

**outdoors**

# Heavy chinook keeping cooks hooked

Salmon fishing in Michigan has evolved from a fall-only activity to a nearly year-around sport which peaks every year at this time as some 20 million fish school for spawning runs off 34 rivers, lakes and bays.

Because of improved equipment and techniques, it's now possible to catch coho and chinook salmon from ice-out in April until the snow flies in December, according to the automobile club of Michigan.

This fishing season has helped earn the state its reputation as the nation's salmon capital, Auto Club said.

Catches off all ports listed on Auto Club's 1981 salmon guide have been good to excellent since early spring. Charter boat captains report action even better than the 1980 season, which was the best since Great Lakes salmon fishing began in 1967.

Fish being caught now range from one to three pounds heavier than in previous seasons because of an excellent population of alewives, the salmon's main food. At present, coho salmon weigh up to 8 pounds and chinook up to 30, with fish expected to gain up to two pounds per week from now until spawning runs begin.

Most fish are taken by trolling, which annually accounts for nearly 70 percent of all chinook and 90 percent of all coho salmon taken in the state.

Best trolling action in Lake Michigan is expected to last through late September.

Fish become targets for wading anglers from late-September until early November, when schools head up rivers to spawn.

West Michigan-stream anglers will find the most improved fishing on the Grand River. Fish ladders will open approximately 40 miles of the river to salmon as far as Lansing Moore's Park Dam, only a mile south of the state Capitol.

Lake Huron trollers will make their best catches from now through late-September from Harrisville to Port Sanilac. River fishing should be best from mid-September through late-October. Some streams, including the Flint River, could have runs through December.

Along Lake Superior, trolling should be best between now and early October, with coho and chinook runs in rivers through mid-November.

A bonus fall fishery awaits Upper Peninsula-anglers, when runs of smaller pink, or humpback salmon, take place.

Nearly all pink salmon are taken by casting spinners or spawn at river mouths or on spawning beds. The fish, which average one pound and run heavily in odd-numbered years, should be found in Lake Michigan at Thompson, and in at least seven Lake Superior tributaries.

In Southeast Michigan, the Detroit River remains the area's best salmon prospect. Fair-to-good fishing action will develop for coho salmon reuniting from a plant of 200,000 fish in 1980, up 100,000 from the 1979 planting. Fish should weigh between 2 and 9 pounds. They will be taken both by trolling and with lures cast from the Belle Isle between mid-September through November.

This fall, anglers may keep accidentally foul-hooked Pacific salmon only on parts of East Michigan's Au Sable and West Michigan's Big Manistee, Pere Marquette, Muskegon and Sable rivers from Sept. 10 through Oct. 25. Consult the Department of Natural Resources' 1981 Michigan Fishing Guide for sections open on each stream.

In August, the State Natural Resources Commission voted to end "fish-crakes" salmon fishing on the Kalamazoo, Grand and St. Joseph rivers.

Chemical contaminant levels are dropping in Great Lakes fish, but the Michigan Department of Public Health has again advised children and nursing mothers against eating any salmon this fall.

Others should eat no more than one-half pound of salmon per week from Lakes Huron and Michigan. Further restrictions can be found in the DNR Fishing Guide.



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