

Freshwater Fish Farming: How to Begin

By:FAO Better Farming Series

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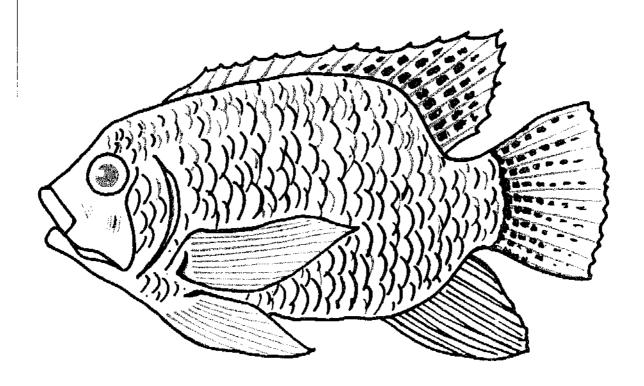
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Freshwater fish farming

How to begin

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PREFACE

This manual is an adaptation of the extension booklet "Simon Raises Fish", based on a technical concept of J.W. Miller, FAO Fish Culture Extension Adviser (original graphic interpretation by Jerry Stafford, U.S. Peace Corps). It is one of a series that is finding widespread use at the intermediate level of agricultural education and training.

The original extension booklet was studied and tested in the following projects in the Central African Empire:

- UNDP/FAO Fish Culture Extension Project
- OTS Community Development Project
- U.S. Peace Corps Fish Culture Programme

This version has been prepared by the Inland Water Resources and Aquaculture Service, Fishery Resources and Environment Division (FIRI), of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Further adaptation can be made to the text according to local climatic and ecological conditions.

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OUTLINE OF COURSE

•	Introduction	7
	What is fish farming?	7 7
	What do you need to raise fish?	8
	How do we begin?	10
•	The pond	14
	Where to put your fish pond	14
	Compost to fertilize your pond	16
	How to dig your pond	16
•	The water	21
	Filling your pond	21
	Fertilizing the water in the pond	22
	How to make compost	24
•	Putting the fish into your pond	27
•	Feeding your fish	30
•	Taking care of your pond	32
•	Harvesting your fish	33
	What to do with your baby fish	34
	What to do with your big fish	35
•	Now you must begin again	39
•	Suggested question paper	42

PLAN OF WORK

FIRST WEEK

Introduction

Read paragraphs 1 to 15.

By raising fish you can get better food and more money for yourself and your family.

But to do this you will have to take good care of your pond and your fish.

Building your pond

Read paragraphs 16 to 45.

Your success in fish farming depends on where you put your pond and how you build it.

Ask your extension agent to visit your land and give you advice.

He can also advise you about building your compost pile.

SECOND WEEK

The water

Read paragraphs 46 to 66.

You need rich land to have a good crop.

You need rich water to have a good harvest of fish.

To make your water rich, make good compost and put some of it in your pond every week.

Putting the fish into your pond

Read paragraphs 67 to 76.

To know the best kind of fish to put into your pond, ask your extension agent or other farmers who are raising fish.

Do not put too many fish in your pond.

Handle baby fish carefully to keep them strong.

THIRD WEEK

Feeding your fish

Read paragraphs 77 to 83.

Feed your fish every day, and watch them while they eat.

If they are healthy they will eat very quickly.

Give them enough to eat, but not too much.

Taking care of your pond

Read paragraphs 84 to 90.

It is not enough to dig your pond and put fish in it.

You must take care of your crops.

You must take care of your pond.

FOURTH WEEK

Harvesting your fish

Read paragraphs 91 to 112.

Harvesting your fish will be a big feast for your family and friends.

Be sure you have everything ready.

Do not forget to keep some baby fish alive so that you can start again.

Be ready to use the big fish or to preserve them or to take them to the market.

Now you must begin again

Read paragraphs 113 to 119.

Paragraphs 69 to 71 will tell you how many baby fish you will need.

When you have begun, try to do better than the first time.

Help your friends to begin fish farming.

Reread all the course

Answer the question paper.

INTRODUCTION

What is fish farming?

 Fish farming is the raising of fish for personal use or profit.
 It is sometimes called fish culture.

