

Fall fishing is fine in northwest Ohio

By STEVE POLLICK
BLADE OUTDOORS EDITOR

For the best of fishermen, autumn may well be the ideal time of year, especially for big fish. That is because cooling weather and waters generally cause fish to put on the feed-bag, laying up some reserves for winter, and because cooling water in some cases drives such warm-water baitfish as gizzard shad closer to shorelines, where pursuing gamefish such as walleye are more accessible.

Following is a summary of what to look for in the region between now and when the last boat is pulled.

LAKE ERIE

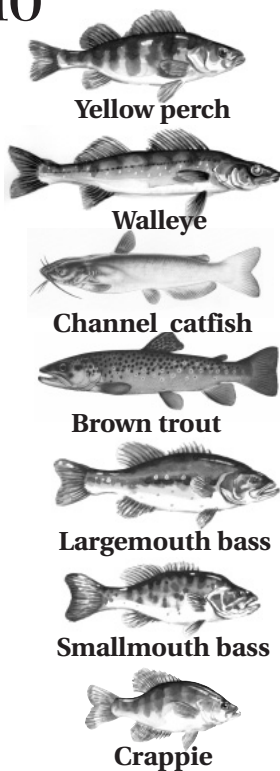
Walleye: Good walleye fishing is under way right now for trollers in the western end of Lake Erie in just 15 to 25 feet of water, which means fairly nearshore fishing well inside of West Sister Island and as close as the Toledo Water Intake.

But the Big Deal for walleye likely will begin in earnest at month's end, with trolling well east of the Bass Islands/Kelleys Island, specifically from Ruggles Reef east to Vermilion and Lorain. Reports of seven- and eight-pound walleye already were coming in this week, and the fish should grow in size and number as more large females return to the western basin to stage and feed over winter, before next spring's spawning.

"The later it gets, the better it gets," said Travis Hartman, a Lake Erie biologist for the Ohio Division of Wildlife. "It's mostly a crankbait bite." Nearshore waters 30 feet deep or less are targets for such trolled baits as Reef Runners, Rattlin' Rogues and Husky Jerks.

An after-dark fishery also is popular for those who know how, as shad move inshore to find warmer water and the big walleyes follow them in. A bite will develop on the Huron pier too, including casting crankbaits after dark.

The big female walleye, tagging studies show, have spent the months since post-spawn



in May moseying off to Buffalo, following preferred cooler water temperatures and big schools of another popular baitfish, smelt. Now they are on the return side of the loop.

