

**Special
Issue!**

1999 Fishing Annual

MICHIGAN HUNTING & FISHING

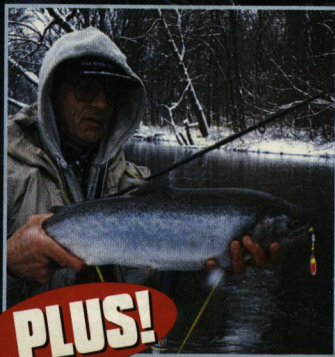
The 'EYES Have It

- Erie's Spring Trophies
- Late Winter Hotspots
- Versatile Spinner Rigs
- Springtime Strategies

Last-Ice Perch Destinations

DRUMMOND ISLAND CORNUCOPIA

St. Clair's Monster Muskies



PLUS!

- Slinging Lures For Steelies
- 1999 Rod & Reel Review
- Top Baits for Early Trout
- Spring Gobbler Preview



A PETERSEN PUBLICATION

Dedicated To Michigan Sportsmen



MICHIGAN

HUNTING & FISHING

Volume 17, No. 2

March 1999

1999 FISHING ANNUAL

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If double-digit walleyes are what you seek, there's no better time or place than spring on Lake Erie. *By Michael Veine*

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REALTREE
America's Most Versatile Camo Pattern.

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MPA The Audit Bureau

The

MONSTER MUSKIES

of St. Clair

MUSKIES ARE OFTEN CALLED THE FISH OF A THOUSAND CASTS. BUT THERE ARE MORE WAYS TO TAG THESE WATER WOLVES, AND TROLLING LAKE ST. CLAIR MAY WELL BE THE BEST ONE.

By **BILL PARKER**

A flock of cormorants huddled on top of a shipping buoy in the middle of Lake St. Clair and seemed to stand guard like a gang of gargoyles defending the entrance of some medieval lair. The pink tint of the morning sun jabbed and poked at the eastern horizon but couldn't quite break through the cloudy gray awning that blanketed the summer sky. A modest breeze kicked up out of the south and gave the water a slight chop and kept us cool and comfortable in the August heat. "What a great day for fishing," I thought to myself as we motored east out of St. Clair Shores and into Canadian waters.

"Fishing starts as soon as the first bait hits the water," explained veteran charter captain Don Miller of Motor City Muskies. "We sometimes catch them before we get all the lines set."

True to Miller's prophecy, the first line was ripped free of the planer-board line before the second line could be set in the water.

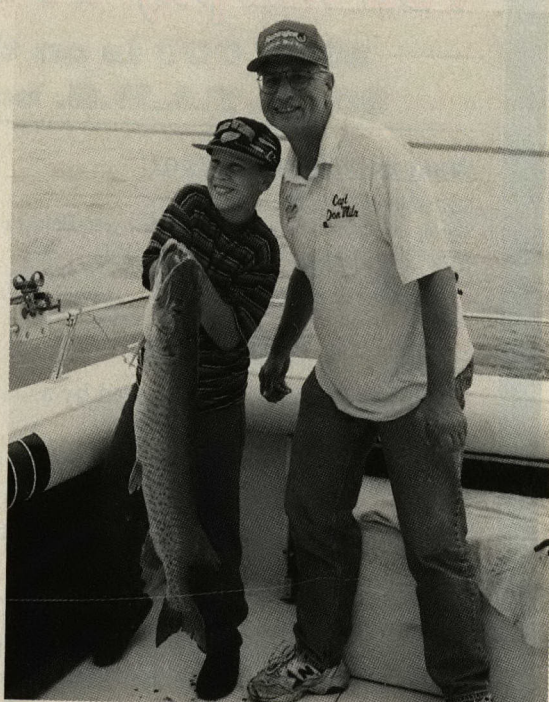
"Fish on! Fish on!" came an excited cry.

Ten-year-old Aaron Paich anxiously raced to the back of the boat. He took a firm, tight grip of the fishing pole and began cranking on the reel as the first brawl of the day ensued. Beads of perspiration formed above the young angler's eyebrows as he bravely fought to bring the reluctant fish to the boat. With his father standing at his side in case the youngster needed a hand, Aaron cranked and cranked and cranked on the baitcasting reel, always keeping a taut line.

Muskie fishing has always been good on Lake St. Clair, but in recent years the fishing has improved to fantastic. Catch rates in the mid-1980s averaged about 29 hours per fish. By 1998 that average had dropped to

approximately 10 hours per fish, although many serious muskie anglers have much better success.

"The population has been improving throughout the '90s," said Don McLennon, a fisheries biologist with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources who has done extensive research on the muskies of Lake St. Clair. "The population has at least doubled since the mid-'80s



Ten-year-old Adam Paich and Capt. Don Miller are all smiles with Paich's 45-inch Master Angler muskie. Lake St. Clair could well be the premier muskie factory of North America.

PHOTO BY
BILL PARKER

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