

A black and white photograph of a beaver on a log, with the title text overlaid on the right side.

OREGON STATE  
GAME COMMISSION

# BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 1960



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## the cover

Photo of young beaver by Wm. L. Finley.

## BULLETIN HUNTER SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAM

### Instructors Approved

Month of December.....	19
Total for 1959.....	615

### Students Trained

Month of December.....	306
Total for 1959.....	1735

### Firearms accidents reported 1959

Fatal.....	15
Nonfatal.....	61

## RECORD NUMBER OF DEER AND ELK TAGS IN 1959

Preliminary tabulation of deer and elk tags issued for 1959 indicates the highest number of licensed deer and elk hunters on record.

Approximately 247,836 deer tags were issued in 1959 compared to 233,885 for 1958, an increase of 14,000.

Elk hunters in 1959 totalled about 43,805, more than 1,300 over the 1958 total of 42,448.

These figures are subject to a change upward upon completion of the final audit of the licenses and tags issued by the more than 1,000 license agencies in the state.

Hunters' reports of the number of elk and deer harvested are now being tabulated and the results will be published in an early issue of the Bulletin.

## NATIONAL WILDLIFE WEEK MARCH 20-26

"Water—Key to your Survival" is the slogan for the 1960 National Wildlife Week from March 20 through 26, sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation.

Kits of materials to be used in promoting observance of Wildlife Week have been distributed to all the states. Organizations and individuals wishing to participate in Wildlife Week activities are invited to contact the state chairmen for Oregon: C. C. Schenck, 700 N.E. Broadway, Portland; or Austin Hamer, 616 Fourth Avenue, Oswego.

## HATCHERY CREWS BUSY SPAWNING FISH

The East Lake egg station this winter produced more than 2½ million eastern brook trout eggs and close to 50,000 brown trout eggs. From Crescent and Odell lakes a million kokanee eggs were obtained, with an additional supply being received from the states of Montana and Washington.

Brood fish at the various hatcheries will produce most of the rest of the eggs needed for an anticipated production of 20,000,000 fish this year. One of the outstanding accomplishments was the taking of 300,000 eggs from the second generation Atlantic salmon brood stock raised at the Wizard Falls Hatchery. As far as is known, this is the first time in the western states that second generation offspring from sea-run Atlantic salmon have been successfully spawned. The original brood stock at Wizard Falls was reared from eggs taken nine years ago from sea-run fish at Gaspé Bay in eastern Quebec.

## JANUARY MEETING OF THE OREGON STATE GAME COMMISSION

The Oregon State Game Commission at its meeting on January 8 conducted the following business in addition to its hearing on angling regulations:

**CAPITAL OUTLAY:** Authorized call for bids for construction of 6-bay garage at Bend; expenditure of \$606.68 for concrete basement for residence at White River Management Area; and call for bids for construction of 12 miles of stock fence on the White River Management Area.

**FENCING POLICY:** Made some revisions in its general policy to assist under certain conditions in the prevention of big game damage through the use of woven wire fences, lumber panels and tree cages.

On January 22 the Commission acted upon the following matters:

**LANDOWNER SURVEY:** Because of lack of funds in the budget and also the need for making a more thorough investigation of proper methods, Commission decided against making a landowner survey this year to determine the extent of trespass and vandalism problems by hunters and anglers and the resultant denial of access to privately owned land in Oregon.

**SNAKE RIVER ACCESS:** Authorized application be made for purchase of five-acre tract near Brownlee Pool for access purposes.

**NORTHTRUP CREEK:** Authorized execution of proposed agreement with State Board of Forestry for a cooperative range improvement program in the Northrup Creek area to attract elk away from conifer plantations.

## TEXAS SITE OF NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE CONFERENCE

The 25th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference is scheduled for March 7, 8 and 9 at Dallas, Texas. General theme of this year's conference is "Natural Resources and American Citizenship."

