

Steelhead action heats up

LARRY KAMMERER was ready to call it quits. Having thoroughly worked a tributary of the Black River near Inlay City for better than an hour without the slightest hint from a fleshy steelhead, the 46-year-old angler was just about ready to pack up his gear and head for home.

"Just a couple more casts," he thought, barely able to brave the 20 mph winds that sent the wind-chill tumbling to near zero.

"Suddenly, my pole bent in half and the reel started singing," Kammerer said. "I adjusted my knee to let him run freely because I knew I had a nice fish on, and I was only using 6-pound-test line."

Kammerer is not a devout steelhead angler, but tries to get out five or six times a year. He lays claim to about 20 steelhead, but none like the lunker that was waiting for him on this chilly mid-March afternoon.

"AFTER ABOUT 10 minutes he finally tired out," Kammerer said. "I started walking downstream to him because I didn't want to try to horse him through the current."

When the battle had ended and the fish finally succumbed to the fisherman, Kammerer pulled out a beautiful 13.52-pound, 35-inch steelhead.



Bill Parker

The fish hit a Super Vibrex Blue Fox spinner with a piece of chartreuse yarn attached as an attractant. "I used a spawn bag for about 45 minutes but didn't have any luck," Kammerer said. "I decided to try a lure to see if anything would hit. I've caught them on a Mops Number 3 spinner before and the Blue Fox is very similar. When spawn isn't working it pays to have some spinners in your tackle box."

WITH THE WARMER spring temperatures invading Michigan, in recent weeks steelhead action is rapidly picking up in rivers across the state. Spring spawning runs have certainly not peaked, but the action is fair enough to keep most anglers busy.

Michigan steelhead, which are actually rainbow trout that mature in the Great Lakes, are born either in a river or a hatchery. The fish venture into the Great Lakes at the age of one or two and remain there for up

to three years while they mature to spawning age.

Steelhead spawn once a year, in rivers during the spring of the year as soon as the water temperature begins to warm. A mature steelhead will usually spawn twice but is capable of spawning up to four times if it lives long enough.

STEELHEAD RETURN to the rivers throughout the year with the biggest runs occurring in the spring. Fish that enter the rivers in the fall and winter spend three to four months feeding in the rivers before spawning season and provide a challenge for diehard winter anglers. Fish that enter the river in the spring of the year prior to the spawn generally are not feeding and only stay for a few weeks. These fish are usually caught when enticed into striking a lure through aggression. "The runs are quite good this year," said Paul Seelbach, research biologist with the Michigan Depart-

ment of Natural Resources. "The wild population is in tune with the warmer winters we've had the last few years, and the stocking programs have been strong in the last four to five years. The wild reproduction is very good right now, and the hatchery reproduction is also very good."

NEW TOURNEY DATE

The River Crab Salmon Stakes, one of the state's longest running fishing tournaments, has moved its date from April to May for the first time in 14 years.

The tournament, which raises money annually to battle child abuse and neglect, will be May 2 at the Chuck Muer's River Crab restaurant in St. Clair.

Last year the tournament raised a record \$65,288 statewide through the sale of \$10 raffle/entry tickets and benefactor donations. Raffle/entry tickets, which are good for a chance at a trip for two to Hawaii, are available at Chuck Muer's restaurants including Charley's Crab in Troy, Pals in West Bloomfield, Johnny Magnum's in Farmington Hills and Muskrat's in Southfield. The tickets are also good for \$10 off dinner for two at any Chuck Muer restaurant statewide.



exercising options

Myrna Partrich

It is time for kids to catch mom, dad

Dear Myrna: I am a school teacher in my mid 30s, who exercises in an aerobics class four times a week. I go to class at 4:30 a.m. after school with a lot of students. These young people are not in as good shape as I am. Children today are sedentary while adults are in better shape. Is this true?

Well, if you remember 25 years ago we were riding bikes all over, running around at recess, in physical education classes at school every day, walking to and from school and participating in sports programs. During that time our parents were storing up unwanted fat due to the inactivity of the good life.

Now the wheel has turned. Adults enjoy the results of the fitness boom. As adults we are now exposed to attractive health clubs, vacation spas and a lot of exercise marketing.

Exercise for adults has been less casual and more imperative as we go into the 90s. The end result is mom and dad are in great shape while children are experiencing a fitness horror story as they are fatter and flabbier than ever before.

This may seem hard to believe, but 1/4 of our children cannot pass a basic physical fitness test and 40 percent show early signs of heart and circulation problems.

In a report published by The National Center for Health Statistics this year, it states "childhood obesity is epidemic in the United States today." There are studies to show that our young people's performance levels have declined over the past decade. The low level of sports skill that most children have today is sad.

How did all this happen? Children watch too much television, play too many video games and eat too much junk food. Most schools have reduced or eliminated their physical education classes and sports activities are fewer.

