



ONTARIO OFFERS BRAGGIN' SIZED FISH

Mid-winter storms can't stop a fisherman from dreaming and planning some jaunts for spring and summer. Many New Yorkers travel to Canada for a week or two, but the problem is to decide which of the seemingly endless waters to try.

Results of a large fishing contest conducted over a 10-year period in Ontario, however, will give some hints if you're looking for a big fish to "hang on your wall." Selected from a quarter-million lakes here are some hot spots:

Rainbow Trout: — Shorelines near Georgian Bay have produced 78 of the 84 prize winners, with the largest going to 18 pounds. Spring and fall are the best seasons for the lunkers.

Lake Trout: — Lake Temagami with 1600 islands and 2800 miles of rugged shorelines, emerges head and shoulders above any other Ontario Lake with 26 winning fish between 22 and 37 pounds. The biggest lake trout was a 40 pounder from Manitou Lake.

Northern Pike: — Widespread and abundant in most waters, Lake Abitibi produced 10 winners including a 33 pounder, and Lake of the Woods yielded nine fish that won honors up to 31 pounds. Georgian Bay eased into first place with 14 champs.

Brook Trout: — The Nipigon River and Lake have the incredible record of 34 trophy fish to eight pounds of weight. The famed world record brookie on the books for many years, came from the Nipigon River, and weighed 14 1/2 pounds. Foote Lake in the Algoma region has some temperamental lunkers and nine skillful anglers caught brook trout records there.

Smallmouth Bass: — Berford Lake on the Bruce Peninsula produced six prize-winners up to 6 3/4 pounds. Some of the largest smallmouths have been hooked in Paré Lake near Sudbury, and Eagle Lake in the Parry Sound District contributed some lunkers.

Largemouth Bass: — Being a warm water fish, the big largemouths are best restricted to southern Ontario lakes. Weir Lake on Lake north of Belleville has yielded more trophies than any other, with a dozen beauties ranging from six to eight pounds. Little Lake, completely encircled by the town of Midland produced some winners for expert anglers.

Walleye: — Georgian Bay is again the winner with 26 outstanding walleyes between 12 and 19 pounds. Fishermen with the know-how picked up these trophies in frigid late October and early November weather. Most were caught near the mouth of Moon River. Lady Evelyn, near Temagami, contributed eight walleye winners.

Muskellunge: — The St. Lawrence River accounted for 19 entries from 34 to 50 pounds, whereas Lake of the Woods checked in with 16 prize muskies up to 40 pounds. Georgian Bay, however, accounted for 24 trophies, including a 51 pounder. Lake Nipissing accounted for 10 winning muskies boated, and the tiny Lake Noshonong yielded nine.

Well, it looks like the taxidermists are kept busy by Ontario fishermen, and now you know where to spend your vacation next summer. The all-round center of big fish activity seems to be Georgian Bay — maybe I'll see you there!

As one reads these old accounts, it sometimes stretches one's imagination to realize that the partridge — now considered by many King of Game Birds — could be a descendant of the old "fool hen." Even today, however, in more remote areas, the partridge is much more trusting than he is in our Southern Tier woodlots.

That the "fool hen" escaped extinction in the early days seems almost remarkable. To do so she proved themselves very adaptable something that a much more common bird, the passenger pigeon,

couldn't do. You can see this ability to adapt quickly to a change at the opening of every hunting season. Before the season, a drive through grouse country will reveal grouse along roads dusting, feeding on roadside greens or sitting on stone walls. Drive the same route a week after opening day under similar weather conditions, and you can consider yourself lucky to see one bird.

Many a road hunter is just this and thought the grouse were all gone. The real grouse hunter knows that the birds are still there, but that they have moved back away from the road a little way. If they are on the roadside, the sound of an approaching car will send them scurrying into the underbrush.

No longer do they sit around posed. They may sit, however, letting their protective color hide them, and then burst forth with startling suddenness which gives them all the jump they need to be behind the nearest hemlock.

Mother Nature has done several things to help grouse survive under

our rugged conditions. One of the most important was making it a "budder." In the summer, grouse have great variety in their diet. When the cupboard is bare and other forms of wildlife are hanging on the ropes from hunger, grouse find abundant food in the form of buds. There is no record of an otherwise healthy grouse ever starving to death. The only thing that could send them to bed with an empty stomach is a heavy coating of ice on all the twigs.

Ice may be their worst enemy for it can also cause doom by locking them in bed. During winter grouse often plunge into soft snow when warm. Their bedroom is close to the surface where they can burst forth, through snow in the face of any ice that tries to pounce upon them. A freezing rain after a grouse has "piled up" will seal him in. Several days or even a week a grouse could probably stand, but if the ice cover lasts too long, there is no escape.

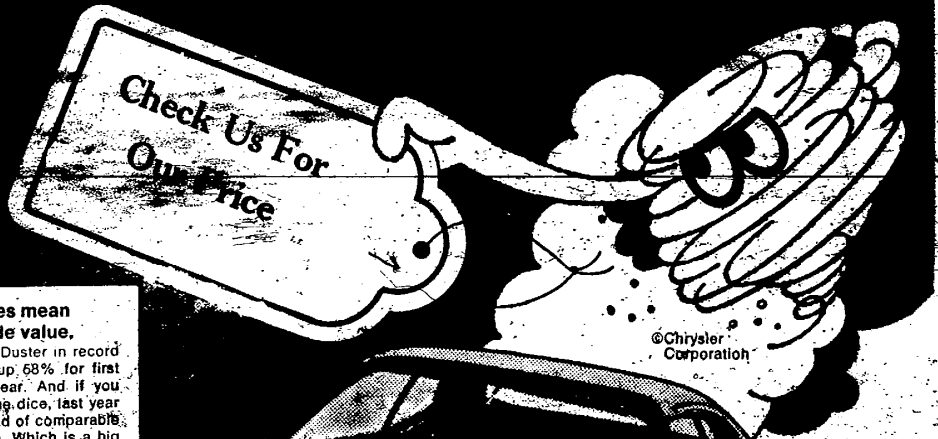
Nature has helped grouse get around in the deep soft snow of the

woodland by equipping him with snowshoes. On either side of the toes are a series of little rod-like projections which start to grow in late fall and have tripled their foot surface by the onset of winter. These rods, along the full length of the toe, look much like little combs. The broader track caused by the snowshoes is readily recognized in the winter woods.

The ruffed grouse has passed the test of an ideal game bird with flying colors. No stocking is needed to maintain their numbers, nor is any supplemental feeding required to get them over the hump. Wherever the proper habitat exists, grouse can furnish top-quality recreation without any artificial boost. They will have their ups and downs, but even at the low of the cycle, the hunter need not worry about killing too many, he just isn't that skillful. The next spring, with good nesting weather, and they will bound right back.

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Conservation News

Fool Hen to King of Game Birds
When our forefathers first came into this country they found the ruffed grouse both common and stupid. In those days, he was known as the "fool hen" and many are the tales about being able to club them, or about market hunters who would shoot a whole covey out of a tree one at a time.