

BOWHUNTING SPECIAL

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MICHIGANTM **Hunting & Fishing**

Volume XII No. 5,
August, 1994

**MICHIGAN'S
NEW RECORD
BUCK**

**MONSTER
BEARS**

**ERIEAU
'EYES**

**BACKYARD
BASSIN'**

**BOW SCOUT
YOUR BUCK**

**LAKE ST. CLAIR
MUSKIES**

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Volume XII, No. 5

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FEATURES

Michigan's Lakers Are Back 18

by Mark Romanack

Abundant, broad-shouldered and willing to strike a variety of lures, lake trout are back.

July Herring Love Mayflies 22

by Gordie Charles

Try this brand of Michigan fishing and you will not be disappointed.

Patterns for

Lake St. Clair Muskies 24

by Tom Irwin

Lake St. Clair is considered by many to support the most productive muskie fishing in the world.

Orchard Bucks 28

by Charles J. Alsheimer

Hunting whitetails in apple orchards can be very productive.

Bowhunting: Don't Miss It 34

by Ben Moyer

Bow season, with all its excitement and suspense, is coming fast.

Bowhunting Organizations: 38

by Dave Samuel

One of these groups can use your help to put something back into bowhunting.

Scout Like You Mean It 42

by John L. Sloan

Pre-season scouting, properly done, is the key to smart and effective hunting.

Before the Shot 49

by Dan Schindler

Sure, the shot is exciting, but most of the story is about seeing deer, before the shot.

Saginaw Bay ...

Walleye When It's Hot 51

by Mark Romanack

July and August are prime months for walleye trolling.

Michigan's Backyard Bassin' 54

by Mike Zielinski

Some of the best bassin' in the state can be found out your back door.

Trip Tip: Erieau 'Eyes 58

by Mike Zielinski

The deep waters of Lake Erie's central basin is perhaps the hottest trophy walleye fishery today.

Lake Michigan's

Changing Fishery 60

by Henry Zeman

Charter captains and experienced anglers have changed how they fish the big lake.

Michigan's New

State Record Buck 62

by Richard P. Smith

Herb Miller, from Brooklyn, bagged a huge non-typical rack last fall in Jackson County.

Menominee County

Monster Bears 64

by Richard P. Smith

This Upper Peninsula County lives up to its reputation as the state's best trophy bear producer.

Warm Weather Whitetails 68

by Mike Raykovicz

For your best shot, hone up your early season know-how.

The All-Around Shotgun! 75

by Nick Sisley

Here are shotguns you will find filling the bill as top all-around smoothbores.

Woods, Weeds and Walleye 82

by Mark Romanack

Special techniques to hook and hold 'eyes in heavy cover.

What's Happening to Fishing? 86

by Darl Black

Fewer youths are taking up fishing for the right reasons—fun, personal satisfaction and involvement with nature.

The Politics of Conservation 88

by Rick Story

Hunting and wildlife management at the crossroads.

