

# Some inland lakes safe for ice fishing

### OUTDOOR IN-SIGHTS



BILL PARKER

Rain showers and balmy temperatures Jan. 2 put a damper on area ice fishing, but the recent cold spell has whipped inland lakes in South-eastern Michigan back into shape.

"The rain we got on Sunday and helped get things back on track," said Ron Jedlicki, owner of Hook, Line & Sinker Bait and Tackle Shop in downtown Lake Orion. "The guys I've talked to said there is still four to six inches of ice on the smaller lakes. They've pretty much been staying off the bigger lakes like Orion, but the smaller lakes are in pretty good shape."

"The Coast Guard is telling people to stay off the ice because the wind is breaking it up, but I think they're pretty much talking about Lake St. Clair. These little lakes aren't affected by the wind like Lake St. Clair is."

Jedlicki said anglers were catching good perch on pike on the Stringy Lake Chain in

Oxford. Blue gill and crappie action has been slow. As of Tuesday evening, Pontiac Lake in Waterford had up to 8 inches of ice according to Paul Frederick, manager of KD Outdoors on M-69.

"I had one guy in today who said it was pretty firm. There was four to six inches out there," Frederick said. "I haven't heard much about the other lakes, but Pontiac Lake seems to be in decent shape."

Crappie and walleye have produced the hot bite on Pontiac Lake. No reports of lunkers have come in, but a lot of good eaters have been caught.

"The action on Wayne County's Beloville Lake, anglers have been shying away from the ice since Sunday. "Before the rains came we had four inches, but no one has been out since," said Rob Seagraves, of South Street Tackle in Beloville. "They were catching some silver bass and some perch last week. If we get a couple good days of cold weather, we should be OK again."

The outlook appeared bright for the weekend with freezing temperatures returning to the area.

### Think safety first

While area lakes should be in good shape for anglers by the weekend, you should always use caution when venturing out on the ice.

Ice thickness can sometimes be misleading. Thin ice (at least 3 inches) that has frozen solid and remains frozen can be safer than 4-to-6 inches of ice that has frozen, thawed, then frozen again.

Stay off of ice that is soft and mushy or tends to bend or drop when weight is placed on it. The best ice is hard, blue or clear ice. Ice that has a grey or white tint, or is full of bubbles, should be avoided.

Remember, too, that warm or sunny weather weakens existing ice. Check ice throughout the season to confirm uniform thickness across the lake.

Ice near river and stream mouths should be avoided, as well as ice around docks and rafts, especially early in the season when ice is still forming.

It's a good idea to keep a rope, hose or ladder close by when venturing out on ice.

If a companion falls through try to keep the person relatively calm. Rescue the person with a

rope, ladder, jacket or branch, but never put yourself in jeopardy by running out onto the ice. If you fall through, again, remain calm. Keep your arms extended so your head doesn't go below the surface.

Ice spikes, or simple wooden blocks with spikes driven through them, will help in gaining a grip on the wet, slippery surface. Kick with your feet, pull with the spikes and roll out of the hole.

If you try to climb out you're likely to break more ice along the edge of the hole and will exhaust yourself. Once out of the water continue to roll until you are well away from the hole.

Shed your wet clothes for dry ones as soon as possible since hypothermia can begin to take hold in as little as three minutes.

Winter recreation on Michigan's 11,000 inland lakes can be fun and enjoyable. Common sense should always dictate your activities and take the time to check ice before venturing out.

(Bill Parker writes a weekly outdoor column for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Contact Parker by writing to Outdoors, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009.)

## OUTDOOR CALENDAR

### SHOWS

#### BOAT, SPORT AND FISHING

The 17th annual Silverdome Boat, Sport and Fishing Show will be Feb. 2-6 at the Pontiac Silverdome. The show features over 300 boats from more than 76 manufacturers, fishing tackle, fishing trips, charter captains, virtual fishing, trout ponds, seminars, casting demonstrations and more. Show hours are 3-9:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 2 and 3; 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 4; 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 5; and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 6. Admission is \$7 adult, \$3 for children ages 6-14 and children under five will be admitted free.

**DETROIT BOAT AND FISHING SHOW**  
The 42nd Annual Detroit Boat, Sport and Fishing Show will be Feb. 12-20 at Cobo Center. The show features the 2000 premiere showing of new model boats, motors, trailers, accessories and more. Some 1,000 boats will be available for viewing including fishing boats, ski boats, pontoons, cruisers, inflatables, personal watercrafts, canoes and kayaks.

