

# Georgia Outdoors

Published by the GEORGIA GAME & FISH COMMISSION

Issue Number Six, 1966

## Lake Permits Not Required

If you are planning to go boating, fishing, picnicking, camping, or otherwise using public facilities on Corps of Engineers lakes in Georgia, you will not—repeat, will not—need to purchase a “Golden Passport” or any other form of permit.

The permit system actually was established last year by the U.S. Department of Interior and various government agencies including the Corps of Engineers. However, rigid enforcement of the permits was to have been put into action this year.

Now, new regulations have been adopted which eliminate Georgia reservoirs from being under the system.

In other words, if you put a boat into any Corps lake in Georgia—or use any other public facility within Georgia on Corps lakes—you do not need the permit.

However, on two lakes on the Georgia-South Carolina border, there are facilities where the permit will be necessary. All three locations are on the South Carolina side. They are The Modoc and Parkville areas on Clark Hill, and Island Point on Hartwell.

Nowhere on Lakes Lanier, Allatoona, Walter F. George, Columbia Lock and Dam and Seminole, will users be required to have a permit for use of public facilities. Previously, the Corps had said permits would be required for all public facilities on all of these waters, but the new regulation eliminated this requirement.

The permit will still be required at more than 6,000 Federally operated public facilities across the nation.



Game and Fish Commission technicians keep long handled nets ready as they carefully scan the water surface for fish coming to the top after rotenone is applied, suffocating the fish. Data is kept on the number of each species found, along with length and weight.

## Population Studies Show Lake Jackson Number One

Bass fishing is on the upswing in Georgia, and Lake Jackson has taken the lead in the trend.

“Lake Jackson has shown the heaviest bass reproduction we’ve ever seen anywhere,” said Leon Kirkland, coordinator of fisheries for the State Game and Fish Commission, at the conclusion of the spring series of population studies on Georgia’s large reservoirs.

“Jackson’s phenomenal bass repro-

duction is largely the result of our intense management program on the lake, we believe,” Kirkland said.

“The management practice which seems to have had the greatest effect is the 10-inch size limit,” he said. “The smaller fish in the 10 to 12 inch size appear to be better reproducers than the larger bass.

“And not only do we have large quantities of newly spawned bass this year, the young bass are showing a very satisfying growth rate. They are running about an inch and a half long,” Kirkland said.

He said population studies in the various lakes showed consistently good bass reproduction this year, particularly in the middle Georgia lakes. In north Georgia, results of the spring spawn have not yet showed up.

As a result of the excellent spawn this spring, bass fishing should be excellent for several years to come.

Studies at Clark Hill also showed good samples of adult bass and indicate that bass are on an upward trend on that lake.

Although there was a severe winter kill on threadfin shad on all reservoirs, studies indicate there are still good quantities of this forage fish, which will provide plenty of food for all game species in all lakes. Kirkland said.

As a sidelight, Kirkland said large walleye taken in the study at Lanier indicated there is probably a sizable

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Lake Sidney Lanier has produced a new lake record 7-pound rainbow trout. Frankie A. Davis, Roswell, caught the scrapper on night crawlers at a depth of about 60 feet while fishing at night. The Game & Fish Commission has been stocking Lanier for the past two years and the phenomenal growth rate (stocked fish weighed approximately 2-3 ounces when released) is attributed to an abundant food supply and plentiful living space. Davis said that he caught a number of trout in seven days fishing and that the total weight was near 96 pounds. (See page two for the new state record rainbow.)



# New Trout Record Set

When the statewide record for a fish falls after nine years, that's news. But when the record falls twice just a week apart, that's something to make all trout anglers in the state sit up and really take notice!

Until May 24th, the state record for rainbow trout had been 9 pounds, 11 ounces. On that day, Henry Charles, of Ellijay, hauled in a 10 pound rainbow near the Georgia Broilers plant on the Coosawattee River near Ellijay. Charles, an employee of the plant, said not many trout had been caught in that area until the plant was built. "Now lots of big ones are caught," he said, "There have been 15 or 20 trout over three pounds caught near the plant since it was built."

But Charles' new record didn't stand long. John Whitaker, also of Ellijay, landed a 12 pound 4 ounce rainbow on May 31st. Both men used chicken liver for bait. Relating the catch, Whitaker said he caught the trout at about 11:30 a.m. and landed the fish on "8 or 10 pound test line. I had some 10 pound on the front and some 8 tied on the end," Whitaker said.

According to Whitaker, he knew that big trout were in the waters of the Coosawattee there at the broiler plant because several trout weighing over 4 pounds were taken a few days before and he had landed a pair weighing 2 and 3¼ pounds.

