

Experience the outdoors



ERIC SHARP/Detroit Free Press

Anglers in small boats drift with the current on the Detroit River as a huge ore boat passes behind them last spring.

AUTHOR EXTOLS AREA FISHING

If the Detroit area isn't the best urban fishery in the U.S., it has to be in the top four along with Miami, Tampa and San Diego.

The Detroit River, Lake St. Clair and western Lake Erie offer best-of-their-kind fishing for small-mouth bass, walleyes and muskellunge, as well as superb opportunities to catch large mouths, perch and a half-dozen other game fish.

Our channel catfish teem in numbers that leave southern visitors shaking their heads over how few Michigan fishermen target that species, and the way that sturgeon and whitefish seem to be coming back could provide even greater angling for the next generation.

That's why it surprises me that so few Michigan fishermen, especially those who claim to be concerned about the future of their sport, have heard of the Friends of the Detroit River.

Anglers interested in joining others concerned about protecting and preserving the habitat and inhabitants of the Detroit River can learn what it's all about when the group holds its annual meeting at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Westfield Center, 2700 Westfield in Trenton.

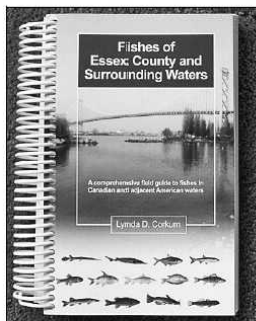
Even if they don't want to join, this meeting would be a great one for anglers to attend because the guest speaker is Dr. Lynda Corkum, professor of biological sciences at the University of Windsor, whose newly published "Fishes of Essex County and Surrounding



ERIC SHARP BELIEVES DETROIT AREA ANGLERS WOULD DO WELL TO HEAR DR. CORKUM SPEAK

Waters" does for local fish what the Peterson and Audubon field guides do for birds.

This book would be a great buy for any angler. It lists information about the range, spawning habits, diet and much more about 110 species commonly found in these waters.



Dr. Lynda Corkum will speak about her book at 7 p.m. Wednesday in Trenton.

While the title includes the words "Essex County," which is the peninsula formed on the Ontario side of the border by lakes St. Clair and Erie and the Detroit River, the fish in the book don't care about such geographic niceties and also live in southeastern Michigan.

Each species, from the smallest stickleback and shiner to the largest sturgeon and muskellunge, is accompanied by a color photograph accurate enough to tell what the fish looks like, something I can't say for all the fish ID books I've seen.

There also are taxonomic keys for each family that let the reader use details like mouth and fin placement, spine count and body markings to identify similar species.

Corkum's book is a spiral-bound paperback, printed on a tough paper that looks like it would stand up to living in a boat. It's a whopping 496 pages that includes pieces on the history of the area's waters and fishing tips about how to catch the species in the book.

"Fishes of Essex County and Surrounding Waters" sells for \$25 (U.S. or Canadian), and Corkum is donating all proceeds to the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club.

Call 734-675-0141 for more information about Friends of the Detroit River.

CONTACT ERIC SHARP: 313-222-2511 OR ESHARP@FREEPRESS.COM. READ MORE IN HIS OUTDOORS BLOG AT FREEP.COM/OUTDOORSBLOG.