

It's spring!

Time for fish to get their blood flowing

By Lem Meese
staff writer

We're in the middle of the cruelest time of an outdoorsman's year.

In the next eight weeks or so, some unbelievable fishing will roll around as gamefish of all sorts begin to spawn. Spawning sets the blood to boiling in many kinds of freshwater fish, and a kill-on-sight frenzy is common.

Fish guarding a nest will literally strike anything that moves too close. There've been no reports of swimmers being chased from the beaches by roving gangs of carp, you understand, but the fish are very aggressive nevertheless.

ANYWAY, I remember when I was a boy fishing the Fox Creek on Detroit's east side with my buddy C.O. Jones. Fox Creek is a narrow tributary of the Detroit River, and it's packed shoulder-to-shoulder with boat wells.

Most of the year you can only find Fox Creek by burning off the thin film of marine gas that glitters on its surface. Estimating the fish population is easy, since you can count the fish one-by-one. Their mouths periodically appear, gaping for air, on the surface.

After the spring ice break-up, though, and before the boats begin parking, you can see the bottom seven or eight feet down, and largemouth bass begin moving into the little creek in large numbers for the spawn.

They run up about a mile until their path is blocked by a barred pumping station inlet gate. There you can see their huge shapes moving below the surface and amuse yourself by watching them attack floating paper boats.

ONE YEAR, when C.O. and I were about 11, we were fishing for these bass with cane poles and crank baits. An odd combination, but easily explained. When we were 11 years old, neither C.O. nor I knew what we were doing.

Anyway, C.O. left his bamboo pole sitting motionless in the water and went off to buy a Pepsi at the

outdoors

Shell station. I was on the other side of the canal. Just after C.O. disappeared from sight, his pole got towed into the water. By the time I managed to retrieve it, two of the treble hooks were bent nearly straight down.

True story. Also sad, since C.O. and I were in violation of so many state and federal fish and game laws it would take a desk sergeant most of the afternoon to book you or all of them.

In other words, while the fish might be anxiously awaiting your lure right about now, you can't satisfy the little devils. And that's why it's the cruelest time of year.

I spend a lot of time in late March not getting any sleep, sitting in the rumpus room and chewing on my knuckles as I remember in some dark 3 a.m. solitude C.O.'s bamboo pole being towed through the water like a scuse out of "Jaws."

I'm sharpening my hooks and biding my time.

BUT I didn't want to talk about that. What I wanted to tell you about was smelt dipping.

Other than the kind of fishing only children and dynamite fans pursue, the only aquatic activity likely to be soon afoot is smelt dipping.

Smelt dipping is one of the few kinds of fishing you can do just as well while drunk as sober. This is proven annually at Point Pelee, a Lake Erie beach in Ontario. Millions of smelt are taken from the Point every year, and it's almost impossible to find anybody there who's sober.

If you'd like to try less crowded quarters — and at least insure yourself against Ontario's prohibitive non-resident license fees — go dipping state-side. Nearby, you can take a shot at the St. Clair River in Port Huron at the foot of the Blue Water Bridge, Sears Dock and Pine Grove Park, at St. Clair north of the Pine River mouth, at Marine City

and at Algonac south of M39. The river runs fast and deep, so plan on using a long-handled net.

Or you can shoot for the tip of the Thumb area at Lexington, Port Sanilac, the Bridgehampton River at Forester along M-39, Corry Creek at Sanilac County Park one mile north of Forester, Elk Creek at the state park two miles south of Forestville along M25 and in Mill Creek at Forestville along M25.

METROPARK goings-on include a 2½-hour "combination visitor dinner and owl program" 6:30 p.m. Friday at Kensington Metropark west of New Hudson. Meet at the Farm Center Restaurant for the \$4 dinner followed by an outdoor search for resident owls within the park. Owls are among the more difficult birds to find. Bring a flashlight and appropriate clothing.

