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SKAGIT TOPS IN STEELHEAD RUNS

Final compilation of steelhead catches for the 1955-56 winter season show that the planting of migratory sized young steelhead in the Skagit River has produced a marked increase in the return of adult fish.

The catch for the season, as indicated on the punch cards, was 161,624 steelhead, which was topped only slightly by the record catch thus far of 162,663 in the 1953-54 winter season.

Streams in which steelhead were stocked superseded previous catches and the most sensational of these was the return cycle of fish planted in the Skagit River. Plans in the Skagit have been in the past fry sized fish, released in tributary streams and beaver ponds. The whopping last seasons' catch of 21,792 steelhead in the Skagit topped by a large margin all previous records and appears to be a direct result of the first migratory-sized release of steelhead in this stream.

From a catch of 16,170 fish in 1953-54, the Skagit dropped to 10,284 in 1954-55 as a result of the low water periods of 1952-53. The 1955-56 catch of 21,792 fish was the first returning cycle of the migratory-sized fish, and lead all other streams in the state by a wide margin.

The Skagit is one of the perfect migratory streams, having extensive feeding areas in the many sloughs which make up its outlet to Puget Sound. The limitation to the steelhead runs in the river has been the loss of valuable spawning and rearing areas in its feeder streams.

In the past season the Skagit was tops

in the state as a steelhead producer. Second to Skagit's 21,792 fish was the Puyallup river with 18,496 and the Green with 15,572. The Puyallup had been in first place the two previous years.

Skagit Open To Marblemount

Apparently the protests of the upper Skagit sportsmen have been heeded by the state game department. In the announcement of the winter fishing season for streams of the state it is noted that on the Skagit the extended season will be open to the government bridge at Marblemount instead of just to the mouth of Grandy Creek as it was this past season.

The winter season will open the first Sunday in December, the 2nd. The minimum size fish that can be taken is 12 inches. This regulation is now statewide.