

The Great Outdoors

Albert F. Simard

How the best laid plans of mice and men go astray! I had planned to sit down last week this week's article early and get to bed early for a change, but instead I became interested in watching the Winter Olympics. Boy howdy! Wouldn't I love to be over there to watch them in person instead of having to put up with all the commercials the boob tube is plagued with. Naturally enough, I was most interested in watching the ski and skating events since I do both, though not with the finesse nor the dedication exhibited by the participants. Oh to be able to ski and skate as they do!

News of outdoorsmen is, as usual, rather scarce. To tell the truth, even I have not been outdoors in the woods and fields as much as I have in the past. It just seems that there are so very many other things to take care of that there just are not enough hours in the day to get them all done. I've been dying to get out skiing and I still have not gone. I guess I'll just have to say to hack with something and break out.

Quite a few of the frigid finger fish fumblers either have or are heading for northern waters to try their luck, but so far I have heard of only three who have returned and reported having any luck. One was Tony Tinsille of the Sunset Sports Shop I mentioned to you all last week. This week I hear tell that Darryl Johnson and Steve Huffner have just returned from Saratoga Lake where they did right well for themselves fishing for walleyed pike.

One fellow who has been doing quite well on a local lake is Mike Woza. So far, he has toiled nineteen pickerel out of the First Bloomers. This is a privately owned lake where a sportsmen can gain admittance simply by paying a one dollar fee. Perhaps the reason the fishing has become so good there is that it has been closed to fishing for quite a while.

I heard something quite interesting the other day that has set me to wondering. You all know the word is out not to eat fish taken from the Hudson River because of the PCB pollution caused by General Electric up in Glen's Falls. Well, I recently heard that Poughkeepsie is getting its water supplies from that river. I wonder if they have some special process for removing the PCB from the water before it gets into the water system of the city. Can any of you readers tell me?

Come to think of it, it suddenly dawned on me that I have asked you readers for help several times in the past and not once have I received a reply. What gives?

The only match results I have so far for the most recent series in the Ulster County Pistol League are for a match fired between Middletown and New Paltz. The Paltzers had intrevet all the way down to Middletown, but even so, they fired a pretty good score. The Middies, being on their own stomping grounds, fired a really fancy score of 1288-1212. The Paltzers fired a 1270-1212. Top shooter for the Middies was George Hoitz with a 288-43. For the Paltzers, both Nels Christiano and Mike Lavrin fired 278, but Nels took top honors by one-ring Mike 5 to 1.

The Conservation Department has announced that it is currently taking applications for youngsters to attend Environmental Education Camps this summer. The camps are open to both boys and girls between the ages of 2 to 16. It seems that in the past about the only groups to sponsor youngsters to these camps have been sporting clubs, but in the past couple of years about half the campers have been sponsored by other groups such as, garden clubs, civic clubs, veterans organizations, scouts and church groups. The Department urges any organization interested in environmental concerns to participate.

I've heard quite a few folks say we should spend less time worrying about the future of falcons to nest and spend more time worrying about problems closer to home. These folks have no idea how close to home the peregrine falcon is. It stands to reason that what affects the falcon has to affect man too. There is reason to worry.

Wild animals are a sure barometer of what we are doing to the environment. By watching them carefully perhaps we will be able to see the danger signals before we have fouled the environment so badly that it is no longer fit for even us.

There have been some among us who, from time to time, have tried to warn us of what we were doing. One of these was Rachel Carson, author of "Silent Spring." She was vilified as a scaremonger, but in less than ten years the warnings contained in her book proved to be true. State and Federal governments have outlawed the use of some of the more deadly and persistent pesticides, but thereby and part of it all is that these poisons are still being produced and used in other parts of the world. It is almost as though the poison manufacturers have lost touch with the fact that this is all one world -- that if you poison one part of it, sooner or later the rest of the world will suffer too.

The change that takes place in the type of wildlife living in an area can also be an indication that the environment either has or is changing. One perfect example taken here in New York is found in many streams that formerly were good trout streams are no longer productive. They have been destroyed by destruction of the habitat along the stream, by pollution, warming, reduced flow, and the addition of too many nutrients from farming operations and septic systems. The trout in these streams have been replaced by trash fish more tolerant of poor water quality.

Sometimes, watching wildlife can also bring good news. For example, watching the brown pelicans of California has shown that the ban on the use of DDT is having the desired effect. These birds are now able to nest successfully again, indicating that DDT is finally starting to leave the environment. If by watching the wildlife we can observe how successful our efforts are at cleaning the environment, then it is a job well done.

According to figures just released, hunters after bears in the early season took 199 bears. This beat the previous high take set in 1965. In that year, 187 bears were taken.

A record big bear was taken during this past season. The bear dressed out at 869 pounds on a certified scale. This would put the animal's live weight at an estimated 750 pounds. I'll bet Ed Ball of Batavia had a heck of a time dragging that monster out of the woods.

If you will recall, I mentioned sometime back in the spring that the state was going to give out big fish awards to lucky anglers. Well, the result of this program is that several new records were set. The new largemouth bass record was taken in Chadwick Lake in Orange County. It weighed 10 pounds 12 ounces.

The new state pickerel record fish was taken in Harrisburg Lake in Essex County and it weighed 5 pounds 8 ounces.

A spidne was taken in Lake Eaton in Hamilton County that weighed 4 pounds 11 ounces. (Are you reading this, George Seymour?)

A channel catfish that weighed 15 pounds 3 ounces was taken in Lake Champlain.

In the salt water division, the new record white marlin weighed 117 pounds and was caught in the waters of the Atlantic.

A make shark taken off Montauk Point weighed a whopping 695 pounds.

If any of you anglers think you may be lucky enough to catch a dream sized whopper this coming season, free entry forms for the 1976 Record Fish Program will be available soon at all the regional offices of the DEC. The entry forms contain all the necessary rules and instructions.

One thing I have always wondered about is why with all the interest there is in this country in the shooting sports we do not have a county operated public range. Properly set up this could turn out to be a profitable enterprise. Down in Nassau County they were able to clear a profit of $84,583 last year from their county rifle range. How about some of you county legislators giving this a good thinking over?

Who knows, if it were successful you might even be able to cut our taxes...

MIDDLETOWN, N. Y.
TIMES HERALD
RECORD

FEB 11 1976

Peter Brain Places 2nd On Ski Team

NEW PALTZ: Peter Brain, sophomore at New Paltz High School Ski Team, placed second for the silver medal in Bruce Davenport of Rondout High in total time of the double run slalom in the first annual "Apple Skill Cup" Ski Race sponsored by Onteora High School which was recently held at Highmount Ski Center.

Peter has been getting up to Highmount most every weekend to practice his skiing and his hard work paid off with a good performance on a tough slalom course against some very fine high school skiers.

MONS 033083