


What is a Fish Car?

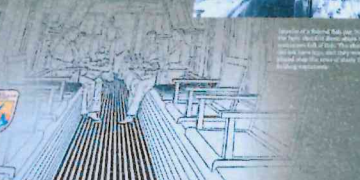
In 1884, following several successful experiments of fish by rail, the U.S. Fish Commission decided to construct a "fish car" specifically designed to carry fish. This railroad car was required to carry 20,000 pounds of fish, water, and equipment at passenger rail speeds.

Construction began in November with the winter months set aside for maintenance and repairs. National Fish Hatcheries across the country shared the fish cars to use hatchery-owned fish.



The U.S. Fish Commission operated two fish cars, and many states also operated their own fish cars. Each car was constructed to carry and keep fresh fish. A typical fish car would have a crew consisting of a captain, several managers, and a cook. The captain was responsible for scheduling and monitoring water work, the managers took care of the fish and delivered them to their recipients, and the cook was responsible for feeding every fish, dog and tackle. The captain's office was located at one end of the fish car and the kitchen at the other. Twelve tables along the fish racks for smoking. Fish cars could carry about 150 25-gallon cans which contained approximately 10,000 three-inch fish.

Fish cars could hold fish as long as two days with only 1% loss.



The Fish Car Era 1873 - 1947

When Railroad Cars Moved Fish


Each year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service transports over 200 million fish from National Fish Hatcheries to tanker trucks filled with oxygenated, oxygen-enriched, and constantly circulated and dechlorinated water.

In the 1970s, however, the volume of fish subject was still young. The U.S. Fish Commission, established in 1873, had fish transportation systems when it began carrying fish for non-sports fishes, which are not eaten.

Fish car passengers were designed to carry 10 cubic yards fish for long distances by some systems. Fish were raised, fed or specifically constructed for this work.

Fish cars, similar to the regular passenger cars, were the fastest, most efficient means of transporting fish eggs and young fish to their final destinations across the country. By the 1940s, with the completion of the national road network and the development of highway truck systems, fish cars were replaced by modern truck units which were more efficient to transport.

By the early 1920s, the fish cars had carried over 75 million fish across more than 2 million miles of track.



With your fish of fish, visit the Bureau of Fisheries Fish Car era.

Fish Car #3 Replica Exhibit

At the National Fish Hatchery, National Fish Hatchery #3, a replica of the fish car #3 is on display. This fish car is a reproduction of the original fish car #3, which was built in 1884.



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