

Wegman teaches the bass fishing basics

For the last 13 years, Wil Wegman has shared his bass angling wisdom with fellow piscators through a course he has taught at the Seneca College King Campus called successful bass fishing.

A spokesman with the Ministry of Natural Resources Aurora District office, Wegman will continue the program this year, running over four days, starting Sept. 26 and continuing Oct. 3, 5 and 10 beginning at 7 p.m. each night.

While teaching the course for a 14th consecutive year might seem routine, Wegman says that's not the case. He says there's always some new facet to be learned based on angling experiences with other high profile tournament anglers that he has wet a line with.

"The course has changed a bit," Wegman said. "You can't help but change based on the experiences that I've had through the years on picking up stuff from some of the pro tournament anglers in the U.S. like Jimmy Houston, Ricky Clunn or Roland Martin."

Running four three-hour classroom sessions, Wegman reveals the course will cover a broad spectrum starting from the basics to advanced tournament techniques.

"The course will cover things like how to read water and how to fish a lake for the first time and how to make the best use of the tackle that you have in your tackle box. That's a big component of this course," he said.

Following the four days in the classroom, the course will be capped off with students competing in the AmBASSadors Cup tournament. This year's event is scheduled for Oct. 14 on the waters of Lake Couchiching.

"It's like a final exam to the course," Wegman said in describing the event, which has been a hit among the students.

In this event, which is run along the same lines as other professional live release tournaments, students are paired with other students. What makes this event unique, Wegman noted, is that students who cannot find a partner could be paired with alums who might have taken the same course 10 years ago.

Wegman notes the experience gained by students in this event should be beneficial in more ways than one. Not only can students apply the techniques taught in the classroom. But by fishing a tournament, it will give them an idea of what this high-pressured competition is all about.

"A lot of people take the course as a stepping stone into tournament fishing. It'll prepare someone for tournament fishing," Wegman said.

Wegman pointed out those wishing to take the course need no prerequisite. Males or females can enrol in the course in addition to youngsters or adults. Novice anglers and even seasoned veterans have been known to take the course.

"Sometimes we get students who are tournament anglers. They take the course with a great attitude and if they can get one tip out of the program they feel it's worth it," Wegman said from his past experiences.

The only stipulation that Wegman has is if someone under 18 years of age enrolls and wants to fish in the tournament, they must do so with a parent or guardian.

"That's why the curriculum varies," he said of his course. "I try to gear my knowledge towards the class. Even with a class of fairly experienced anglers, you can't ignore the basics."

Wegman hopes to get at least 25 students into the course, which is also offered in the spring.

For further information on the



Mike Hayakawa

course, call Seneca College at (416) 493-4144.

Hunting forecast sounds good

Those making plans to take in this year's local duck and geese hunting opener on Monday should be in for a good outing.

Mitch Baldwin, a ministry fish and wildlife biologist from the Aurora District office, notes the resident Canada Goose population continues to grow and should provide excellent opportunities for hunters.

With the migratory Canada Goose population, he said an average spring nesting in the James Bay area should result in an average migration of birds to the south.

As for ducks, Baldwin said good nesting conditions in the spring should produce plenty of mallards, wood ducks and blue-winged teal.

As the season progresses, he anticipates an above average migration of bluebills, goldeneye buffleheads and scaup from the Prairies as a result of favourable nesting conditions in the spring.

Grouse hunters should also expect a good year as the ministry reports that the population is still in its peak cycle.

"But within the next year or two, we can expect a downward trend," the report said.

What has enabled the cycle to remain at a peak has been the warmer weather experienced over the last two to three years.

Those who do not have written per-

mission to utilize private land to hunt but are looking for a place should contact the local ministry office as some provincial wildlife areas offer public hunting.

Among those is Darlington Provincial Park in nearby Clarington

which has a limited number of blinds that can be used on a first-come, first-served basis.

Baldwin also pointed out that hunters need to be cognizant of no firearm discharge provisions in each municipality.

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