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A PARTIAL CREEL CENSUS ON OPENING DAY (JUNE 25, 1947)

OF SWAINS LAKE, JACKSON COUNTY

By

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As in the past four years, a partial creel census of the angling on Swains Lake was conducted on the opening day. The creel and boat count data were obtained by E. L. Cooper and the writer. All anglers were interviewed as they came ashore after completing a fishing trip.

The census began at 6:00 A. M. and continued until 7:00 P. M. An estimate of the total fishing during the census day was obtained by using an hourly boat count method involving the creel data obtained in a random check of the anglers' creels. It was calculated that the ninety-five anglers contacted represented 36.0 per cent of the total fishing from 6:00 A. M. to 7:00 P. M. The following table summarizes the creel data obtained in personal contacts together with the estimated totals.

	Creel records	Estimated total
Total male anglers	83	231
Total female anglers	12	33
Total anglers	95	264
Number anglers taking no fish	54	150
Total hours fished	342.5	954.0
Total legal fish caught	139	387
Catch per hour	0.41	0.41
Total catch by species		
Bluegills	93	259
Rainbow trout	14	39
Largemouth bass	11	30
Yellow perch	9	25
Rock bass	5	14
Green sunfish	3	9
Black crappie	2	5
Bullheads	1	3
Warmouth bass	1	3

It must be kept in mind that the estimated total figures are an underestimate of all fishing for the day because a great deal of angling began at midnight or before the census got started. The first boat count at 6:00 A. M. tallied fifty-eight boats or about one hundred twenty anglers fishing. Just how much fishing was omitted is not known.

Anglers came from six Michigan counties. Jackson County residents comprised the bulk of the angling population with 67.4 per cent; Lenawee, 20.0 per cent; Calhoun, 7.4 per cent; Washtenaw, 3.2 per cent; Hillsdale and Monroe, 1.0 per cent each.

The results from the previous four years opening days' census is given in Table 1. The number of anglers contacted ranges from thirty-seven in 1943 to one hundred five in 1946. In 1945 the census clerks concentrated their efforts in obtaining data from trout fishermen only and the results are not to be compared with other years data. Fishing was much less successful in 1947 than in previous years, and more than half the anglers contacted had taken no fish at all. cursory observations while engaged in the census leads to the opinion that more than half the anglers were focusing their angling skills to the taking of trout.

Table 1

Comparison of Fishing Results for June 25 of the
1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, and 1947 Seasons.

	1943	1944	1945*	1946	1947
Total fishermen censused	37	50	68	105	95
Total fish caught by above	131	141	135	323	139
Total hours fished	65.5	189.25	135.0	418	342.5
Catch per hour	1.7	0.74	1.0	0.77	0.41
Per cent of unsuccessful anglers	32.	20.	...	...	56.8
Species and number in catch					
Bluegills	98	71	30	177	93
Largemouth bass	19	27	12	9	11
Rainbow trout	6	27	83	93	14
Perch	5	10	1	27	9
Bullheads	...	5	1	...	1
Pumpkinseeds	2	...	...	5	...
Smallmouth bass	...	1	...	...	...
Warmouth bass	1	...	...	1	1
Rock bass	...	...	...	5	5
Black crappie	...	...	...	4	2
Dogfish	...	...	...	1	...
Bluegill x Pumpkinseed	...	...	...	1	...
Green sunfish	...	...	...	...	3

* - Only trout fishermen censused this year.

All fourteen trout seen in the census were fin-clipped. The plantings from which they originated and numbers are as follows: one planted in April, 1944 (anal fin-clipped; regenerated); three planted in December, 1944 (dorsal fin-clipped; large fish at time of capture); eight planted in December, 1945 (right pectoral fin-clipped); and one planted in December, 1946 (dorsal fin-clipped; 8.4" fish at time of capture). The relative scarcity of the December, 1946, planted fish is quite contrary to the expected number appearing in the catch when at least a large portion of the 3,500 rainbows (average size 6.2" at time of planting) should have attained legal length by June 25, 1947.

Six of the trout planted in December, 1945, and captured on the opening day averaged 16.1 inches. The one rainbow creeled from the April, 1944, planting measured 17.5 inches. The lone recapture from the December, 1946, planting was 8.4 inches long.

Weights were obtained on four of the 1945 planted fish. They averaged 23.8 ounces ranging from 23.0 to 24.5 ounces. The one trout recaptured from the 1944 planting weighed 27.5 ounces.

The sky was clear to partly cloudy most of the day with thunder showers appearing at 5:15 P. M. Wind direction was southwest and velocity about ten to fifteen miles per hour all day. Surface water temperatures were 68.0° F. at 6:15 A. M. and 75.0° F. at 5:00 P. M.

The number of boats engaged in angling at hourly intervals was as follows: 6:00 A. M. - 58, 7:00 A. M. - 56, 8:00 A. M. - 63, 9:00 A. M. - 47, 10:00 A. M. - 52, 11:00 A. M. - 42, 12:00 noon - 37, 1:00 P. M. - 14, 2:00 P. M. - 15, 3:00 P. M. - 17, 4:00 P. M. - 16, 5:00 P. M. - 30, 6:00 P. M. - 1, 7:00 P. M. - 4.

The writer noted that the "Davis spinner", a trolling lure, was in use by a greater number of anglers than in 1945 including a few homemade imitations.

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