DEPARTMENTS

Outdoor News..... 11

Editorial 14

From the Field 16

Sportsman's Rendezvous 104

Sportsman's Stuff 112

Woodland Thoughts 114

REGIONS

Western Upper Peninsula 92

by Richard P. Smith

Eastern Upper Peninsula 94

by Betty Sadders

Northern Lower Michigan 96

by Mark Romanack

Southwest Michigan 98

by Henry Zeman

Southeast Michigan 99

by Mike Zielinski

Thumb Area 100

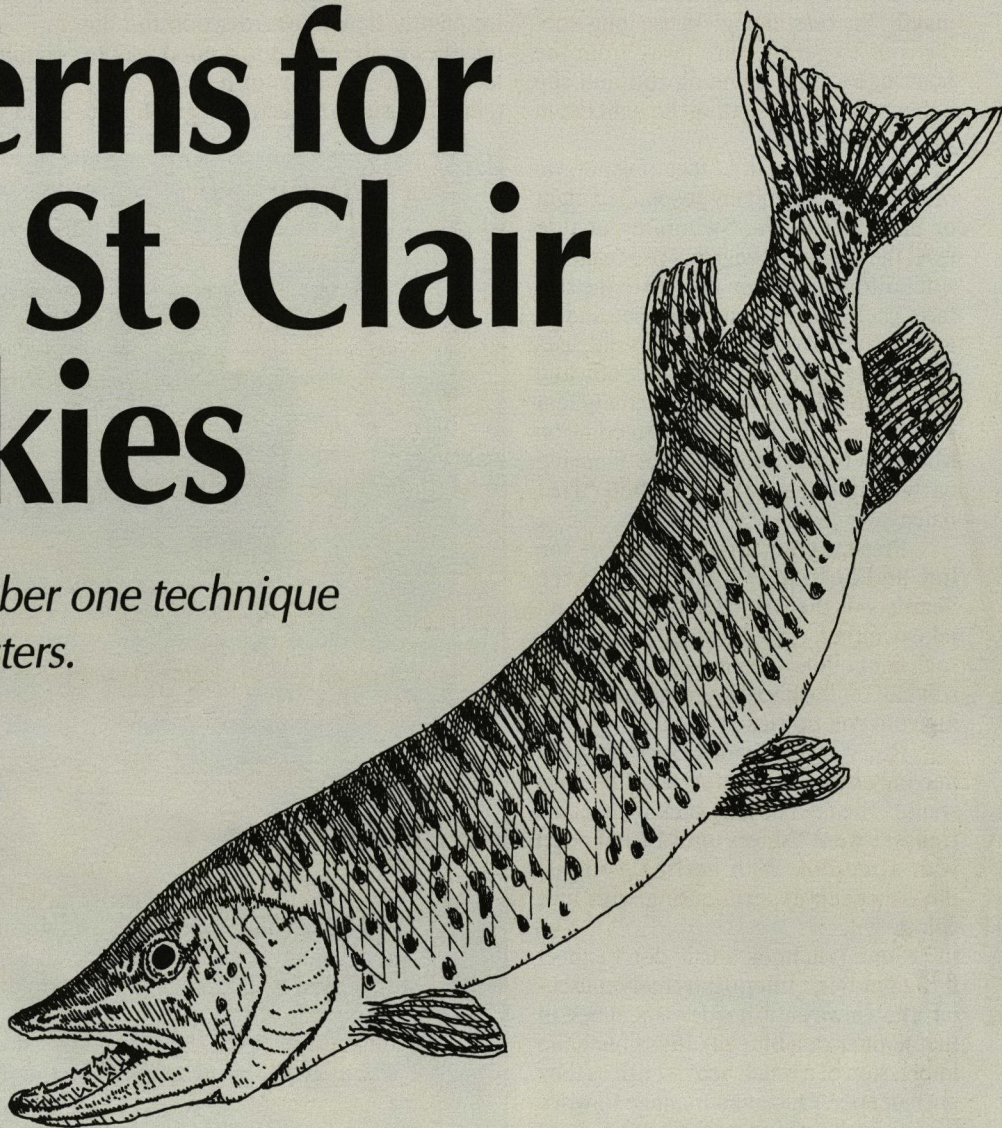
by Bud Donnelly

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Patterns for Lake St. Clair Muskies

Trolling is the number one technique for St. Clair's monsters.

by Tom Irwin



Of all the fresh water fishes the muskie alone stands atop the food chain. The premier predator of the fresh water environment, the muskie is without a doubt the most feared resident of the fish community and the most prized trophy of the fresh water sportfisherman. Dubbed the fish of ten thousand casts the muskie has a reputation of being hard to catch. Stories of anglers preoccupation with the muskie ring reminiscent of Ahab's obsession for the great Moby Dick.

While definitely not a pushover for sportfishing tactics, the muskie can be had and there's no better place for anglers to pursue them than the Michigan and Canadian waters of Lake St. Clair. Nicknamed the sixth Great Lake, the sprawling Lake St. Clair is considered by many to support the most productive muskie fishing in the world.

Located in southeast Michigan on the border of the U.S. and Canada, St. Clair is fed by Lake Huron through the St. Clair River and empties in Lake Erie via the Detroit River. This relatively shallow 256,000-acre lake accommodates a tremendous volume of water completely flushing itself every four days. Because of this the lake remains remarkably clean and clear considering its industrialized surroundings.

"Muskie fishing on St. Clair is the best I've ever seen in 20-plus years," says veteran St. Clair muskie guide Captain Don Miller. According to Don, the improved fishing is a direct result of cleaner water and a higher percentage of fishermen using catch and release. Don also credits the change in the minimum size limit from 38 to 40 and again to 42 inches as having a positive effect on the quantity and quality of muskie fishing on St. Clair.

While professional guides and charter captains have targeted muskies for years on Lake St. Clair; Miller now sees more recreational fishermen setting their sights on the muskie. "Muskie clubs have sprung up all around the lake, both in Canada and Michigan. This is good because they all push a strong conservation, catch and release ethic and share information and techniques resulting in more productive all around muskie fishing," states Don.

Trolling is the number one technique for taking St. Clair muskies. A trolling pattern developed by legendary muskie fisherman Homer LeBlanc in the 1930s and '40s on Lake St. Clair remains the best producer of St. Clair muskies to this day. The only variation to Homer's original trolling technique is the utilization of planer boards to increase the amount of water covered while trolling.