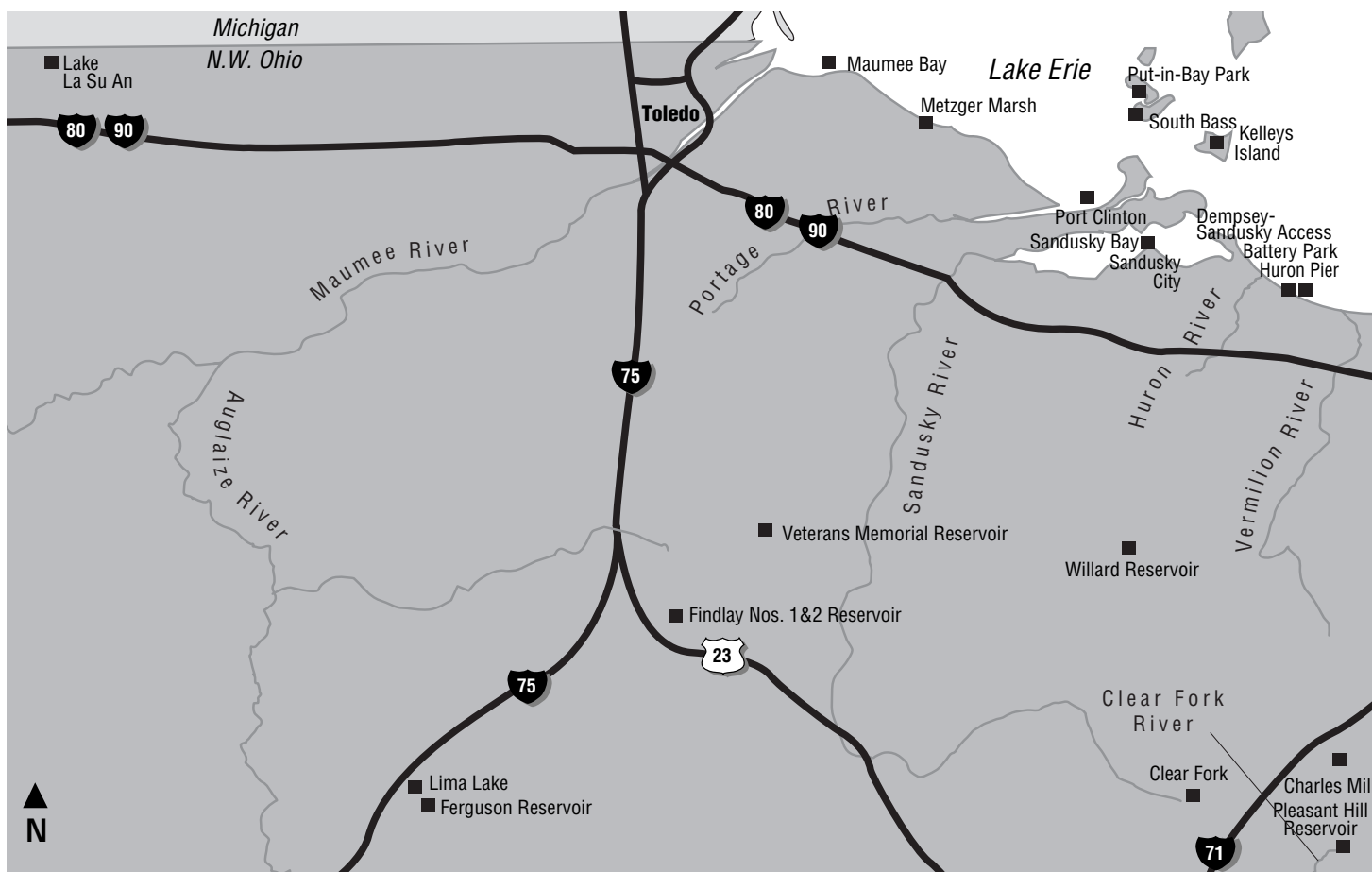
Smallmouth bass: These prized gamefish tend to move inshore in fall and put on a feed for winter, which is good news for smallie fans, many of whom had less than memorable summers fishing for them in 2004.

Hartman suggests the east side of Kelleys, West Reef and the slot between Middle Bass and Sugar islands as possible hunting grounds for smallies this fall. Target the waters 20 feet deep or shallower with tube jigs or drop-shot rigs with goby-colored, four-inch plastic worms or goby imitations. Smallmouths examined by biologists have been feeding more heavily on gobies than traditional crawdads.

Yellow perch: Lake Erie is not lacking for numbers of yellow perch, but many complaints have been aired lakewide this summer about small size.

Hartman said that is because of several big year-classes just coming into their

Following the Fish



own, all of which far outnumber the larger, more preferred "jumbo" perch that are older but fewer in number.

Choice perching sites include the Marblehead area, C-Can, West Sister Island, the Toledo Ship Channel from the Toledo Harbor Light to the Turn-Around Buoy, and the Toledo Water Intake and "Gravel Pit."

Steelhead trout: Discussed in detail here last week, steelie anglers should be in for another very good season, starting now with trolling off river mouths and casting from beaches and pierheads. As fall progresses and the fish run upstream, anglers will switch to fly-fishing tackle or drifting spawn bags.

The Vermilion River is the nearest "target" river for steelies, with most steelhead-stocked streams lying from Cleveland on east. But any Lake

Erie tributary, including the Maumee River and its downtown tributary, Swan Creek, will have a run of some strays.

INLAND

Larry Goedde, fish management supervisor for Ohio Wildlife District 2, makes these picks for good fall fishing:

Yellow perch: Findlay Reservoir No. 1 and, to a lesser extent, Reservoir No. 2; Ferguson Reservoir near Lima, and Willard Reservoir near Willard.

Channel catfish: All the region's upground municipal water-supply reservoirs, and area rivers and streams.

Walleye, saugeye: Try trolling with worm harnesses or drifting jigs and leeches in Findlay No. 1 or 2 for walleye, and Lima Lake at Lima and Veterans Memorial Reservoir at Fostoria for saugeye. Crankbaits such as the various Rapala models also may work.

Largemouth bass, bluegill: All lakes and ponds at the various state wildlife areas. Fall also is an excellent time to fish for trophy keeper gills, 9-1/2 inches or larger, at the Lake La Su An lakes in Williams County, and for plentiful catch-and-release bass that are governed by slot or length limits.

