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FISH DIVISION

INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN
Report 196

March 8, 1933

BAIT MINNOW SITUATION

In response to a Departmental request of February 23, the Institute can state that experience indicates that a very considerable depletion of the bait minnow stock has taken place within recent years in at least many fishing lakes, and in nearby streams.

It has been our experience that the streams near the fishing lakes have a minnow population well below what would be expected from the existing conditions. At considerable distances from roads, and in streams which for one reason or another are hidden or inaccessible, we usually find a much larger minnow supply than in accessible and easily seen streams.

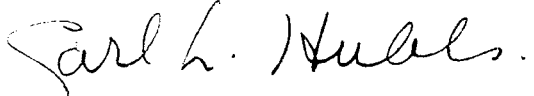
Further evidence of depletion of the minnow supply comes from the circumstance that bait dealers are often forced to travel increasing distances to obtain an adequate minnow supply. This is typical evidence of depletion of a fish stock.

In our work in Iowa we have found the same situation. The intensive local studies of Prof. T. L. Hankinson are in thorough agreement with our observations.

No doubt the unregulated and often unintelligent methods of handling the reserve stock of bait minnows has contributed heavily to the depletion of the minnow stock.

When it is considered that the bait minnows are the forage fish on which the game fish depend for their growth to a large size, the problem has ear-marks of rather grave importance for the future. Bait minnow culture may well provide an answer to this problem, as well as providing means to hasten the reestablishment of an adequate forage fish supply in natural waters.

Institute for Fisheries Research



Carl L. Hubbs
Director

February 23, 1933

Institute for Fisheries Research
University Museums Building
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Gentlemen:-

Re:- Minnows in the inland waters of the state.

Several letters have been received in this office criticising the removal of minnows from inland waters for the purpose of securing bait used in fishing, claiming that an excessive drain is being made on the minnow resources which may be seriously interfering with the food supply of our valuable game fish.

Some of these complaints may be somewhat prejudiced due to the interest of certain parties of undertaking the propagation of minnows in control ponds.

I am wondering whether the Institute has made any observations in connection with the removal of minnows from inland waters that would enable them to comment on this matter.

The Law Enforcement Division seems to encounter some difficulty in enforcing the provisions for securing licenses to take minnows for commercial purposes. The import of the provision of law requiring a license to take minnows for commercial purposes was to centralize control rather than to provide any considerable amount of revenue and so far as the contact of the Fish Division goes, it seems to have served its purpose, as many of the complaints formerly registered with this office have ceased.

Very truly yours,

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

F. A. Testerman
FISH DIVISION

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