

Its prime time of year

Fin Fur Feather

by Bryan Berriault

Salmo Gairdner Richardson, alias rainbow, Kamloop or steelhead.

The rainbow trout is one of the most popular fish and is most susceptible to fishermen in spring and fall when its natural tendencies take it into rivers and streams throughout most of the Great Lakes area.

The rainbow trout is not natural to our waters, with stocking programs starting in the late 1800's. The first rainbow on record taken from the Sturgeon River was in 1933 with the first in the Coldwater in 1934, according to the Department of Lands and Forest.

The Nottawasaga and Pine Rivers were first stocked in 1900 by a mistake. In 1883, men moved from Sault Ste. Marie to a farm in Hockley Valley, bringing with them some rainbows which were kept in a pond on the Nottawa river. A few years later, the old man died and the sons, not caring for the fish let the dam go until the spring of 1900 when it was washed out and the fish finally made their way down to Georgian Bay to return each year to spawn.

The original stock in the old man's pond were imported from the McCloud River in California.

The fishermen depend on the instinct of the fish to return to rivers and streams to spawn. It is at this time that they are readily available to fishermen. The fish, from hatching, will reproduce in three to four years and return to the rivers looking for gravel beds with good water containing lots of oxygen and a hope that stiling or warm water temperatures will not appear until the young have hatched.

In early spring, the fish, after seeking these special gravel beds begin their spawning. The female will use her tail to make the impression in the gravel bed and then deposit eggs which are fertilized immediately by the male. She will deposit from 550 to 1,300 eggs in a series of these nests which are called 'a redd'.

The female rainbow always works upstream, with each nest being about two and a half feet apart and usually in a straight line. The spawning may take place in 12 hours but as a rule it will take a few days. Incubation periods may last from 90 to 210 days, depending mainly on the water temperature.

High water temperatures and silting are prime factors which determine the success of the hatch. Silting will bury the eggs and smother the young. Some stocking has been done with fall spawners in recent years in the Great Lakes. The rainbow trout is a real fighter and can be taken by almost any means of fishing including trolling still fishing or draft fishing. Due to unsportsmanlike tactics employed by certain men, rivers have had to be closed to fishing to stop the snagging.

Thousands of fishermen each year make their pilgrimage to their favourite streams and rivers to fish for one of Ontario's greatest assets — the rainbow trout.

Warm weather has brought the walleye into the North River, so Port Severn should be starting by the time the column appears in the paper. This year the Ministry has pamphlets on the spawning fish at Port Severn. So drop up and see nature at work at Port Severn. When the run is one it is surely something to see.

Smelts are running at Parry Sound. Whether smelting, trout or pickerel fishing, let's show that we care and appreciate the opportunity to fish on private property by taking all our garbage with us when we leave. Don't leave it for the property owner to clean up. It may spoil everyone's fun.

Pike and walleye open on May 10 in our inland waters. Most sanctuaries on some of our trout rivers will also be open to fishing at this time.

Scooting here and there easy if you're in a scoot

by Dave McCausland
For several weeks each year, the employees of Parks Canada at the Honey Harbour headquarters of The Georgian Bay Islands National Park travel to and from Beausoleil Island by an unusual breed of boat.

The "Scoot" is a small, once-popular flat-bottomed boat powered by an airplane engine and steered by a rudder in the slipstream of the propeller.

Few remain in the area. The scoot is able to travel on either ice or water and is therefore ideally suited to the conditions which occur in Georgian Bay during the short time of freeze-up and break-up each year. It is used to provide a means of transportation when the ice is dangerous for snowmobilers and yet there is still not enough open water to permit the operation of boats.

Last week, a reporter from this paper went to Honey Harbour to take a ride in one of these hybrid vessels. It was an interesting experience. The noise was loud since he was standing only a yard or so from an un-insulated 95 hp. Lycoming airplane engine. The wind which the passage of the boat pushed over the low windshield was very cold, chilled as it was by the large amounts of ice still remaining in the bay.

The wind and the noise were only secondary, however, to the sensation of

realizing that though the ice was cracking underneath the scoot as it passed, there was no danger. The scoot was designed with this situation in mind and when it came to a patch of open water it did so with no reluctance, negotiating the water with the same freedom of movement that it had displayed on the ice.

To a reporter who had earlier covered the search for a missing and later proved drowned snowmobiler who had

ventured onto thin ice this was an enlightening experience, to say the least.

The provision of a reliable means of transportation to Beausoleil Island during the tricky part of the year is important. A Parks Canada warden and his family make their home on the Island year-round and the children come back and forth to Honey Harbour to school each day.

The scoot is used only for those things which must be done at this time of the year.

Soon, the water will be open, the boats will be in service again, and the scoot will once more take a rest until it is needed for a few days in the fall when the waters again begin to freeze up.

The scoot is a relatively innocuous though complicated looking contraption. It has a number of relations who see duty in the Florida Everglades. Their advantage is that there is no propeller below the bottom of the craft which would interfere with its passage in

shallow water and over weeds or the ice.

They are not, however, as safe as they may appear. In the words of Greg Gemmill, the chief park naturalist at Honey Harbour, two men at the St. Lawrence Islands National Park were "very lucky" to escape alive when their scoot overturned and sank recently in the St. Lawrence River. They were rescued by two men on shore who grabbed a rowboat and pulled them out.

With the coming of the

snowmobile and its relative ease of operation the scoot's popularity waned. However, with the increasing determination of area people to venture onto thin ice in the

springtime, it seems appropriate to give serious second thoughts to this reasonable and practical way to scoot from here to there.

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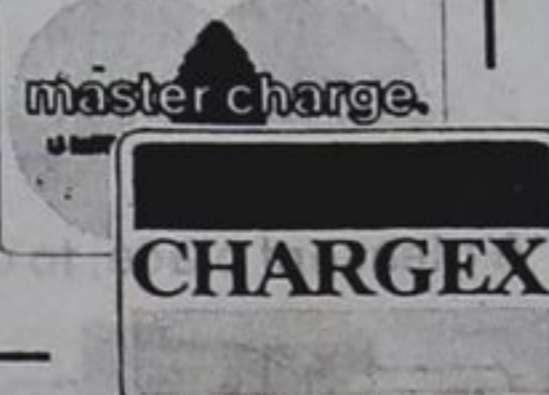
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