

TIPS & TACTICS  
GETTING READY  
FOR DEER SEASON

# Michigan SPORTSMAN

COVER STORY:  
OUR NEW  
STATE-RECORD  
WHITETAIL!  
TOP BOW KILL

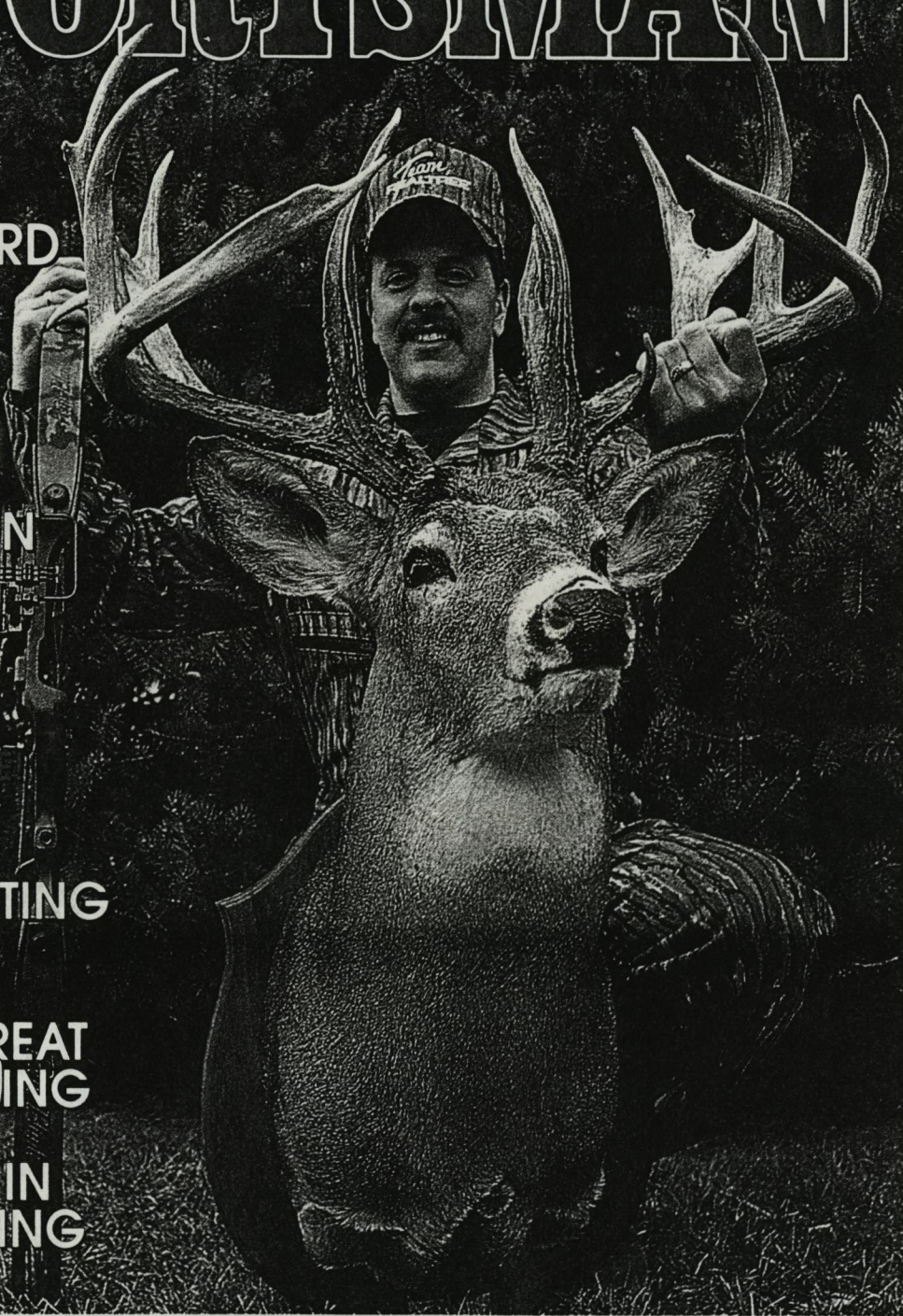
HOW TO LOCATE  
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OUR BEST  
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**PLUS:** FENCEROW HUNTING FOR SQUIRRELS  
TREE-STAND TACTICS FOR BIG BUCKS



# Michigan's Best

## Fall Fishing

*Don't miss out on some of our state's hottest angling opportunities of the year. Here are eight great waters where you can catch everything from walleyes to salmon to bass this fall.*

*by Mike Gnatkowski*

September finds many Michigan sportsmen painting decoy spreads, flinging arrows at imaginary deer and conditioning hunting dogs in preparation for fall. But those who leave their fishing rods standing in a corner of the garage and forget about fishing until next spring are missing out on some of the best angling opportunities of the year.

There are several reasons why fishing fortunes improve during early fall. For one thing, lakes and impoundments that were abuzz with activity during summer are devoid of aggravating water-skiers and jet-skiers now. A few diehards might cause some problems for anglers on warm weekends, but for the most part, you'll now have the lakes all to yourself.

Cool September nights that drop water temperatures cause fish which were lethargic and inactive during the hot summer months to once again become aggressive and go on the prowl, making them easier to catch when the leaves begin to turn. These fish also sense that tougher times are ahead, and this innate instinct tells them to feed heavily to bulk up for a long winter ahead.

September also coincides with peak runs of fall spawners, like salmon. Silvery cohos, kings and pink salmon that have fattened up all summer in the big lake succumb to the urge to run up natal rivers to perpetuate the species. Fresh from

the lake, these fish are at their fighting best. They're aggressive and are great on the table.

### LAKE ST. CLAIR

"September is an excellent time for big muskies on Lake St. Clair," said charter captain Don Miller. "Early fall is a transitional time frame when muskies usually go on a feeding frenzy."

Miller said that all of the factors which make summer angling difficult for Lake St. Clair's muskies change in September. Post-Labor Day boat traffic is reduced dramatically. Lake St. Clair has more registered boat owners than any lake in the world. Finding a piece of undisturbed water before September is almost impossible. Huge mats of floating weeds dislodged by boat traffic and wind make trolling a formidable endeavor at best. Cloudless skies and clear water compound the odds of catching muskies before early fall. "But everything changes come September," stated Miller.

September winds can be an ally on Lake St. Clair when muskie fishing. Winds collect floating weeds in certain areas that trollers can avoid. The wind also stirs up this shallow lake, and muskies become less spooky and more inclined to lash out at a wiggling plug. "It seems the bigger fish turn on starting in September in preparation for winter, too," claimed Miller. "Big" to Capt.

Miller means muskies topping 30 pounds and 50 inches.

Whereas much of the better muskie fishing on Lake St. Clair takes place on the Canadian side during the summer, fall finds muskies relating to U.S. waters. Miller suggested fishing the Clinton River spillway, the St. Clair shipping channel and around the St. Clair light and the shallows of Anchor Bay after the fall turnover. Midday often produces the best action during the fall, and sunny days make it easier for muskies to see and catch trolled lures. Natural-colored baits are hot in the fall. Try frog and perch shades in Believers and Wiley's, said Miller.

Muskies are never easy fish to catch, but plan a trip to Lake St. Clair during September and you're definitely improving your odds of taking a trophy. To book a charter for September muskies, contact Capt. Miller at (313) 429-9551.