

# Going ice fishing? Here's scoop on area lakes

Ice is finally starting to form on most area inland lakes so the ice fishing season will heat up in a hurry. Anglers venturing out should still exercise extreme caution, especially if you are unfamiliar with the body of water you are headed out onto.

With the help of local guide Bob "Hangman" Mitchell of Redford we've come up with some of the area's best winter fishing spots.

**Orchard Lake** is excellent for pike on tip-ups right in front of the state boat launch on Orchard Lake Road and behind Apple Island. Larger suckers or dead bait suspended three feet above the weeds or one foot off the bottom work well. Pan fish can be found on the flats and along the many weed lines and readily accept wax worms or spikes. Crappie, ranging from eight to 13 inches, are plentiful in the

weedy areas of the lake and are caught on small shiner minnows throughout the night and just before dawn.

**Union Lake** is a good bet for pike and pan fish and sometimes offers up trout and walleye as well. Pike up to 18 pounds and walleye up to eight pounds have been caught in Union Lake.

"The area across from the public access site gives you pike and pan fish," said Mitchell. "The north shoreline is good for trout and walleye."

Mitchell suggests anglers try minnows or corn for trout. Walleye can be found along the ledges in 10 to 20 feet of water. Jig-and-minnow combinations are deadly as are dead lines or tip-ups (10-pound monofilament with a No. 4 splitshot and a No. 8 treble hook) baited with shiners.

"The south end of the lake has two large sunken islands that hold great numbers of large crappies, monster pike and schools of walleye," said Mitchell. "But it's a long walk of almost two miles to get there."

**Cass Lake** is another ice fishing hot spot and regularly pro-

duces nice catches of pike and pan fish. An occasional walleye or large trout will also show up for the dedicated angler. Ice anglers do well in the bay north of Dodge Park and along the sunken islands and sand bar off the beach. For the larger game fish check the drops in 15 to 45 feet of water. Try a jig-and-minnow combination or a tip-up baited with a live shiner.

"Walleye Lake is a real sleeper for ice fishing," said Mitchell. "The only real access is at Bogie's Restaurant at the north end of the lake."

Walleye Lake annually gives up some dandy pike, blue gill and crappie for anglers fishing the scattered flats and weed lines. For those not afraid to travel, the south end of the lake holds some huge pike, blue gill up to 12 inches long, and crappie up to 16 inches.

"All the proven tactics work well here," added Mitchell.

**Proud Lake** is probably the area's most under-fished winter lake. "Proud Lake gets very little winter pressure because of the difficulty of access," explained Mitchell. "You can only get on at

the boat launch at the state recreation area and then, only if the river is frozen. But when you can get out there the fishing is nothing short of spectacular."

Jumbo blue gill and perch, rainbow and brown trout, and some of the fattest pike in the county are caught through the ice on Proud Lake.

Look for weeds near a drop-off and you'll undoubtedly find pike. Gills and perch are found in 10 to 30 feet of water and trout are in the 20 to 40 foot depths. Dead smelt or large shiners work well for pike. Gills are fond of wax worms and spikes and small shiners work well for perch or trout.

"A secret trout tactic is to dump some canned corn down the hole then set a dead line in the middle of the bait," explained Mitchell. "Use a small single hook on six-pound line with a No. 7 splitshot and two kernels of corn."

**Kent Lake** consistently produces good catches of blue gill and crappie in the five to seven inch range. Good numbers of pike also come through the ice with an occasional monster

weighing up to 15 pounds. Kent is one of the best inland walleye lakes in southeastern Michigan and is stocked annually with walleye fingerlings.

The deep holes at the south end of the lake hold both pike and walleye. The old river bed between the beaches and the drop off near the freeway bridge are also good locations. Crappies bite out in front of the dam at the southwest end of the lake in 10 to 20 feet of water. The bays and flats along the south shore are good spots to set up a tip-up for pike.

**Lake Orion** is an ice anglers paradise with bays, points and islands scattered throughout the lake. Blue gill, perch, crappie and pike are abundant in Lake Orion.

The bay in front of the state boat ramp off Indianwood Road holds a nice population of blue gill as does the bay in front of Snug Harbor. Pike anglers do well around Park Island and along the break just south of the dam at Paint Creek. Crappie and perch are caught with regularity off the points around Bellevue Island.

These are some of the better lakes in the area, but most inland lakes serve up a decent winter catch.

Before you head out be sure to think about safety first. The cold weather hasn't been around long enough to form safe ice on all the lakes in the area, so take it one step at a time.

Remember, hard, blue ice is the best ice. When ice has a gray or whitish tint to it or is full of bubbles and air pockets it's smart to stay on shore. Always be aware of ice-covered rivers and river mouths since moving water will keep ice from freezing and will leave many rivers and river mouths unsafe. Sunny warm weather will weaken existing ice so be aware of those balmy afternoons.

On a final note, always let someone know exactly where you'll be fishing and never go out alone.

Good luck and be sure to call me with your fishing success.

If you're looking for a speaker for your club or an upcoming show contact Mitchell at (313) 638-0156.



