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Report 158

FIRST REPORT ON BRUSH SHELTERS  
PLACED IN ANTRIM COUNTY LAKES

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I. Shelter installed in Round Lake

The first brush shelter following the recommendations and specifications of the Institute for the Antrim lakes was started on June 25th, 1932, and placed in shallow water near the shore on the same night. On the morning of June 26th it was noticed that three sizable small-mouth bass had taken refuge in the shelter overnight. By 4:00 p. m. of June 26th the shelter had been put in place and sunk. On June 29th the fishing was tried around the shelter and the results were almost unbelievable. Seven large Rock Bass, two sizable perch, and three good sized smallmouth bass were caught.

On July 1st, fishing was again tried about the brush, but the results were not as great. The weather conditions, however, were unfavorable. On July 3rd a good catch of seven rock bass and one 2-1/2 pound smallmouth bass was taken. All this time fishermen were fishing near the same shelter, but I did not get any of their catches. I feel certain, however, that they must have had some good results as they returned to the same spot on good fishing days.

On the fifth of July two very large smallmouth bass and one five pound pike were taken about the brush.

On July seventh I pulled up a few of the leaves from the brush pile and found them already covered with small animal life, including sizable insect larvae.

That same day fifteen rock bass and three smallmouth bass were taken here.

On July sixteenth fishing was tried again and five perch, two rock bass and one smallmouth bass was taken. On this day, since the lake was calm, I was able to see the shelter, and in one corner was able to count twenty-one smallmouth bass fingerlings all pecking away at the leaves of the shelter and darting in and about branches in a most contented manner.

The shelter was built of green brush with the leaves left on. The base was built of oak and the limbs of the oak trees saved and used for brush. Some aspen was used and some June berry. All in all it was 25 x 50 feet in outside measurement and was sunk in about fifteen foot of water, about 150 yards southeast of Zabel's Lodge.

## II. Shelter in Torch Lake

Another brush shelter was placed in front of Bingham's Inn on the South end of Torch Lake, at the head of the large sand bar about one-fourth mile offshore. This shelter, due to lack of help in placing it, and lack of adequate equipment to finish the job on the spot did not turn out as well as expected. In the first place the shelter was about fifty foot by thirty foot on the outside and the base was built of birch poles, the brush itself was dry and exceedingly bouyant. This proved to be a great hindrance, as it took approximately 1500 lbs. of stone and gravel to sink the shelter into place.

During the three days when the raft was being constructed and sunk, observations were made on the fish life collecting about it. On the first day, during its preparation on the shoal, great schools of minnows found refuge in the center.

On the second day Dr. Hubbs observed a small school of fish, presumably perch swimming in and around the shelter, while it was floating offshore.

The third day, when the raft was finally sunk in about nine foot of water, a fish estimated to weigh eight to ten pounds was seen about the deep end of the raft.

### III. Other shelters installed in Torch and Clam lakes

We were informed that a quantity of brush had been sunk in bundles in about ten feet of water, along a quarter-mile front off Alden. This work was done by the Alden Rod and Gun Club early this spring. The bundles of brush were sunk by old iron. No check-up on these had been made.

A resident on Clam Lake reports that he had installed several brush shelters on Clam Lake, holding them in place with deadhead logs. He says that good catches of fish have been made about the brush heaps.

### IV. Conclusions

These observations show for the large Antrim County lakes, as for smaller lakes previously dealt with, that the brush shelters perform their expected function: sheltering and feeding small fish, and congregating the larger fish to increase the catch.