Both Charles and Whitaker were fishing specifically for trout. "They feed in there below the chicken plant so that's why I fished with chicken liver," said Whitaker. "There was nothing in that trout's stomach but chicken liver."



Limit catches like this one aren't at all rare when the white bass are really running during their spring spawn on several Georgia reservoirs. Even if you don't catch a full limit of 30, you're bound to get a good number.

## 1966 PEAK YEAR FOR WHITE BASS

About eight years ago, a new species of sport fish was introduced to Georgia anglers. Now the program has reached its climax—the new fish, white bass, hit its peak this spring, and Peach State fishermen had a field day (rather, season) on these tremendous fighters this spring.

Action on the white bass comes mostly at one time, and when it comes it is fast and furious. The time to catch them is around April, when the spawning run is on. Sometimes the run starts in late March, and sometimes it drags out longer, possibly into May.

But when conditions are right, these silvery white scrappers can be boated almost as fast as you can pull them in.

Don't think, however, that "pulling them in" is just as simple as putting those few words on paper. True, he's usually hooked deep enough in a tough mouth that he's unlikely to throw the hook. And he rarely takes to stumps, roots or brush piles to snag the line.

What he does, though, is pull. For his size, there's probably not another fish that can put up such a tussle. Even against strong river currents, he powers upstream with such force that if you pull hard enough, the line will literally sing as it slices through the water.

The big danger, then, of losing a white bass is in breaking the line. Yet,

if you play him cautiously and don't put too much pressure on him, he'll eventually tire. He won't quit until he is tired—in fact, completely exhausted.

White bass fishing is now available in just about all parts of Georgia, although the greatest concentration is in the state's midsection.

Best places to find him during his spring run is in rivers that are headwaters to these reservoirs: Sinclair, Allatoona, Clark Hill, Lanier, Burton, Blackshear, Bartletts Ferry and Goat Rock. There are also white bass in Notley, Chatuge and Jackson.

These last three lakes were stocked later, and in a few years should be just as good as the others.

White bass can be caught other times of the year, but without any regularity. When nature calls in the spring, however, the white bass answers with his long run up rivers out of the reservoirs, to spawn. He particularly likes rivers with rocky beds, the rockier the better.

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The State Record for rainbow trout is now 12 pounds, 4 ounces with the landing of this beauty. John Whitaker is the fisherman. The rainbow is almost as big as Whitaker's son, Bobby. Whitaker caught the trout in the Coosawattee River near Ellijay using chicken liver as bait. (Game & Fish Commission Photo by Dan Keever)

# SMALLMOUTH AND WALLEYE TO FILL GAP IN GEORGIA FISHING

By Dean Wohlgemuth



The pugnacious smallmouth bass may be the answer for fishing in many north Georgia streams that are too warm for trout and too cold for largemouth bass. The smallmouth is easily identified by the dark vertical bars on its side.



Many anglers on Lake Allatoona and other north Georgia waters mistake the spotted bass for the true northern smallmouth. The color bar on this spotted bass resembles that of the largemouth bass.



Commission fishery biologists use an electric shocking machine to capture smallmouth bass already found in a few north Georgia streams. Brood fish captured this way and purchased from other states are now being used in state hatcheries.

There's really no explaining just why, but nature doesn't always provide a full variety of fish species even in waters which are suitable for more types of fish.

A lot of reasons for this could be theorized. Probably it's because that at one time, conditions were not right for some species.

This is where nature needs an assist from man. And the State Game and Fish Commission steps into the picture to give a hand.

Now there's good fishing in north Georgia's mountain streams for trout. And in the lakes, bass, crappie, bream and white bass are giving anglers some fine fishing.

This sounds like a well-rounded picture. Yet, there is a niche to be filled.

There's a gap between the coldwater species, the trout, and the warmwater species, which includes the others.

## Room For More

There is a good bit of water in Georgia that borders between coldwater and warmwater fisheries. Yet nature has not given Georgia anglers a fish for this type of water.

To provide good fishing in these situations, the Game and Fish Commission is working on two projects right now to fill this niche.

These projects are to establish the walleye and the smallmouth bass.

Walleye stocking was started four years ago. The state has added more than three million walleye to Georgia waters this year. Walleye were put into Lakes Allatoona, Burton, Rabun

and Sinclair, and the Coosawattee River.

There are already good populations of walleye, established in Hartwell, Burton and Blue Ridge lakes.

A group of four or five fishermen caught a string of 12 walleyes on a recent night, that weighed in the vicinity of 50 pounds. Six of them weighed more than five pounds apiece, the largest hitting the 10 pound mark. These same men had good luck on later nights.

## Will Establish

Eventually, it is hoped that these stockings will establish the smallmouth in the reservoirs.

