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Outdoors

Blue pickerel now extinct

ART BRIGGS-JUDE
Correspondent

It's walleye time again, or to most of the old-timers, yellow pickerel season is open.

While angling for this choice gourmet fare is among the most

popular pastimes in this province, I remember when this golden beauty with the opal eyes had some competition. It came in the form of a slate-colored cousin, the blue pickerel.

Those whose fishing adventures take them back to the mid-'50s can

remember when this slate-blue game fish was listed on the fishing regulations.

The memories of those anglers whose exploits took them to Lake Erie, the lower Niagara River or the western parts of Lake Ontario as far east as the Bay of Quinte still flash images of this unique game fish.

Yet today's anglers plying those same waters will never know what their earlier counterparts experienced, for the blue pickerel is no more.

Sadly, it's gone the way of the Dodo Bird and the Passenger Pigeon in an era when we should have learned from our past mistakes.

While fingering the blame for the demise of this blue swimmer will hopefully prevent other species from the same fate, there is no guarantee.

Evidence shows that public apathy, government policy and blindness to the facts allowed a once prolific game fish to disappear.

Blame pollution if you will, but that is only part of the problem, as proven by the return of the yellow walleye to these same waters in recent years.

The cold facts were laid out as clear as the 11 million pounds of blue walleye taken in commercial nets in 1956.

Ironically, no one twigged to the fishes' plight when the commercial haul fell to a little more than half that amount the following year.

By 1959, this total had slipped to less than 50,000 lbs. Yet

yet there was still no conservative action taken when the over all take went down to a mere 3,600 lbs in 1960.

It finally bottomed out at less than a dozen fish in 1966.

Of similar grave circumstances was the fact that countless fisherman went merrily on catching dwindling blue fish with no knowledge from the powers that be that they were in trouble.

With plenty of yellow pickerel being caught, one wonders why a closed season on the "blues" would not have helped save them from extinction.

I can recall going down to the dock at Queenston below the Lewiston Bridge on the Niagara River and catching blue pickerel near the huge sand piles there.

The mouth of the same river off Old Niagara was another good place to bring in full stringers of these same fish.

Evan's Point in Lake Erie was also a great place for trolling, especially in August where you could limit out on big yellows and a scattering of blues that occasionally hit the three-pound mark.

There are several ways in which the true blue walleye differed from the blue-grey mutants that periodically show up today.

First, it was more slate or steel based on its dorsal surfaces. Blue walleyes also had larger eyes than their yellow counterparts and these were positioned higher on their heads, making them appear closer together.

It seems ironic that in recent times we have spent millions of dollars saving birds and animals that we can see on this earth, but allowed a species that swam beneath the surface of our international waters to fade into oblivion.

There is no pride in those of us who caught the blue walleye, only the feelings of frustration and remorse that we in fact were responsible in some small way for adding it to the list of creatures now extinct.



TOWN OF PICKERING NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW HAMLET OF CLAREMONT

In January, Town Planning staff circulated to residents in and around the Hamlet of Claremont a questionnaire survey on future growth and development. Planning staff now wishes to present and discuss its findings and preliminary conclusions.

You are cordially invited to attend a public meeting to be held in the Claremont Community Centre, commencing at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 27, 1990. A summary of the questionnaire results and a description of staff's preliminary conclusions on growth opportunities in Claremont will be available at the meeting.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate contacting either Miss Catherine Rose or Mr. Tom Melymuk of the Planning Department (420-4617 or 683-2760).

Bruce J. Taylor
Town Clerk

Wayne E. Arthurs
Mayor



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF UXBRIDGE 1990 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Nominations will be received by the undersigned for Citizen of the Year for 1990.

This event is being held to honour ONE CITIZEN in recognition of his/her outstanding service to this community. Persons nominated must be permanent residents who have resided in the Township of Uxbridge for a minimum of 1 year. Nominations must be submitted in writing with reasons outlined.

The person selected will be recognized at the Spring Water Days Official Opening Ceremonies.

Deadline for receipt of nominations is June 25th, 1990.

W. E. Taylor, A.M.C.T., C.M.C.,
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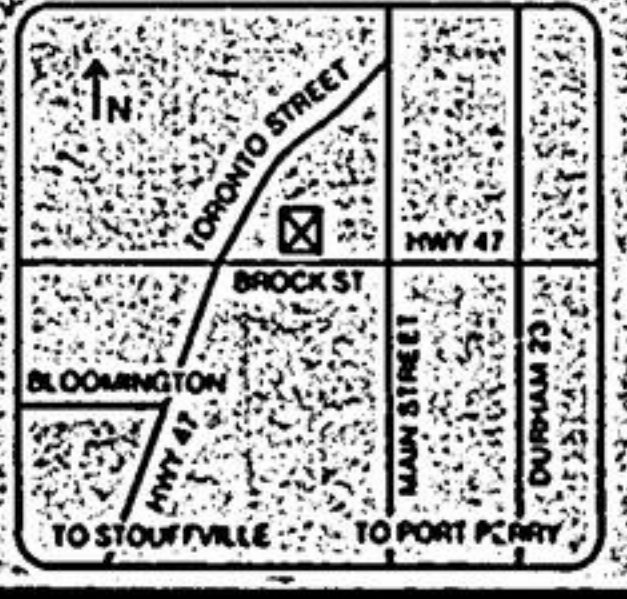
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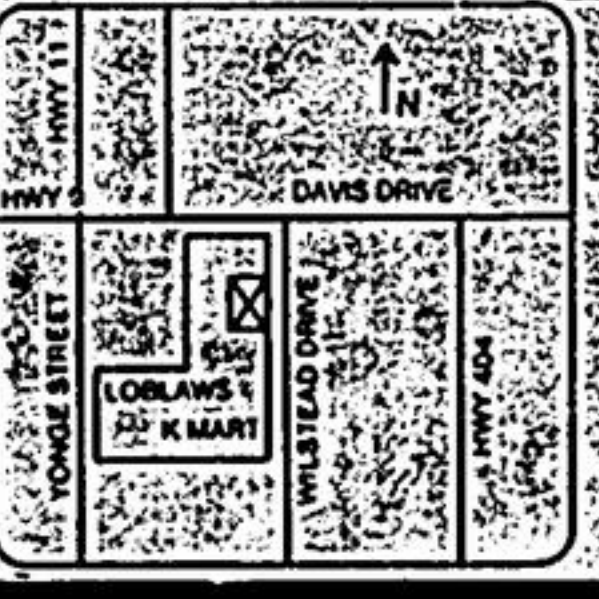
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