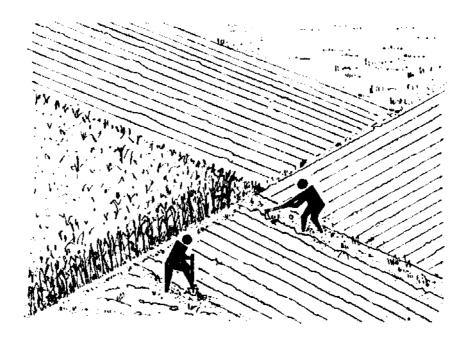
Why do we raise fish?

- By raising fish we make better use of our land and our water.
- By raising fish
 your family will have more to eat.
 The protein in fish
 will keep your family strong and healthy.
 Fish are tasty,
 like chicken, sheep and goat.
- If your family is not too big you will have more fish than you need for food and you can sell them at the market.



5. If your family is not too big with more food and more money you and your family can live better.

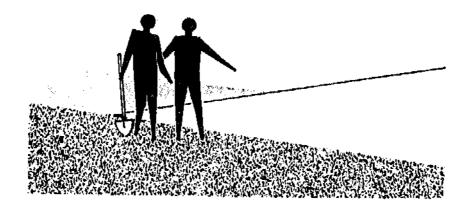
6. But fish farming is not easy.
To raise fish is as hard work
as to raise anything else,
such as maize, rice,
cassava or groundnuts.



7. You will need to learn to do many things.

What do you need to raise fish?

8. You will need a piece of land where you can build a pond,



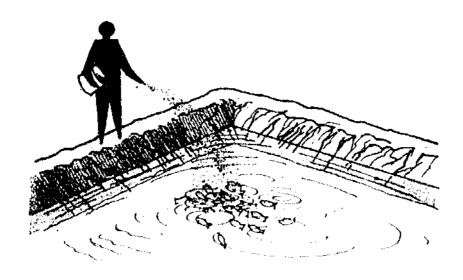
a supply of water,



baby fish to begin,



food for your fish.



9. You will need time to build a pond and to care for it regularly. Fish farming takes a lot of time.

How do we begin?

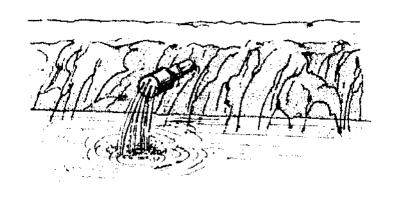
10. If there is a fish culture station near where you live you may be able to get help from an extension agent.



- 11. If there is no extension agent you will need to learn many things by yourself.
- 12. You will need to know the type of soil best for your pond, how to dig your pond,



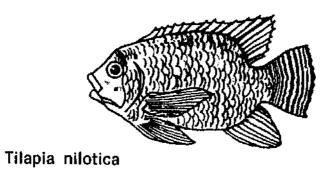
how to fill it with water,



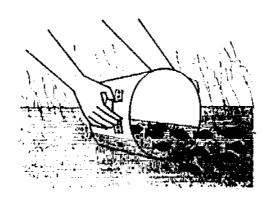
how to fertilize it.



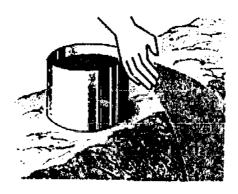
13. You will need to know what kind of fish to raise,



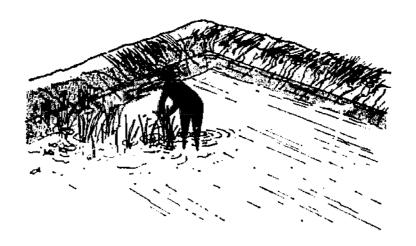
how to put the baby fish into your pond,



what to feed your fish, how to feed them.



14. You will need to knov how to take care of the pond,



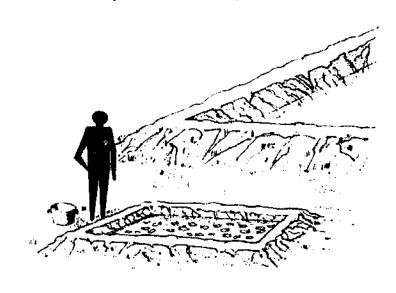
how to drain it,



how to harvest the fish,



how to use your own baby fish to start again.

