

Weeds On 2 Lakes Challenge County Officials

By TIM RICHARD

Board commission officials are already at work on control of the ugliest growth of weeds that has been seen in many years on western Wayne County lakes. The targets: Wilcox Pond in Plymouth, Newburgh Lake in Livonia and Nankin Pond.

All three are part of the Middle Rouge River chain in the E.W. Hines Parkway, which the county controls.

MOST UNSIGHTLY are the surface weeds, most in evidence on Newburgh Lake. They are filamentous algae, a primitive, rootless, leafless plant.

Two conditions are responsible for the algae, according to fish biologist Mel Bonham of the state Natural Resources Department.

One was the wet spring. The other is the amount of nitrate and phosphates that get into the water from human activities and, literally, fertilize the plants.

The plants you see on the surface are already dead. They have floated to the surface and

are turning brown.

THE ALGAE then decompose. When they decompose, they use up oxygen that is dissolved in the water. This robs fish of the oxygen they need and could, in time, result in a fish-kill Bonham said.

When the algae are thick on the surface, moreover, they can blot out sunlight that more desirable water plants require.

The decomposing weeds could play havoc with the Natural Resources Department's efforts to stock game-fish in Wilcox and Newburgh lakes. Gametish require lots of oxygen in the

water — the brown trout in Newburgh, for example, need six parts of oxygen per million parts of water.

The undesirable carp, on the other hand, need only two or three parts of oxygen to survive. If the oxygen level gets low enough, gametish will be killed off, and carp could again take over the lake.

In addition, some weeds will even clog the gills of fish.

CONTROLLING the weeds, however, is a tricky proposition, says Ike Porter of the road commission.

You can't kill all the algae at

once, or else their decomposition will use up all the oxygen in the water. And state officials warn that copper sulfate, the chemical that kills the algae, can also kill fish if too much is used.

Porter said the county has already begun a treatment program to kill submerged weeds. Control of the algae and floating weeds will be attempted soon.

"WE'RE NOT trying to kill the weeds completely, because some are needed for the fish,"

said Porter. The problem is to kill just the right amount to restore the balance of nature.

Nankin Pond's heavy growth of water lilies will also be a target.

The problem isn't confined to just the area lakes. Many lakes throughout the state have heavy weed growths this year.

The problem also doesn't crop up uniformly, Porter pointed out. That Phoenix Lake, upstream from Wilcox, had a bad weed problem two years ago but is in good shape this year.



NEWBURGH LAKE'S EAST end is entirely choked by dead algae whenever the wind comes from the west. This unsightly sight was snapped from Newburgh Road.

U-M Musician Sets Concert

Perceval Price, carillonist and professor of campanology at the University of Michigan, will make his first concert appearance in two years when he rings the bells of Christ Church Cranbrook at 4 p.m., Aug. 17.

A much sought-after guest artist, Prof. Price has made solo appearances throughout this country and abroad.

The public is invited to attend this and all other carillon recitals and may sit either in their cars or on the church lawn.

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