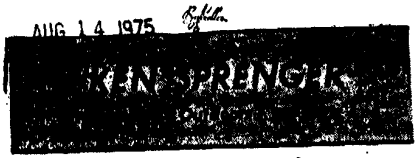
NORTH TONAWANDA, N. Y.
NEWS
(BUFFALO MARKET AREA)
D. 17,500

AUG 14 1975



County Fair stint yields many questions

While sitting at the fishery display booth at the Niagara County Fair, I had opportunity to talk with many sportsmen. Concerns were many.

Several expressed a negative attitude to the Oct. 1, license increase. No one likes to pay more money. But, as I pointed out, the sportsmen do have a voice in Albany. The New York State Conservation Council. The council recommended an increase to help offset increased costs. Part of the increase is to keep programs and projects in operation.

A survey of the pheasant population is one such program. Hunting and fishing licenses remain a bargain despite increased fees. It can be expensive for a man with children who also hunt and fish and I think that a family plan is worth some study.

One man said, "I've got a depth finder and temperature gauge." Before he could continue I said, "great! How about signing up for our salmon sweep?" He said, "I don't have a boat," then he went on to say he and his wife were great fishermen.

When his wife passed away, he sold the boat, stored the other equipment and gave up fishing. "It just wasn't the same." Pretty soon the far away look disappeared as we talked about the new salmon program in Lake Ontario. After I told him he had a good start with his idle equipment, he said, "you know what, I'm going to get another boat," and left smiling. He had made my day.

"Where are all the pheasants?" More than one farmer asked this question. Because they are close to the wildlife farmers know how many birds and animals are around. They are concerned more for the birds than for the hunting.

It could be a single factor such as habitat change or it could be a combination involving habitat, egg destroyers such as possum and raccoon, early spring mowing and pesticides.

"Wow, look at the size of that fish" — a mounted lake trout taken in Great Bear Lake and weighed about 30 pounds. I told the wide-eyed young anglers that fish that size are already in Lake Ontario, and in a few years they would be double that size. It happened in Lake Michigan and will be duplicated here, given a little time. I told them how last week the New York State Conservation Department netted three brown trout off Wilson. A small one, a six-pounder and one brown that was nine pounds. The large one was stocked a year ago in the spring and weighed less than a pound. What a fishing future these kids have ahead of them.

"I read in the paper not to eat salmon from Lake Ontario."

This item had stunned me too, and I got on the phone Friday morning to check it out because I knew there would be close to 10,000 people at the fair that evening and the question would certainly be asked.

My call to Bill Shephard, head of the fisheries in our area, gave us our first doubt about the story. Bill, an old friend of ours, stated he knew nothing of the salmon report but was briefed on the chemical PCB in fish in the Hudson River I called Albany and talked to the director of communications, Robert McManis. He gave me a chronological account. Briefly, it is this. General Electric was requesting permission to dump waste into the Hudson. During the course of the study it was found that the fish tested (rock bass and striped bass) contained large amounts of PCB.

PCB is used for "closed" systems, such as for insulating purposes in transformers and capacitators.

Formerly, it was used in paper products, plastics and paints. Such uses were discontinued in 1971 because these materials are long-lived. They remain in garbage dumps, landfills and river bottoms and are an on-going source of contamination of the State's waters through discard and recycling of paper goods.

New York State commissioner of the Environmental Conservation Department, Ogden Reid, said a 1972 report on eastern Lake Ontario showed 10 to 20 parts per million in salmon. Safe levels are five parts per million. On that basis, Reid issued the report.

MONS 030876