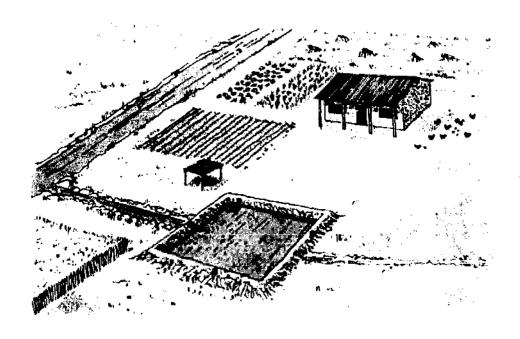


15. This book will help you to begin good fish farming.

THE POND

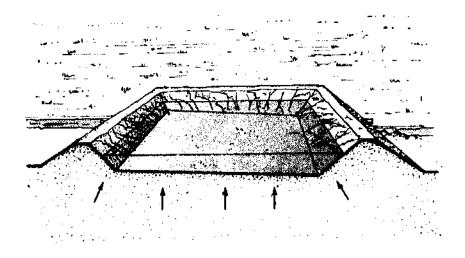
Where to put your fish pond

- 16. You must choose a good place to put your pond.
- 17. Remember that a pond for fish is only one use for your land. Be careful not to build a pond on land that could be better used for something else.
- 18. It is best to choose a piece of land that has a gentle slope.
- 19. Do not build your pond on a steep hill or where it can be flooded in the rainy season.
- Choose a sunny place for your pond, close to your home so people will not come and take your fish away.

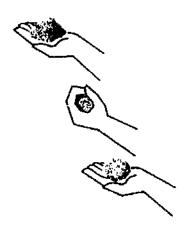


Near your home it is also easier to take care of the fish.

21. The pond should be near water such as a stream or a spring, or in marshy ground where the water in the soil will fill up your pond.



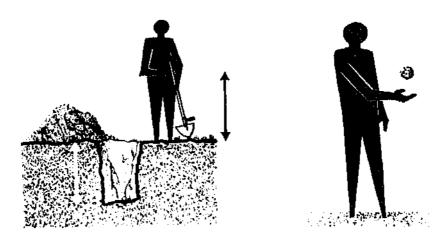
- 22. The soil in the place you choose must be good for a fish pond.
- 23. To test if you have good soil, take a handful of soil from the surface and squeeze it into a ball.
- 24. Throw the ball of soil into the air and catch it.





- 25. If it sticks together it is good soil and will hold water well.
- 26. Bad soil
 with sand or gravel in it
 will not stick together
 and will not hold water.

27. Now dig a hole as deep as your waist and test the soil from the bottom of the hole in the same way as before.



28. If the soil from the surface is good, and the soil from the bottom is good, this is a good place to dig your pond.

Compost to fertilize your pond

29. You will need compost to fertilize your pond.

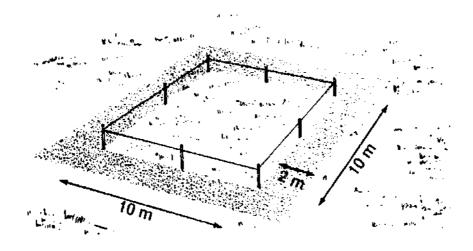
To make a good compost pile will take one month, so you should start making it before you dig your pond.

Later this book will tell you how to make compost (see 56-66)

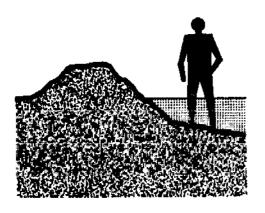
How to dig your pond

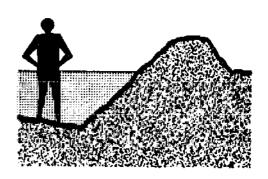
30. Mark out the size of the pond on the ground you have chosen. Each side should be about 14 metres long, 10 metres for the pond and 2 metres for each bank of the pond.





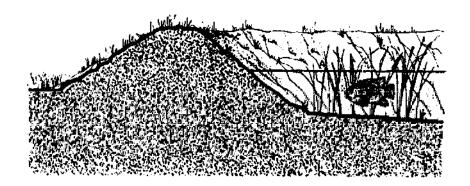
- 31. Clear this area of all trees, bushes and grass and take away all the roots.
- 32. Take away 20 centimetres of topsoil from all the cleared area and put it aside.
- 33. Now you can dig your pond.
- 34. The bottom of the pond should be even and sloped toward the deep end.
- 35. In the shallow end, the water in the pond will have to be about knee-deep.
- 36. In the deep end, it will have to be waist-deep.



