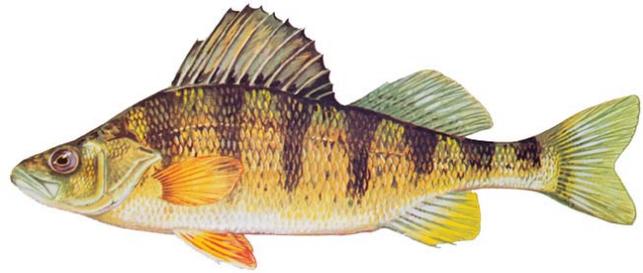


ICE FISHING REPORT NUMBER 7 2/24/2011



SAFETY REMINDER: DEP reminds winter anglers that **SAFETY COMES FIRST!** Be aware that ice thickness varies on all water bodies due to a number of environmental factors including in-lake water circulatory patterns, snow cover and the type and amounts of recent precipitation. Please check the ice carefully before venturing out and check repeatedly to make sure that ice thickness is sufficient. Local bait and tackle shops are often excellent resources for the most current information on ice conditions. Always let someone know where you are going and when you'll return.

ICE FISHING REPORT

This winter has definitely provided anglers with an extended ice fishing season. However, with a lot of deep snow to cross to get to their favorite fishing hole, anglers do have to work to get to their fish this year, and the snow cover may also be slowing the bite in some areas. **Although much snowpack has been lost recently, anglers should be aware that a number of access and parking areas may still be difficult to access.**

Also check out the new feature on the last page - "TUCKER® GOES FISHING"

TROUT – Best reports from West Side Pond, Mohawk Pond, Crystal Lake, Mashapaug Lake and East Twin Lake.

NORTHERN PIKE – Fishing continues to be very good with catches up to 15 pounds reported. Best reports are from Bantam Lake, Pachaug Pond and Beseck Lake.

WALLEYE – Fishing for walleye has been variable, but recent catches include a 30.5 inch beauty. Best reports from Mashapaug Lake (very good action, some big fish) and Coventry Lake (good action on smaller fish).

YELLOW PERCH – Lots of action for these tasty fish, with reports from Winchester Lake, Bantam Lake, Silver Lake, Coventry Lake and Mudge Pond.

CHAIN PICKEREL – Good fishing for pickerel reported from Winchester Lake, Highland Lake, Lake Waramaug, West Side Pond, Park Pond, Tyler Lake, Bantam Lake, Cedar Lake, Nod Brook WMA, West Hill Pond, Coventry Lake and Lower Bolton Lake.

LARGEMOUTH/SMALLMOUTH BASS – Bass are being found at Winchester Lake (including a 6 lb largemouth), Highland Lake, Candlewood Lake, Hatch Pond, Tyler Lake, Ball Pond, Bantam Lake (19 inch smallmouth bass), Beseck Lake, Mansfield Hollow Reservoir, Coventry Lake, Lower Bolton Lake, Mudge Pond and Mashapaug Lake.

SMELT – One skilled angler got a limit of smelt from Hogback Reservoir.

PANFISH - Early mornings are the best for finding these winter favorites (jiggging with corn or grubs on your favorite lure while moving from place to place works). Locations to try include Highland Lake, Lake Waramaug, Park Pond, Winchester Lake, Coventry Lake, Lower Bolton, Mudge Pond & Mashapaug Lake.



TIPS & TRICKS – for SMELT (as found on ehow.com)

- Once you've arrived tie on your jig, or small hook and clip on a sinker. Place it in the water and drop it down until your line goes slack, that's the bottom. Mark this spot on your line by tying a small knot and then pull the line back in and remove the depth finder.
- Bait your jig with a small piece of grub or bloodworm.
- Some anglers prefer to use several hooks or jigs tied to a single line (only 3 hooks may be baited) because smelt swim in large schools, and multiple fish can be caught at one time with this technique.
- Drop the line down to the depth you like and begin jigging.
- When you feel a bite, set the hook and reel your fish in.
- Make sure to grab the smelt quickly; they often hold onto the bait but are not hooked properly and can wiggle off the hook and fall back into the water.

