

Footloose

Bluegill time is almost with us

"When the cottonwoods start flying," The Indian said, "the bluegills start spawning."

He got that calculating look that made you want to draw the wagons up in a circle.

"Well, the cotton flew a long time ago," he continued. "We're three to four weeks behind schedule."

I told him he was talking over my head because I still tell time by where Mickey's hands are.

"Everything's behind," he emphasized. "Look at the hellgrammites. They're three weeks behind at least. The only thing that ain't three weeks behind is Catfish."

"Stenlund?" I asked.

"Naw," he said. "The other catfish. The ones that live on The Flats. They're on schedule."

He stuck a finger at my chest like he was drawing a bow.

"The bluegills are just getting on their beds about now," he said. "And all of them are full of spawn."

I asked him what did it.

"Cold water did it," he said. "Just like a cold shower. Takes you right out of the mood altogether."

The Indian's eyes were deep and mysterious as the pools of The Evergreen.

"Byt this could be the week," he said. "They could start spawning this week and then you got the finest fishing around here."

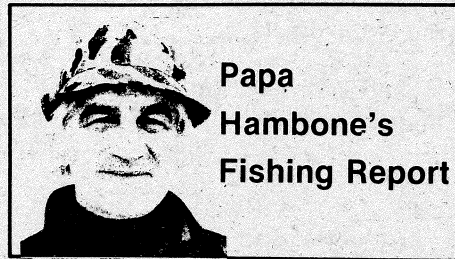
Better than the musky fishing, I asked?

"Around here," he repeated. "Around here you got dumb muskies. Big bluebills aren't dumb. They just protect those nests like tigers. And if they grew as big as catfish, you'd have your hands full."

Catfish Stenlund," I asked, "or the catfish that live on The Flats?"

"If bluegills got to be as big as Stenlund," The Indian mused, "They'd all hit .500 too. And their perms would be even prettier."

LAKE MENDOTA: Big bluegills starting to hit off Spring Harbor and Mendota Beach. Some being picked



Papa
Hambone's
Fishing Report

up at The Hatch Cover and the County Park. On redworms. Bluegills in University Bay too. Papa, in the pleasant company of young Allan Pizer, got 20 the other afternoon on leafworms. None spawned out, all meaner than Stenlund. Allan's a young Old Pro.

Walleye action from Mendota Beach to Spring Harbor. Mostly on leeches in around 10 to 15 feet of water. Some decent walleyes off old Camp Indianola in about nine feet.

Perch starting off Picnic Point, bay side is the best side. On waxworms, hellgrammites and crickets. Nothing super huge, but up to 3/4 of a pound.

A few northern pike taken off Governor's Point and Warner Beach by trolling. On live suckers. Fish range from 32 to 37 inches long, in the eight to 10-pound class. Northerns off the Tenney breakwater too. Spinner baits, Mepps and Rapalas.

Some perch off Maple Bluff in 25 to 30 feet. Size: nine to 11 inches. On smaller worms and hellgrammites. Some perch off Second Point too, off the bar in 17 to 21 feet.

Smallmouth slowed down, but best area off Maple Bluff, 10 to 12 feet. Use crawlers.

Dunn's Bar producing a few walleyes on leeches. Depth: 10 to 15 feet.

Big thrills out of the big lake:

• Dennis Gengler, Monona. A Bluegill, 1 lb 3 oz. On a redworm.

• R. C. Koeppen, Madison. A Bluegill, 1 lb 2 oz. On a Rapala.

• Ron Nelson, Madison. A largemouth bass, 4 lb even. On a sucker.

LAKE MONONA: A lot of those "dumb muskies" at The Outlet, the Law Park area and Squaw Point to Schleuter Beach. Fish are in 9 to 11 pound range, hitting big bucktails, small suckers and Rapalas.

Walleyes off The Rock Pile, early morning and evening. On the leeches.

Bluegills doing business off Turville Point and in the bay. Some starting in Squaw Bay too. Bluegills also off Law Park and now starting off the Dunning Street Bar. These are nice-size. Also cranking up off Brittingham and The Trestle. On all worms, hellgrammites and crickets. Some bluegills going up to a pound.

Crappies continuing at The Trestle, and a few nice largemouths taken here too.

Walleyes, where the river comes in and where the river goes out. Early morning and evening. This could be the toughest fishing of all. "Like hitting the curveball," Dynie always said.

The week's noteworthy fish taken by:

• Tom Vetter, Monona. A Musky, 10 lb 8 oz. On a bucktail. Fish was 35 1/8 inches.

• Todd Schara, Madison. A Smallmouth bass, 2 lb 10 oz. On a Lindy Rig and crawler.

UPPER MUD LAKE: Mostly bullheads and catfish here.

LOWER MUD LAKE: Mostly likewise.

LAKE WAUBESA: Walleyes in the early morn and evening at The Trestle and Christy's. Two and three-pound fish, mostly on leeches. Bluegills up above Hog Island in two to three feet of water. Usual live bait plus poppers in the late afternoon and evening.

Crappies galore off The Bible Camp and Larsen's. In six to 10 feet of water. On waxworms and small minnows.

A few northerns coming out of The Springs and the South Shore. Fish are running around 22 to 25 inches. Taking suckers, spinner baits and bucktails.

Waubesa gave up a nifty bass to:

• William Malholland, Stoughton. A Smallmouth, 3 lb 7 oz. On a night-crawler.

LAKE KEGONSA: Colliday Point producing perch in the 3/4 to one-pound class. On worms, hellgrammites and crickets. In about 20 feet of water. Good place, not a lot of pressure here.

Walleyes off Colliday at night. On leeches and crawlers. Fish are two and three pounds. In 10 to 12 feet of water. A few bigger walleyes being taken at the river mouth in about 10 feet.

Also at the mouth and a little upriver, lots of crappies.

At Sunnyside, some bluegills, but their size is so-so. The Old Man always used to ask them, eye to eye: Hey, where's your Old Man? On Crickets and waxworms.

Overall, the fishing is pretty good. Scott says we can look for a lot more bluegill action and the perch should really start in Mendota and Monona.

Scott is also keeping on ice at Captain Jack's an 8 lb 1 oz Largemouth bass, a 23 inch fish taken by John Suyder of Madison up at Westfield. On a plastic worm. John's having the fish put up on a wall.

Over at Blair Street Bait, the only thing on ice was a six-pack taken by Steady Eddy off the Williamson Street Bar. Steady says he won't put the six-pack up on a wall. Usually, says The Indian, it's the other way round.

DNR recognizes record sturgeon

The 195-pound sturgeon speared in Pokegama Lake in Vilas County this year has been recognized by the Department of Natural Resources as the largest verified lake sturgeon taken from Wisconsin waters.

The sturgeon was speared May 20 by Henry St. Germaine of Lac du Flambeau. In a letter to St. Germaine, Jim Addis, Director of the Bureau of Fish Management, stated that because the fish was not taken during the Wisconsin general open season for lake sturgeon spearing, the department would also continue to recognize the 180-pound fish speared from Lake Winnebago in 1953.