

There Are No Fish in This Lake!

"There are no fish in this lake!" We have heard this claim made by a few visitors to our cabin. In response, we point to our mantle, which has a nice Large Mouth Bass mount, our photo albums, filled with fish pictures, and we tell a few of our favorite fishing stories. A few Sunday's ago we were blessed with the BEST fishing story yet!

It was a warm sunny Sunday afternoon on beautiful Forest Lake. We thought it would be a great time to relax and try a little trolling. Fishing had been going in spurts over this summer. A few pan fish here and there, and Rick had already caught (and released) two Michigan Master Angler, Channel Catfish (29" and 27"). When trolling wasn't getting us anywhere, except to the other end of the lake, we thought we'd try fishing at a spot that had produced pan fish in years past.

Rick was using his ultralight pole with 8 lb test line, minnow and bobber. I had my normal rig; Zebco pole, worm and bobber. We were getting a few nibbles from some tiny perch when all of the sudden it hit Rick's lure. We both saw it flash under the water and we knew it was big, but we couldn't tell what kind of fish it was. You know those three little words many love to hear; "I Love You", well for me those three little words are, "Get The Net!"

Just as this fish hit Rick's line, a boat was pulling up along side our pontoon. We looked over and saw two Department of Natural Resources (DNR) officers. Rick asked them to hang back until we landed the fish. The pressure was on - 2 DNR officers watching us trying to land this big fish!

Immediately after taking the bait the fish dove into a very thick weed bed, as if to say, "If I hide out, you won't be able to get me!" Rick followed good fishing practices; rod tip up and line taunt. He kept is drag at a level which allowed the fish to take line, but not so loose that he couldn't reel. Slowly, he began to reel in this big one. The fish stayed buried in the weeds. We have a trolling motor, which was key to being able to move the boat and follow the fish. While Rick was fighting the fish I was running around the boat in excitement, trying to get into position with the net.

Slowly the fish came to the surface. I am proud to report I netted it on the first try (If I missed with this big of a fish, I'm sure the thought of throwing me over board may have entered Rick's mind!) We had landed a 22 ¼" LARGE MOUTH BASS (~8 pounds), with 2 DNR officers as witnesses!!! We quickly took measurements and photos. This size fish qualifies for the Large Mouth Bass Michigan Master Angler Award! Rick then released the fish so it could be caught again another day.

The celebrating began immediately! It was great to have the DNR witness the excellent fishing available on Forest Lake. We were also glad to see the DNR out on the lake. They did check us for fishing licenses and inspected our boat. We had our licenses with us and all equipment was in order for the boat. We know that they were here to help protect our fishing and keep our boaters safe.

The next time we have visitors you can bet this new fish story will be the first one to be told, including pictures, and Rick's Master Angler Award. Whoever says "There are no fish in this lake", clearly hasn't fished on Forest Lake!

Submitted by:

Joann Surma