

outdoors

Heat affects fishing but fun abounds

By Lem Mason
outdoors writer

Fishing reports have slowed in hot weather and with the warming moon.

In Oakland County, Big Seven Lake is producing some good bass fishing if you're using purple plastic worms or red-and-white spoons.

Elsewhere, panfish will devour crickets if you have them. Here's one to make you drool: Dan Fitzgerald of Tecumseh last month caught a new state record largemouth bass — 12 lbs. 15½ oz. — at Wamplers Lake in Jackson County. Fitzgerald'sunker replaces the 1934 record catch of 11 lbs., 15 oz.

PHOTOGRAPHERS will want to try the "Morning Magic Photo Walk" 8-10 a.m. Saturday at Independence Oaks County Park. Hartley Anglin, whose specialty is nature photography, will present the subject, and a walk will follow. Bring your camera, film, tripod, insect repellent and appropriate clothing. Meet at the park boat-house. Independence Oaks is on Sashabaw Road 2.5 miles north of I-75 in Clarkston. To pre-register, call the park office at 625-0877.

AT THE Huron-Clinton Metro-parks:

• "The Great Canoe," a special Voyageur canoe program, will move from its usual haunts on Lake St. Clair to Stony Creek Metropark northeast of Rochester at 7:30 p.m. today. Naturalists Roger Bajorek and Bill Thomas will introduce you to the way French-Canadian trappers pined the Great Lakes two centuries ago. Charge is \$1. Make reservations by calling the nature center office at 781-4621.

• A morning nature cruise on Kent Lake aboard the "Island Queen" excursion boat leaves the west shore dock in Kensington Metropark at 10 a.m. Sunday. Naturalist Mark Szabo not only points out wildlife features but plucks pleasingly on his guitar, according to our neighbor. Charge is \$1.50 per person. Register in advance by calling the park office at 685-1561.

• A nature center walk to look at wildflowers will be led by Mark Szabo from the Kensington nature center at 2 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 1. It's free, but register in advance by calling.

• "Birding by Bike" will be done at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 3 at Hudson Mills Metropark on North Territorial Road northwest of Ann Arbor. Meet at the Oak Meadows picnic area, bring your bike and binoculars. Make reservations by calling the Kensington office number.

Oakland board balks

Alimony reform has hefty price

By Suzie Rollins Singer
staff writer

Oakland County Friend of the Court administrators want reform of the 1919 law which governs divorced peoples' alimony, child support and visitation rights — but not at the county's expense.

County commissioners, in a general government committee meeting last week, discussed several pending state House bills aimed at reforming the law.

Friend of the Court director John Houghton said the changes are necessary, but he urged the commissioners not to support the \$874,180 alterations unless they are state-funded.

"My concern is getting the money to implement the bills. We'll be encumbered with additional duties, and we won't have the money to do them," Houghton said.

COUNTY legislative reporter Joe Mullins explained that the five-bill package was introduced earlier this year by Rep. Debbie Stabenow, D-Lansing.

"It passed through the House and will be studied by the Senate Judiciary Committee when it returns from recess. It should be a top priority for the Legislature by the end of August," he said.

Of the 108 Friend of the Court employees, one-third are paid by the state, and two-thirds are on the county payroll.

THE REFORM package provides that the Friend of the Court must:

- Issue written reports/recommendations to parties where there is a dispute as to the visitation or custody, or both, and where mediation is refused or unsuccessful.

- Review cases once every four weeks, rather than the present once every three months. Houghton

ton estimates that this would cost the county more than \$105,000.

- Establish referees to hear both parents' testimony in a dispute over visitation or support payments.

The bill also:

- Provides for withholding income from the supporting parent's paycheck should he/she become 10 days delinquent.

- Establishes a grievance procedure for people believing they are receiving unfair treatment by the Friend of the Court.

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