

Crayfish offer an alternative for hunters

by KEN DURBIN
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While many of us travel the length and breadth of our state in pursuit of trout and steelhead, deer and elk, others find satisfying outdoor sport in their own backyards. "The Little Sports," are what outdoor writer Ted Trublood once dubbed those ancillary outdoor activities that occupy so many outdoorsmen between and in conjunction with other major outdoors events.

One of "the little sports" that is available to sportsmen almost anywhere in Oregon is pursuit of the humble crayfish. For some, the crayfish is a mere curiosity... that somewhat forboding creature with the big claws seen in the shallows of lake and stream. But for many others this crustacean relative to the lobster provides a satisfying outdoors past-time and a delicious addition to the family table.

One or more of three closely related species of crayfish is found in nearly every freshwater lake and stream in the state. Like the crab in saltwater, the freshwater crayfish is part of Nature's cleanup detail. Fish, insects and other crustaceans, mammals, birds... virtually anything organic which dies and finds its way into the water can be con-

sidered food for crayfish. Contrary to popular belief, however, the crayfish likes its food fresh and is not particularly attracted to decomposing materials.

This liking for fresh foods provides the key to transferring good numbers of these animals from natural habitat to cooking kettle. Crayfish are easily attracted to a trap with such baits as fresh carp, suckers, scrap meats or even, we are told, some

vegetable matter. Simple wire traps are available commercially, or are easily made at home by anyone with some hardware cloth, wire cutters and small hogrings.

Traps can be soaked for a few hours while the fisherman goes off in pursuit of fish or other recreation. But the most effective procedure is to leave them in the water overnight. The "smell" of the bait lays down a trail through the

water which the crayfish will follow until they have located the bait.

Youngsters have often been delighted to learn they could attach a bait to the end of a string, and that a crayfish intent on eating the bait would often hang on while drawn gently through the water to a waiting dipnet. And while not often terribly productive, kids can have a ball wading a shallow stream, turning over rocks, and at-

tempting to catch the speedy crayfish as they jet away.

In Oregon, no license is required to take crayfish and the daily limit is 50 per person. The season is open the entire year at all hours, and crayfish may be legally taken by angling, hand, baited line, net, rings and traps.

Near the turn of the century, Oregon was the number one US producer of crayfish for the market. In

later years, Louisiana took over this honor, but Oregon still is an important producer of crayfish, and the species found here are prized worldwide for their eating qualities.

Like other crustaceans, whose skeletal structure is on the outside of their bodies, the crayfish can grow only through a moulting process wherein the old shell splits and is exited by its occupant which then grows a new,

larger shell to accommodate a growing body. After molt and during the growth and hardening of this new shell, the crayfish is in what is known as the "softshell" state. During this time it is very vulnerable and secretive, hiding itself under rocks or other cover. Some crayfish are estimated to molt up to 12 times during the first year. Crayfish in warm, nutrient rich waters grow faster and larger than ones

in clear, cold water. A large adult crayfish in Oregon waters would measure five inches or more from tip of nose to end of tail. The average size is smaller.

Crayfish are very sensitive to water quality and are good pollution indicators. When the oxygen level in the water goes down, the crayfish either die or seek new waters. So the presence of large numbers of crayfish usually indicates good water

Ladies fall but it was 'a good season'

Lances Ladies were knocked out of action third round this weekend in the ASA State Softball Tournament, for girls 16-18.

In the first round the Ladies were tied 6-6 with Salem after seven innings. The defense held through the eighth and ninth, with Shannon Demoret walking across the plate and Debbie Rudisill knocking in Patty Gray for the final 8-6 win.

It was a "super" game, said Coach Lance Staab, "and my fingernails are short."

Gray had the only hit in a 5-0 loss to Lebanon on Saturday. "We just couldn't get any momentum going," Staab said.

Sandy suffered its second loss, 8-1 against the Eugene

Shamrocks.

They ended up with a 22-14-1 record. Although it could have been better, Staab said it was "a good season."

Gina Brigantic of Gresham ended the season having scored 39 runs. Rudisill ended up batting .339, and Gray ended up with a fielding average of .950.

"She wanted to play and win," Staab said about Gray. "That was really appreciated."

He felt she had her best season. "She outdid herself in all aspects," he said.

Rudisill was picked up by Thomas Distributing of Salem to compete in the regional tournament in Billings, Mont.

Dodson's take two for title

Dodson's Bargain Store won the city league championship Tuesday night, downing Paola's 5-4 and 10-1 in a doubleheader.


"It was definitely a team effort with all the girls pulling for each other," said John Dodson. Seven Bargain Store players hit over .500. The team averaged .450, and played "great defense" as well.

The Sandy Area Softball Association women's tournament will be held Saturday and Sunday at the high school field.

Hwy. 26, Sandy Phone 668-8058

PAOLA'S PIZZA BARN

Congratulations to:
Wendy Coleman



Wendy Coleman, 13, of Cottrell is prep of the week. She took first in the Regional Junior Olympics at Grandview, Wash., in the discus with a toss of 102 feet. She was unbeaten in the shot put and discus throw in four meets for Cottrell Grade School this spring as a seventh grader.

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