## GAME FARM PRODUCTION SCHEDULE INCREASED FOR 1960

The Game Commission has authorized an increase in the game farm production of pheasants during 1960 to compensate for the 1959 decline in pheasant densities, particularly in eastern Oregon counties.

The distribution schedule calls for the release of 38,000 pleasants, 4,000 chukars and 1,200 hunns in 1960.





By Chester E. Kebbe  
Chief Biologist, Fur Resources

IN THE HALF-CENTURY BEFORE OREGON BECAME A STATE, much of the economy of the newly settled territory was based on the fur industry. The animal most sought after by the early trappers and fur traders then, as today, was the beaver. Records of the Hudson's Bay Company, of Vancouver, Washington, show that in a four year period (1834-37) it obtained 405,472 beaver pelts from trappers and Indians in the Northwest. Such intensive exploitation served to reduce the beaver population to a point where it was a comparatively scarce animal by the time statehood was attained.

The year 1959 marked a century of progress for the State of Oregon. It also marked a century of progress in beaver management, most of which evolved in the last 30 years. Management has brought back a resource from a state of near-extinction to one of abundance. More beaver inhabited the state in the last decade than at any time in the last 100 years, and resident trappers have harvested more animals in the last 10 years than in any previous period since statehood.

Oregon has not been amiss in honoring this largest of North American rodents. It has adopted the nickname "Beaver State" and emblazoned its likeness in gold on one side of the state flag. One need not travel far in the state before coming to a town, creek, or landmark bearing the name of this valuable fur-bearer.

Throughout the first half-century of statehood, trappers continued to trap

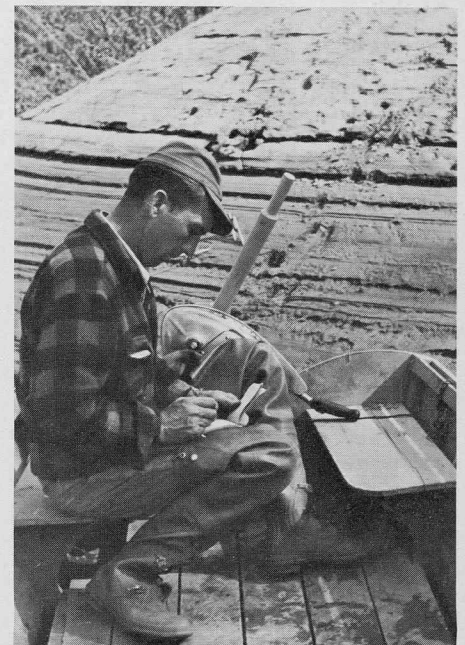
beaver without restriction until the Oregon State Legislature in 1893 closed the season in Baker and Malheur counties. This was followed by a state-wide legislative closure in 1899, which remained in effect until 1917 and 1918, when the law was relaxed to permit killing of beaver at all times of the year in Benton and Marion counties.

IN 1923 THE LEGISLATURE AGAIN enacted a law opening the entire state to beaver trapping during November, December, January, and February except in national forests and the five southwest counties of Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson, and Josephine. After eight seasons, a 1931 legislative act again protected the beaver in all parts of the state except in Clatsop, Columbia, Multnomah, Marion, and the western part of Douglas County. The following year the Game Commission passed a regulation closing these last five counties. This action was further supported by legislation in 1937 closing the entire state to beaver trapping and delegating the responsibility of removing nuisance animals to the Game Commission.

The initial step in active beaver management in Oregon was taken in 1932. The U. S. Forest Service, Bureau of Biological Survey, and State Game Commission joined forces in a cooperative project of relocating beaver. These animals were live-trapped from available colonies and transplanted in mountain streams where their dams would be beneficial in soil and water conservation. A total of 962 animals was moved in the six years this program was in operation.

