

Trout fishermen get early start on Huron River

OUTDOOR INSIGHTS

Trout season is open and not just for April Fools.

Trout anglers school up early each year on the Huron River to participate in a special "fines-only" catch-and-release trout season.

Normal regulations apply when the regular season opens with the exception of a three-fish possession limit.

The program began in the mid-1970s and has been a joint venture of the Livonia-based Michigan Fly Fishing Club and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources ever since.

The biggest smallmouth

The recent warm weather has most air-weather anglers across the state spooling up new line and cleaning out tackle boxes in anticipation of the summer fishing season. If the weather hasn't

been enough of a boost the following tale is sure to get your adrenaline flowing.

Livonia's Mike Canfield, his wife Deborah, and their six-year-old daughter Maggie were fishing in the Loud Dam Pool last July 5 when they decided to beach their boat and allow Maggie to take a swim along a sandy bar. After a short swim, Maggie got back into the boat and Mike cast a night crawler harness out the back of the crawler.

"As soon as I hit the water he hit it," Canfield said. "He gave me a great fight."

After battling the feisty smallmouth bass for several minutes, Canfield was able to bring it to his net and finally got a good look at the fish.

"I really had no thought of keeping him," Mike said. "I knew it was a b' fish, but Maggie had

already named him 'Fred' before I even got him into the boat. We quickly measured him, took a picture and released him."

The bass was big enough to earn Canfield a Master Angler Award for catch-and-release smallmouth bass. The minimum entry is 21 inches. On top of that, Mike recently received another award from the DNR because his fish was the largest catch-and-release smallmouth in the state that was registered with the Master Angler Program during the 1998 fishing season.

"I knew he was big, but I had no idea he was an award winner," Canfield said. "I'm just glad we thought to measure it and take a picture."

"It was a good afternoon of fishing and Maggie caught her first bass and Mom got to take another picture."

Fund-raiser reminder

Don't forget about the spring wild turkey workshop coming up Saturday, April 10, at the Northland Sportsman's Club in Gaylord, especially if you hunt in the northwestern section of the state.

The Traverse Bay Chapter of the Michigan Wild Turkey Hunters Association distributed over 100 tons of shelled corn to help the birds in that area get through the harsh winter. On top of the hundreds of hours provided by local volunteers, the corn cost the chapter some \$14,500.

This turkey workshop is the chapter's main fund-raiser. Proceeds will be used specifically for the wild turkey supplemental winter feeding program.

The workshop will feature presentations by Al Stewart, the DNR's new upland gamebird specialist, as well as local wildlife biologists and veteran turkey hunters. There will also be door prizes, raffles, a kids calling contest and more.

For tickets and more information or to make a donation to the chapter call Rick Riley at (616) 545-2179.

(Anglers and hunters are urged to report your success. Questions and comments are also encouraged. Send information to: Observer, 605 E. Main, Birmingham, MI 48009. Fax information to (248) 644-1314, send e-mail to barker@comcast.net or call Bill Parker evenings at (248) 901-2573.)

Proud Lake Recreation Area — from the signs just below Moss Lake to the signs 100 yards below the Wixom Road Bridge — is open for the special season. The regular trout season doesn't open until Saturday, April 24, but those who can't wait the additional three weeks can get in on some spring training on the

FUND-RAISERS

WHITETAILS UNLIMITED

The Clarkston Chapter of Whitetails Unlimited will hold a fund-raising banquet beginning at 5:30 p.m. Friday, April 9, at the Deer Lake Athletic Club in Clarkston. The event will feature a buffet dinner, an auction, door prizes, sporting equipment, limited edition wildlife and outdoor art, Whitetails Unlimited collectibles and much more. Proceeds from the event will be used for conservation and youth related projects. Tickets are \$65 each, \$95 for couples and \$35 for juniors 15 and under. To order tickets or for more information, call Tom Bushong at (616) 781-8430.

TURKEY HUNTER'S WORKSHOP
The Traverse Bay Chapter of the Michigan Wild Turkey Hunters Association will hold its annual spring workshop on Saturday, April 10, at the Northland Sportsman's Club in Gaylord. The workshop will feature presentations by the DNR's new upland gamebird specialist, Al Stewart, local wildlife biologists and veteran turkey hunters. There will also be door prizes, raffles, a kids calling contest and

more. Proceeds from the event will be used exclusively for MWTWA's winter feeding program. For tickets and more information, call Rick Riley at (616) 545-2179.

