

# Winter's staying power puts fishing season on hold

## OUTDOOR INSIGHTS



BILL PARKER

Last week's trip to South Haven for a perch fishing outing confirmed my belief: this wacky, lingering winter weather has the fishing all goofed up.

It was a cold (30 degrees), windy (20 mph) day on Lake Michigan with the four-foot rollers steadily turning into whitecaps. The perch weren't cooperating either. We caught just nine fish between my brother John, nephew Justin, daughter Jenelle and myself. None of the other 30 or so anglers on the perch charter were doing much better.

Last year, brother John and company nearly all caught their limit during the same week of the year. But this year, with winter hanging around like an unwelcome in-law, the first week of April was just a little too cold.

Upon my return to work, I was informed that this week's annual fishing trip in southern Lake Huron to preview the River Crab Salmon Stakes Fishing Tournament had been postponed a week. The trip begins in St. Clair and there is too much ice flowing down the St. Clair River right now to even get the boats in the water.

When the warm weather finally sets in, and I'm sure it will soon, fishing across the state will improve dramatically.

About the only ones experiencing any success right now are the steelhead anglers, although the spring runs have yet to material-

ize. A few days of warm, sunny weather coupled with a nice warm rainfall and the river water will begin to warm, triggering those much anticipated spring spawning runs.

### Creek survey ongoing

Anglers heading out to the local steelhead producing streams — the Clinton River the Belle River and Mill Creek — should watch for stamped, steelheaded postcards from their windshields.

Steelhead anglers on these three southern Michigan streams are being asked to participate in a creek survey, which is being conducted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Between 12,000 and 15,000 steelhead are stocked annually into each of these streams, but the DNR has no means of evalu-

ating the return rate of the fish, which is where the creek survey plays an important role.

A creek survey gathers information from anglers fishing a specific area. The postcards ask questions dealing with the number of anglers in a party and the number and species of fish caught. Through careful examination of such information, fisheries biologists can determine if their management efforts are working.

"We currently do not have any data to evaluate the return rate of steelhead stocked in these rivers," explained Gary Towne, DNR southeastern Michigan fisheries supervisor. "This survey will help us plan future management efforts for these rivers, and may show a need to increase or maintain stocking levels."

Members of the Clinton Valley,

Challenge and Paul H. Young chapters of Trout Unlimited, along with local steelhead anglers, are assisting the DNR in the creek survey and distributing the postcards.

"This low-cost study could not be done without the support of local fishing clubs and volunteers," added Towne. "We appreciate the efforts of everyone involved."

The creek survey will continue through the end of the month. Anyone with questions can call Jeff Brauneheid at (313) 953-1418.

### Leftover turkey permits

Applicants who were unsuccessful in Michigan's 1996 spring wild turkey season license lottery may now apply for a leftover license at any license agent. Applicants must apply in person and

licenses will be sold until the end of the month. Following is a list of the hunt units and the number of available licenses in each: hunt 126 in Unit M (May 9-20), 212 permits; hunt 129 in Unit N (May 9-20), 361 permits; hunt 201 in Unit X (April 29-May 8), 136 permits; hunt 202 in Unit X (May 9-20), 203 permits; hunt 210, valid in all units except public lands in Zone III (May 21-31), an unlimited number of licenses are available.

Anglers and hunters are urged to report their success. Questions and comments are also encouraged. Send information to Outdoors, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Fax information to (810) 644-1314 or call Bill Parker evenings at (810) 901-2573.

## OUTDOOR CALENDAR

### CLASSES

#### BIRDING BY EAR

Learn to identify common birds by their songs during this class, which begins at 7 p.m. today at the West Bloomfield Township Hall. Registration fee is \$5 for West Bloomfield residents and \$7 for non-residents. Call (810) 344-5660 for more information.

#### DUCK AND GOOSE CALLING

Lyman Burgess, in cooperation with the West Bloomfield Community Education Department, will offer a class in basic duck and goose calling beginning at 7 p.m. Monday, April 22, at West Bloomfield High School. The class will meet every Monday for four weeks. Cost is \$30. Call 855-4021 for more information.