BILL PARKER

## OUTDOOR CALENDAR

### OUTDOOR CLUBS

**SOLAR**  
The School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure and Recreation, a non-profit organization interested in promoting the appreciation of outdoor activities, meets at 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month at the Colony Hall in Southfield. Call (248) 988-6658 for more information.

**HOLIDAY NATURE PRESERVE**  
The Holiday Nature Preserve Association meets monthly at the Livonia Civic Center Library. The next meeting begins at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 4. Call (313) 522-8547.

### OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

**WINTER WALK**  
Kathy Treppa will lead a winter walk beginning at 12 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 14, at the William P. Holliday Nature Preserve in Westland. Call (313) 522-8547.

### OUTDOOR SHOWS

**CAMPER & RV SHOW**  
The 14th annual Camper, Travel & RV Show will be held Jan. 21-25 at the Pontiac Silverdome.

**DEER & TURKEY SPECTACULAR**  
The Michigan Deer & Turkey Spectacular will be held Feb. 13-15 at the Lansing Civic Center.

**BOAT, SPORT & FISHING**  
The 15th annual Boat, Sport and Fishing Show will take place Feb. 18-22 at the Silverdome.

**OUTDOORAMA**  
Outdoorama '98 Sport and Travel show will be Feb. 20-March 1 at the Novi Expo Center.

**SPORTFISHING EXPO**  
The 10th annual Greater Detroit Sportfishing and Travel Expo will be held March 5-8 at the Palace of Auburn Hills.

### MEETINGS

**NRC**  
The next monthly meeting of the state Natural Resource Commission will be Feb. 11-12 at the Lansing Center. Persons with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in the meeting should call Teresa Golden at (517) 373-2352 a week in advance for assistance.

### ARCHERY

**JUNIOR OLYMPICS**  
The Oakland County Sportsman Club in Clarkston offers a Junior Olympic Archery Development Program beginning at 1 p.m. on Sundays. Call (810) 623-0440.

**JUNIOR ARCHERS**  
A weekly program for junior archers begins at 9 a.m. Saturdays at Detroit Archers in West Bloomfield. Call (248) 661-9610 or (313) 835-2110 for more info.

### 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.

**1998 PERMITS**  
The 1998 Huron-Clinton Metroparks annual vehicle entry permits and boat launching permits are on sale at all Metropark offices. Vehicle entry permits are \$15 (\$8 for senior citizens). The annual boat launching permits are \$18 (\$9 for senior citizens). Call 1-800-47-PARKS.

**CHILD'S PLAY**  
Ages 3-5 can enjoy an hour of stories and songs during this program at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 24, at Kensington.

**SPACE TRY-IT BADGE**  
Brownie scouts can earn their Space Try-It badge during this

program, which will be offered Saturday, Jan. 24, at Indian Springs. Interested scouts should call for times and to reserve a spot (248-625-7280).

**SKY SKELETONS**  
Study the intricate patterns and designs formed by skeletal branches of leafless trees during this program 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25, at Stony Creek.

**WINTER TREASURE HUNT**  
Search for hidden winter goodies along a snowy trail during this program 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25, at Indian Springs.

**TRINIDAD & TOBAGO**  
Visit these islands, located off the coast of Venezuela, through a slide presentation 2 p.m. Sunday at Kensington.

**THE MAKING OF MICHIGAN**  
Homeschoolers ages eight and older can learn how Michigan was formed during this program 1 p.m. Monday, Jan. 26, at Indian Springs.

### OAKLAND PARKS

**COUNTY PARK REQUIREMENTS**  
Advanced registration is required for all nature programs at Oakland County Parks. Call (810) 625-6473 to register.

**TUNING YOUR TOT INTO WINTER**  
A nature program for children ages 3-6 including a hike, stories, snacks, crafts and more will be offered at 1 p.m. and at 2:45 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 24.

**WINTERFEST**  
An opportunity for families to participate in some old fashioned winter fun including cross country skiing, ice skating, hay rides and more begins at 2 p.m. Saturday at Addison Oaks.

**OWL PROWL**  
Learn about the different kinds of owls found in Michigan then take a hike to hear some resident owls during this program, which begins at 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 24, at Independence Oaks.

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Because there is limited space available, pre-registration is required. For more registration information, call Monday through Friday at least one week in advance of the session. Notes: Individual dates and times may change in each community. Clinics begin in January (weather permitting). Non-resident fee or local parks and recreation policy in effect.

**Addison Oaks County Park** c/o Oakland County Parks  
1480 W. Romeo Road, Leonard, MI 48367-3706 248-693-2432  
Observer & Eccentric Ski School - January 17 and February 17 & 18,  
10 a.m.-noon & 1:30-3:30 p.m. Ski a special event! Family & Friends Ski Nights -  
January 31 and February 7 and Winterfest - January 24

**Independence Oaks County Park** c/o Oakland County Parks  
9501 Sashabaw Road, Clarkston, MI 48348-2064 • 248-625-0877  
Observer & Eccentric Ski School - January 18 & February 7 & 15,  
10 a.m.-noon and 1:30-3:30 p.m.  
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**Rochester Avon Recreation Authority** -  
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