



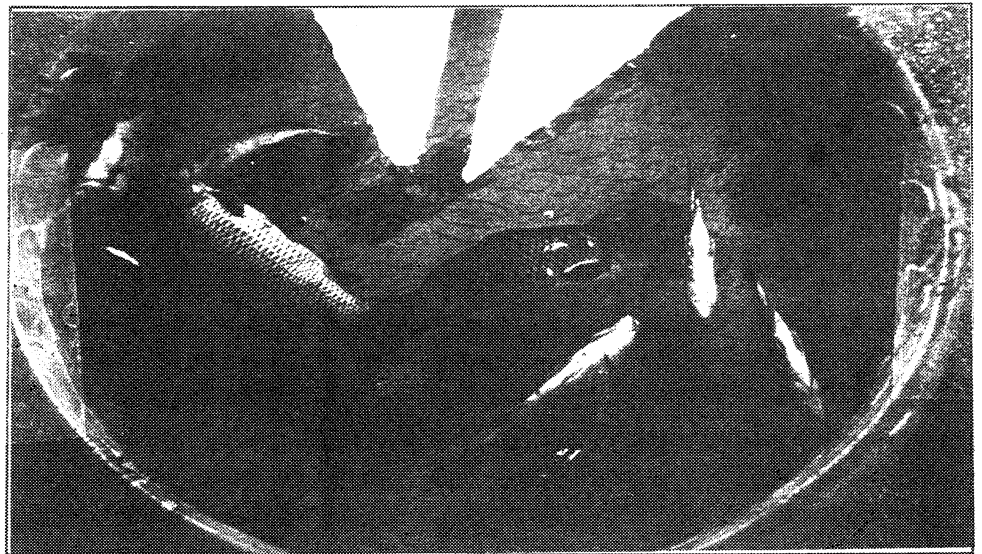
Hook, Line, and Sinker

The Official Publication of The New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen

**August
1996
Volume 5
Issue 8**

River Fishfest '96

After an absence of several years, River Fishfest is back! This year the contest was held on Saturday, August 10th, at Minnecon Park. The turnout was good, being basically the first year of the contest. There were 70 contestants from all over Southern Minnesota and one from Iowa. The fish also cooperated, as there were many registered. The winners included, Eric Stern with a 29 lb. 11 oz. Flathead catfish, Frank Brunner 12 lb. Channel catfish, Gwen Melchert caught the most species, and Ed Sehr won the last category with a 12



Carp. On the downside, there were very few club members helping out that day. We can't let all the work fall on the same shoulders all of the time. We need your support and help to keep this club strong. There was also a drawing among all entrants for a depth finder, donated by Marv's Sport Center. And the winner was, Mel.

August Meeting

Because the August meeting is so close to the Labor Day Weekend the meeting will be the last Wednesday of the month, rather than Thursday. This is not a mistake, the meeting will be Wednesday, August 28th, 7:30 P.M. at Schells Tap Room.

Club Calendar

**August 28th - Wednesday
Meeting - Schells Tap**

Room - 7:30 P.M.

**September 26th
Meeting - to be announced**

Curb Those Grass Clippings

At the last couple of meetings we have had some discussion on grass clippings being mowed into the street, to be washed down the storm sewers by rain water. The grass clippings cause oxygen depletion in the river as they settle to the bottom and start decomposing. Members were wondering if there shouldn't be an ordinance prohibiting this practice. The ordinance is on the books, and has been for some time. It is published in the paper every spring. If you see a neighbor mowing into the street, let them know its against the law to do so. Or, if you don't get along with your neighbor, just turn them in.

July Meeting

A special thanks goes to Dave Berg for providing us with one of the best meeting places we have had the pleasure to use. Our July meeting was held at the Ulmer Cafe. After the meeting Dave prepared and presided over a most delicious Fish Fry. Thanks again Dave, it was a great evening. Thanks also to the guys who helped clean the fish the night before.

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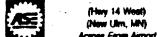
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Pelicans Not the Villains Some Believe They Are

by Tom Conroy

When it comes to fishing, a hungry bunch of pelicans knows few peers. Working in unison, they swim toward shore, thrashing the shallow water with wings spanning nine feet while scooping up startled fish as they attempt to dart past. A pelican may eat up to a third of its own weight before resting to digest the catch.

It is a spectacle such as this that can provoke the wrath of the angler. Should fishing turn slow on a lake visited by pelicans, the blame can be unfairly placed on the pelican. And even if the fishing is good, the assumption is it would be better were it not for the havoc caused by the white pelican. (While there are eight species of pelicans, they can be thought of as two sorts - the white pelican which is common to this area and the brown, which can be found in coastal areas, fishing almost exclusively in salt water.)

In Minnesota, the white pelican suffered the same fate as many other bird species during the time DDT and other hazardous chemicals were widely used - its population plummeted. Once DDT was banned and there occurred a general awakening to the potential dangers of chemicals and other pollutants, the pelican and other species began a comeback.

