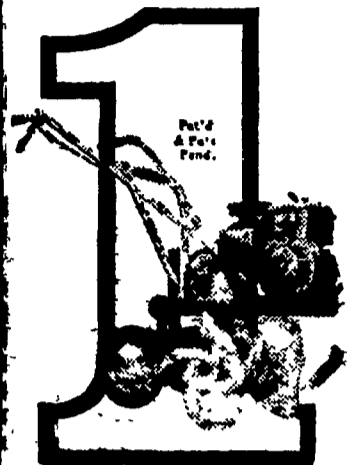


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The Tragedy of Pollution

*Trout Output Varies
Greatly in Streams*

(Continued from Page 6)

areas. The ugly reality of water pollution takes many forms.

It may take the form of offensive odors and offensive sights, of rotting algae and rotting fish, of floating debris and dirty boat hulls. Or it may take more stealthy forms, such as water that looks clean at a distance but water that is dead, devoid of oxygen, devoid of all living things, an aquatic wasteland.

Continued pollution, regardless of the source, means less and less water of suitable quality for necessary as well as optional purposes. At the same time, continued growth of population and industry means an ever-mounting demand for clean, usable water. It is when the lines of supply and demand to exceed supply — it is then the crisis begins.

Our gross pollution of land water, and air has lent credibility to the grim prophecies of widespread world famine in the decades ahead. In the bleak light of our man-made perils the wild creatures that were original objects of conservation may be abandoned altogether. These dark ideas are brought to mind by a release from the Office of Endangered Species of the United States Department of the Interior that lists there are "78 species of wildlife threatened with extinction in the United States."

Three examples of our disappearing wildlife are: The snowy egret whose delicate plumes became so fashionable that it almost became extinct; The polar bear, stalked by hunters' airplanes; and the bald eagle, our national emblem, being reduced in number by

people disturbing their nesting areas.

Man himself is, of course, an exotic species in North America, whose arrival was for the other creatures the ultimate disaster. His pollution to a continent is the greatest present threat to North American Wildlife.

With more and more of the American landscape disappearing each year under concrete and asphalt, and yielding to the suburban developer, the people of this country have become more sensitive to the need for preserving a few remaining wilderness areas as pleasure grounds, as reserves set aside for recreation, and as laboratories for studying the forces and processes of nature.

An increasing number of people in the country believe that some of the undisturbed areas of woodlands, mountains, marshes, and similar types of landscape should be preserved.

The wilderness is a living museum and a laboratory of natural history, a storehouse of knowledge, and a record of the past. The wilderness that is left in this country is not renewable, once lost it can never be restored. Many conservationists believe that, with so much of this country developed for mass recreation and organized sports, it is not too much to ask that two per cent of it be kept in its original state.

What will happen to such wilderness areas as Storm Kings Mountain, and Hells Canyon? Will the people allow them to be flooded by a new dam? Can their loveliness be preserved? These are the questions that you and I face.

There is something that

Fertile trout streams can be five times as productive as less fertile streams, says zoologists at Pennsylvania State University and Lock Haven State College. They find that fertile streams can produce 268 pounds of brook trout per acre annually, compared with only 52 pounds per acre from the less fertile streams.

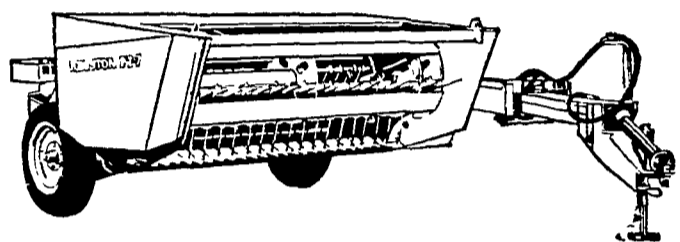
However, such annual production is seldom harvested by fishermen, according to Edwin L. Cooper of Penn State and Robert C. Scherer of Lock Haven. They report that fertile streams generally provide anglers with about 65 pounds of fish per acre. The average yield for the less fertile waters is about 10 pounds per acre.

In both instances, yields are reduced by restrictions on fishing and by natural mortality and limited life span, the zoologists claim.

Everyone can do to help combat pollution, and preserve our wildlife and wilderness areas. Some people can do much to prevent these problems. Others, perhaps, can do only a little. But everyone, or just about everyone, can do something. It's up to us to make the next move. If we allow this to happen to our wilderness areas, as well as push out our wildlife, evaporated from the landscape will be that mystery, a mystery instilled in the quiet air by the hint of a great cat's presence, whether one ever glimpses it or not.

Few ask, after all, for a glimpse of God. It is a mystery, the wildness, in our world that is dying and that mystery is, by definition, irreplaceable.

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