

When Can We All Go Swimming? Is It OK to Drink Erie Water? Is It Wise to Eat a Lake Michigan Fish?

PEOPLE can now swim, boat and fish in each of the Great Lakes. Two—Superior and Huron—are totally available for all kinds of recreation. The others have problem areas where some types of recreation may be unsafe or undesirable.

Ontario and Erie have recovered from the worst effects of intense pollution and now open their beaches for longer periods in the summer.

Michigan still has unsafe and undesirable areas, and it will take longer to respond to treatment than the others because it is a dead-end body of water.

The overall municipal sewage treatment program for the Lakes will be complete within five to ten years. It should be safe to swim at all beaches by then, though rotting algae may still make swimming unpleasant. The algae problem should be eliminated by 1986.

ALL THE LAKES are now desirable sources of raw drinking water. Away from the shoreline and local pollution sources, the water, even in Erie, is normally potable without treatment—though drinking it is not recommended. Great Lake water used for municipal drinking supplies requires only minimal treatment.

SOME LAKE FISH contain pollutants in their bodies in a concentrated form. There is no immediate solution to the problem and it may take twenty years to reduce it. However, in all cases, the occasional angler who catches and eats fish only a few times a year has nothing to worry about. It is only a problem in communities (such as several Indian ones) where fish from the Lakes form a major part of one's diet.

Rochester Embayment area into four regional ones has had a positive effect.

The Toronto Harbour and waterfront areas have had high sewage pollution, but the completion of a mid-city sewer interceptor program last year contributed significantly to the solution of the problem. Waste treatment projects at steel companies in Hamilton and improved sewage treatment facilities have also helped matters.

[LAKE SUPERIOR]

Superior is a liquid wedge driven 1,333 feet into the earth. It will almost surely remain the healthiest of the Great Lakes because its volume is so huge—2,858 cubic miles of water. The major problem areas are in Duluth-Superior Harbor, Silver Bay, Thunder Bay and some locations along the southern shore. By mid-1977 the nine sewage treatment plants in the Duluth area will

be replaced by a single plant and the inflow of phosphorus will be significantly lowered. The city of Thunder Bay has scheduled two new sewage treatment plants, and waste loadings from that area's mills are being reduced.

[LAKE HURON]

Huron is smaller than Superior, but it is big enough and deep enough to generally cleanse itself. On the US side Bay City, Saginaw, Midland and Flint all discharge sewage into Saginaw Bay, and the Dow Chemical and Monitor Sugar Companies discharge industrial waste. All have remedial programs under way and the Bay water quality is expected to improve. On the Canadian side sewage and waste from Eddy Forest Products Ltd. has had an apparent effect on the taste of fish taken near the mouth of the Spanish River. Remedial programs are under study.

The Difficulties of Putting New Fish in Old Waters

A "fish-at-your-doorstep" program in two of the Great Lakes has run into difficulties. The Ontario Natural Resources Ministry and similar agencies in the United States planted Coho salmon in

Lakes Ontario and Michigan, and by the early 70's they were abundant in both. Fishermen stood elbow to elbow at the Credit River and other Lake Ontario tributaries and caught salmon ten pounds