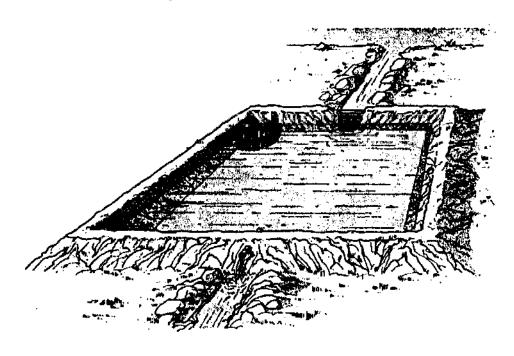


37. As you dig the soil out, put it on the 2-metre strips to be the banks of the pond.

38. Do not make the sides too steep, but slope them to make them stronger.



- 39. Compact the soil as you take it out, to make banks strong enough to stop the water from pushing them out. The banks must be watertight.
- 40. You will need to make an inlet at the shallow end above the water level to fill your pond.



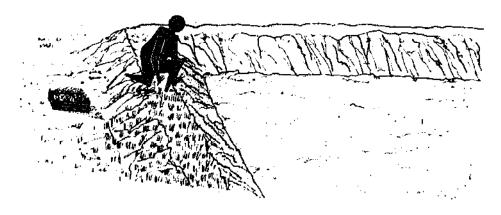
41. At the deep end you will need to make an outlet to keep the banks from overflowing if there is too much water in the pond.

42. The inlet and outlet for your pond can be very simple.

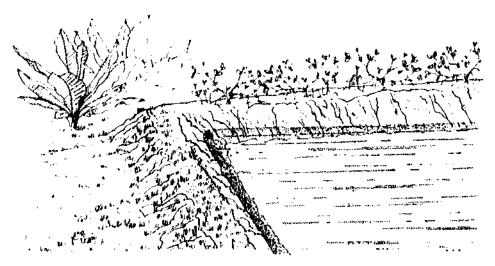
Large bamboo pipes will work very well.



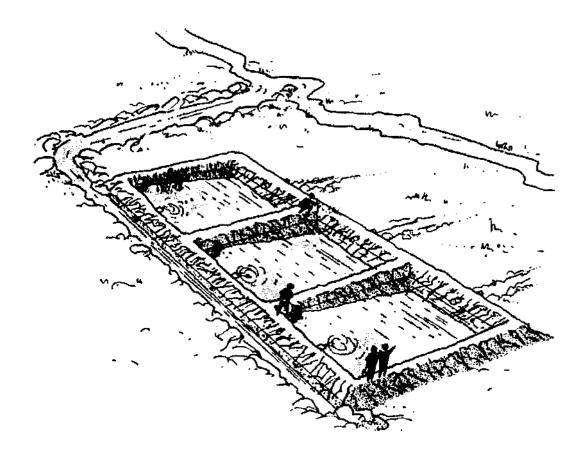
43. When you have finished digging your pond, put the topsoil you have set aside on the banks. Then plant grass on the banks to stop the soil from being washed away by the rain.



44. If you need more land for growing crops, instead of planting grass on the banks you may grow food crops such as rice, sweet potatoes or groundnuts.



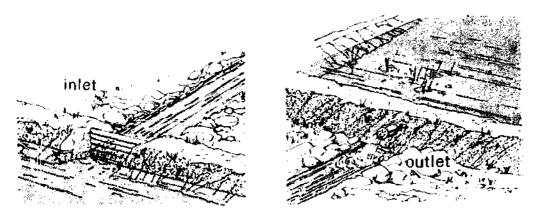
45. It is good if other farmers build ponds beside yours. It is easier if others help you in fish farming, and one bank can be used between two ponds.



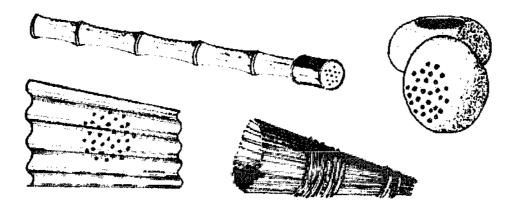
THE WATER

Filling your pond

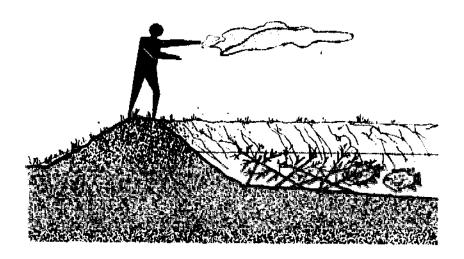
- 46. Using a small ditch is the easiest way to get water to the inlet and into the pond.
- 47. If the water comes from a stream, be careful to keep out bad fish. You can do this by using a screen on the inlet.
- 48. To stop fish from getting out of the pond, put another screen on the outlet.



