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## GRAYLING IN MICHIGAN.

BY JOHN H. BISSELL, OF MICHIGAN.

Having been asked some questions about this rare member of the salmon family, I assume that the subject may be of interest to your readers who are anglers.

Where is the Michigan grayling found to-day? Any one really wishing to know may take a map of Michigan to follow my answer. Begin at a point on Saginaw Bay at the mouth of Saginaw River, and draw a line west by southwest to the mouth of the Muskegon River, on Lake Michigan, and all of the grayling waters are to the north and west of your line. Let us start again at the same point on Saginaw Bay and follow the coast northward towards the Straits. The first stream of any size is the Rifle River. I am informed upon good authority that grayling have been found within the past three or four years in the Rifle and its tributaries. I am not sure that the appearance of the fish there is of so recent a date as my informant believed, but with a fairly extended knowledge of such matters I had never before heard of their being there. There is no reason why they might not live and flourish in the Rifle, as its waters are suitable.

The next river to the north is the Au Sable, where grayling have been known since 1841. This is one of the most famous of fishing-grounds. While to those who fifteen years ago used to kill from one to two hundred grayling a day, this river seems to be "fished out;" it still furnishes fair sport to the humble philosopher who is satisfied with a moderate reward for his day's work.

To the north, in Presque Isle, Montmorency, and Alpena counties, is the Thunder Bay River, with its numerous branches of fine water. I have never heard of grayling in any of them, but from their situation and the character of the waters, I should want good proof that grayling were not to be found in the head-waters of this system. This is des-

tined to be a great brook-trout region, as the railway facilities now permit its being stocked.

The Pigeon and Sturgeon rivers, flowing nearly north into the Straits of Mackinac, at Sheboygan, are well stocked with grayling.

From the Straits around to the head of Grand Traverse Bay are the rivers and brooks which contained brook-trout before any were planted by the State. Originally there were grayling in all these streams, but for twenty years or more these fish have been so scarce here that they have really ceased to be grayling streams. South of the Boardman River, which flows into Grand Traverse Bay to our imaginary line, is a distinctively "grayling country." The main rivers are the Manistee and the Muskegon, the whole region spoken of being drained by their tributaries, except two much shorter streams, the Pere Marquette and White rivers.

This comprises the grayling region of Michigan. There is one stream on the Upper Peninsula, about twenty miles from Houghton, where grayling are found—the east or north branch of the Ontonogon River, crossed by the D. S. S. & A. R. R.

The rivers and their branches above mentioned are most conveniently reached from the interior of the State by the Michigan Central Railway (Mackinaw Division) for the eastern and northern, and by the Grand Rapids, Indiana, & Chicago and West Michigan for the western streams.

Over a large part of the territory described the grayling has beyond question become very scarce, mainly by reason of the indiscriminate fishing of the citizens, lumbermen, and hunters, as well as fishermen from other States. The lumbermen and hunter have speared and netted and used dynamite for meat during the close season. The others have killed more than they could use. The running of logs has undoubtedly done great injury to the grayling by the disturbance of their spawning beds, as they use the

channel of the main stream, not seeking the brooklets and shoals, as the trout usually do. Still there are grayling yet to be had, and most delightful sport it is to capture them with delicate tackle.

Nothing has been done by the State for preserving the grayling beyond experiments to determine to what extent the grayling can be bred in captivity like the brook-trout. The experiments have not been successful. Grayling kept in stock-ponds have gone for several seasons without showing any signs of spawning. The experiment is now being prosecuted in a large wild-pond—that is, a portion of a natural grayling stream screened off, where the fish remain in entirely natural conditions of bottom and shade without any molestation. Unless the approaching spawning season turns out better than 1888 and 1889, I think the State Fishery Commission will conclude that the only feasible way to increase the grayling will be to establish one or more camps on the Manistee, or other stream where spawners can be secured, and handle the fish there, taking the eggs from fish caught in spawning season, as is done with white-fish and shad, and hatching in shad-boxes or some similar appliance, in the river, turning loose the fry intended for the stream where operations are conducted and transporting to other localities in carrying-cans.

There is no doubt that if nothing is done to save them they will become practically extinct in the next five or ten years.

There are some inaccessible places where they will undoubtedly linger many years; but they are or will become practically extinct when they are so few and so scattered that their pursuit no longer furnishes reasonable sport to a reasonable and modest angler.

The grayling waters of Michigan are cold, clear, rapid streams, flowing through bottom-lands and sand regions, and in no case, to my knowledge, over rock formations, an alternation of the most beautiful ripples and pools.