#### BEGINNER FISHING

Learn the basics of fishing including strategy, equipment, casting, safety and more during a fishing class for beginners, which begins at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 24, at Ealy Elementary school in West Bloomfield. The class is for adults and children ages eight and up and will be taught by O&E Outdoor writer Bill Parker. Call 539-2290 for more information.

### FISHING TOURNAMENTS

#### SALMON STAKES

The 18th annual River Crab Salmon Stakes fishing tournament will be held Saturday, April 27, in St. Clair. Proceeds from the tournament are used to help troubled children, adults and their families statewide. Money is raised through the sale of \$10 raffle tickets. The grand prize in the raffle is a trip for four to Walt Disney World. Other prizes include a weekend for two in Toronto; \$750 in gift certificates redeemable at any Chuck Muer restaurant nationwide; a charter fishing trip for four with overnight accommodations and dinner; and \$300 in gift certificates redeemable at any Chuck Muer restaurant nationwide. All raffle tickets are redeemable for \$10 off dinner for two at any Chuck Muer restaurant. Tickets are available at all Chuck Muer restaurants or by call Ruth Rhoades at 1-800-468-3727.

### EXPOS/BANQUETS

#### CAMPING EXPO

Detroit Sports and Recreation will hold a camping expo beginning at 12 p.m. Saturday at its headquarters in Canton. Representatives from the Metroparks, Camp Cavell and the Moonlighter's Camping Club will be on hand to answer questions and provide information. Call (313) 981-0088 for more information.

#### OUTDOORS FOREVER

Outdoors Forever will hold its 10th annual wild game banquet beginning at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, April 20, at the Livingston County Wildlife & Conservation Club in Hamburg. Tickets are \$30 each, \$55 for two. Call (810) 227-5308 or (817) 337-0018 for more information.

### SEASONS

#### COYOTE

Statewide through April 15.

#### TROUT

A special fly fishing only, catch-and-release trout season runs through April 26 on a two-mile stretch of the Huron River in the Proud Lake State Recreation Area. (810) 685-2433. The regular trout season opens April 27.

#### TURKEY

Spring wild turkey season runs April 22-May 31 by special permit only in designated management units throughout the state.

### FISHING CLUBS

**METRO-WEST STEELHEADERS**  
Metro-West Steelheaders meets at 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month at Garden City High School. Call (313) 420-0521 for more information.

#### FISHING BUDDYS

Fishing Buddys Fishing Club meets monthly in Rochester Hills. Call (810) 656-0556 for more information.

#### MICHIGAN FLY FISHING

The Michigan Fly Fishing Club meets at 7 p.m. the first and third

Wednesdays of each month at Livonia Clarenceville Junior High School. Call (810) 478-1494 for more information.

#### BASS ASSOCIATION

The Downriver Bass Association, a non-tournament bass club, meets the fourth Tuesday of every month at the Dearborn Civic Center. Call (313) 676-2863 for more information.

#### FOUR SEASONS

The Four Seasons Fishing Club meets 7:30 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month at the Maplewood Center in Garden City. Call (810) 477-3816 for more information.

### METROPARKS

#### METROPARK REQUIREMENTS

Most Metropark programs are free, while some require a nominal fee. Advanced registration and a motor vehicle permit are required for all programs. Call the respective parks, toll free: Stony Creek, 1-800-477-7756; Indian Springs, 1-800-477-3192; Kensington, 1-800-477-3178.

#### A LITTLE FOSSIL DIG

Little scientists ages eight and older will have a chance to unearth real fossils during this program, which begins at 11 a.m. Friday at Stony Creek. A similar program begins at 10 a.m. Saturday at Kensington.

#### FROG FRENZY

A program including slides and a walk to the park to learn about the habits and songs of frogs begins at 2 p.m. Sunday at Kensington.

### OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS

#### COUNTY PARK REQUIREMENTS

Advanced registration is required for all nature programs at Oakland County Parks. Call (810) 626-6473 to register or for more information.

#### MARCH FOR THE PARKS EARTH HIKE

Celebrate local parks with an afternoon of hiking and nature activities during this program, which begins at 1 p.m. Saturday, April 20, at Independence Oaks.

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