So when you attend an exercise class it shows. I teach class often at 4:30 p.m. and I do see the same as you. Many times I am the oldest person in the room at that time and usually the most fit.

Now figure that out. This should not be. It is scary! For this reason Arnold Schwarzenegger will be visiting Michigan. He and I will be trying to convince our state to extend themselves for our youth. I am hoping for good results, as all of us are.

By the way, you don't want to miss the "Arnold Schwarzenegger Youth Fitness Rally" set for Monday, April 13 at Joe Louis Arena. The show, a fitness extravaganza by the Workout Company Exercise Studio, will run from 10-11:30 a.m.

Included in the show will be performances by the Cass Tech Performing Arts Group, Annette and Company, Tap Dancers, Super Kids Karate Kids, Gym Jammers from Shelby Junior High, Avery Elementary School's Aerobic Kids and much more.

Free tickets will be available after April 7 at the Workout Company Exercise Studio or by calling 567-7500.

(Myrna Partrich, co-owner of The Workout Company Inc. of Bloomfield Township and a member of the President's Council of Physical Fitness, is happy to answer any questions readers may have regarding exercise. Please send your letters to Sports Department, Myrna Partrich, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.)

outdoors calendar

IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

• April 3-5 - The Grand National Art Invitational, a juried master showcase featuring wildlife, western and landscape art, will be at the Grand Traverse Resort in Traverse City. Show hours are 9 a.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday. Weekend admission is \$5 adult and \$3.50 for senior citizens. Children under 12 will be admitted free. Call 1-800-748-0303 for more information and Wilderness Weekend packages.

• April 4 - A spring wild turkey workshop will be at the Williams Gun Sight Company in Davidson.

• April 7 - Romeo B.A.S.S. Busters will hold its monthly meeting at 7 p.m. at the Romeo Community Youth and Civic Center. New members are welcome. Call 286-6469 for more information.

• April 18 - A Hunters' safety class will be offered at the Detroit Sportsmen's Congress. Call 759-3500 for more information.

• April 19-25 - National Wildlife Week

• April 20 - Spring wild turkey action opens in designated areas of the state.

• May 2 - River Crab Salmon Stakes, an open salmon fishing tournament held annually to raise money to benefit child abuse neglect programs in Michigan, will be at Chuck Muer's River Crab Restaurant in St. Clair. Prizes, including a trip for two to Hawaii, will be raffled off. Raffle/entry tickets are \$10 each and available at Chuck Muer's restaurants including Charley's Crab in Troy, Pals in West Bloomfield, Johnny Magnum's in Farmington Hills and Meriwether's in Southfield or by calling 1-800-468-3727. The tickets may also be used as a \$10 credit on dinner for two at any Chuck Muer restaurant statewide.

• May 5 - A hunters' safety class begins at 6 p.m. at the Multi-Lakes Conservation Association in Walled Lake. Call 353-2294 for more information.

• May 7 - A six-week course on Basic Muzzleloading Shotgun Shooting begins 7 a.m. at the Western Wayne County Conservation Association. The course is open to the public and certificates of completion will be given to each participant. Call 353-2294 for more information.

Call 353-2294 for more information. • May 23-24 - The 8th annual Wildlife Art Festival will be in Clare. Call (517) 385-2442 for more information.

METROPARKS

• Kid Stuff, a hands-on program for children in which participants will explore pond life, begins at 10 a.m. Saturday at Indian Springs. Registration is required and participants should wear waterproof boots.

• Whistling Wings, an evening outing into upland meadows to witness the traditional but curious sounds and sights of the American Woodcock courtship, begins at 7 p.m. Saturday at Stony Creek.

• Spring Awakening, a slow-paced walk to discover the awakening of nature from its winter slumber, including a look for birds, frogs, insects and other animals that are beginning their annual courtships, begins at 2 p.m. Sunday at Kensington.

• Treasures from the Sea, a program in which guest speaker John

Thompson will discuss the salvage operation of the ship SS America, which sank in the Atlantic Ocean during the gold rush era, begins at 5 p.m. Sunday at Indian Springs.

• Most Metropark programs are free, while some require a nominal charge. Pre-registration is required. A motor vehicle permit is required. Call 1-800-47-PARKS for registration information.

OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS

• Easter Egg-Stravaganza, an afternoon of family fun and egg-formation including an unusual animal egg hunt, live animals, face painting, a puppet show and more, begins at 1 p.m. Saturday, April 11, at Independence Oaks. Limited tickets are \$2 each and available at the Independence Oaks Nature Center on or before April 10.

• Taming Your Tot Into Spring, a nature program for 3-6 year olds including songs, stories, games, a nature hike, a craft and a snack, begins at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday, April 15 and 16, at Independence Oaks.

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