

Lake Orion fish bigger, fatter in '86—DNR

By Lam Messee
outdoors writer

FISH thinning projects work, says Ron Splitter. He's the district fisheries biologist, operating out of Pontiac, for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

"Lake Orion fish populations are bigger and fatter," Splitter reported recently, a year after tens of thousands of small panfish were removed chemically.

"It seems apparent that neither the pike nor bass were harmed by the treatment, as expected. Instead they may well have benefited through increased growth and survival, which we also anticipated. Anglers already are commenting about better fishing than before the treatment."

Here is a breakdown by species of what DNR found in a 1985 netting survey compared to 1982, the year before the thinning project:

• **Bluegills** — Of 1,500 bluegills in 1982, only one was seven inches or larger; average was 5.2 inches. In 1985, of 743 gills netted, 79 were larger than seven inches; average was 6.0 inches.

• **Crappies** — The 1982 averaged 7.8 inches;

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only five were in the 10-inch range. The '85 fish averaged 8.7 inches with 28 in the 10-inch range.

• **Northern pike** — In 1982 only 12 were netted, averaging 24.4 inches. In 1985, the survey showed 47, averaging 25.9 inches.

• **Largemouth black bass** — In 1982, only nine were handled, averaging nine inches. In 1985, the survey found 48 largemouths, averaging 13.3 inches (12 inches is legal keeping size).

IS LAKE ERIE coming back as a walleye producer?

Last year anglers were catching a lot of undersized walleyes, but the reports this season are more cheerful. Many excellent catches of 14-18 inch walleyes are coming from Lake Erie, DNR reports.

Favored lures are the nightcrawler harness, Barney and Hot-n-Tots.

Lake St. Clair and Anchor Bay are producing many 15-18 inch walleyes.

On the inland lakes, good largemouth and smallmouth bass catches, along with panfish, are reported from Lakeville, Graham and Trout Lakes and Lake 18.

THE MICHIGAN Wildlife Habitat Foundation in Lansing announced two grants for Oakland County projects.

The Drayton Plains Nature Center in central Oakland County is \$4,250 richer, thanks to a grant from the Michigan Wildlife Habitat Foundation. The grant will be used for a walleye-rearing pond. Fund-raising help, technical advice and supervision also will be provided, the foundation announced.

A grant for \$3,000 will go to the Palmt Creek-Clinton Valley chapter of Trout Unlimited for a trout stream restoration project.

SWIMMING CLASSES in Oakland County's wave-action pool will be offered at Waterford Oaks County Park in four seasons: June 17-28, July 1-12, July 15-26 and July 29-Aug. 9.

Classes will be offered for beginners, intermediate and advanced lifesaving. Waterford Oaks is on Scott Lake Road between Dixie Highway and Pontiac Lake Road.

Sessions run five days a week for 45 minutes. Starting times will be 8, 9 and 10 a.m. Enrollment is limited to 20 per class. Fee is \$20 for all except advanced lifesaving, for which it is \$30.


For registration information, call the parks office at 858-0918.

The pool will be calm during classes. Three-foot waves will be generated during open swim hours, from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

AN EVENING program on "Songs, Stars and Smores" starts at 7:30 p.m. Friday, June 14, at Independence Oaks County Park, Sashabaw Road 2 1/2 miles north of I-75, Clarkston.

Naturalist Lynn Coover will lead family-oriented campfire singing and tell how to find major constellations, starting with the Big Dipper.

Register in advance by calling the park naturalist at 625-6473. There's a vehicle admission charge at the park gate.



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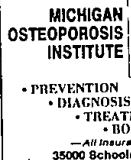
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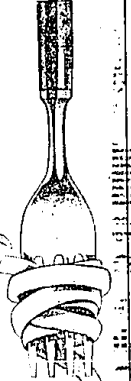
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