If bothering owls isn't your idea of a fun Friday night, you can do it Saturday at Stony Creek Metropark northeast of Rochester when the program will concentrate on the great-horned owl, which nests in February. Participation is limited, so call 781-4242 ahead of time for the 7 p.m. excursion.

Dems' Jeff-Jack speaker is Brown



GOV. JOHN Y. BROWN JR.
Jeff-Jack speaker

Kentucky Gov. John Y. Brown Jr. will be the featured speaker at the Michigan Democratic Party's 31st annual Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner April 11.

The dinner begins at 7 p.m. in the Renaissance Ballroom of the Detroit Plaza Hotel. Tickets are \$50 a person. About 2,000 people are expected.

Brown, 47, a former owner of Kentucky Fried Chicken, Inc., was elected governor in 1979. He chaired the Democratic National Telethon in 1972-74, raising some \$19 million.

Dennis M. Hertel, Freshman U.S. Rep., will be dinner chairman. This year's dinner is dedicated to Adlai Stevenson, 80, of Bloomfield Hills. Hart has served as a delegate to four national Democratic conventions and chaired the Democratic caucus in the Michigan Constitutional Convention, 1962-63.

Call Democratic headquarters in Detroit at 393-2944 for ticket information.



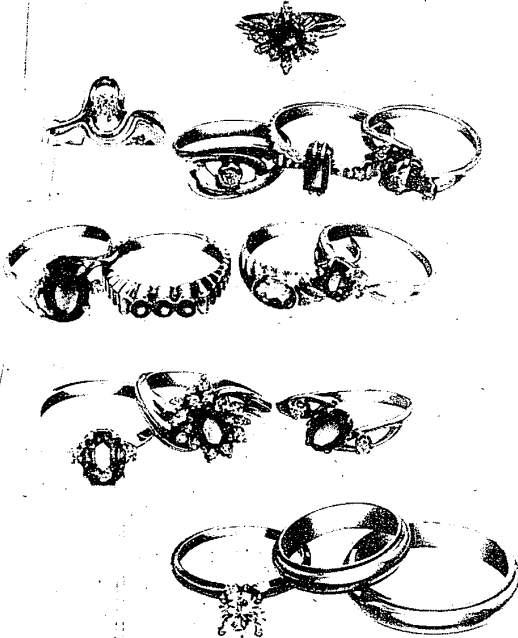
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Hudson's offers a timesaving service we predict you'll enjoy tremendously. Just make an appointment with either Sandy Livon at Twelve Oaks or Ken Dewey at Northland. They'll acquaint you with spring selections from designers in our Woodward Shops, advise you on the proper shoes and accessories, even suggest new ways to add life to your present wardrobe. And then put it all together for your spring '81 wardrobe. No time to shop? Consult with Sandy or Ken on your lunch hour, then come back a week later to review the selections. It's a marvelous, personal shopping experience, at no charge. Call Ken at 569-3232, ext. 2263, or Sandy at 348-3232, ext. 2016.

Need inspiration for on-the-job dressing this spring? Attend one or several of our Career Dressing workshops, presented by Sandy Livon at Twelve Oaks and Ken Dewey at Northland. Choose the session that interests you: **Wardrobing the Career Woman for Spring**, Thursday, April 2 at Northland; **Weekend Wardrobing for the Career Woman**, Thursday, April 2 at Twelve Oaks; **Thursday, April 9 at Northland**; **Special Occasion Dressing**, April 9 at Twelve Oaks; **April 30 at Northland**; **Ralph Lauren Makeup News and Advice from the Experts**, Thursday, April 30 at Twelve Oaks; **Thursday, May 7 at Northland**; **Shape Up for Summer**, Thursday, May 7 at Twelve Oaks; **Thursday, May 14 at Northland**. For Northland, choose a lunchtime session at noon, cost is \$4 including a box lunch. Or an evening session at 7 p.m., cost is \$3 including hors d'oeuvres. Call 569-3232, ext. 2001 or 2002 to reserve. Twelve Oaks sessions start at 6:30 p.m., cost is \$3 including wine and cheese. Call 348-3232, ext. 2019 to reserve.

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