

summer sportsman



# A Visit To A Hatchery

By Don Macalady

Earlier this week, I made a very interesting and rewarding visit to Pennsylvania's Benner Spring Fish Research Station. The installation is only about five miles from State College, not far from the Bellefonte Highway.

During my visit I was guided through the station by the very capable and cordial Arthur Bradford, who is in charge of fish management research at the station

**THE BUSINESS** of stocking our lakes, streams and farm ponds with healthy fish and maintaining a good state fish population is quite a complicated task.

Between the two types of fish research (culture and management) being conducted at Benner Spring, projects are under way at all times. The entire staff is kept busy all year round.

Among the studies are those concerning fish pathology. For this work with the parasites, diseases and viruses which infect fish, two well equipped laboratories are maintained.

**ONE OF THE** most interesting instruments here was a scale magnified, by which a fish's scale is projected onto a screen many times its normal size. By examining the scale, the biologist can tell the fishes' age. The scale contains growth rings, which look remarkably similar to the growth rings in a tree trunk.

Fish, I was told, are subjected to many diseases essentially the same as human afflictions. And, the cures are often essentially the same—antibiotics, sulfa drugs, etc. Does your goldfish need a shot?

The staff there also maintains a file which contains data on every stream, pond, reservoir, dam and lake in the state. This is some file. For example, there are six Mill Creeks in Sullivan County alone!

**IN ADDITION,** the building contains a large fish information library, storerooms, offices, a water testing lab for pollution studies, and, most important, a fish hatching and growth research setup.

The hatchery and fish growth studies occupy the entire basement of the building and many large outdoor ponds and raceways. Here, biologists are conducting tests, among other things, the breeding of trout.

Selective breeding, much the same as that used for cattle or horses, is being tried with the objective of improving the strain of hatchery trout. Desirable qualities sought include fast growth, disease resistance, fighting ability, and adaptability to natural environment (for which, by the way, brown trout have been found to be by far the best).

**DIET EXPERIMENTS,** to determine the feasibility of new pellet type feed for trout, are also being conducted. A new automatic feeding device is being used by which the trout are fed out of doors the prescribed diet automatically.

Experiments are being conducted, too, to solve the problem of the pale color of hatchery trout. Adding paprika, or other specialized coloring agents, to the fish's diet imparts a deep natural outer coat and a pink colored flesh to the fish. These characteristics make the fish more natural looking, and thus more desirable, to sportsmen.

In addition, many new developments in hatching techniques have given information for some of the first improvements in this field in 50 years. A new vertical jar and barrel hatching system utilizes space much better than the old shallow, horizontal troughs usually used in hatcheries. Mechanical sorters now automatically size trout before they're placed into ponds or loaded into trucks for stocking.

**EVEN AN OLD** western routine has been modernized and used here—branding. Researchers found that a burnt brand number serves as a lifelong identification tag for certain species of fish.

Fish researchers even use an electrical "herding" device. Developed by the University's Electrical Engineering Department, the instrument, through a series of direct current pulses, draws fish into an area where they can be used for research purposes.

With another device developed in part at the University, operators can electrically count fish in their ponds or troughs.

**THROUGH THE STATION,** too, fish management projects evaluate stocking programs and study fish problems throughout the state. Recent attempts to improve fishing at Black Moshannon and Lake Jean, and present river spawning experiments are examples of projects in the management field.

Another is the "Fish for Fun" project near Renovo. Here, year round fly fishing for trout is permitted. The only stipulation—all fish are returned to the water.

This project suggests a possible inevitable trend in fishing. Over-population may someday make this the only practical way to permit sport fishing.

For anyone interested in fish and fishing, a trip to the Benner Spring Research Station is truly a fascinating experience. Visitors are always welcome at the station, and the word "welcome" is liberally interpreted by the courteous and helpful employees at the station.

To get there, take the Bellefonte Road to the Shiloh Church. Turn left and follow the signs which will show you the way directly to the station.



Macalady

## 'S' Club Calls DuMars Best

Mark DuMars has been named Penn State's outstanding senior athlete by the Varsity 'S' Club.

Other athletes under consideration for the award were sprinter Bob Brown, football quarterback Dick Hoak, Eastern heavyweight wrestling champion Johnston Oberly, and baseball pitcher Ed Kikla.

**DUMARS WON** the award for his brilliant scoring and ball handling antics during three years as the backcourt ace for the Nittany Lions.

He averaged 16.8 points per game as a sophomore, 21.3 as a junior, and 15.2 this year. His total of 1139 points make him the second highest scorer in Penn State history. Jesse Arnette holds the No. 1 spot.

### Gymnasts Hold Title

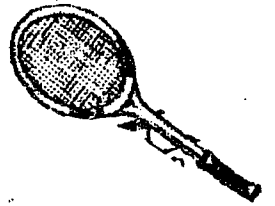
Penn State gymnasts have captured the national all-around title for the past three years. Armando Vega won in '59, Jay Werner in '60, Greg Weiss in 1961.

Southpaw Ed Kikla, ace Penn State pitcher for the past three seasons, is hurling for Lancaster of the Class 'A' Eastern League.

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