With the passage of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act in 1938, federal funds became available to the various states for wildlife research and management. The first project utilizing these funds approved for Oregon was an aggressive beaver transplanting program. Beaver were caught on agricultural lands, where their activities were often destructive, and liberated at appropriate sites in most watersheds in the state. By 1945, when the emphasis was shifted to dead-trapping and pelting, over 3,000 beaver

(Continued on Page 4)



Field agent records beaver sign on census strip to obtain population trend.





Beaver dams in mountainous areas act as storage reservoirs, preventing rapid run-offs. Ideal habitat is created for fish, waterfowl and other wildlife.

## Oregon's Beaver Story

(Continued from Page 3)

had been relocated. A scarcity of suitable transplanting sites, increasing numbers of damage complaints, and a rapidly increasing beaver population over the entire state necessitated this change.

THIS RESTORATION IS A REMARKABLE EXAMPLE of a fur species responding to protection and other man-

agement practices. Now that the resource has been restored, proper management calls for the harvest of the annual crop, whether it be a surplus of one beaver in an irrigation ditch or a hundred beaver on an overcrowded stream. Populations must be kept in harmony with available food supplies and with primary land uses. In diking districts and agricultural areas, beaver must be eliminated or their numbers held to a minimum, while in other regions where their activities are beneficial sizeable populations



Invention of successful live-traps led to restoration of beaver in Oregon.



Dams are occasionally cor-

should be maintained. Each watercourse, therefore, demands attention with regulations designed to crop the desired number of animals.

During the evolution of the present program, many changes in laws, policies, and procedures have occurred in attempts to keep abreast of population fluctuations. As more streams were brought into production and populations continued to increase, the number of damage complaints also multiplied. In 1942 only 656 beaver were removed from complaint areas, but by 1944 this figure exceeded 2,000.

In 1945 landowners who were interested in perpetuating beaver were included in the management program. They signed agreements to protect and foster beaver on their properties, for which they received a share of the sale price of pelts taken from their land. As its part of the agreement, the Game Commission managed the beaver, cropping the surplus and nuisance animals during the winter months when the fur was prime and live-trapping nuisance animals at other times of the year. The number of landowner participants rose from 590 in 1945 to 1,500 in 1950, the last year the cooperative agreements were in effect. The number of beaver removed by state trappers also increased from 3,000 to 6,000 during the period.

THE CROPPING OF 6,000 BEAVER a year by state trappers under this program failed to remove a satisfactory number from complaint areas and had no effect on the large surpluses available elsewhere. The legislature had not given the Game Commission complete authority to manage beaver but had made it the Commission's duty to remove nuisance animals after a complaint in





structed at ill-chosen sites.

writing had been received. As a result, surplus animals on lands from which no complaint had been registered could not be harvested. Since populations had increased to a point where it was no longer a job of restoration but one of wisely harvesting an annual crop, new legislation was requested.

In response to this urgent need, the 1951 legislature passed a bill delegating broad powers of management to the Game Commission. Under the statute the Commission obtained the authority to set seasons and bag limits, open streams or areas and promulgate such other regulations as deemed necessary. Its initial action was to declare a three-month open season, the first in Oregon in 30 years, for the following November. In general, only agricultural lands were opened in order to confine trapping to areas of damage and prevent overtrapping on mountain streams.

Prior to trapping, each beaver trapper was required to purchase numbered box-car type metal seals at \$2.00 each in sufficient quantity to cover his anticipated needs. Reorders could be made throughout the season until the established quota of 200 tags per trapper was reached. As soon as a beaver was skinned, the law required a metal seal to be locked through an eyehole. A report card containing the corresponding number was then to be filled out with information as to where and when the beaver was taken and returned to the Game Commission within 10 days from the date of catch. After the season had closed, refunds were made on all unused tags providing all of the other seals had been accounted for.

