



ST. CLAIR SUMMER MUSKIES

If it's muskies you're looking for, there's no better place in the state to look than the shallow waters of Lake St. Clair. The muskie population on this Great Lakes connecting water has exploded in the last decade or so and offers an unbelievable world-class fishery.

Late summer and early fall produce the lion's share of the action. Muskies sense the impending change of season as early as August and will begin feeding up in preparation for the approach of another long, cold winter. Get into a feeding pattern and the fishing action can be spectacular.

While muskies used to be known as "The Fish of 10,000 Casts," that moniker no longer holds true. Anglers on Lake St. Clair have no problem boating multiple fish in one trip.

One of the most popular techniques for taking these toothy predators on Lake St. Clair is trolling the edge of weedbeds with large body baits.

Terminators and Believers in the 8- to 10-inch range are deadly and almost always produce fish. A popular trolling technique used on the lake is called prop-wash trolling. Popularized by the late and legendary Homer LeBlanc, prop-wash trolling is used widely today and is one of the more productive techniques on the lake. For this technique lures are run five to six feet behind the boat directly in the prop wash. The feeling is that muskie think all this churning water is a school of baitfish and swim right along with the boat waiting for one of those baitfish to stray.

Found throughout Lake St. Clair, muskies are ambush feeders. They'll bury themselves in a thick weedy haunt

and wait there until an easy meal comes swimming by. Muskies can be found wherever weed growth provides an adequate ambush spot. Fish along the edges of such weedbeds and be ready for the action to begin.

On the southern end of the lake try the area between Askins Point and the Belle River. The Belle River Hump and the scattered weedbeds from the St. Luke's Club up to Mitchells Bay also produce fish. Farther up the lake, check the scattered weeds along "The Wreck," just west of the shipping channel; the weedbeds at the mouth of

aren't far behind. Muskie anglers sometimes troll around the outside of such concentrations of fishermen and usually do very well.

The best bet for taking muskies on Lake St. Clair is to charter a trip with one of the many charter boat captains that pursue these worthy game fish. To set up a guided trip call Don Miller at Motor City Muskies, 734/429-9551 or Roger Doyle at Neptune Charters at 810/731-1672.

If you prefer to go it alone there are several access spots along the U.S. side of Lake St. Clair including Metro Beach

Metropark, off Metropolitan Parkway in Mount Clemens; the Harley Ensign Memorial Access Site, off South River Road at the mouth of the Clinton River; and the Selfridge boat ramp, off Rosso Highway (Hall Road) just north of the Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

RAISIN RIVER SMALLMOUTHS

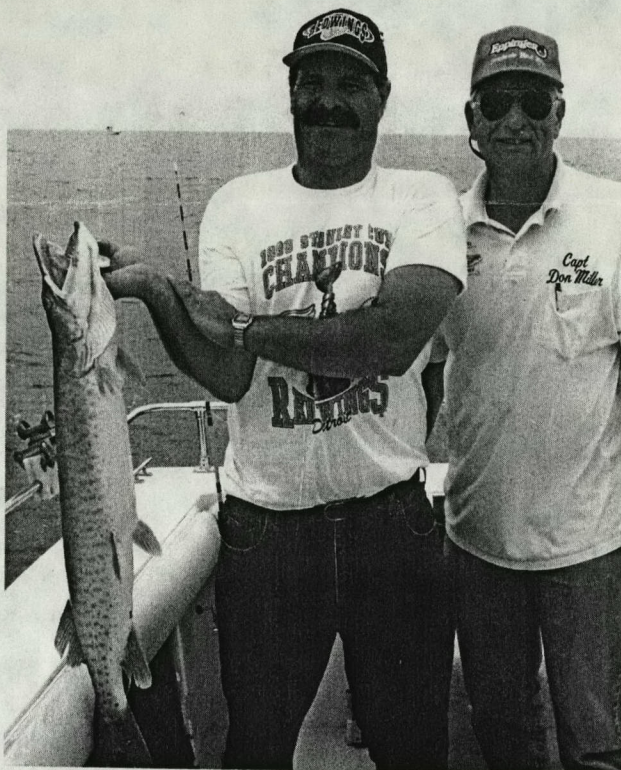
There's no better way to cool off from the sweltering August humidity in southeastern Michigan than to take a quick dip in a nearby lake or river.

Anglers in the Monroe area take it one step further and combine a dip with a fishing trip. Wading the Raisin River for late-summer smallmouths is an enjoyable way to cool off and have some fishing fun as well.

"Most of the people just wear tennis shoes and a pair of shorts," said Meredith Frank, an avid angler and manager of Cook's Sportland in Monroe.

"Smallmouth bass are holding in the river all summer and the fishing is still pretty good in August."

During periods of limited daylight,



If it's August, the muskies are on the feed in Lake St. Clair. Trolling big baits right in the prop wash is a favored technique.

the Clinton River Spillway; or the weed beds around Strawberry Island. In Anchor Bay try Grass Island at the mouth of the North Channel.

Another option is to watch for a congregation of boats fishing for perch or walleyes. If these fish are congregated in a particular area, the muskies

PHOTO BY BILL PARKER