Thursday, September 21, 1989 THE DES MOINES REGISTER / 55

Biologist: Releasing fish doesn't mean they survive

IN THE OPEN

By LARRY STONE

Register Outdoor Writer

Contestants don't keep the fish caught in er ailments. catch-and-release tournaments such as the one held near Dubuque last weekend. However, the fish often die days later from the stress of being handled, said a biologist studying them.

Department of Natural Resources officials are looking at ways to increase fish survival during tourneys.

After last week's Walleye Council championships, in which 100 anglers fished for walleye and sauger in the Mississippi River near Dubuque, biologists have been monitoring fish caught in the contest.

Initial survival was good. Of the 457 fish caught, 448 were alive when released.

However, those fish are still at risk, said fisheries biologist Tom Boland of Bellevue. It's often impossible to determine the exact cause of death, he said, but the shock of low oxygen, physical injuries and temperature changes probably weakens the fish and lowers their resistance to disease, parasites and oth-

To estimate the long-term mortality, Boland is comparing the survival of fish that are weighed and handled in the contest with those that are returned to the water with a minimum of human contact.

For the test, two groups of fish were placed in submerged nets. Some fish were released into the enclosures immediately after they were brought to shore in fishermen's live wells. Another group of fish went through the contest's weigh-in before they were placed in the test area. The weigh-in routine included longer confinement in a live well while the boat was pulled to an indoor arena.

Biologists also measured such variables as number of fish in the live well, temperature and oxygen content of the water and the length of the fish's stay in the live well.

Based on the differences in the number of fish that survived in each group, early data suggest about 32 percent of the fish died as a result of the weigh-in procedure, Boland said.

However, he emphasized that the study is not yet complete.

From initial data, it is apparent that sauger are much more tolerant than walleyes, Boland said, and live wells with circulation pumps also greatly increased the fish's survival chances.

When the studies are complete, Boland hopes to prepare guidelines for future fishing tournaments. Some examples of methods that may save fish, Boland said, would be speeding up weigh-ins, banning hot-weather tournaments; requiring immediate release of fish or mandating recirculating live wells.

Boland said sponsors of the walleye tournament bought more than \$1,000 worth of nets to support the study. The council was stung by criticism last June, when more than 400 fish died after a regional tournament at Dubuque.

ART FOR WILDLIFE. The Iowa Wildlife Federation, Pheasants Forever and Ducks Unlimited have begun a cooperative effort to raise money for wetland restoration under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

The Wildlife Federation will donate two wildlife art prints to each of the state's 83 Pheasants Forever chapters and 138 Ducks Unlimited committees in Iowa. The groups will auction the prints at their fund-raising banqueis, with the proceeds going to buy land for wetland habitat.

Under the waterfowl plan, Iowa's goal is to protect more than 30,000 acres in 35 counties by the year 2000.

NEW LAKE? The state has begun buying land at the site of the proposed White Water Lake in Dubuque County. The Natural Resources Commission recently approved the first 40-acre purchase, at a price of \$62,000. The Department of Natural Resources has plans to buy more than 1,700 acres and to construct a 110-acre artificial lake.

HUNTING BLINDS. The Department of Natural Resources is accepting reservations for waterfowl hunting blinds at Forney Lake and the Riverton Area in southwest Iowa. For details, call (712) 374-3133.

DESOTO REFUGE HUNTING. Parts of DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge near Missouri Valley will be open to archery deer hunters this fall. Hunters must have a license for the state in which they hunt (Iowa or Nebraska), as well as a refuge entrance permit. A Federal Duck Stamp is sufficient.

For details and a map of open areas, write DeSoto Refuge, Rt. 1, Box 114, Missouri Valley 51555, or call (712) 642-4121.



new rule about confidentiality

CONFIDENTIALITY

Continued from Page One Mitchell and Harmon were disclosed during the fraud trial of sports agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom.

Slatton also said the signed statements should be considered "more of a reminder of what our confidentiality policies are than anything else."

But an expert on federal and state privacy and information laws said that requiring employees to sign a statement promising to follow confidentiality laws isn't appropriate.

"The loyalty oath approach doesn't strike me as appropriate as a records management policy," said Herbert Strentz, executive director of the Iowa Freedom of Information Council and a Drake University journalism professor. "Instead, the people should be informed clearly and directly what information they may disclose and what information they can't disclose."

Strentz said a major problem could develop without better definition of what is to be kept confidential and could result in employees being fearful to discuss anything.

"Is it confidential who will start at left tackle or right tackle? You can't tell from a statement like that." Strentz said. "Coach [Hayden] Fry was upset just recently because someone disclosed a player's injury. Will we have people frightened to talk to anyone just because they may say something that Coach Fry might not like? That isn't a good records policy." A special committee of the athletic board suggested that student-athletes "are best protected by the university if it maintains maximum confidentiality. In its deliberations, the board also approved giving the school's men's and women's athletic directors veto power over the disclosure of information about an athlete in some circumstances. And, in a related matter, the board deferred a final vote on a proposal suggesting that student-athletes not be asked to sign a general waiver of their rights to confidentiality concerning academic and health matters. That vote was delayed after several board members suggested that revisions of the current waiver form would be more appropriate than a total ban on athletes waiving their rights to confidentiality. School policy requires each student-athlete to complete a confidentiality waiver form annually. It gives the university permission to disclose certain types of information concerning a student's background, academic status and health. School officials say each student is now permitted to choose what information may be released.



The waivers are considered neces-

sary under a federal privacy law making universities responsible for unauthorized release of personal information concerning students.

Several board members acknowledged there had been no complaint about the current policy from student-athletes, but others suggested there may be subtle pressure placed on them to allow information to be disseminated.

"We shouldn't be making information of that type available and our athletes shouldn't be asked in any way to sign a consent form," faculty member Tim Johnson said.

But other board members pointed out that sometimes it would be impossible to keep information from being disclosed.

"After all, won't it be little awkward if 15,000 to 20,000 people see a player break his leg?" asked Annette Fitz, chairwoman of the board.

Slatton said the new policy is directed at making sure "that students who don't want to have information released have that right."

Of a possible ban on coaches disclosing injury information, Slatton said that decision should rest with the athlete, not the coaches. At the same time, she agreed that it was a part of keeping a competitive advantage.

"That is why coaches have closed practices or don't want to disclose that someone has had the flu late in the week," Slatton said.