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POND CULTURE OF STRIPED BASS X WHITE BASS HYBRIDS

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ABSTRACT

Four 0.1-hectare earthen ponds were stocked with two densities (10,000 and 15,000 fish/hectare) of female striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) X male white bass (*M. chrysops*) hybrids on 30 October 1980. Mean weight at stocking was 20 g. Fish were fed ad libitum 2 or 3 times daily with a dry commercial salmon diet, and ponds were aerated mechanically during periods of low dissolved oxygen in warm months. Survival to harvest about 13 months later (22 November 1981) averaged 50% in the low density ponds and 93% in one high density pond. Total mortality of fish in the other high density replicate occurred in late August after an aerator failed. Survival until then was 92%. At harvest, mean weight of fish was 465 g in the low density ponds and 351 g in the high density pond. The average food conversion ratio of dry food to wet fish weight was 1.58:1. Standing crop at harvest averaged 2,312 kg/hectare in the low density ponds and was 4,886 kg/hectare in the high density pond. Growth was positively correlated with temperature, with the most rapid growth rates occurring during periods of high mean water temperatures. The study demonstrated that the hybrids can be grown to marketable sizes in ponds within 15-18 months of age at densities similar to those used in culture of channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*). In view of their high market value, we believe that this hybrid has considerable potential for culture as a commercial food fish or perhaps for use in fee-fishing ponds.

INTRODUCTION

The striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) has long been a highly desired sport and commercial food fish from estuarine areas of the United States. More recently, because of its ability to adapt to freshwater, it has also become a valuable species for sport and for management in many inland reservoirs. Its value as a food fish is reflected in the wholesale

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