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*Outdoors*

# Trout fishing time for our Great Lakes

**TROUT FISHING TIME?** It sure is. The brown trout are hitting along Lakes Ontario and Erie. Several 18-inchers were taken last week at Wilson, a few at Waterport Dam and some at Point Breeze. Egg sacks and dew worms fished slow and low is about the only thing attracting any interest. Casting lures into the cold water is useless at this time.

As we have pointed out many times, the Great Lake fishing for salmonids offers year-round fishing. Fishing that is determined by the fish instead of the calendar, such as inland waters, are governed.

It looks as though the rainbow run in the Finger Lakes region might be over by the April 1 opener. Snow is almost all gone from the hills unlike other years and some bows are already in the streams. In fact, when I stopped at Springwater on Saturday the water looked just about right. Too bad it is still a month away before it can be fished.

**THOSE BROWNS** taken in Lake Ontario and upstream are probably last year's fingerlings. Growth rate in the big body of water is also another asset to this new fishery. Not only do they grow long, but fat, too, and an 18-inch brown taken from the Great Lakes is much heavier than those from the Cattaraugus or Wiscoy.

According to the reports I've read, the browns and rainbows in Lake Ontario do not have the P.C.B. problem that the salmon do. But, because there isn't enough known at this time about the P.C.B. one should stay within the recommendation that pregnant women not eat any Lake Ontario fish, just to be on the safe side. You may like to read the last issue of the New York State Conservationist. There was an article concerning P.C.B. (copies are usually in libraries.) If you prefer not to eat fish it doesn't mean that one has to forego fishing; there may be an old lunker stocked several years ago just waiting to grace your wall.

**IN THE RECENT** 1975-76 published Fish and Wildlife Program Plan the comments on the Great Lake fishing are reassuring. Quoting a part of the 60-page booklet gives the angler some idea of the work being carried on for them — and where and how their license dollars are spent.

"Despite past abuses, Lake Erie contains an excellent warmwater fish population and has potential for management of coldwater species such as salmonids. The average lakewide commercial fish catch for the past 50 years is about 50 million pounds, and the annual sport catch may exceed this figure.

The region around Lake Ontario was settled first and it was the first of the Great Lakes to suffer major declines in fishery resources. It is essentially a coldwater lake with limited warmwater habitat. Valuable socks of coldwater species had nearly disappeared by the 1950s and been replaced by non-native trash species such as the alewife. Excellent populations of warmwater game fish and pan species are found in the eastern basin, the St. Lawrence and Niagara Rivers and along the south shore.

**THIS WAS THE PICTURE** when Bureau of Fisheries operations were reorganized in 1971 to more accurately reflect its responsibility for stewardship of freshwater fisheries resources and to serve as the basis for focusing more attention, money and manpower on restoring coldwater fisheries of Lake Ontario and diversifying the recreational fishery on Lake Erie. The Great Lakes Section of the Bureau is comprised of a Lake Erie Unit and a Lake Ontario Unit. The Section coordinates all Department fish management and research effort in these waters. These efforts have begun to pay big dividends.

**AN EXCELLENT INSHORE** fishery for brown trout, rainbow trout and coho salmon developed this spring from Oswego west to the Niagara River. Preliminary reports on the fall salmon runs are very encouraging. Netting surveys Sept. 10 off Stony Point in the eastern basin of Ontario produced 60 lake trout in the four-pound range from a 1973 plant of 65,000 yearlings. A chinook salmon weighing 27 pounds, 10 ounces was recorded at Pulaski, the largest reported from New York waters of the Great Lakes. The ultimate objective is to produce an annual yield of 300,000 salmonids to fishermen.

Activities under this sub-program include (1) updating a comprehensive fish and wildlife management plan for Lake Ontario, (2) beginning a similar plan for Lake Erie, (3) treating five streams with lampricides, (4) lamprey ammocoete distribution surveys on the Oswego River Watershed and four other Lake Ontario tributaries, (5) lamprey nest counts, (6) obtaining lamprey wounding and scarring data, (7) operating two fish weirs on Orwell Creek and Spring Brook (Pulaski), (8) inshore assessment netting of salmonids in the spring, (9) monitoring the spring and fall sport catch by spot checks, and an intensive creel census on Salmon River, (10) marking stocked fish by fin-clip.

Also, (11) stocking 180,000 coho and chinook salmon in Lake Erie, (12) stocking approximately 2.2 million chinook and coho salmon, brown trout, rainbow trout and lake trout in Lake Ontario, (13) experimental trolling to locate offshore concentrations of salmonids, (14) coordinating management plans with the Province of Ontario, Canada Department of Environment, other Great Lakes States, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Marine Fisheries Service under guidance of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, (15) acquiring land for a new Great Lakes Salmon Hatchery, and completing a final design, (16) purchasing 500,000 lake trout from the Fish and Wildlife Service for $13,000, (17) fitting out a new 43-foot research vessel.

**CHALLENGE:** The Terry Corners Bowmen Club challenges others sportsmen clubs to donate to the Variety Telethon program. They are donating $100; what is your club going to do about the challenge?

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