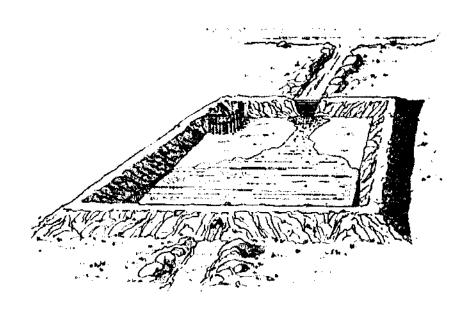
- 49. As a screen you can use:
 - a fish trap
 - split and woven bamboo
 - a clay pot with holes in the bottom
 - a piece of metal roofing with holes
 - a tin can with holes in the end.



50. To stop other people from taking fish from your pond, you can put some bamboo branches on the pond bottom.
This will stop them from fishing or taking fish with a net.



51. Now you are ready to fill your pond with water.



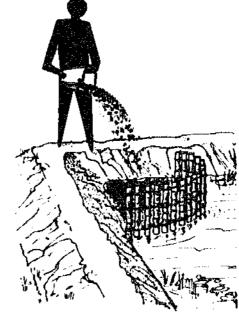
Fertilizing the water in the pond

52. To make more food in the water for the fish you will need to fertilize the pond. You can do this by adding compost. 53. Build a crib with bamboo or other wooden poles, in the shallow part of the pond, and fill it with compost.



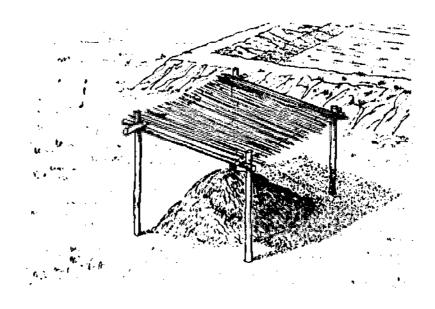
- 54. Several days later the water will become green. When the water is green, there is more natural food in the pond and the fish will grow faster.
- 55. To keep the water green, put a bucket of compost in the crib every week.

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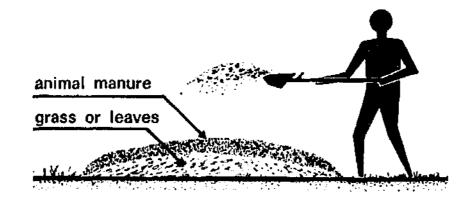


How to make compost

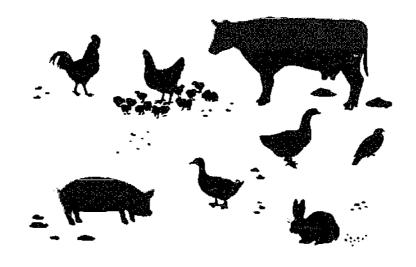
56. Make a compost pile near the pond. Put it in a shady place protected from rain.



- 57. Make your pile in layers.
 Make the first layer of grass or leaves mixed with a spadeful of topsoil, and damp it with water to make it rot faster.
- 58 Then make a second layer of animal manure mixed with a spadeful of topsoil and some water.



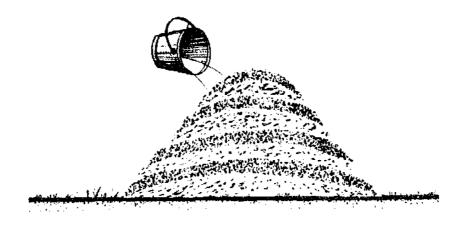
59. Use animal manure from sheep, goats, cattle, pigs, chickens or ducks.



60. In place of animal manure you can also use cotton seed, spoiled fruit, household garbage, ashes from the fireplace or night soil.

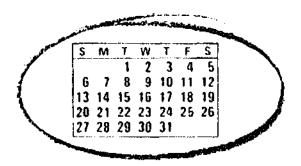


61. Then make another layer of grass or leaves, and another of manure, until you have a large pile.



62. Keep your compost pile damp by watering it every few days.

63. Let the compost pile rot for about a month.



64. Take compost from the bottom of the pile, or the old part of the pile, where it is most rotten, to put in your pond.



- 65. Add new layers to your pile every week so that you will always have compost.
- 66. If you have too much compost you can use some to fertilize your land.