Dave Trauba, acting area wildlife manager at Lac qui Parle (LQP), said approximately 35,000 pelicans now use a 13-acre island at Marsh Lake as a nesting ground. Twenty-five years ago, only about thirty pelicans were counted there. LQP is one of but two primary nesting areas in Minnesota, the other being Lake of the Woods. More than a few anglers in the area, Trauba said, are not exactly fond of the big white birds.

"All it takes is for one person to see one pelican take one walleye," Trauba said. That seen, the pelican's undeserved reputation as a destroyer of game fish populations spreads further.

Several years ago, a disease outbreak at LQP killed numerous pelicans and cormorants, along with other species of water birds. An examination of the stomachs of those dead birds found but one walleye. Further, Trauba said he has yet to find even a single walleye on the nesting island at Marsh Lake but "we do find plenty of crayfish, bullhead and other species not sought by anglers."

Pelicans are "opportunistic," explained Huon Newburg, DNR Region 4 Fisheries Supervisor at New Ulm. "They'll take the most abundant species of fish available and that is almost always fish such as bullhead and carp." And even if they were feeding on fish such as walleye, northern pike or panfish, the impact would be inconsequential, Newburg said.

"If you put 100 pelicans on a six-acre pond, yes, they'll have an impact," Newburg said. Bait dealers who have had minnow rearing ponds raided can attest to that fact. "But if you put 100 pelicans on a 600-acre lake, they won't take enough game fish to make a difference."

Still, perception can become reality and the perception that pelicans and cormorants can decimate a lake's fishery persists. The truth is, the pelican's comeback is a good sign, an indication that nature is able to regain some of the balance lost to assaults such as habitat destruction and chemical misuse.

It was maybe twenty years ago that I had my first memorable experience with pelicans. Lazily paddling a canoe across the summer-warm waters of Swan Lake in Nicollet County one late afternoon, the sky suddenly filled with large snowy pillows - undulating, banking, turning, swooping - catching the sunlight in flashes of brilliant snow white color.

To this day, the sight of the slow, powerful, sweeping wingbeats of pelicans in flight or bobbing and thrashing on a lake, their whiteness in stark contrast to the deep blue of the water always causes me to pause and admire. Others, I understand, may pause and fume. Reputations do die hard.

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The Hook Line and Sinker is published monthly by Joyce Reese for the New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of respective writers and not to be construed as the opinion of the NUASF or its members. Send all correspondence and submissions to Mike Deinken, Editor, 1022 Spring Street, New Ulm, Minnesota 56073.

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CLEAR LAKE UPDATE



I have been to Clear Lake several times in the last month or so, and the lake doesn't seem to get much use. Maybe it's because the lake gets so green and slimy in the summer and people don't care to get their boats dirty. The fishing pier seems to get plenty of use, there has always been someone fishing from it when I have been at the lake. How is the fishing? I couldn't tell you, as I have not had the time to wet a line out there. The lake looks healthy, there are lots of minnows swimming in the shallows and plenty of small fish jumping at bugs swimming on the water along the shore. On the down side I have noticed small bullheads swimming along the shore in several areas. We can only hope that the walleye and bass population is healthy enough to keep them under control. One of the really sad things I have noticed at the lake is how the trees that were planted in the two islands in the parking lot don't seem to be growing. It has been 7 years now since they were planted, but they are still only about one foot tall. The ones that are still growing that is. Those trees should be about 12 feet tall by now, but people just have to keep driving over them. Couldn't we plant some new trees and put posts around them so they had a chance to grow? It doesn't seem like much to ask so that some day we could have some nice shade trees in the parking lot. We should also be thinking about the benches we have talked about building for the County Park at Clear Lake. As you know, we have some plastic 2x6s leftover from the walkway we built. We would like to build some benches to put in the park. Does anyone have some ideas or plans to build some type of bench out of 2x6s? If so, bring your ideas to the next meeting.

From the President.

Who will win the three cases of Schell's products? Come to the next meeting and find out. Membership is at the forefront of any organization and ours is no exception. As we grow and are ever changing in our dynamics as a club, we should never lose sight of the fact that new members bring new ideas, and new leadership. So as you talk to people think about what that person could bring to an organization such as ours and go out on that limb and ask if they would be interested.

We have had some good news regarding the Minnesota River, which is kind of startling to me as a river observer. The U.S. Geological Survey has released a report that indicates that the sediment in the river has declined over the past decade and has quantified it at % 20. The survey did not include the 1993 flood year or those times of the year where peak high flows or those of drought were taking place. Now if you were to ask me what the clarity of the river is today compared to 10 or 15 years ago, I would have to in all honesty say that it looks about the same. This is not to suggest that the study is wrong, it just says to me how far we have to go to really see some difference in water clarity. A great deal of what we see now is a brownish green algae that has had a wonderful bloom in the river. This is due to the high levels of nutrients that are in the water. So with sediment in mind I am happy we are on the right road and it confirms that things like RIM and CRP are working along with conservation tillage, but on the other hand we need to continue to work on those areas that have shown little or no improvement as well.

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