AS SOON AS THE SEASON was publicized, enthusiasm mounted, with many

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No tree is too large for a beaver to fell, as indicated by work on this cottonwood along the Willamette River.

opportunists anticipating sudden wealth with little expenditure of time and money. Suitable beaver traps were expensive and became difficult to locate. A number of inexperienced persons became beaver trappers, making poor sets with inferior traps. Their catches ran to a high percentage of kits and yearling animals. These low value furs, along with poorly prepared skins, returned them little for their time and effort. Even though an instruction sheet showing the steps in pelt preparation was sent to all trap-

pers, fur buyers reported a large number of poorly handled pelts. Some trappers averaged as little as \$5.00 per skin, while the more experienced men received between \$12.00 and \$15.00.

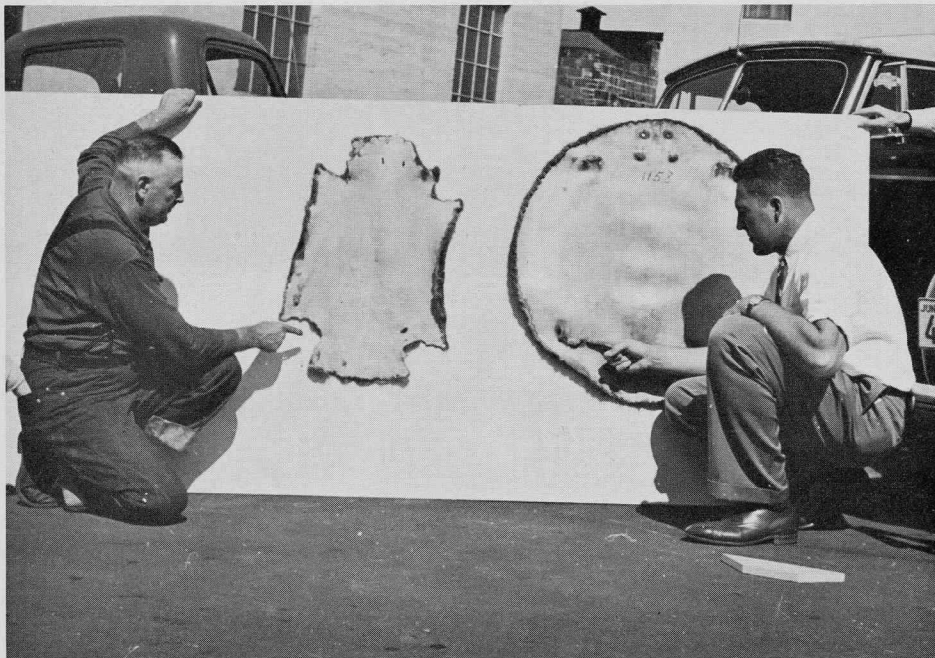
It became obvious shortly after the season closed that beaver were far from annihilated in spite of the heavy trapping pressure. Complaints were received in numbers comparable to the previous year. One difference was noted, however, in that most complaints involved only

*(Continued on Page 6)*



Over 3,000 beaver have been removed from agricultural areas and liberated in mountain streams.





Half of the fur value is lost through improper skinning and stretching. Pelt on left in practically worthless.

#### BEAVER HARVESTED BY PRIVATE TRAPPERS

Year	Trapping Licenses Issued	Beaver Seals Issued	Beaver Trapped	Av. Price Per Pelt	Sale Price of Furs
1951-52	2,270	22,744	15,257	\$ 9.75	\$148,756
1952-53	1,954	15,642	10,374	10.40	107,890
1953-54	1,730	16,234	11,103	8.48	94,153
1954-55	1,614	16,917	13,373	12.78	170,907
1955-56	1,598	15,291	11,533	11.90	137,243
1956-57	1,543	16,255	12,210	9.24	112,820
1957-58	1,593	16,755	12,865	10.29	132,381
1958-59	1,094	12,923	9,786	9.08	88,857



Beaver pelts sewed on hoops to dry. Prime, well-prepared pelts bring top prices.