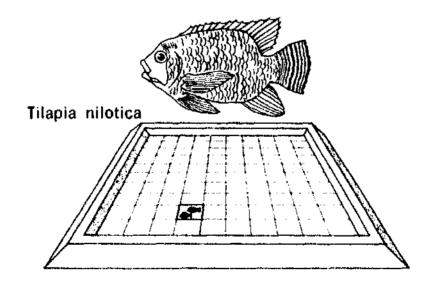
PUTTING THE FISH INTO YOUR POND

- 67. The first time you stock your pond you will need to find some baby fish.
- 68. You can get them from a dish-culture station



or from another fish farmer.

69. If you use *Tilapia nilotica*you will need two baby fish for each square metre.
If each side of the pond is 10 metres long
(100 square metres)
you will need 200 fish
(about 2 kilograms or 5 pounds).



70. Be careful
not to put too many fish in your pond.
Stocking a fish pond
is like planting a field.
If plants are too close together
they grow badly.
If there there are too many fish
in your pond
they will grow badly, too,
and they will stay small.



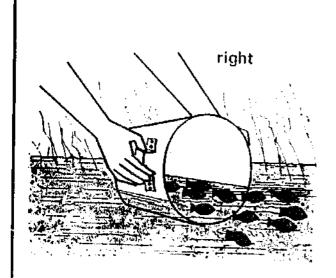


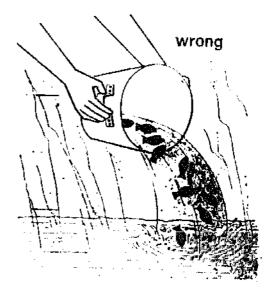
- 71. If you want to use a different fish, ask your extension agent for help.
- 72. Before you put the baby fish in the pond, be sure that the water where they are is not hotter or colder than the water in the pond.
- 73. You can find this out by putting one of your hands in the water with the fish and the other in the pond.
- 74. If one is hotter or colder slowly put water from the pond in the water with the fish until they are both the same.





- 75. If you do not do this the fish may die when you put them in the pond.
- 76. Do not pour the fish into the pond.
 Gently put the container into the water, tip it a little, and let the fish swim out by themselves.



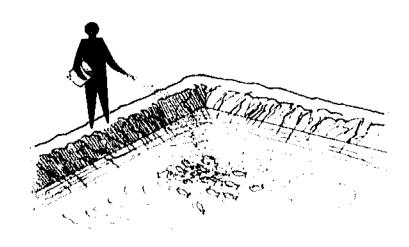


FEEDING YOUR FISH

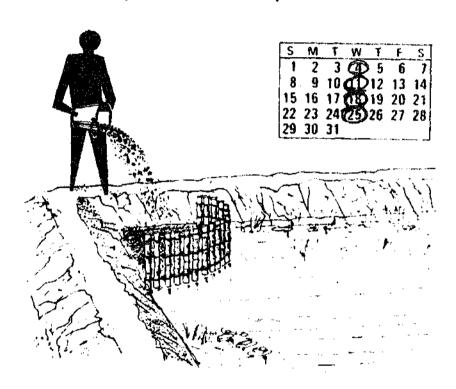
- 77. Feed your fish every day.
- 78. You can give them many things to eat. You can give them
 - termites
 - cassava leaves and cassava wastes
 - grain mill sweepings
 - rice bran
 - beer wastes
 - cotton seed pounded in a mortar
 - slaughterhouse wastes
 - spoiled fruit
 - kitchen waste



79. Feed your fish in the shallow part of the pond so that you can see them eat.



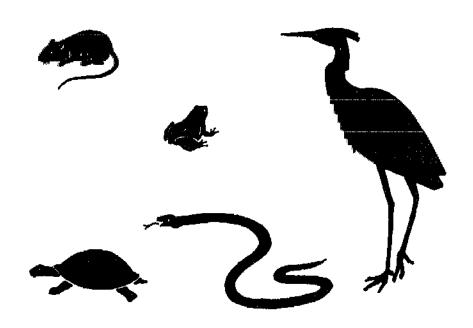
- 80. Feed your fish only what they will eat each day. Do not give them more than they can eat.
- 81. If your fish are healthy they will eat quickly.
- 82. If they do not eat all their food give them a little less the next day. If they eat everything quickly give them a little more the next day.
- 83. Do not forget to add a bucket of compost every week to the compost crib in the pond.



