

THE CONCRETE HERALD

Formerly the Hamilton Herald Established Nov. 23, 1901. Oldest Paper in the Upper Skagit.



Fish Are Elevated

The ride of the salmon starts from the trap in groups of a few to fifty. From the trap they are hosted to a water-filled tank care on a narrow gauge track, hauled some 400 feet to aerated holding pools where they are alive and jumping. From there they are lowered into a water-filled "bucket" which is picked up by an aerial cable for another ride of 900 feet through the air to the dam to be held in a slatted and aerated scow. Whereupon, at the end of the day, they are turned free to nose their way under their own power upstream

again. If, however, gates are kept open when the last haul to the dam is made, the above handling is modified in that the slatted scow is towed by motorboat a mile up the lake so they will not drift down and spill over the dam.

There are two traps at Baker – the river trap and the tailrace trap. The river trap makes use of the water spilled over the dam when the gates are open. It is a wooden structure secured to cement and steel piers which is salvaged in the fall of the year if the fishing season ends before floods wash it away. The lumber of the structure would

build several houses. It is mostly of 2X6 fir in lengths from 14 to 22 feet. The barrier to the fish is made of these 2X6 boards with spaces through which water flows. These rackbars are slanted towards the middle of the stream and as water flows through the cracks small streams entice the fish along towards the middle of the stream where a wider slot and heavier stream attracts the salmon to enter. This is the trap. The tailrace trap is necessary at times when gates at the dam are closed. Here they are noticed to enter the trap by an artificial stream of water from a flume.

Once well into the small tributary streams above the dam, the salmon will spawn and die. In the following spring the young fingerlings swim back in large schools, and with the gates of the dam open they ride in the full flow of water down over the dam and eventually find their way to the ocean to finally repeat their life cycle back to the Baker River.

Sockeye, Silvers, and Humpies

There are three distinct runs of salmon that reach the Baker River. The Sockeye come first attaining a peak in July. They have a life cycle of four years. Then come the Silversides to reach a peak in September. Their life cycle is three years. The Humpy salmon makes their appearance late in fall and have a two year cycle.

Last year the total run for sockeye salmon was 2,416 and for Silversides 11,209. At their peak the Silvers are a wonderful sight – 2,000 a day!

To develop the salmon into very sizable runs, the Washington State Fish and Game Department has closed the Skagit River and its tributaries above the mouth of Gilligan Creek in salmon fishing for the year 1951.

—**Courtesy of Puget Power News**