

File Photo

Windsurfing is a popular activity at Fern Ridge Reservoir. Lessons and board rental are available.

## Reservoirs spawn recreational use

*Boating, fishing, bird watching top the list*

By Stephen Maher  
Of the Emerald

When the U.S. Corps of Engineers began work on Fern Ridge Reservoir 49 years ago, recreational use of the site was a moot subject. Authorized by Congress, the construction of the dam was based on the need for flood control.

Today, however, Fern Ridge and Eugene's other nearby reservoir, Dexter Lake, attract close to a million visitors yearly. And they come for one reason only: recreation.

At Fern Ridge, windsurfing has taken hold, joining older boating pastimes, such as water skiing and sailing, as a popular activity. At Orchard Point Park, for example, visitors can rent sailboards and receive windsurfing

lessons.

At Dexter Lake, where the water is much colder, boating is limited to sailing and crew, and for the diehards with wet suits, water skiing.

"The water for Dexter Lake comes off the bottom of the dam for Lookout Point Reservoir. So it is the coldest of all of the Corps of Engineer reservoirs in this area," said Bill Chapman, director of the Lane County parks department, which leases five park sites at the two reservoirs from the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

"Sailing is the primary thing on Dexter. There's very little windsurfing on Dexter, both because of the wind patterns and the temperature of the water. Of course, there is some swimming but not much. Mostly just sunbathing

and sailing," Chapman said.

Fishing also attracts people to the two reservoirs.

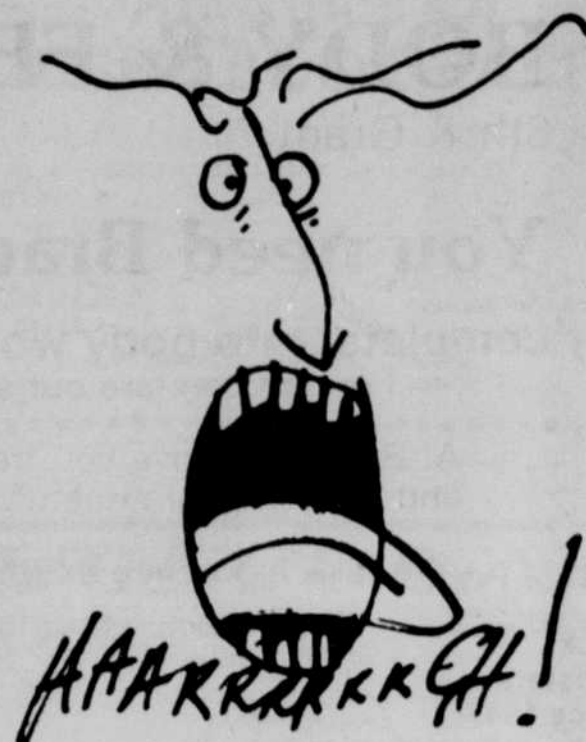
"There's a sprinkling of trout, both the rainbow, which are mostly put in by the fish and wildlife hatchery programs, and some native cutthroat," said Dick Lamster, natural resource manager for the U.S. Corps of Engineers' Upper Willamette River system. "I don't think Dexter has any (native fish), but I have heard of Fern Ridge having some. They may come down from the streams."

At Fern Ridge, there are warm water fish as well, including bass, blue gill, crappie and suckers, Lamster said.

But fish are not the only wildlife to be found at Fern

Turn to Reservoirs, Page 21B

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