## Oregon's Beaver Story

(Continued from Page 5)

a pair of animals where previously large colonies had to be removed. Drift from closed territories undoubtedly helped to repopulate some of the intensively trapped areas.

In recent years, due primarily to the large number of pelts on the market, the price has remained low. Consequently, after the first winter the Game Commission reduced the price per seal to \$1.00. The quota of tags per trapper was also lowered from 200 to 50 the second year but was raised to 100 for subsequent years. Other regulatory changes have included changing stream and area openings in accordance with the supply or need for removal and staggering opening and closing dates by area to manipulate trapping pressure. Results of recent open seasons are presented in the table accompanying this article.

THE RESULTS OBTAINED in the last eight years of harvesting beaver by private trappers have been very encouraging. With the annual take remaining constant, it does not appear that trappers are cropping more than the annual increase. Undoubtedly, the low fur prices which have prevailed during this period have been a factor in preventing overtrapping. Had prices remained high, as they were in 1947, regulations would have had to be tightened rather than relaxed. But perhaps the strongest section of the law making for an orderly harvest is the penalty clause which sets a minimum fine of \$200 upon conviction of violating any part of the beaver law. The convicted trapper also forfeits his right to trap beaver for a period of two years.

Beaver have again become a valuable asset to the State of Oregon, not only from the standpoint of an annual cash crop for the trapper, but in soil and water conservation through construction of dams in mountain streams. These dams not only provide living space for the beaver but create additional habitat for waterfowl, trout, deer, and other wild creatures. No one can measure the increased pleasure a person derives from the great outdoors by observing the actions of a beaver in the wild or viewing its marvelous engineering feats. Beaver have demonstrated their ability to respond to management practices in the face of encroaching civilization. We therefore are confident they will continue to be a valuable part of our wildlife resources through our next century of progress.





Printed copies of the 1959-60 Oregon game code are now available at the Game Commission office. The booklet is a compilation of the game laws enacted by the legislature.

\* \* \*

An encouraging picture of the results of the experimental open seasons on spike elk is obtained from the records of elk hunter success on the Millicoma tree farm of the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company in Coos County. In 1955, 59 bulls were taken from the Millicoma tree farm and 64 in 1956, all of which were 3 points or better since spikes were protected. Beginning with 1957, spikes were legal in the south coast area. That year hunters in the Millicoma area took 139 bull elk, of which 83 were 3 points or better. In 1958, of the 131 bull elk killed, 54 were 3 points or better. During the 1959 season, 160 bull elk were checked out of which 83 were 3 points or better. Not only was the take of mature bulls and spikes equal to previous highs for both classes of animals but the total kill was 2½ times as great as with the 3-point regulations.

\* \* \*

Most farmers in the Willamette Valley trying the blood and bone meal repellent sacks have found them effective in preventing deer damage to young trees by browsing or horning, a survey by game field agents shows.

\* \* \*

The Matson Creek controlled elk season on December 12 and 13 in Coos County resulted in the high kill of 134 elk by 142 hunters. Included in the kill were three ear-tagged elk, which showed a maximum of 1½ miles of travel from point of tagging. December elk hunts on Bridge Creek in Umatilla County and for the Baker area in Union and Baker counties resulted in only poor to fair hunter success due to mild weather conditions. The Clatsop controlled elk season resulted in a fair harvest for that area.

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# Angling Regulation Changes

THE 1960 angling regulations were adopted last month by the Game Commission and copies of the complete regulations in pamphlet form will be available at license agencies sometime in March. Only changes from last year's regulations are included in this article.

The general open seasons for trout will be April 23 to October 31 in all zones except streams in Zones 1, 3 and 4; May 28 to October 31 for streams in Zone 1; and May 21 to October 9 for lakes, reservoirs and their tributaries within the national forest boundaries in the Cascades.

The winter angling season in open coastal streams of Zone 1 was extended through the month of March, thus permitting steelhead anglers one more month of fishing.

