

Spring fishing clinic Sunday in Westland

By LEM MESESE
Outdoors writer

People in the padded rooms may have a few personal problems, but there's always somebody around who even they think is crazy.

For instance, while dry-landers may think all fishermen are deranged, many fishermen think steelheaders are.

These thoughts came to mind as we received the announcement from the Metro-West Steelheaders of their free clinic this Sunday.

AN ANADROMOUS form of rainbow trout, steelhead sometimes begin life in spawning streams, although more often it's in DNR tanks. Either way, the fish sooner or later spend some growing time in a stream before migrating out to the Great Lakes.

Once they settle in the big water amid the alewives, the smelt and the smaller cousins, steelhead enjoy a few years of blissful, gourmet excess. They also grow, sometimes to trophy size — the state record steelhead is 26 1/2 pounds.

At 3 — usually — the surviving fish return to the original stream. Most often the fish do this because they're ready to spawn and die, but some fish survive the run and return.

Although spawning takes place in spring, some fish begin running upstream as early as the preceding September. That means there's both a spring spawning run and a smaller fall run.

Steelhead are never easy to catch, but they're even harder during the run. Maybe it's because they're mad with desire, maybe because they're wily and maybe because anything remotely suspicious scares them witless, but once in the stream they largely stop eating. They're especially reluctant to strike the wet fly, lure or netting sack of salmon eggs usually used to entice them.

That means most fishermen spend many hours looking for a strike. And the hours are uncomfortably spent, as anybody knows who has spent much time at all streamside in months like October, November, March or April.

YOU MIGHT improve your chances of a catch, and lessen the amount of

outdoors

time it takes you to get back inside by attending the spring fishing clinic of the Metro West chapter of the Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishing Association.

It runs from noon to 5 p.m. Sunday in the Bailey Recreation Center, 36651 Ford Road, behind the Westland City Hall.

The clinic will feature demonstrations in the skill, techniques and equipment used to take salmon and trout in Michigan.

Some 30 volunteers will be on hand to answer questions and give demonstrations. Flies and rods, fly-tying gear, drift baits, spinner-making equipment, downriggers, graphs and trolling boards will all be on hand to peruse.

Among the more interesting items on tap are demonstrations in filleting and smoking fish, with samples given away.

Some 4,000 people attended last year, and the 250-member club is expecting bigger things in 1981. The program is co-sponsored by Westland Parks and Recreation. Admission is free.

ROCK POLISHING will be demonstrated at a family nature program 2-4 p.m. Sunday, March 15 at the Oakwoods Metropark Nature Center. The park is near Flat Rock. Members of the Great Lakes Rock Club will show various methods of finishing rock specimens for several jewelry applications, including hand-polishing. Petoskey stones. The program is free, but vehicle entry permits are required for the park. They cost \$7 a year, \$2 daily, or \$2 a year for senior citizens.

SLAKES ARE stars in a 1 1/2-hour program of slides and discussion at 1 p.m. Sunday, March 15 at the Kensington Metropark Nature Center. Register in advance for the free program by calling the park office at 685-1561 in Milford.

Also scheduled at Kensington, not coincidentally for Friday the 13th, will be a "Myths and Superstitions" program beginning at 7:30 p.m. March 13. Advance registrations are required for the 1 1/2-hour program. Call 685-1561 to make them.

Thursday, March 12, 1981
(B.W.T.F. Ro) 7A



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