TAKING CARE OF YOUR POND

- 84. You must take care of your pond every day when you take food to your fish.
- 85. Be sure the pond is full of water.
- 86. Be sure the screens are in place so that your fish cannot get away.
- 87. Do not let weeds cover more than one quarter of the surface. If there are too many pull them up.
- 88. Cut the weeds and grass on the banks of the pond.
- 89. Be sure the water is not leaking through the banks.

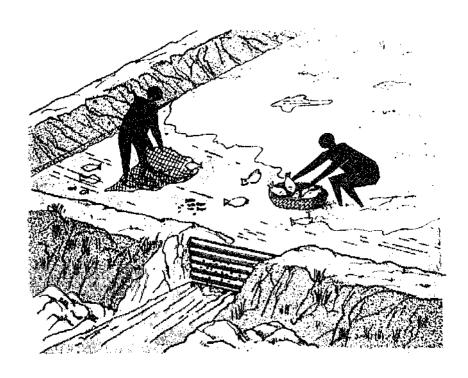
 If you find leaks stop them up right away with good soil.
- 90. Get rid of birds, frogs, turtles, rats and snakes. They can hurt your fish.



HARVESTING YOUR FISH

- 91. Do not take any fish out of your pond during the first five months.

 After five months you may catch four or five big fish each week to eat with your family.
- 92. When the fish are big enough, it is time to harvest all of them.
 Usually, they will be big enough to harvest in about six months.
- 93. Harvest the fish early in the morning when it is cool.
- 94. Have some watertight containers ready to store live fish.
- 95. The easiest way to harvest is by draining the water out of the pond.



- 96. Drain the pond by opening the bank at the deep end.
- 97. Use a screen at the outlet while you are draining so that you will not lose any fish.
- 98. Use baskets or nets to take the fish out of the water while the pond is being drained.

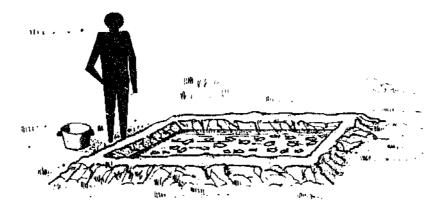
What to do with your baby fish

99. As soon as you find baby fish, put them gently into containers with clean water.



- 100. You will need these baby fish to put back into your pond to begin again.Baby fish are the fish farmer's seed.
- 101. Keep them in clean water, out of the sun, and move the water around gently with your hand from time to time.

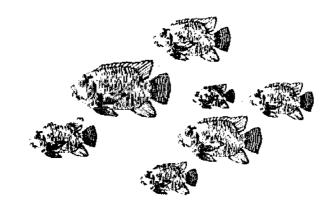
- 102. If it takes more than half a day to make your pond ready to put back the baby fish, you should keep them alive in a special small pond nearby.
- 103. The small pond
 can be a simple hole in the ground
 about two metres square.
 You should have it ready
 before you begin to harvest.



104. When moving your baby fish from one pond to the other, be very careful not to hurt them.

What to do with your big fish

105. You will harvest from your pond many big fish.

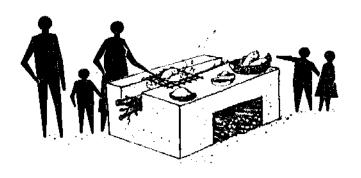


106. Fish spoil quickly after they die.

Be ready to use them *fresh* the same day or to *preserve* them for later use.

107. Use fish to feed yourself and your family. Fish is very good for you and for your children.

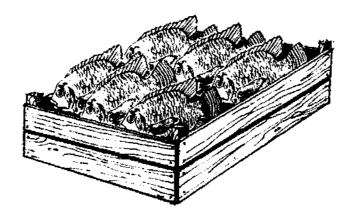
The smaller your family is the more fish each of you will have to eat.