In-stream impoundments in the Mansfield area also are good choices for a short fishing trip. Try Clear Fork Reservoir for bass and muskellunge, Pleasant Hill Reservoir for bass, and Charles Mill Reservoir for bass and hybrid striped bass.

And if stream water levels remain decent, smallmouth bass and crappie can provide some moving-water action. The Maumee, Sandusky and Auglaize rivers all are worth a try.

Last and not least, many of the fine lakes in southeast

Michigan's Irish Hills region in northern Lenawee County provide fine fall bass fishing.

An excellent guide to the Ohio fishing venues is available free from the Ohio Division of Wildlife by calling toll-free, 1-800-WILDLIFE. Ask for Publication 77, "Public Hunting, Fishing, and Wildlife Viewing Areas."

Note to readers: This is the last Following the Fish installment for the 2004 season; it will resume on Fridays in the spring. Look for Steve Pollick's regular columns on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday through the winter. A selection of Following the Fish pages from this season can be viewed at www.toledoblade.com/outdoors.

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TENNIS

Top four women seeds on sideline for semis

Davenport heads list of contenders

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — No. 1 is gone. So is No. 2. The French Open champion and the Wimbledon champion left days ago and the Williams sisters were done soon after that.

Still, the U.S. Open has some headline players set for today's women's semifinal matches, with the No. 1 ranking hanging on the outcome.

No. 5 Lindsay Davenport will face No. 9 Svetlana Kuznetsova and No. 8 Jennifer Capriati will play No. 6 Elena Dementieva with the winners advancing to tomorrow night's final.

They are the survivors after defending champion Justine Henin-Hardenne, No. 2 Amelie Mauresmo, No. 3 Serena Williams, French Open champion Anastasia Myskina, and Wimbledon winner Maria Sharapova all bowed out of the tournament.

This is the first time in the Open Era that none of the top four women's seeds have made it to the semifinals of the U.S.



Elena Dementieva, left, will face Jennifer Capriati, while fellow Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova will meet Lindsay Davenport.

Open.

Still the match-ups offer considerable intrigue, especially for Davenport, seeking her second U.S. Open championship.

Kuznetsova, Dementieva, and Capriati have never played for the U.S. Open title. The stakes



are highest, however, for Davenport, the 1998 winner, who arrived at the season's final Grand Slam event as the hottest player on the tour with four straight hardcourt tournament victories.

She has won 22 consecutive matches and if she wins this

event, she will claim the No. 1 ranking in women's tennis.

If Davenport loses to either Kuznetsova or in the final, then the top spot goes to No. 2 Amelie Mauresmo, who lost in the quarterfinals to Dementieva and has never won a Grand Slam tournament.

Since losing to Sharapova in the semifinals at Wimbledon, Davenport has dropped just three sets and swept events at Stanford, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Cincinnati leading up to the Open. She has won the last 16 sets she has played and waited out daylong rains before defeating Shinobu Asagoe 6-1, 6-1 in just 46 minutes in the quarterfinals on Wednesday.

"At about 6-1, 5-1, I thought, 'if it rains now, I'm going to die,'" Davenport said. "Then I started to hurry it up a bit."

This is familiar territory for Davenport, who has reached the semifinals of the Open in seven of her last eight appearances.

Kuznetsova, just 19, has never been this far in a Grand Slam event. But she earned her way here defeating Nadia Petrova in the quarters after Petrova sent Henin-Hardenne home.

■ TV today: 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Channel 11.

Kuznetsova won the Wimbledon warmup at Eastbourne, defeating Vera Zvonareva and Daniela Hantuchova in the last two rounds after both had served for the match in the second set. She also has wins over Venus Williams, Amy Frazier, Dementieva, and Henin-Hardenne this summer and has never faced Davenport before.

It has been an up and down season for Dementieva, who lost in the semis at the Open in 2000. She was a first-round loser in both the Australian Open and Wimbledon but reached the finals of the French Open before losing to Myskina.

Against Mauresmo, she struggled with an aching thigh and dehydration.

Capriati, who lost a memorable semifinal to Henin-Hardenne at the Open a year ago, owns three Grand Slam titles and has reached 13 Slam semifinals, most recently in the French Open, where she lost to Myskina. But she hasn't played for a Slam title since the 2002 Australian Open and is winless this season.

U.S. Open

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the Open semifinals.

Federer will face No. 5 Tim Henman, while Johansson, having eliminated the 2003 Open winner, goes up against the 2001 champion, Lleyton Hewitt — whose sister Jaslyn just happens to be the 28th-seeded Swede's girlfriend.