Bag limits were placed on black bass, striped bass and shad. For striped bass, the limit is 5 per day, 16 inches or over in length; and for shad, 10 per day and 20 in possession or in 7 consecutive days. Anglers will be limited to 12 black bass per day, 24 in possession or in 7 consecutive days. In the daily bag only 5 may be over 17 inches in length. The bag limit for channel catfish was increased from 10 to 50.

Night angling for warm water game fish will be permitted except in the main stem of the Rogue River.

The use of certain kinds of cut or live bait will be permitted in Zone 1 waters.

Willamette River and tributaries above Oregon City Falls were opened to sturgeon angling.

The special jack salmon bag limit in effect from October 1 through November 15 in Zones 1 and 2 was eliminated.

Mullet may be taken the entire year, with no length or bag limit.

Changes by zones follow:

## ZONE 1

**Coos bay** open to salmon angling entire year.

**Nestucca river** between Beaver creek and Powder creek closed to salmon angling March 1 to October 15. Nestucca river above Powder creek and all Nestucca river tributaries unless otherwise mentioned closed to salmon angling. (See exceptions)

**Pacific ocean.** The salmon bag limit for the Pacific ocean is 2 fish 20 inches or over per day and 4 in possession or in 7 consecutive days, except that for the period from July 1 to October 31 the salmon bag limit is 2 fish 22 inches or over per day and 4 such fish in possession or in 7 consecutive days in that portion of the Pacific ocean from the Washington state line to Tillamook head. Jack salmon are not classed as trout and may not be taken in the Pacific ocean.

**Three rivers** (Nestucca) is closed to salmon angling from its mouth up to winter deadline 200 feet below the hatchery rack from March 1 to October 15; above that point and all tributaries closed to salmon angling the entire year.

**Tillamook bay** open to salmon angling entire year.

**Trask river** above Hanenkrat road, Trask river and tributaries, north fork, and south fork closed to salmon angling March 1 to October 15.

**Trask river** is closed to all angling from May 28 to November 30 from head fish rack site down to Hanenkrat road about 0.3 mile below the lower rack site.

## ZONE 2

**Clackamas river** closed to all angling from River Mill dam down to the gauging station approximately 1,000 feet below.

**Clackamas river** and tributaries closed to Chinook salmon angling July 1 to September 30.

**Cottage Grove reservoir** open to angling entire year. (Summer trout bag limit)

**Eagle creek** (Clackamas county) closed to all angling from hatchery rack up to and including the hatchery intake spillway.

**Lindsey creek** closed to all angling except from April 23 to August 14.

**Lost lake** (Linn county) open to angling April 23 to July 15.

**Lost lake tributaries** opened to angling May 21 to October 9.

**McKenzie river**—Leaburg powerhouse tailrace—closed to all angling.

(Continued on Page 8)



# Angling Regulation Changes

(Continued from Page 7)

**Pamelia lake**, special bag limit 30 fish per day, 60 in possession or in 7 consecutive days. No minimum length limit.

**Pine lake** (Linn county) open to trout angling during entire general trout season.

## ZONE 3

**Tidewater areas** open entire year to salmon angling.

**Umpqua river** and tributaries below confluence of Elk creek open to trout not less than 8 inches May 28 to October 31.

**Umpqua river** and tributaries above and including Elk creek except North Umpqua between Steamboat and Soda Springs dam open to trout not less than 6 inches May 28 to October 31.

**North Umpqua** between Steamboat and Soda Springs dam open to trout not less than 6 inches May 28 to September 5.

**Umpqua river**, North Umpqua below narrows at Rock Creek, South Umpqua below Jackson creek, Smith river below west fork, and north fork Smith river open to trout, jack salmon, and steelhead no less than 12 inches November 1 to February 29.

**Umpqua river**, North Umpqua below Steamboat, and South Umpqua below Jackson creek open to steelhead no less than 20 inches May 28 to October 31. North Umpqua above Steamboat open to steelhead no less than 20 inches May 28 to September 5.

