program adopted by the Conservation Commission last June. The Commission ordered the program put into effect as rapidly as possible.

POPULARLY known as the McFadden Plan, the program calls for curtailment of the present practice of stocking legal-sized trout in streams and a shift in emphasis to planting sub-legal trout in lakes.

Savings from the change, expected to amount to $250,000 a year eventually, will be put into other phases of fish management, including construction of artificial lakes in water-short areas of the state and purchase of new access sites.

The four stations to be phased out initially were recommended by the Department's Fish Section staff and its field organization. In general, they are stations with low capacity or some other limitation which makes them less economical to operate.

When production ends at all four, the Department still will have five major hatcheries plus a number of sub-stations for rearing and distribution of trout.

"With the modern transportation methods we now have, these facilities will be entirely adequate to meet the needs of our new fish program," MacMullan emphasized.

THE PARIS hatchery, near Big Rapids in Mecosta county, will go out of trout production as soon as this fall's planting commitments are met. The three fish culturists there will be assigned to lake and stream inventory and improvement.

A portion of the hatchery site already has been given to the county for a park. The state will continue to maintain a trout display pond on the grounds for visitors.

The Paris facility has been producing about 70,000 fish yearly. It is the oldest hatchery in the system and has a limited water supply.

Also to be phased out this fall is the Watersmeet hatchery, whose three fish culturists likewise will be given lake and stream inventory and mapping duties. Part of the grounds may be used to provide public access to the middle branch of the Ontonagon River.

In recent years, Watersmeet has been used mostly as a holding and distribution station. The other two Upper Peninsula hatcheries, at Marquette and Thompson, have enough production capacity to supply the region.

THE SMALL Benton Harbor sub-station of the Wolf Lake Hatchery will shut down this fall and the lone full-time employee transferred back to Wolf Lake.

Last of the four to go out of production will be the Grayling hatchery, which will be fully converted to a field office. At least one new employe will be assigned there in addition to the present staff.

The Grayling hatchery last year produced more than 400,000 fish, but the facility has been troubled with problems of fluctuating water temperatures that impaired efficiency.

More Drownings Throughout State

An alarming increase in the number of drownings and water accidents this year in Michigan has been reported by the state police.

Up through July 29 there have been 198 drownings, an increase of 51 or 26 per cent over 141 reported through July 30 last year.

Water accidents total 372, an increase of 21 per cent over 293 for the same period last year.

OFFICIAL REPORTS have not yet been received on 31 of the drownings. Of the remaining 343 accidents of all types, there were 150 fatal in which one or more persons drowned, 102 personal injury and 91 property damage only.

Of the 176 drownings on which official reports have been received, 87 were swimmers or waders, 23 boat operators, 25 boat passengers, 2 skin or Scuba divers, 9 fell through ice, 17 fell from a bridge, bank, dock or pier, 1 fell into a caisson and 3 died attempting to rescue another.

"WATER SAFETY is just as important as traffic safety and it is dismaying that there has been such a big increase in drownings," Commissioner Joseph A. Childs said. "And, as in the case of traffic deaths, most could be prevented.

"With August still remaining of the summer season, I cannot stress too strongly observing water safety rules. As I have said before, enjoy the water, but respect it."

Childs emphasized that there be life preservers on boats, that boats not be overloaded or improperly operated, that swimmers never swim alone, swim only in waters they know and never in gravel pits and that when children are in or near the water, there should be constant adult supervision.

Young Designers Among Winners In Car Contest

In the annual Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild model car competition third state winners of $50 cash included James G. Craft 18, 30515 Rock Creek Drive, Southfield, in the Senior Division.

Junior Division honorable mention winners included Tom Samanen, 169 Birwood, Birmingham.

EACH YEAR, many hundreds of young designers, 11-20, hand craft model cars from their own original designs in competition for the $117,000 in cash and scholarship awards annually offered by the Craftsman's Guild.

Since the Guild was founded in 1930, Fisher Body Division of General Motors has awarded over $2,000,000 to participants in the program.

If your picnic area is near a highway of well traveled street, make certain your car is parked a safe distance from speeding traffic. Autos parked on the shoulder of the road can be a mental hazard to oncoming drivers whose tendency is to swerve over the center line when passing a vehicle parked close to the highway.

Rights Bill Gives Boost to Morality

An official of the U.S. Department of Justice has defended the new Civil Rights Bill as a measure that can give new meaning and impetus to national morality.

Speaking at Michigan State University, William J. Vandenhuevel said the bill, while it has "not gone far enough," has broken into significant areas of racial inequality.

Vandenhuevel, a special assistant to Attorney General Robert Kennedy, said the new law has come at a time of one of the most important and successful social revolutions in the U.S. since 1776.

The Michigan State Fair, Aug. 28 through Sept. 7, again this year will feature music all over the fairgrounds, with strolling bands playing music of many lands.

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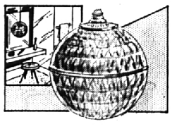

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