

Simcoe boasts big fish

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sixth-largest lake, waves can pick up in a heartbeat. Possessing a VHF radio or listening to a marine forecast before venturing out can help you decide what to do.

Largemouth bass, which are generally associated with areas offering plenty of protective cover such as boat docks, lily pads, weed mat, undercut banks or submerged stumps, can be found in Cook's Bay and in the various feeder rivers.

During summer, cold-water species such as lake trout and whitefish are found in the deeper depths off Kempenfelt Bay and Oro Station. Catching lake trout and whitefish at this time of the year, though, is conducted by experienced anglers who troll with downriggers or drift with a weighted jig.

During spring and fall, yellow perch and black crappies can be found close to shore along rivers emptying into Simcoe.

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Such places — which primarily offer rainbow trout or brook trout — include Burd's Trout Fishing in Whitchurch-Stouffville at 905-640-2928, the Ponds Fishing Preserve in Mount Albert at 905-473-5291 and Woodland Ponds Fish Farm in nearby Sandford at 905-852-5487.

Woodland Ponds has two ponds stocked with largemouth bass up to six pounds that can be caught on a catch-and-release basis only.

If you seek a place that's exclusive, the Franklin Club at 1-905-473-1469 just north of Newmarket provides members with excellent rainbow trout and brook trout angling year-round.

Some places such as Preston Lake and Musselman's Lake, both in Whitchurch-Stouffville, that might seem like obvious fishing locales do not have public access for angling.

Written permission from a landowner is required. Preston Lake, it should be noted, holds the provincial largemouth bass record of 10.43 pounds.

For those relatively new to the game, the thing to do is acquire and carefully read regulations in the 2002 Ministry of Natural Resources Recreational Fishing Summary.

This guide indicates catch limits, sanctuaries, season openings for each species and other regulations anglers must obey.

Among them is the purchase of a residential angling licence for those between the ages of 18 and 64.

Aye, matie, never been to sea

From page 32.

but as time went on I couldn't raise it any farther, no matter how hard I pulled.

"What are you?" Mr. Palmer said. "A landlubber?"

Only with the help of a winch could I get the sail up the rest of the way. We repeated the process with the mainsail.

"You think sailing is just sitting around," Mr. Palmer said. "It can become quite physical, but there comes a time when you can sit and have your tea."

Mr. Palmer said it gets particularly physical when racing. The racing crew has to constantly manipulate the sails to gain advantage over the adversary. Often, crews will practise for hours perfecting their technique.

Still thinking like a landlubber, I asked Mr. Palmer how many miles per hour the boat could go.

"It can go about 10 miles per hour. Although sometimes it does seem like it goes faster than that," he said. "Speed, as you know, isn't measured in miles per hour, it's measured in knots."

Oops. Once out on the water, we unravelled the sail a little more, a process known as unfurling. The faster you want the boat to go, the more you unfurl the sail.

Soon, we were gliding across the water while a stiff but gentle breeze kept us moving. It was quite peaceful. It looked like it was time for tea.

But then Mr. Palmer gave me the wheel of the vessel. When steering a sailboat, you must keep in mind the direction of the wind. There's only one direction a sailor can't go.

"You can't really sail directly into the wind," Mr. Palmer explained, encouraging me to try it.

The sails began to flutter and lose their tension. Mr. Palmer said when the sails begin doing that, they are luffing. Eventually, the boat stopped or, in seafaring terms, I put the ship in irons.

"That's very good to know if you need to stop," Mr. Palmer said, adding it's an important manoeuvre if someone falls overboard.

Next, I learned about a "tight reach", or pointing the boat almost directly into the wind. It's a common misconception, Mr. Palmer said, that sailboats can only travel downwind. The newer models can perform a tight reach.

Next, I learned about tacking and jibing. A tack is a turn upwind. A jibe is a turn downwind. A jibe is a dangerous turn and should be avoided because it causes the boom to swing across the boat, causing any poor person in its path to be cast overboard or worse.

"The most common complaint about sailing is getting hit in the head with the boom," Mr. Palmer said. "You understand why they call it the boom pretty quick."

Eventually I brought the Buena Vista home or, should I say, back to port.