**SPORTSFISHING EXPO**  
The 12th annual Greater Detroit Sportfishing and Travel Expo is set for Thursday through Sunday, March 2-5, at the Palace of Auburn Hills. An all-star lineup of seminar speakers is already scheduled. The show also features exhibitors, merchandise booths, casting and fishing activities and more. Show hours are 4-9:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, March 2-3; 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Saturday, March 4; and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday, March 5. Admission is \$7.75 for adults, \$3.50 for children ages 6-12 and children age 5 and under will be admitted free.

**SPRING BOATING EXPO**  
The eighth annual Spring Boating Expo is scheduled for March 16-19 at the Novi Expo Center. The show features some 200 exhibitors with new boats and watercrafts, motors, trailers, docks, accessories and more.

### METROPARKS

**METROPARK REQUIREMENTS**  
Most Metropark programs are

free while some require a nominal fee. Advanced registration and a motor vehicle permit are required for all programs. Call the respective parks toll free at the following numbers: Stony Creek, 1-800-477-7766; Indian Springs, 1-800-477-3192; Kensington, 1-800-477-3178; Hudson Mills, 1-800-477-3191.

**1999 PERMITS**  
The 1999 Huron-Clinton Metroparks annual vehicle entry permits and boat launching permits are on sale at all Metropark offices. Vehicle entry permits are \$15 (\$8 for senior citizens). The annual boat launching permits are \$18 (\$9 for senior citizens). Call 1-800-47-PARKS.

**STARS 'N' STORIES**  
Families, scouts and home-schoolers will learn about planets and the phases of the moon and make a star-studded shirt during this program, which begins at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 9, at Indian Springs.

**ANIMAL TRACK T-SHIRTS**  
Bring a white T-shirt and track it up with animal tracks during this program, which begins at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 9, at Kensington.

**WINTER WILDLIFE**  
Slides and a walk will help visitors understand how local residents cope with the challenge of winter. Bring binoculars to this event, scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 15 at Kensington. Pre-registration required.

**WINTER BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS**  
If you've never gone birding before, winter is the perfect time to start. Bring your binoculars and take a walk through a variety of habitats to discover which birds have the "right stuff" to stick around through a Michigan winter. Pre-registration required for this event, which is scheduled for 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 16 at Kensington. To register or for more information, contact Kensington Nature Center at (248) 685-0603 or 1-800-477-3178.

**FULL MOON WALK**  
A 90-minute interpretive-led walk at Stony Creek, scheduled for Friday, Jan. 21, discussing the activities of wildlife under the light of the "Moon of Winter's Sleep." Dress Warmly. For age eight years and older. Pre-registration required.

# Animals, birds know how to tell time, too

### NATURE NOTES



TIM NOWICKI

As I watched the bull in Times Square full second by second to mark the beginning of the year 2000, I was reminded how dependent we have become on time and timing devices.

Man has come a long way from the days when he began to recognize the cycle of day versus night, the recurrence of the full moon and the return of migrating animals.

Timing devices are essential in modern society so that people can coordinate their activities.

Animals need to coordinate their activities, too. They use the

same kinds of sequences that early man used before the development of small units of time.

Scientists have determined that animals time their activities based on the lunar cycle, the rotation of the earth on its axis day and night, and the revolution of the earth around the sun.

They may not have a Timex, but they have developed internal ways to determine time. Lunar cycles are most influential along the ocean shore. Since ocean tides are regulated by the moon, animals living on the shoreline are subject to a regular cycle of wet and dry.

What intrigues scientists is the shoreline animals are not responding to the movement of the tides but to an internal clock that changes their behavior.

Small crabs that live on the

shoreline were taken to a laboratory and placed in a constantly dark enclosure with no tidal movement of water. Despite these constant conditions, the crabs maintained an activity cycle that was the same as if they were on the shoreline.

Experiments have shown that young animals born in constant conditions of a laboratory and never exposed to the natural cycle had a cycle of activity that was like their wild cousins on the shoreline.

Migratory birds exhibit an annual clock based on a 365-day cycle. Birds placed in constant conditions of a laboratory will molt feathers and exhibit migratory activity at the same time as their wild relatives. This occurs twice a year, once for the northward migration and again for the

fall flight.

Each migratory activity period continues for a prescribed amount of time and in a specific direction. By flying in a specific direction for a given amount of time, birds of that species will all end up at the same place.

Because their internal clock was activated at the same time, they will also arrive at the same time. This is necessary if all the birds are to mate and raise their young before the change of weather in fall.

Timing in animals, other than man, is also critical. Migrating, molting, hibernating and mating at the proper time are essential for their survival.

They may not have to be in a particular place at the stroke of midnight, but animals that hesitate too long, lose.

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