

INSTITUTE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS
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Report 300

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A BRIEF STUDY OF WINTER FISHING WITH HOOK AND LINE ON SIX BRANCH COUNTY
LAKES

This report is based on the creel census sheets submitted by Conservation Officer C. G. Cole of Branch County. It gives no indication of the extent of winter fishing on these lakes but gives some idea of the kind of fishing carried on, the kind of fish taken and the per hour catch. The report is based on the catch taken by 184 fishermen, some of whom were probably contacted before they had finished the day's fishing.

A few fishermen used spears; their records are not included in this report.

Table I shows that caddis larvae (called "hellgramites" by Mr. Cole) constituted well over half the bait used. Worms and grubs also served as bait to a limited extent. The 184 fishermen took 3314 fish in 734 hours, an average of 4.5 fish per hour. The fish, were generally, of a uniform size usually from 7 to 8 inches long. At the time they were contacted by Officer Cole, 77 of the 184 fishermen had already taken their limit. It is possible that well over half of the fishermen caught their "limit" before ending their day's fishing.

Table II shows that, of the 3314 fish caught, over 99% (all except 23) were bluegills.

The place of residence indicates that winter fishing in Branch County attracts fishermen from a relatively large number of localities.

As previously stated, this study is based on the records of relatively few fishermen, consequently, it may not be a general cross-section of winter fishing on these Branch County lakes. It does indicate, however, that ice fishing for bluegills, by the method used, is quite successful.

It is recommended that fishing on these lakes be checked more or less extensively, both in winter and in summer, to determine whether or not this intensive winter fishing might affect, adversely, the summer fishing.

Officer Cole is to be commended for his interest in the fishing in Branch County and for the manner in which he prepared the creel census sheets which he submitted.

Table I. A study of fishing on six Branch County lakes.

Name of lake	Bait used ¹	No. of fishermen	Hours fished	No. of fish taken	Fish per hr. ²	Limit ³	Av. size of fish in inches
Cemetery ⁴	Caddis larvae	10	31 3/4	228	7.2	6	7
North	" "	9	29 22 5/8	225	7.7	9	7 - 7 1/2
	Grubs	2	12 4/8	41	3.4	0	7 1/2 - 8
Craigs	Worms	7	21 1/4	143	6.7	5	6 - 7 1/2
Coldwater	Caddis larvae	13	65	226	3.5	6	7 1/2 - 9
	Grubs	1	6 1/2	25	3.8	1	7 1/2 - 9
	Worms	4	20	54	2.7	0	7 1/2 - 8
Morrison	Worms	21	44 1/2	468	10.5	14	7-8
	Caddis larvae	10	30 1/2	250	8.2	10	7-8
Matteson	Worms	17	67	80	1.2	0	7-8
	Caddis larvae	89	402	1562	3.9	26	7-8
	Grubs	1	4 1/2	12	2.7	0	7-8
Totals		184	734	3314	4.6	77	7-8

¹ This table does not include records for fishermen who used several kinds of bait in one day's fishing except in one case where it was evident that all fish except one were taken on one bait.

² A majority of fishermen used only one line.

³ This includes only the limit catches at the time the men were contacted. More may have had their limit by the time they ended their day's fishing.

⁴ Dates on which data were collected: Cemetery Lake, Jan. 15, Feb. 3, 5, 7, 10; North Lake, Jan. 6, 12, 13, Feb. 3; Craig's Lake, Jan. 9, 12, 31; Coldwater Lake, Jan. 6, 13, Feb. 6, 8, 10; Morrison Lake, Jan. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, Feb. 2; Matteson Lake, Jan. 19, 20.

Table II. Species of fish taken.

Lake	Total no. of fish	Bluegills	Perch	Calico Bass	Rockbass
Cemetery	228	218	10	...	...
North	266	257	9	...	...
Craig's	143	143	...	...	...
Coldwater	305	305	...	...	...
Morrison	718	718	...	...	...
Matteson	1654	1650	1	2	1
Total	3314	3291	20	2	1

Place of residence of fishermen; with number
of fishermen from each locality.

Cemetery Lake: Coldwater 7, Jackson 1, Wauseon, Ohio 1, Napoleon, Ohio 1.

North Lake: Coldwater 8, Union City 2, Battle Creek 1.

Craigs Lake: Coldwater 4, Union City 3.

Coldwater Lake: Coldwater 14, Ft. Wayne, Ind. 3, Battle Creek 1.

Morrison Lake: Coldwater 19, Lansing 8, Jackson 3, Battle Creek 1.

Matteson Lake: Coldwater 39, Bronson 41, Burr Oak 3, Quincy 4, Battle Creek 3,

Sturgis 2, Sherwood 4, Union City 2, Colon 1, E. Leroy 2,

Lansing 4, Mishawaka, Indiana 2.

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