SEMINARS

INTRO TO CYCLING

Adult beginners will learn the basics of the sport of cycling during this class, which begins at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 7, at REI in Northville. Call (248) 347-2100 for more information.

BIKE MAINTENANCE 101

Get your bike ready for spring during this instructional clinic, which begins at 11 a.m. Saturday, April 10, at REI in Northville. Call (248) 347-2100 for more information.

STEELHEAD FISHING

Metro-West Steelheaders will present a free seminar on steelhead fishing beginning at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 13, at Garden City High School. The seminar will include discussion on river and lake fishing, trolling, drift boats, planer boards and other offshore tactics. The seminar is held as part of the regular monthly meeting of the Metro-

West Steelheaders fishing club and the public is welcome to attend. Call Dominic Lippato at (248) 478-5027 for information.

WOMEN'S FLY FISHING

River Bend Sports Shop in Southfield is sponsoring a Women's Fly Fishing School on Sunday, May 23. Participants will spend a full-filled day learning the basics of fly fishing including lessons in casting, knot tying, reading the water, playing, landing and releasing fish, entomology and fly selection and more. Cost is \$125 per person and class size is limited. Call Pat Ross at (248) 350-8484 for more information and to register.

FLY FISHING SCHOOL

The Riverbend Sports Shop in Southfield is sponsoring several fly fishing schools in the upcoming months. Held at the Huntsman Hunt Club in Dryden and Huntars Creek Hunt Club in Metamora, the schools include lessons in basic fly fishing techniques including casting, knot tying, reading the water, playing, landing and releasing fish, entomology and fly selection and more. Classes are scheduled for April 25, May 8 and 16, June 6 and 19, July 11 and 25, August 15 and 29, and Sept. 12. Class

size is limited. Call (248) 350-8484 for information and to register.

OUTDOOR CALENDAR

size is limited. Call (248) 350-8484 or (248) 591-3474 to register and for more information.

YOUTH FLY FISHING

The Michigan Fly Fishing Club will host its annual Youth Fly Fishing School from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, April 17, at the Walled Lake Outdoor Education Center. Cost is \$25 per person and class size is limited. Call Dale Ross at (734) 420-2233.

APRIL FOOL'S WALK

A naturalist-led hike under the light of the "Blue Moon" begins at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 1, at Stony Creek.

SLOPPIN' THE HOGS

Children age 5 and older can help feed the farm animals during this program, which begins at 3 p.m. Saturday, April 3, at Kensington.

NATURE PROGRAMS

The nature center at Stony Creek will offer the following programs beginning at 11 a.m. each day during spring break: Funny Frog Faces, Monday, April 5; Hot Dogs and Stories, Tuesday, April 6; Pickin' Pellets, Wednesday, April 7; Turtles and Tortoises, Thursday, April 8; Bluebirds for You April 9.

SPRING CLEANUP

Spring cleanup days are scheduled at several Metroparks in the upcoming weeks. Most programs last one-half day and lunch is provided for all volunteers who register in advance. Cleanup days will be held Saturday

required for all programs. Call the respective parks toll free at 800-477-3176; Saturday, April 17, at Stony Creek, (800) 781-4242, and Metro Beach, (800) 477-3172; and Saturday, April 24, at Lake Erie, (800) 477-3189, and Kensington, (800) 477-3176.

1999 PERMITS

The 1999 Huron-Clinton Metroparks annual vehicle entry permits and boat launching permits are on sale at all Metroparks offices. Vehicle entry permits are \$15 (\$8 for senior citizens). The annual boat launching permits are \$18 (\$9 for senior citizens). Call (800) 47-PARKS for more information.

COUNTY PARKS

COUNTY PARK REQUIREMENTS

Advanced registration is required for all nature programs at Oakland County Parks. Call (810) 625-6473 to register or for more information.

SPRING EGGS-ITEMENT

Learn how nature decorates eggs and enjoy some egg games and crafts during this program, which begins at 1 p.m. Saturday, April 3, at Independence Oaks.

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