Lake Burton now has some smallmouth, too, but not in large numbers. However, Burton, Lanier and Allatoona have good numbers of the spotted bass.

The spotted bass is a different species from the true northern smallmouth, although both are smallmouth. Like the largemouth, the spotted bass is distinguished by its dark lateral line running along its sides. Yet it has a mouth the same size as the smallmouth. The true smallmouth has several vertical bars on its sides.

## Native Smallmouth

Two Georgia lakes do have native populations of the true northern smallmouth. They are Chatuge and Blue Ridge. These two, along with Nottely,



Walleye can already be found in several places in Georgia, but thanks to stockings made this spring, soon anglers will find them in more waters of the state.

are on the Tennessee drainage system, where the smallmouth is prominent. Yet Nottely, strangely, has only a small population of this species.

The Commission now has smallmouth fry at the McDuffie Public Fishing area near Augusta, where they are being raised to fingerling size for stocking. When they are up to six inches long, they'll be put into north Georgia streams below trout water, where the water is still cool, yet not quite cool enough for trout.

As soon as possible, smallmouth stocking will be extended to rivers which feed the large reservoirs, such as the Etowah which feeds Lake Allatoona, and the Chestatee and Chatahoochee rivers, which feed Lanier.



# LAKE JACKSON TOPS IN POPULATION STUDIES

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spawning population in the lake, making it possible that there will soon be good walleye fishing in Lanier.

"We also took more channel catfish from Lanier than in previous studies. This is of particular interest to float fishermen, jug fishermen and sportfishermen who like to take the channel cats on rod and reel.

"Channel cats have been classified by us as sport fish now," Kirkland explained, "because of their gamy qualities, the types of baits they take, their fighting qualities and their eating qualities. However," he said, "we do still permit channel cats to be taken on trot lines and bank lines, in baskets and in nets."

The reason for this, he said, is that there are plenty of channel cats for both purposes and it is desirable to keep the numbers of these fish down so there will be a good growth rate.

Again discussing Lake Jackson, Kirkland said that as this year's class of bass comes around and reproduction remains

consistent on the lake, "we should be able to bring the bass population around at Jackson. If so, we expect predation on bream, particularly bluegills, and other forage fish to be sufficient so as to increase the size of bluegills and other bream. This will provide more interesting fishing for these species."

Crappie fishing this year has been excellent in Lake Jackson. "You never have to worry about maintaining a large enough population of crappie," Kirkland said, "but the big problem is to keep populations in line so that the crappie may obtain good size."

Due to stocking of threadfin shad in Jackson, crappie are now much larger than in recent years. "Crappie are showing a good growth rate, and we have a good backup population of small crappie to insure future catches of large crappie."

Kirkland said that last year, there were 300,000 crappie and the same number of other fish taken from Jackson

in nine months of fishing. This means the 5,000 acre lake produces fish at the rate of 60 crappie per acre, or 120 fish of all species per acre.

"We expect that fishermen will get larger crappie in the future from Lake Jackson, although there probably will be slightly fewer fish caught in actual numbers. Previously the population was stunted by lack of food. Now with more food available, the crappie will be considerably larger," Kirkland said.

## WHITE BASS

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The way to catch him is with a jig, spoon or spinner. Jigs are best and may be white, red, yellow or orange. Silver spoons and spinners are usually better than gold or brass. Cast the lure across the current, let it drift down, and slowly bring it upstream, keeping it as close to the bottom as possible. You'll know when he hits.

Jackson, Nottely and Chatuge received the bulk of their white bass stockings two years ago. Nottely received some white bass three years ago, and an additional stocking was made in Jackson this spring.

The first big white bass stockings were made in Georgia in 1957 and 1958. These stockings were made in Allatoona, Clark Hill, Lanier and Sinclair. Now all of these lakes have well-established populations.

No more stocking is anticipated for the state, except perhaps in smaller reservoirs, such as Lake Rabun. The white bass is now on his own.

In stocking white bass, only adult fish are used. "We find they become established faster this way, and that it is an easier and better way to stock them," said Leon Kirkland, supervisor of fisheries for the Game and Fish Commission.

He said brood stock of fish weighing between one and two pounds are normally used for stocking.



This young Georgia angler has found the key to catching slab-sided crappie. He caught these two fine specimens in Lake Jackson in minnows.



This Lake Lanier white bass of four pounds and nine ounces fell victim to a minnow at night in the Chestatee River section this spring. The catch by C. L. Marris of Tucker, Ga., is the closest approach this year in Georgia to the world's record of five pounds, two ounces. A four pound, 14 ounce fish was caught in Lanier last year by Albert Pittman of Gainesville.

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Atlanta, Ga. 30334

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## GEORGIA OUTDOORS

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## New Record Fish; Smallmouth Bass Stocking

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