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FISH DIVISION

INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH
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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
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Report 193

SPAWNING SEASONS OF GAME FISH IN MICHIGAN

We are in receipt of inquiries from the Department of Conservation regarding spawning dates for various game species, and a copy of Mr. O'Malley's letter, in which he requests such information.

We have no very large amount of data, further than that which was sent in by Metzelaar, Langlois and Hubbs some years ago.

SMALL-MOUTH BASS

Just finishing spawning in Crystal Lake, Oceano County, June 10, 1932. During our lake work, usually starting about the middle of June, we see very few black bass on their beds, indicating that the spawning is usually in May and early June.

LARGE-MOUTH BASS

The species also is about through spawning when our lake crews get underway about the middle of June. We have some evidence that the ordinary spawning season carries into June, however. Thus, we found very recently hatched large-mouth bass in Hamlin Lake, Mason County, on June 14, 1932.

SPOTTED BASS

Absent in Michigan.

ROCK BASS

In northern Michigan this species spawns late. Thus on July 21, 1931, many were found on their beds in Log Lake, Kalkaska County. Rock bass were last seen on their beds in Hamlin Lake, Mason County, about June 14, 1932. This is very early, to judge from our general experience.

CRAPPIE

The white crappie is scarce in Michigan outside of Lake Erie, and no information

as to its spawning period is known to us. We have little new information on the black crappie. On June 18, 1931, they were still on their beds in Hillsdale County.

BLUEGILL

In the work on the hybrid sunfish, we found bluegills on their beds and producing eggs and young on into the first week of August, though rather few were spawning after July 15. This was in Third Sister Lake, Washtenaw County. Many were spawning here in early July.

In Hillsdale County, we found bluegills still on the beds in considerable numbers on June 25, 1931. Practically all beds were occupied June 20.

In Wolf Lake, Van Buren County (kept cool by springs) were found recently hatched bluegills fry on July 16, 1932.

In at least some northern lakes bluegills spawn through July and into August. On July 21, 1931, Kettle Lake in Kalkaska county was revisited, and quite a number of very recently polished beds were found. Mr. Mather, resort operator here, said that nearly all bluegills caught were still full of eggs, and that last year some caught through August were in this condition.

WARMOUTH BASS

No new information.

PIKE PERCH

We have no data on the spawning period of this species in inland lakes.

SHEEPSHEAD

No data.

CHANNEL CATFISH

We have no data on the spawning season of catfish in Michigan.

BUFFALO

This fish is very scarce or absent in Michigan waters, except for some Lake Michigan lagoons. We have no data on its spawning.

CARP

It is difficult to fix the spawning season of carp from field observations, as they roll around and jump a lot even after the spawning period. Popularly such fish even in midsummer are thought to be spawning, but we doubt this. Carp are said to "run" soon after the ice goes out.

In the River Raisin we have found very young carp very abundant on June 12, indicating that the height of the spawning was some time previous to that date. Young taken in various places in July and August are almost all an inch or more long, indicating spawning some weeks previous.

LAKE FISH IN GENERAL

In our lake survey we have made some observations of the spawning beds, and have learned something of the end of the spawning season for the common lake fishes as a whole. This gives an end date for any one of the species common in the given lake. Fresh beds are very seldom found in August, and usually few in late July, in either half of the lower peninsula.

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