

Raising walleye a risky task

ART BRIGGS-JUDE
Correspondent

People rearing fingerling walleyes from a tapioca-like mass to fish over three inches in length, quickly discover it's a risky procedure. It begins on the banks of a bone-chilling river in mid-April, gathering and hand fertilizing eggs from spawning fish in an ordinary wash basin. During this operation, the timing and temperatures must be right for the fresh-stripped spawn are only receptive to the male fish sperm for about half a minute.

The transfer of these thousands of eggs to the separate upwelling jars of the hatchery is also a perilous journey. There's no sloshing allowed in pails holding more than a quarter of a million potential walleyes.

Once equally divided in the jar hatchery units, the eggs begin the long period of incubation. During this time, daily care must be exercised.

Correct water flow must be maintained to ensure that the eggs are continually circulated, and any foreign matter or dead eggs removed. Water

temperatures have to be carefully monitored and the upwelling jars treated with a formaldehyde solution when any fungus appears.

Hazards such as plugged intake filters and power failures seem to be part and parcel of a jar hatchery operation.

After weeks of watching and waiting, the eyed eggs begin to pop. Tiny tadpole-like creatures, so small they can swim right through a window screen, wiggle to the surface. The word goes out: "They've hatched."

Most of the emerging fry are transferred immediately to a nearby lake, while according to the carrying capacity, the remainder are put in specially constructed rearing ponds.

Remember at this stage, 27,000 hatching walleye will fill an ordinary beer mug. At the pond site the water's edge has been cultured for the previous couple of weeks with a soy bean meal mixture. The plankton developing on this meal is a necessary food for the survival of the young fish.

The feeding of the pond with

this soy bean meal mix will continue every four days until the fish are seined out, some eight to 10 weeks later.

As the growing walleyes utilize more water area of the pond, additional food must be provided to help curb their cannibalistic tendencies. The infusion of pond water, pumped from another source not only supplies the tiny fish with mosquito larvae, nymphs, and daphne, etc., it is used to add oxygen to the rearing pond water.

By running the flow along a sloping eavestrough over lengths of light chain, the water is riffled into countless bubbles. Numerous holes drilled in the trough bottom allow the water to spray out over a large area. Young walleyes develop quite rapidly and need to be fed accordingly.

While some groups start feeding small minnows to the walleyes when they are five to six weeks old, the Westport Area Outdoor Association uses a different approach.

Pails hanging from booms swung over the pond are fitted with wire

mesh bottoms, into which are dropped small road-killed animals. The decaying process of these raccoons, rabbits, groundhogs etc., provides the fingerlings with high-protein maggots.

The worrisome part of all these procedures is the fact that very few walleyes are ever sighted in the pond after they are put in. So since May 12 you are literally flying blind. The temperatures are watched closely; the water is pumped in, the oxygen level maintained, the soy bean meal is added and the road kills are hung up.

The puzzle of whether there are any fish in the pond remains until the day the seine net is put in. Last week some 2,160 plump walleye fingerlings, 3 and 1/8 inches long, were transferred into nearby Sand Lake. Is that all? Are there more? Remembering last year when 1,500 fish were missed, we believe there are more. And while many of the 250,000 fry released in the lake on May 12 will survive, these larger sized fingerlings just released have sure got a jump start on the rest.

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Calendar of Events

- Organizations and/or individuals are asked to call in their events calendar listings by the Friday preceding publication. The telephone numbers are 640-2100 or 649-2292.
- There's no charge for this service.
- Thu. July 20**
The Oshawa Fair opens, continuing to July 23.
 - Fri. July 21**
Sheep Focus will be staged at the Lindsay Fairgrounds today and tomorrow.
 - The York County Pork Producers hold their barbecue and dance at the Markham Fairgrounds.
 - Sat. July 22**
Great Canadian Antique Tractor Field Days will be celebrated at the Ontario Agricultural Museum, Milton, today and tomorrow.
 - The family of Allan and Reta Meyer invite their friends and relatives to an open house in honor of their 60th Wedding Anniversary, from 2 to 4 p.m. at Parkview Village Auditorium. Best wishes only.
 - The family of Sue Jones invite her friends to an open house on the occasion of her 90th birthday, this afternoon from 2 to 5 p.m., in the Fellowship Room, Parkview Apartments, 465 Rupert St., Stouffville. Best wishes only, please.
 - Mon. July 24**
The Video Luncheon Club meets at 12:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and Home Support Services supplies a sweet treat and tea. We will be showing Police Academy V at the Silver Jubilee Club.
 - Tue. July 25**
Farm Safety Week starts, continuing to July 31.
 - Wed. July 26**
The Canadian Seed Trade Association tour of the Crop Science Program starts at Elora Research Station at 1:30 p.m.
 - The Jersey Type clinic is on tap today at the Lindsay Exhibition Grounds, hosted by Kawartha Jersey Club.
 - The second Re Max Four Seasons Seniors Outing will be a picnic at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum July 27.

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Thank you!

Our charity barbecue held Saturday, July 15/89 for the Markham Stouffville Hospital was a great success! We would like to thank the following for their help and assistance.

- The Gas B.B.Q. store (Unionville)
- Stevensons Rental (Markham)
- Buns Master (Markham)
- Cardinal Meats
- Grimms Food
- Chocolate Products Ltd.
- Dutch Mill
- Markham/Economist & Sun
- Original Cakerie

Congratulations to our B.B.Q. winner **Mr. Mike Del Grande**

10 Pinebrook Hollow, Unionville

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Offer expires July 25/89 for wine quantities only