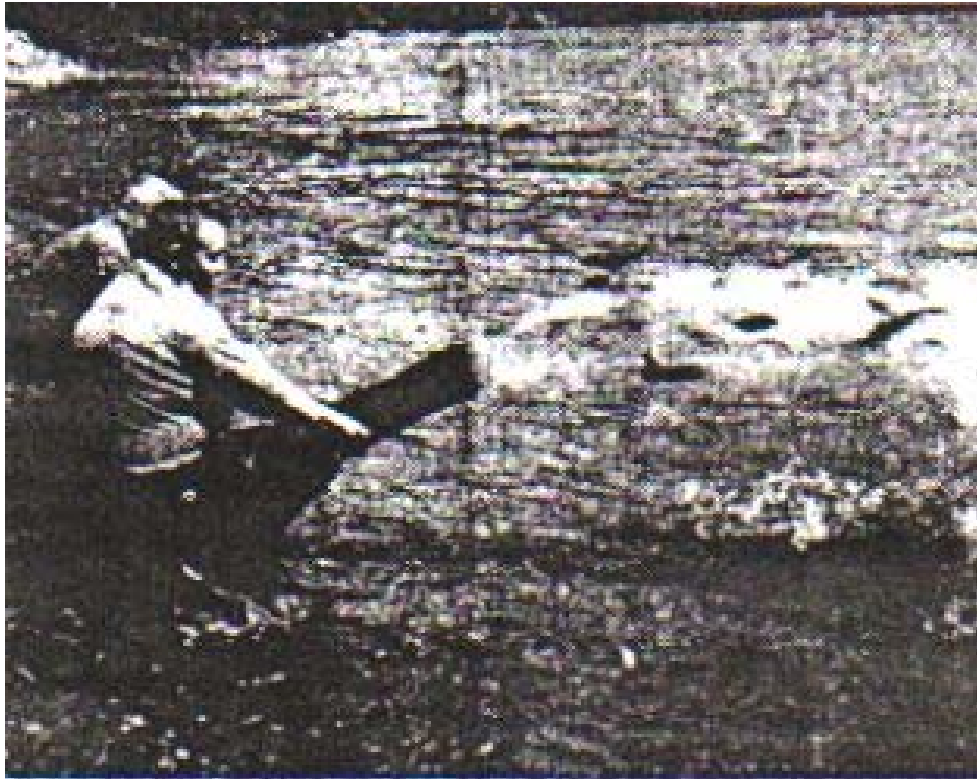


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SKAGIT SLATED TO BE BEST STEELHEAD STREAM IN U.S.



Game Protector Don Gibson Guides 12,000 Young Steelhead Into New Home In Skagit River

Prospects for steelheading on the Skagit River in future years were looking up considerably last week as a big truck from Tukul Creek hatchery, near Snoqualmie, made several trips here to plant 65,000 young steelhead.

First plants were made on the upper part of the Skagit, with two made in the vicinity of Concrete. In the picture above, Don Gibson is holding the nose as the tank sprays out 12,000 of the lively fish at the bar on the upper side of the mouth of the Baker.

Another 12,000 were planted on Friday at the big eddy just above the Ovenell

place on the South Skagit road.

It was amusing to see the fish coming out of the big hose, all swimming upstream madly, so that they appeared to come out backwards in slow motion. After hitting the water they did lots of jumping and quite a number skittered right up on the bar. After schooling up in the area for long enough to wear out the tranquilizers given survive the trip, they gradually began to disappear into deeper water.

The fish planted were from six to nine inches long and should be up to legal steelhead size in two years. Those shown in

the small picture were some that died during the long ride from the hatchery, but show the sizes of the fish planted.



The main effect of the planting on the river at this time, however, will be that the river will not be opened this Sunday with the high lakes and other streams. To give the steelhead time to escape to the lower waters, the Skagit opening will be delayed until July 1st.

An extensive planting program is planned for the Skagit. The next big project will be making Barnaby Slough at Rockport into a rearing pond from which marked fish can be released directly into the river. This project is to get under way very soon.