

Michigan Medicine

July/Aug. 2001 • Vol. 100 • No. 4

Award-Winning Journal of the Michigan State Medical Society

*Hi Don -
Thought you'd enjoy this.
Happy Holidays!
Sam Hughes*

21st Century Telemedicine in Michigan

**The Technology is Here -
How Will You Use It?**

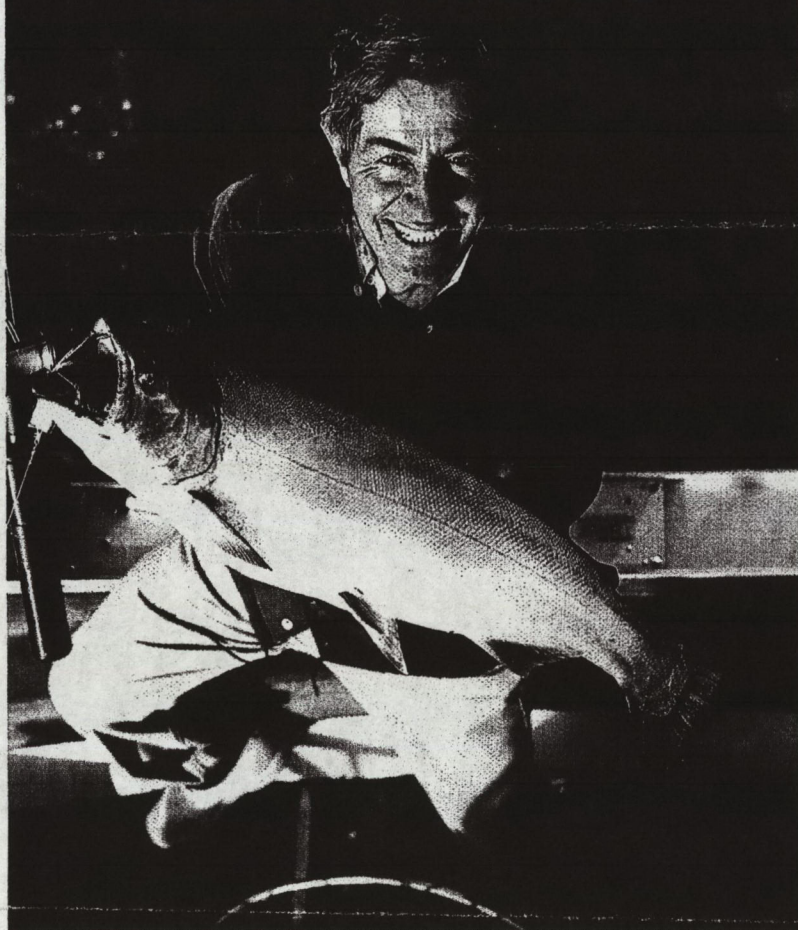
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**Regulations Primer:
OIG, HCFA & HIPAA
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**End of Life Care:
New Guide Offers a
Comprehensive Look**

**Off-Call Adventures:
"Great" Lakes Fishing
and Delicious Tuscany**

THE GUIDE TO "GREAT" LAKES FISHING



By Tom Huggler

Considering a fishing trip on the Great Lakes? Thinking about booking a charter boat, during the annual family vacation to Leland for a run out to the Manitou Islands where the Chinook salmon weigh more than your year-old grandson? Or maybe you'll treat your staff to an all-day outing for lake trout on Lake Huron out of Port Austin.

Saginaw Bay or Lake Erie for sag-belly walleyes? Lake St. Clair for tackle-eating muskellunge? The Detroit River for scrappy smallmouth bass?

So many places to fish; so little time to go. An experienced charter boat captain at these and many

more notspots can show you a day on the water you'll never forget.

None of the other seven states that border the Great Lakes has more angling opportunities than Michigan. You might be one of the 900,000 Michigan registered boat owners – more than half of whom are anglers. You could be one of the two million licensed anglers. If not, why not?

Finding Fish

According to results of a survey taken by Michigan State University researchers several years ago, catching fish was not the primary reason anglers booked a certain charter boat captain over another. It wasn't even the second or third criterion.

The 80 Great Lakes skippers and some 450 of their customers who returned questionnaires said the captain's ability to *locate* fish was the number one priority. His hospitality was second (bedside manners are important in this industry, too). The safety provisions of the charter service were third. Ranking fourth was the captain's ability to *catch* fish, followed by the species of fish available and the comfort and other amenities (fish cleaning, guaranteed catch or no pay, etc.) offered. Cost, apparently, was not an important consideration.

So why go fishing if not to catch fish? Well, several reasons.

- A day on the water, doing something so different, so relaxing, restores balance to a stressful work life. There's much to be said for letting someone else make the decisions, while you lose yourself in sky and freshwater sea. You may nod off to the rhythmic rocking of waves against the boat. Being outdoors all day before a soul-sifting west wind will positively give you a different perspective when you unlock the office door the next morning.

- Fishing with a professional can be a great learning experience, too. Some captains delight in showing customers how to operate the boat, rig trolling lines, tie fishing knots, and read sophisticated sonar. If you own a fishing boat, or plan to some

day, you can gain valuable information. On the other hand, some skippers are not comfortable sharing control, or they may be preoccupied with trying to encourage lip-locked fish to bite. The better-quality charters typically include an efficient first mate or steady wheelman, who free up the captain to share quality time with customers.

Picking a Good Captain

When inquiring about a certain charter, share your expectations and ask if they will be met. Be sure to get references and then call them. Most skippers keep a fishing log; ask for best times and conditions. After all, you hope to catch some fish, don't you?

Also, ask if the captain is a member of the Michigan Charter Boat Association (MCBA). The U.S. Coast Guard licenses members. If their vessels carry six or less passengers, the state of Michigan inspects them. If capacity is seven or more passengers, the Coast Guard does the inspection. According to the MCBA, members have the best safety record in the nation, and captains and mates are enrolled in a federally approved drug-screening program.

Great Lakes fishing has improved greatly in recent years after a series of scares beginning in the mid-

1980s with bacterial kidney disease in Chinook salmon, the invasion of zebra mussels and other exotics, and nagging doubts over the edibility of fish.

Those fears either have been resolved or failed to materialize, resulting in a fishing rebirth of sorts, and an infusion of new charter boat operators into the industry. Some captains, who may not be MCBA

The following are good questions to ask:

- What is the maximum and minimum size of the party accepted?
- How long will the charter last?
- Are reservations required?
- What is the cost? (The range is \$300 to \$600 depending on the number of people and whether the charter trip is half-day or full day.)
- What is the departure time?
- Are restroom facilities available?
- What services and equipment are available?
- Is a deposit required?
- What is the cancellation policy?
- What license(s) are required?
- What are directions to the charter location?
- What area accommodations are available?
- What should I bring?