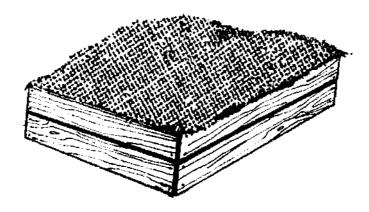
- 108. You can sell part of your harvest to neighbours or at the market, either fresh or preserved.
- 109. To transport fresh fish to market, you should:
 - rinse them well in clear water



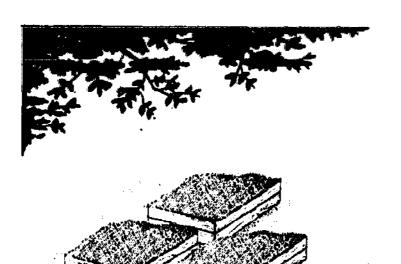
put them in a clean and dry container



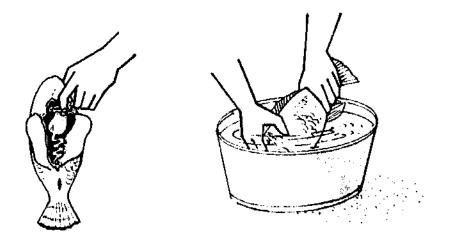
cover them with fresh leaves or a mat, and



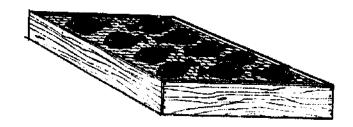
• keep them out of the sun.



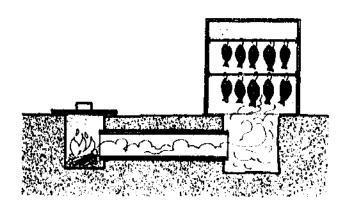
110. A fresh fish will keep better if you remove its guts and rinse it with clean water.



111. To preserve the fish you cannot sell or eat quickly, dry them in the sun,



or smoke them.



112. By putting some salt on your fish while you are drying or smoking them you will preserve your fish better.

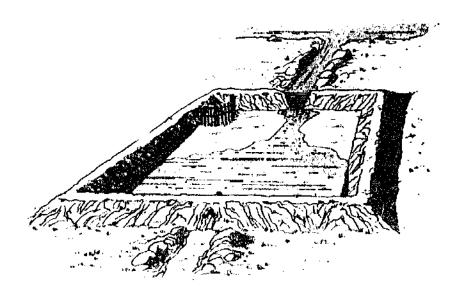
NOW YOU MUST BEGIN AGAIN

- 113. Be sure that your pond is very clean.
- 114. Repair the banks and cut the weeds and grass around the pond.



115. Fill the pond with water as before.

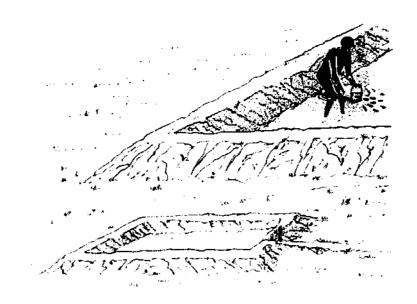
Be sure to use a screen
to keep out bad fish.



116. Put compost in the crib.



117. Then put 200 of your baby fish back in the pond.



118. If you have more baby fish than you need, sell some to a neighbour to help him start fish farming.

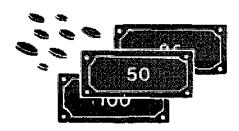


119. You will see that by farming fish you can provide for your family better



and you will have

- fresh fish to eat
- fish to dry, smoke and store
- fish to sell at market
- 120. If your family is not too big you will have more fish to sell



and you and your family can live better.

SUGGESTED QUESTION PAPER

FILL IN THE MISSING WORDS:

Raising fish will give you and your family more and more For your pond it is best to choose land with a slope, near to			
		and to your	Such land should
		not be	during the rainy season.
		If a ball of soil	together, it
will hold	well.		
Before digging your pond	, you		
the area and you take aw	ay all		
and	of soil.		
To keep out bad fish, you	can use a		
To make the water better	for the fish, you will add		
ond	ce a week.		
You should handle the bal	by fish very		
You will	your fish every day,		
in the	part of the pond.		
To take good care of your	r pond, you should look for		
i	n the banks, you should cut		
, and	get rid of		
After 5 months, you may	catch		
big fish each week.			
When draining the pond,	you will need		
to keep ba	by fish alive.		

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

What do you need to raise fish?

Raising fish has several advantages. Which ones, for example?

How do you describe a good place to put your pond?

How do you test if the soil will hold water well?

You have cleared the area and removed the topsoil. How do you proceed now to build your pond?

How can you protect your fish from being stolen?

How do you make a compost pile? How do you use it?

How many baby fish will you need to stock your pond?

What can you feed to your fish? How much? How often?

Yoy have now big fish in your pond and you want to harvest all of them. How will you do it? What will you need?

When you drain your pond, how will you keep the baby fish alive?

If you cannot eat and sell all your big fish on the same day, how can you preserve and store part of them?

