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'Fishing Vanishing'

To The Sentinel:

Those 85 cent perch are now $3.09 a pound at the supermarket. And there are few packages in the freezer.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is putting 254 out of 260 licensed commercial fishermen out of business July 1. Many other people connected with the industry will also be put out of work.

Nearly 1,000 farmers went out of business during the first four months of 1975. This will put some 3,200 other small businesses out of business by the end of the year.

Gov. Lucey goes to Washington for money. Guess he forgets who puts it there.

When a commercial fisherman catches a salmon or trout in his nets, he is subject to arrest. Yet when the first plantings were made in 1965, he was promised trout in five years.

Every time a salt water fish has been introduced into the Great Lakes it has caused nothing but trouble. Smelt was planted in Michigan. First, the smelt cleaned out the lake shiners, which were feed for perch and herring, then they cleaned out the young herring.

Next came the lamprey, which cleaned out the trout and any other fish they could drain of blood.

The lamprey was followed by the alewife, which make our beaches in summer smell like a sardine factory.

And there is the carp. Millions of pounds of carp are shipped from this state every year. Now the Food and Drug Administration says they are loaded with PCBs and can't be marketed.

Michigan has been importing salmon eggs, which have introduced disease into their rearing ponds and probably the Great Lakes. Michigan destroyed 2½ million young salmon this spring.

This spring, Kenosha's holding pond had 72,000 young salmon. They developed a gill fungi which killed most of them. The balance, about 10,000, were released into the lake (to pollute other fish?).

Recently, I saw some nearly dead northern pike and trout with gill fungi.

Dick Eichler, our last commercial fisherman, recently netted 60 pounds of chubs, plus lots of alewives, in nets that had been left out for 10 days. These alewives are taking their toll of perch, chubs and smelt that are low in DDT and PCB.

With trout and salmon waiting there to eat them, the perch and smelt can't enter shallow water to spawn. They, too, may soon go the way of the shiners. Well, we can always blame the lack of fish on the commercial fishermen.

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