

Kids Catch Fish at East Aurora Fish & Game Open Outing

June 6, 2010; 91 Kids; 28 Volunteers; New Skill Development is Highlight

"The kids are all so excited!" said Susan Gould at the Registration station. Tall kids, short kids, boys and girls from 15-years old all the way down to the youngest wanna-be angler (6-months old), all awaited their turn to "sign-in" and get started at the annual East Aurora Teach-Me-To-Fish event for parents and kids. Rose Barus reported 91 kids registered for the outing, each provided with Mardi-Gras "fish beads" to officially show their registration status.

The weather gods showed favor as everyone enjoyed the surprisingly sunny, near perfect, 80-degree day, despite the nasty forecast that had called for rain and thunderstorms.



families to fish right here in Erie County. Kids were presented with their own free copy of the Lake Erie Fishing Hotspots Map.

Jovial Paul Stoos taught "how-to" fish lessons that enabled kids to learn more about bait rigging and "how-to fish". Lessons must have been good, as the kids caught a record number of slab crappie, bass and even a turtle.

At the casting station, Jennifer Baglio, Gerry Skrzeczkowski and John Murray demonstrated step-by-step skill-forming lessons to help kids learn how to "plunk" their casting plugs into small hula-hoop targets time after time. Jennifer reported, "the kids really "get good"



The kids valued their time visiting each of five learning stations where they learned to tie fishing knots, cast a line, discover where to go fishing

next time, how to adjust their bobbers and lines when they fish, and how to rig plastic baits.

Bob Carlson, Russ Johnson, Norby Antonik and John Bonanno demonstrated one-on-one fun as they taught kids how to craft the strong, but easy-to-tie, Palomar knot.

Next stop was at the Skeet Shooting shelter with Joe Fischer and Spencer Schofield, both visiting from the Erie County Fish Advisory Board,



where parents were taught the more many places they can take their

in no time!"

At the final learning station located at the pond, Mike Manka and kids discovered how-to rig a plastic worm, a plastic jig tail and how to fish with an artificial bait. No mess, no fuss! Modern mom's really liked this stop!

Another dynamic stop on the 5-learning station tour was the Bait Station. Fishing experts Art Fulle and Casey Glogowski provided fish tales and free nightcrawler / live minnow bait with lessons on how to rig. Over 1,000 worms were donated by Weekley's Bait Shop in Lackawanna, New York.

Bait in hand, all the skill development stations completed, Marty Bennett and volunteers provided pre-rigged rods/reels that enabled the kids to fish with an individual line.

The official weighmasters Matt Wendelbon and Charlie Hashem said, "The kids really caught a lot of fish today, the lunker pool aerator was busy and the kids were fascinated watching the big fish up close". Naomi Fulle added, "All the fish were later released to the big pond, the kids really enjoyed that task too!"



The "Lunker Pool" is a 6-foot swimming pool filled with pond water, complete with a powerful battery-operated aerator, allowing kids to watch the assorted finny critters swim as they competed for the biggest and smallest fish in each species category.



Dan Wilson and Sam Fowler maintained EMT watch at the official First Aid station, offering sunscreen, band-aids and advice, but were prepared with CPR

equipment and Emergency Rescue if needed by anyone for any reason.

Over the course of the fishing day, Erik Maeder, Dave Smyczynski, Butch Betz and Paul Hashem offered hands-on help and on-site fishing lessons as families fished the pond perimeter.



Mary and Megan Hubbard, Dave Zell (Jr. and Sr.) and John Borngaber donned their plastic gloves to provide a very professional service food line under the direction of Elaine Winters. Complete with the Sahlens backyard barbecue tent and grill, healthy watermelon, salads and, of course, a few cookies for good measure. The hot

dog line moved pretty fast, even though kids kept coming back for succulent seconds. Kids loves Sahlens hot dogs!

Youngster Bruin W. caught the biggest crappie (12"), Seth C. caught the smallest crappie (8-1/2"), Jared W. and Ian S. tied for the biggest bass (11"), Rylie T caught the smallest bass (6"), and the oddest catch rod/reel prize went to Sean K who caught the same snapping turtle twice!



Ashley Friol announced the happy 50-50 winner

followed by cheers and a nice round of applause from the crowd of 200+ people as the volunteers were thanked for a great day. Thanks were publicly noted to Pure Fishing, Mepps, Northern King Lures, Mustad Hooks, Will Elliott of the Buffalo news, and to all the East Aurora Fish/Game and Erie County Fish Advisory Board volunteers who donated the biggest prize of all, their time, to help area youth learn more about how to have fun in the outdoors through fishing. Special thanks to Jack Maeder for his professional photography skills!



Thanks TEAM!

Dave Barus 2010 Chairman

Dave Smyczynski 2010 Co-Chair