That should make for interesting dinner conversation.

Johansson played pretty much perfectly for the first two sets and threw Roddick off his game. Twice, Johansson held serve after being down love-40; once, he broke Roddick after trailing 40-love.

In the final game of the match, No. 2 Roddick fell behind love-40 with a double-fault, saved two match points thanks to big serves, then sailed a backhand long on the third.

Up at the net for a postmatch handshake, the 6-2 Roddick reached up to tap Johansson on the chest.

Roddick found himself playing the way opponents try to

negate his power-packed game, standing way behind the baseline, resorting to guesswork on returns, and hitting to the backhand. After dumping one return into the net, Roddick flipped his racket in the air.

And Roddick seemed generally uncomfortable, arguing the occasional call, questioning a line judge's positioning, and standing with hands on hips as if he didn't want to leave the court for what turned out to be a 55-minute rain delay right after being broken to 3-2 in the first set.

When they returned to action, Roddick missed a backhand on the first point, then pointed and snapped "Sit down!" at spectators slow getting to their seats. Johansson went on to win the first set with a running forehand winner down the line.

At one moment in the fifth set, while Roddick was needing the chair umpire, his coach, Brad Gilbert, pointed both index fingers to his temples. The message was clear: "Keep your head in the game."

Johansson was flawless in the first two sets. In the third and fourth sets, it was Roddick's turn to be brilliant, with a total of three unforced errors. Yes,

three. Actually, Roddick won far more points: 152 to 128. But he converted only three of 15 break chances.

Both pounded aces, with Johansson finishing with 30 to raise his tournament-leading total to 109, while Roddick had 34.

Johansson inherited some of his abilities: His father, Leif, was Bjorn Borg's teammate on Sweden's 1974 Davis Cup team.

And little Joachim — surely, he was little at one time — got to practice with Borg as a tyke.

Hours earlier, Agassi sat alone, starting blankly at an Arthur Ashe Stadium doorway, the silence punctured by the rustling leaves on nearby trees.

Soon, he'd walk through that exit, his U.S. Open done. In those idle moments on a lobby bench, there was plenty for the 34-year-old Agassi to contemplate.

"My game plan is to play until I can't do it," Agassi said. "I certainly want to be able to assess my level of play, and at some point my level of play will dictate my decisions."

"But as of right now, I'm trying to win tournaments, and I believe that with that focus, I can still do that."



REUTERS

Joachim Johansson of Sweden celebrates his 6-4, 6-4, 3-6, 2-6, 6-4 victory over Andy Roddick in a U.S. Open quarterfinal.

GOLF

Toledo to host tournament at Inverness

The University of Toledo golf team will host the fourth annual Inverness Intercollegiate Invitational beginning this morning at Inverness Club, a 13-team, 54-hole event that will conclude tomorrow.

The other teams in the field are Alabama-Birmingham, Augusta State, Central Florida, Eastern Michigan, Georgia Southern, Illinois, Kansas State, Kent State, Kentucky, Michigan State, Northwestern, and Notre Dame.

The field includes two All-Americans in Kentucky's John Holmes and Aron Price of Georgia Southern.

Previous winners of the event are South Carolina, Florida, and UCLA.

There will be 36 holes today beginning at 8:30 a.m. Tomorrow's final round starts at 2 p.m.

"We have a strong field again this year and it should be very competitive," said Rockets coach Jamie Mauntler. "We'll have some new faces in our lineup so it's going to be interesting to see how they react to playing in their first collegiate tournament."

UT will look to rely on senior Justin Bertsch and sophomore Tyler Riley to lead the way for its newcomers. Mauntler said his starting lineup this weekend will consist of Bertsch, Riley, redshirt freshman Kyle Demeter, freshman Justin Hull, and freshman Reno Langevin.

Sindelar leads by 2

OAKVILLE, Ont. — After a five-hour rain delay, Joey Sindelar made Glen Abbey look like a breeze with a 5-under 66, giving him a two-shot lead over Pat Perez in the Canadian Open.

Half the field did not come close to finishing the first round and four players didn't even get a chance to tee off.

Perez, who is 140th on the PGA Tour money list and is in jeopardy of losing his card, had a 3-under 68.

Only 10 other players among the early starters managed to break par on a course that was soaked with rain, but still played difficult because of 30 mph gusts and pins tucked atop knobs to avoid any standing water.