



Dateline Outdoors

By LEM MESEE
Outdoors Writer

My engagement almost broke up one fine May afternoon when I took my woman perch fishing off a pier on Lake Michigan.

We used those old telescopic poles, no bobber, two No. 6 or 8 hooks just off bottom, with wigglers and minnows for bait. Even though we had identical rigs, my woman commenced to catch six or eight fish for every one I caught, for she was a native of those parts and practically raised on Lake Michigan perch. I told her I wasn't jealous, but she didn't believe it.

She got embarrassed at her good luck and my lack of it, so she quit and packed up her pole. As soon as her line was out of the water, I began to get bites, and pretty soon the scores were nearly equal.

THAT WAS 11 years ago, and between us we got two dozen of the striped beauties with the yellow-orange fins. It wasn't as good a catch as in the old days, but it was better than in the years that followed.

Perch fishing in Lake Michigan deteriorated badly later in the 1960s, and in the tasty perch's place came the useless alewife, which was no good to catch, no good to eat, died by the millions and stunk up the beaches.

So it was good to read in the May edition of Auto Club's Motor News that the perch is making a comeback in Lake Michigan, with not a single one artificially planted by the state.

The signs of a comeback appeared in 1969 when there were good catches of small fish. Sizes improved in 1970 and '71 with increasing numbers of "jumbos" — some up to 14 inches and a pound. This year, it may be like old times.

PERCH FISHING collapsed as part of a chain reaction that started in the 1950s.

The sea lamprey got into the Great Lakes from the Atlantic Ocean and nearly wiped out the lake trout. Lake trout fed on alewives, whose population

then exploded. Alewives compete with perch for food, space and spawning territory, and alewives love to snack on perch eggs. The perch population took a nosedive, and only the "pros" like my fiancée could nail 'em.

The Dept. of Natural Resources did two things about it. First there was the lamprey control program, and second there was the stocking of salmon, lake trout and steelheads (lake-run rainbow trout). They brought the alewife population under control, and now the perch are back too.

DNR biologists say 1969 was the best spawning year for Lake Michigan perch in a long time, and perch reach good, catchable size in three years.

PERCH BITE most of the year but best in spring. Sometimes you have to get out in a boat up to a mile, but often you can fish off a pier or breakwater. They're usually not great fighters, but some will put up a scrap.

The perch bite is quick. Set your hook just as soon as you see that pole tip wiggle. There's no closed season or minimum size, and in Lake Michigan no creel limit.

A perch meal consists of a schooner of beer, slices of tomatoes, pumpernickel bread and fish rolled in flour and cornmeal and fried to a golden brown. The flavor is clean and fresh, better'n coho any day.

HERE'S THE latest southeastern Michigan fishing rundown:

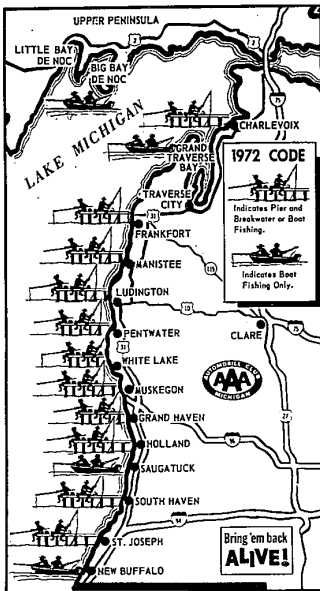
Union Lake producing some 14-inch splake (hybrid brookie and lake trout), and crappies hitting good.

Sucker run still at its peak on the Huron River below Milford Dam. Light spearing activity at Sasabaw Creek.

Wayne County riverbank fishing popular but not too productive. Perch and crappies hitting good at the Flat Rock dam of the Huron; use small minnows.

DNR survey in the Huron at Pte. Mouille showed thousands of carp.

Lake Michigan Perch Guide



HELPFUL HINTS

- ★ Fish close to shore—usually not over a mile out.
- ★ During spring and fall, fish in four to eight feet of water.
- ★ Fish in 20 to 50 feet of water for jumbo perch during warm-weather months.
- ★ Use a pair of number 6 or 8 hooks, tied 18 inches apart, with a sinker at end of line.
- ★ Best fishing is in morning and afternoon, before noon and after 3:00 p.m.
- ★ No closed season or minimum size, and catches are unlimited in Lake Michigan.

Spring perch fishing action begins at the south end of Lake Michigan in mid-May and moves north through June. Bursts of good fishing occur during July and August. During September, excellent perch catches again are taken along the shoreline.

Almost any type tackle—from drop line to costly rod and reel—with wigglers, worms and preferably shiner minnows for bait guarantee success. Keep the baited hook close to bottom and don't move it much.

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In Coming Week

2 Chances To Give Blood

Observerland resident will have two opportunities in the next week to donate blood.

One will come Monday, May 15, when a Red Cross Bloodmobile will be located at the Plymouth Elks club at 41700 Ann Arbor Rd., Plymouth, from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Appointments can be made

by contacting the Detroit office of the Red Cross.

A special Healththona Week program at the Livonia Mall will offer another opportunity to shoppers and area residents who want to insure their families' blood requirements for a full year.

The voluntary blood drive from May 15 through 20 will

bring a mobile unit from the Michigan Community Blood Center (MCBC) to the mall to accept volunteers from 12 noon to 8 p.m. daily.

Unmarried donors may designate three persons for coverage during the year. Donors must be in good health and between ages 18 and 65.

Britons Buy Local Company

Specialty Coatings, Inc., 15169 Northville Rd., Plymouth, has been acquired by Ozalid Co., Ltd., of Loughborough, England. President S. C. Slickin said he and his wife traded their 50 per cent interest in Specialty Coatings for stock in Ozalid. No prices were announced.

Specialty Coatings is a manufacturer of coated films of primary interest in the engineering duplicating field. Ozalid is the largest manufacturer in the world of reprographic materials.

Planning an aggressive expansion in the U.S., Ozalid has plants in the United Kingdom, South Africa, Rhodesia, Zambia, Sweden, Finland, France, Belgium, Italy, Canada and Australia.

**Louis Smith
Dead At 84**

Funeral services for Louis Smith, former owner of The Adams Bar in Detroit and a longtime friend of Detroit-area newsmen, will be held today (Saturday) at 10 a.m. at St. Constantine and St. Helen Greek Orthodox Church, 4801 Oakman Blvd., Detroit.

Smith, 84, died Thursday in Grace Hospital where he had been a heart patient off and on for two years. He was a Redford Township resident.

Cut your grass, Mister?

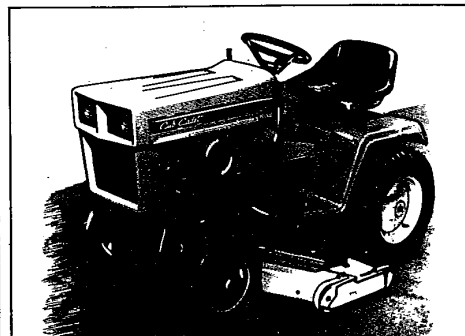
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