

SANTA CRUZ

# Salmon get a little help from friends

*Fish & Fishing*  
Hatchery workers put rearing pens into SC harbor

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Under blue skies and sunshine at the Santa Cruz harbor Wednesday, Bob Eustice and his four-man crew were busy piecing together myriad nets, pipe and ropes.

By May 9, those pieces will be net pens housing 60,000 finger-length salmon.

"They should grow really fast," Eustice said.

The effort is a project of the Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project, a volunteer group dedicated to replenishing the state's salmon population.

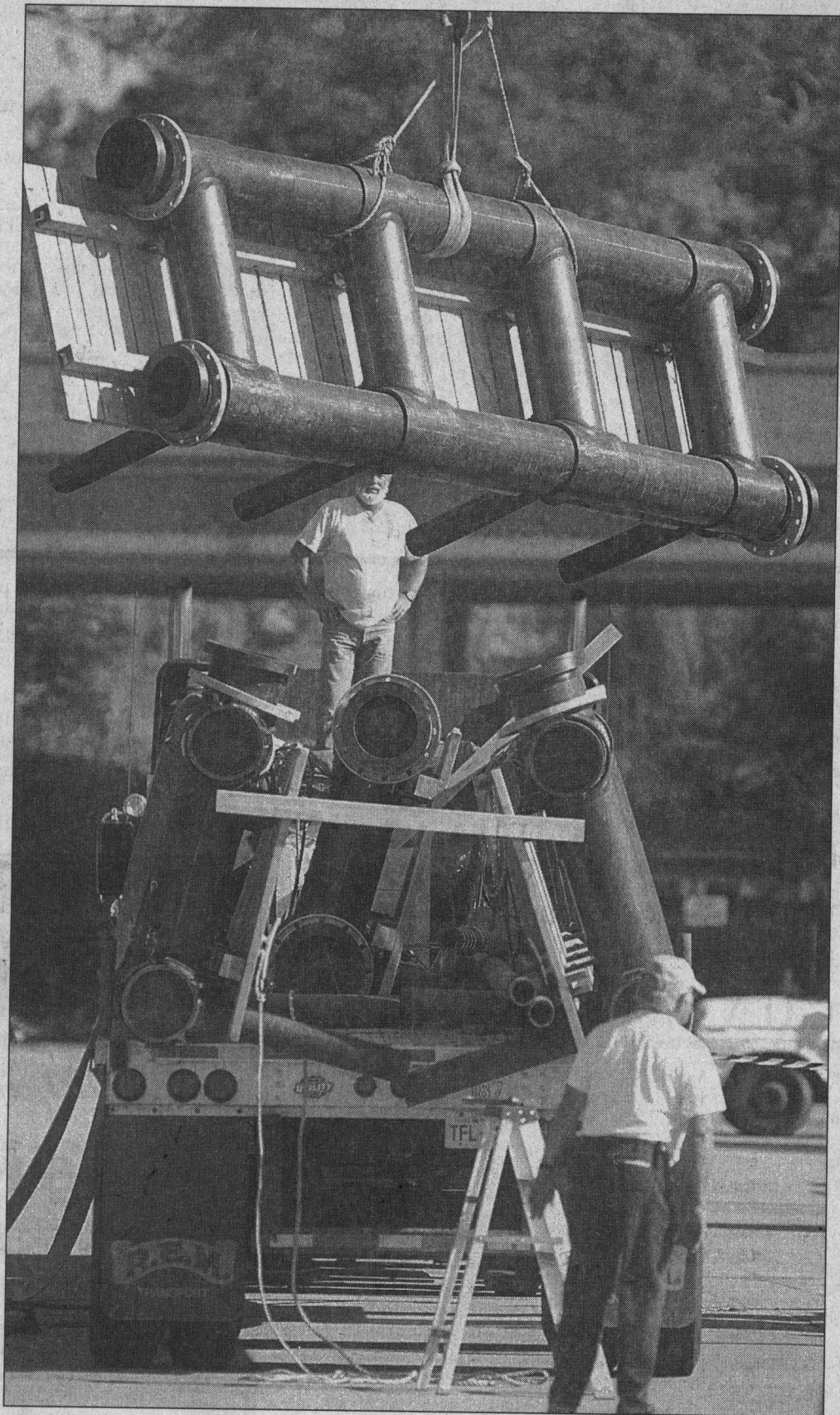
Dave Streig, project biologist, said they hope the hatchery-bred salmon will be eaten by their marine adversaries or harvested by commercial fisherman. That would allow the river-born, wild salmon population to replenish.

The \$20,000 pen will make its home here for the first time. Dredging at Moss Landing displaced the pens in 1998. Combined with a pen in Monterey, 240,000 king salmon are expected to be released in two batches this year.

When the fish arrive from the state-run Feather River or Nimbus fish hatcheries, they are placed inside a bladder containing fresh water, which is mixed gradually with saltwater for five days. In the Santa Cruz harbor, the first release is set for May 19.

Of the five sites on the California Coast, 480,000 salmon will be released this year, said Jerry Ayers of the state Department of Fish and Game.

"Those projects are for the enhancement of ocean fishing for sport and commercial fishing," Ayers said.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Workers watch as a portion of the pens is hoisted off a truck at the harbor Wednesday.