

**Bowhunting Special**

47486

# MICHIGAN™ Hunting & Fishing

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Scouting Tips**

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## SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

by Mike Zielinski

**Smallmouth Bass:** Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River and Lake Erie have been invaded by incredible numbers of smallmouth bass in all year classes and sizes. Looking for a trophy smallie, try the Detroit River. Need a quick limit of 2½ to 3-lb. tourney fish, hit the weedbeds almost anywhere in Lake St. Clair. Like to drag live bait among the rocks, then work a soft-shelled crayfish along the reefs of the Huron River in Lake Erie.

During July and August, Lake St. Clair smallie hunters rely on massive weedbeds so prevalent in this shallow body of water. Crankbaits come into their own here on the flats, and ripping them across the weed tops is a quick way to locate schools of aggressive fish.

Fish are found along the channel edges. Tossing spinnerbaits and small tube jigs work here. Look for pockets in the weedlines along channel breaks where eddies are formed by rocks or man-made structures.

John Kalash, a walleye fishing legend along the Detroit River says, "I've had to give up some of my favorite handline trolling walleye hotspots because there are so many bass. They love No. 11 Rapalas. Talk about a circus. Those bass are like submarine-launched missiles coming out of the water. I've never seen so many smallmouth bass, and I've been fishing the Detroit River over 60 years."

Try the Fighting Island Light, a large concrete and steel structure stationed

mid-channel where smallies congregate. Jigging with 1-oz. Hopkins Spoons is productive for feisty bronzebacks.

Bass pro Marty Wiebelhaus, of Rockwood, has made a fishing career out of the Detroit River. "I love to throw a ¾-oz. jig and No. 11 Uncle Josh porkrind combos along seawalls in the Detroit River. Last year I broke off on several fish that were over six pounds. Smallmouth bass that big are a whole different breed of fish," he says.

The local waters of Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River is North America's top smallmouth fishery. For fishing info on Lake St. Clair, call Lakeside Tackle (810) 777-7003; Detroit River try the Trenton Lighthouse at (313) 675-7080.

**Walleye:** For limit catches of big walleyes, the St. Clair River after dark can be awesome during mid-summer. Try handline trolling or anchoring and chuggin' bottom with heavy weights. Pencil plugs and short stubby rods is the way to go in the swift current.

The Detroit River yields good catches of eater-size walleyes during summer. Handliners ply the deep, swift, river water. After dark try trolling pencil plugs and Rapalas near Cobo Hall, along the north end of Fighting Island, and the Amherstburg Channel along Bob-Lo Island.

In the daytime, spinner and crawler combos drifted on bottom near Calf Island, Mud Island, the Sugar Island cut and along the Big Banana Dike always produces walleyes. Expect to catch a variety of fish on live bait in these locations, including rock bass, sheepshead, catfish, white perch, and smallmouth. For fishing information, call Viking Tackle (313) 388-FISH or The Fish'n Hole (313) 287-4020. For charter info, try (313) 692-6746 or (313) 382-4517.

Trolling close to bottom with live bait or stickbaits using bottom bouncers or snap weights is a system that successful Erie anglers depend on. Studies indicate that during bright sunlight walleyes feed in deeper water or lay dormant on bottom. In 1975 the water clarity in Lake Erie was less than five feet and the walleyes fed throughout the day. Today, mid-summer water clarity runs 12 to 17 feet.

By mid-July, southeast Michigan walleye anglers head for West Sister Island in Lake Erie. The deeper, cooler water holds walleyes until they migrate east during late summer. Locating

schools of fish is easy; just look for packs of boats.

For information on Lake Erie's western basin call Luna Pier Harbour Club at (313) 848-8777.

Erieau, Ontario, on Lake Erie's north coast, is without a doubt the finest summer walleye fishery in the country. The 40- to 80-foot deep water holds trophy walleyes aplenty for anglers trolling deep diving cranks. Downriggers, Dipsy Divers and Off Shore Snap Weights are common methods used to reach suspended fish.

Even a 10-lb. walleye makes for great eating from this clean, cold, deep water. For information on this fishery, call Barney's Erieau Marina (519) 676-4471.

● **Muskies:** Muskies have been making a strong comeback, so strong in fact, that walleye anglers in the Detroit River have been complaining about too many huge muskies. Detroit River muskie hunters start trolling weedlines growing along the deep shipping channels.

Lake St. Clair muskie fishermen have had tremendous success last four years. Many veteran anglers attribute this to catch and release angling plus an increase in the size limit to 44 inches.



For muskie information, call Lakeside Tackle (810) 777-7003. For charter information try Capt. Don Miller at (313) 429-9551.

**Perch:** Perch fishing in Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River continues to improve. The Detroit River schools can be difficult to find, preferring to hang in small, open pockets in the dense weeds paralleling the channel banks. Small minnows, night crawlers and waxworms work.

On Lake St. Clair, the perch are nomadic. They may be in Michigan waters one day, then move. Several locations need to be checked out before a school is found. Once pinpointed, the fishing can be fast and furious. Perch remain tightly schooled in one area for days, at other times their movements appear as whimsical as the winds.

For information on Lake St. Clair perch, call Lakeside Tackle (810) 777-7003, Angler Rod & Sport (810) 329-2253 and in Ontario, try Snoopy's at Mitchell's Bay (519) 354-4075.