I may not be an old salt, but at least I know a little more about a fun, easygoing sport than I did before.

To learn more about sailing, check out Sail Georgina's website at www.sail-georgina.ca

Been There, Done That is a regular feature following the exploits of staff as they try to keep up with experts in a variety of sports and recreational activities.

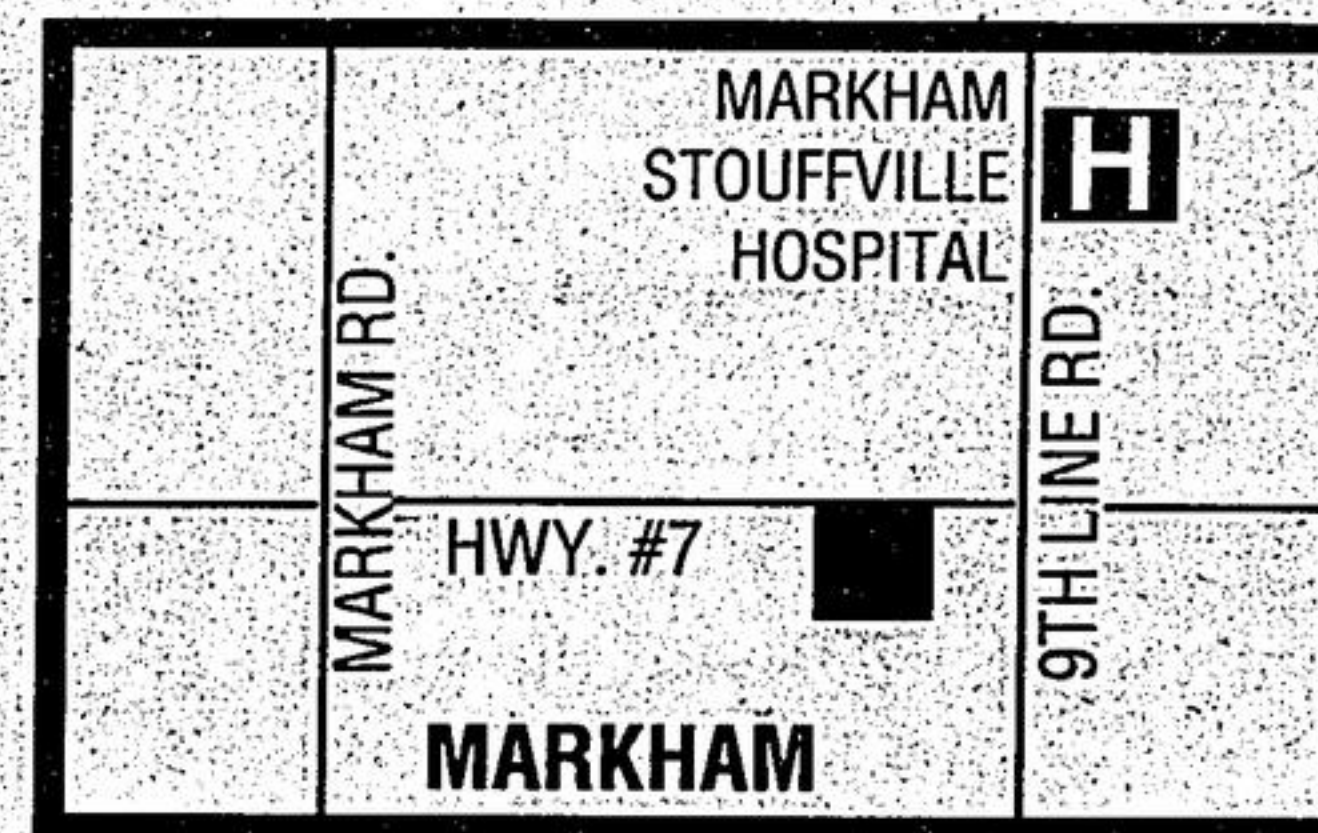


STAFF PHOTO/SUSIE KOCKERSCHIEDT

Staff writer Jerome Watt joins in a feisty little sea shanty with John Palmer, commodore of Sail Georgina.

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