Location

- Smelt can be found in deep water from early to mid-winter; this means you need deeper fishing holes.
- Late-winter ice fishing often finds the smelt in shallower water, where they are more easily collected.
- The mouths near the rivers where smelt run during their spawning season are good target areas in the late-winter months.
- Dropping chum in the water is known to attract wandering schools.
- Some anglers tie a small hook to yarn and dip it in fish attractor.
- When the smelt bites, their teeth get tangled in the yarn, making them easier to catch.

**COOKING SMELT
BY**

GRANDMA 'G'

(instructions by fishcooking.com)

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

- 3-6 dozen fresh or thawed smelt, depending on your appetite
- Kosher salt
- Olive oil for frying, about 1/4 cup
- 1 cup whole wheat flour (you can substitute all-purpose)
- 1 T. kosher salt
- 1 t. garlic powder 1 t. cayenne (or more to taste)
- 1 t. mustard powder 1 t. fresh ground black pepper
- 1 whole bunch of Swiss chard, about 2 pounds
- 1 T. garlic powder
- A pinch of kosher salt
- 1-2 lemons for garnish

Preparation:

Make the seasoned flour by mixing all the ingredients. It should not taste overpowering -- the seasonings are there to accent the fish, not hide it.

Lay your smelt out on a platter and salt them well.

Heat a large frying pan over high heat for a minute or two. Turn the heat down to medium-high and add enough olive oil to coat the bottom of the pan by about 1/8 inch. You do not want the smelt swimming in oil. Let this oil heat up for 2-3 minutes, or until you see it begin to ripple on the surface.

While the oil is heating, dredge your smelt in the flour and set aside on a dry spot. Lay out some paper towels to drain them later.

When the oil is hot, arrange your smelt in one layer with room between each one and fry over medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Turn and fry for an additional minute, maybe two.

The trick here is to do most of the cooking on one side, giving you that pretty golden crust. You give the other side less time because you don't want overcooked fish inside that pretty golden crust.

Set your smelt aside and add the chard. Turn and stir it constantly, while sprinkling in the garlic powder and a bit of salt. The chard will release a lot of water, so when it does, turn the heat up to high and keep stirring until it is all wilted -- about 3 minutes.

To serve, lay down a bit of chard and arrange the smelt on top. Serve with lemon wedges.

**Special notice –
PROPOSED FISHERIES & WILDLIFE
REGULATIONS:**

A public hearing on proposed fisheries & Wildlife regulations has been scheduled for March 16th at the DEP Phoenix Auditorium, 79 Elm Street, Hartford. Questions concerning the hearing and/or the proposed regulations should be directed to the Inland Fisheries Hartford office (860-424-3474). The Notice of Intent, a summary of the proposed regulation, complete text of the draft proposed regulations and fiscal/small business impact statement are available online at: www.ct.gov/dep/publicnotices

**Reminder-LICENSE FEE CREDITS
AVAILABLE**

During the 2010 session of the General Assembly, legislation was approved and signed into law in April reducing many of the fees for sportsmen’s licenses and permits. This was followed in June by legislation authorizing a credit to be applied against the fee for any 2011 sportsmen’s license, permit or tag when purchase of a license, permit or tag had been made at the higher prices in place between October 1, 2009 and April 14, 2010. The credit amount will be the difference between the higher amount paid during that time period and the amount set by the new fee structure established April 14, 2010.

For information about these credits, please visit the DEP website license fees and credits page:

www.ct.gov/dep/sportsmensfeereduction

**TUCKER®
GOES SMELT FISHING**



We’re going to a new place and fishing for smelt! Let’s have some more fun. This is great!



There is going to be a lot of these



delicious fish caught.

There should be ‘No Child Left Inside’



can have fun and eat like this.

Put something on the ice and cook it with Grandma



‘G’s’ instructions. fishing.

Take a child

The Department of Environmental Protection is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and service provider. In conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, DEP makes every effort to provide equally effective services for persons with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities who need this information in an alternative format, to allow them to benefit and/or participate in the agency’s programs and services, should call 860-424-3051 or 860-418-5937 or e-mail Marcia Bonitto, ADA Coordinator, at Marcia.Bonitto@CT.Gov. Persons who are hearing impaired should call the State of Connecticut relay number 711.



DEP ICE FISHING REPORT
CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
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