**Umpqua river** and North Umpqua below narrows at Rock creek open to salmon angling no less than 12 inches March 26 to June 5.

**Umpqua river**, North Umpqua below narrows at Rock Creek, South Umpqua below Jackson creek, and Smith river below west fork open to salmon no less than 20 inches August 27 to November 15.

**North Umpqua river reservoirs.** All Copco impoundments above Soda Springs dam open April 23 to October 31.

## ZONE 4

**Fish lake** open April 23 to October 9.

**Howard Prairie reservoir** open April 23 to October 9. All tributaries within Talent project subject to stream regulations in Zone 4.

**Rogue river.** The main Rogue river channel, except the backwaters of Gold



Ray and Savage Rapids dam, is closed to night angling for warm-water game fish.

**Rogue river**, including tributaries, below Mule creek and Illinois, including tributaries, below Indigo creek open to trout not less than 8 inches May 28 to October 2. May 28 to October 2 in all other waters for trout not less than 6 inches.

**Illinois river** below Pomeroy dam open October 3 to February 29 and Applegate river below Little Applegate open January 14 to February 29 for trout not less than 12 inches.

**Rogue river**, exclusive of tributaries, for trout not less than 12 inches below Gold Ray dam October 3 to November 30 and below Hellsgate October 3 to February 29.

**Rogue river**, exclusive of tributaries, open to salmon and jack salmon angling above Mule creek March 26 to June 30 and below Mule creek March 26 to November 30; and Illinois river below Pomeroy dam March 26 to November 30.

## ZONE 5

**Pelton reservoir** open to angling May 21 to October 31.

**South Twin lake.** Chumming prohibited.

## ZONE 6

**Lofton reservoir** open to angling during regular trout season.

## ZONE 7

**Trout bag limit in all waters:** 10 fish 6 inches and over in length in any one day and 20 in possession or in 7 consecutive days. No minimum length on eastern brook or Dolly Varden. Dolly Varden to be included with the regular summer trout bag limit. Winter limit on Dolly Varden is 10 fish per day and 20 in pos-

session or in 7 consecutive days in waters open to salmon and steelhead angling.

**McKay reservoir.** Regular trout bag limit applies.

**Mill creek** open to trout angling May 22 to September 18.

**Slide and Upper Slide lakes**, and **Strawberry and Little Strawberry lakes** open to trout angling during regular season.

## ZONE 8

**High lake, Mud and Little Mud lakes** open to angling during regular season.

## ZONE 9

**Trout bag limit in all waters:** Same as for Zone 7.

**Catherine creek** (Union county). Removed angling closure below Union water intake and from upper Davis dam. Fishway deadlines apply.

**Joseph creek** below Crow creek is open to steelhead and salmon angling except April 10 to August 31.

**Snake river** open to trout angling entire year up to marker 100 feet above the upstream bank of Pine creek. (Summer bag limit prevails)

**Wallowa lake** is open April 23 to November 30, except that the season for yanks (kokanee) is open April 23 to August 31; after August 31 the head of the lake is closed to all angling south of markers established by the Game Commission.

## ZONE 10

**Columbia river.** All regulations pertaining to main stem of Columbia river to be consolidated under Zone 10.

**Columbia river** closed to angling from McNary dam downstream to a line drawn across the river from red and white marker at the Government Ferry Landing on the Oregon shore to red and white markers on the Washington shore.

## WINTER REGULATIONS

### ZONE 1

**Open season:** February 6 to March 31 and November 1, 1960 to March 31, 1961.

**Coquille river** (north fork) open up to Moon creek.

**Millicoma river** (west fork) open up to unnamed tributary one-half mile above Girl Scout Camp.

**Coos Bay and Tillamook Bay** open entire year to salmon angling.

### ZONE 8

**Owyhee river** above diversion dam opened to winter angling for salmon and steelhead.

## Oregon State Game Commission Bulletin

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