

THE MIGHTY MUSKIE

Good day, everyone--it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

Some years ago--ten or eleven, as memory serves--I stood near the Clarion River at Tionesta--a pretty little county seat in Forest County--and watched men pour muskellonge fingerlings into the Clarion...and they scattered everywhere. This action was part of the revival of muskellonge fishing in Pennsylvania--a feast for our anglers--and gave them a shot at the fightingest heavy-weight on the American continent--the muskie. He's called the Mighty Muskie and with good reason, this hook-and-run demon--he's a fighter. Ask any Pennsylvania angler who ever had a big one on the end of his line. And some weigh in at 45 pounds. As early as 1924 a record muskie which weighed 54 pounds was taken out of Conneaut Lake in Western Pennsylvania--and others that large have been taken in recent years, thanks to that revival program. Even as April is "Trout Month" in Pennsylvania--so is May "Muskie Month," one which fishermen look forward to catching, as they do Pennsylvania's heralded trout. Where they formerly cast or trolled for bass, walleye, northern pike and pickerel, they now look forward to the shock of a muskie strike that could bust tackle wide open and bring on human trembling. You fish for the big muskie in big waters in this State--waters with musical Indian names--Tionesta, Conneaut, Canadohta, Conewango, Allegheny, Susquehanna, and others. A 35-pounder, caught by Ardie Plattner of Cochranon, Crawford County at Sugar Lake--would you believe it measured some 53 1/2 inches--and that's no fish story--it's

the truth. The State Fish Commission's modern program, dating from 1953, was the introduction of muskies into lakes which had been newly built; in water supply reservoirs and existing waters which had not been populated by the fighter. There are many reasons, by the way, why the Commission doesn't rear as many muskies as trout--the limiting factor is food. Muskies will eat only live food and their consumption is enormous. At the Linesville Hatchery, for example, 10,000 young fingerlings and muskies have been known to eat an estimated 100,000 small minnows a day. They're a hungry breed--hungry for your offering. Incidentally, the Susquehanna River has brought back a fine return from the muskie plant and is now an excellent Central Pennsylvania source for fishermen.

But the first requirement of the angler for this fighter is perseverance--and a little knowledge--such as the fact that early spring and late fall are the best catch times. The muskie fast for a few weeks in the summertime. So prepare for a jaunt to the lakes and reservoirs and the big water rivers of Pennsylvania, my friend--the mighty muskie is waiting for you. Maybe he doesn't have the dash, or the class or the elan of the trout--he's no bantamweight...he comes on like a real rockem-sockem heavyweight--the Pier Eight Brawler of Pennsylvania's water. Toss that line in and begin trembling, man--you've got a fight on your hands from Pennsylvania's Piscatorial Powerhouse--the Mighty Muskie.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.