

# Fewer Salmon But Better Catches Predicted

Despite the smallest number of coho and chinook in the Great Lakes in three years and stricter snagging regulations than a year ago, Michigan's 1973 salmon fishing season should be the best on record, according to Automobile Club of Michigan.

"The reason for this optimism is that Michiganians now rank among the best-equipped and most-skilled sport fishermen in the world," explains Auto Club Touring Manager Joseph Ratke.

"The average Great Lakes angler has between \$3,000 and \$5,000 invested in equipment, including the most sophisticated gear on the market, and he has learned how and where to catch coho and chinook," states Ratke.

"When salmon were first introduced into the Great Lakes seven years ago, coho and chinook were a mystery and few anglers knew what was needed or how to go

about catching them," he adds.

The early salmon fishermen attempted to navigate the Great Lakes in a 12- to 14-foot boat with wire line and lead sinks as his main fishing tools.

"Today 18- to 22-foot crafts, depth sounding devices to locate fish, thermometers to find the proper salmon feeding temperature and downriggers that allow fishing to exact water depths are the rule rather than the exception," Ratke points out.

"Proof of the salmon fishermen's prowess in Michigan is evidenced by the fact that nearly two million coho and chinook have been caught in state waters during the past two years."

But in spite of this success, "When salmon were first introduced into the Great Lakes seven years ago, coho and chinook were a mystery and few anglers knew what was needed or how to go

three reasons for this reduction.

The loss of nearly 3.5 million coho in two separate disasters at the Platte River fish hatchery forced large cutbacks in plantings the last two springs.

Selective plantings - initiated last year to eliminate unsuccessful salmon fishing and spawning areas - have reduced the number of salmon stockings in the Great Lakes and tributaries from a record 34 locations in 1971 to 28 in 1972 and 22 this year.

Egg collections for future plantings at several Lake Michigan harvest weirs dropped by more than 60 percent in 1972 as compared with the previous year because of too liberal snagging regulations in Michigan streams.

In all, approximately 1.4 million mature coho and chinook (salmon that are at least three years old) will be available for catching in Lakes Michigan, Huron, Superior and tributaries, a drop of about 300,000 salmon from 1972 and 150,000 from 1971.

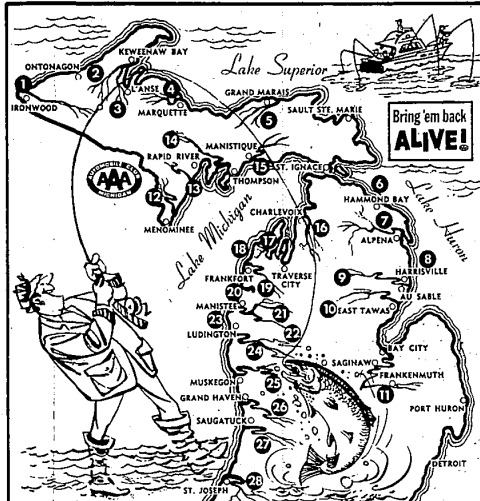
Lakes Huron and Superior have been hit hardest by reduced salmon plantings. Lake Huron, which received 1.2 million coho and 900,000 chinook in 1971, had only 250,000 coho and 514,000 chinook planted the year Lake Superior went from 500,000 coho and 250,000 chinook in 1971 to 150,000 coho and 470,000 chinook in 1972, a total drop of 150,000 salmon.

Even Lake Michigan and tributaries, which yielded 77 per cent of the 932,000 salmon caught in Michigan last year, were cut from 2.8 million coho and 1.9 million chinook plantings in 1971 to 2.3 million coho and 1.4 million chinook last year.

"Selective plantings also are being used extensively on Lakes Huron and Superior to phase out unproductive fishing and spawning areas," explains Ratke.

Along Lake Huron, only five locations received salmon in 1972, compared with 10 the previous year. Lake Superior plantings were cut from six to four during the same period.

## 1973 Michigan Salmon Fishing Guide



AREAS TO CATCH MATURE SALMON					
LAKE SUPERIOR	COHO	CHINOOK	LAKE MICHIGAN	COHO	CHINOOK
1 - Black River	•	•	12 - Menominee River	•	•
2 - Sturgeon River	•	•	13 - Whitefish River	•	•
3 - Fish River	•	•	14 - Chequamegon Creek	•	•
4 - Grand River	•	•	15 - Manistique River	•	•
5 - Sackett River	•	•	16 - Portage Creek	•	•
			17 - Sawyer Creek	•	•
			18 - Platte Bay	•	•
			19 - Platte River	•	•
			20 - Potage Lake	•	•
			21 - Little Manistee River	•	•
			22 - Little Manistee River	•	•
			23 - Big Sable Point	•	•
			24 - Big Sable River	•	•
			25 - Muskegon River	•	•
			26 - Grand River	•	•
			27 - Kalamazoo River	•	•
			28 - St. Joseph River	•	•

• Indicates open water plantings. Other plantings in designated rivers.

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