



# Foothills

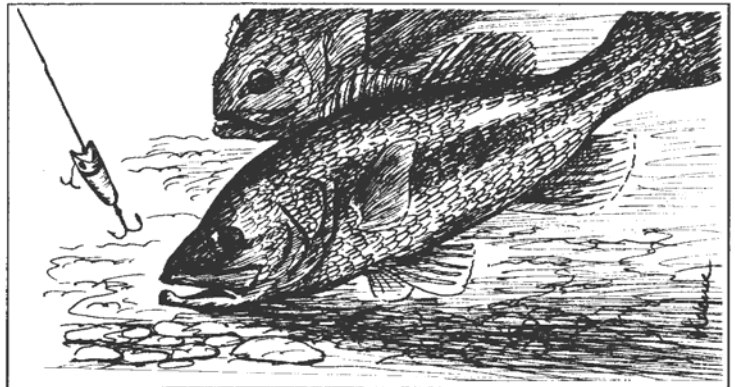
## Nature Notes

CITY OF PALO ALTO • COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT • OPEN SPACE, PARKS AND GOLF DIVISION

### Fish Are Jumping in Boronda Lake

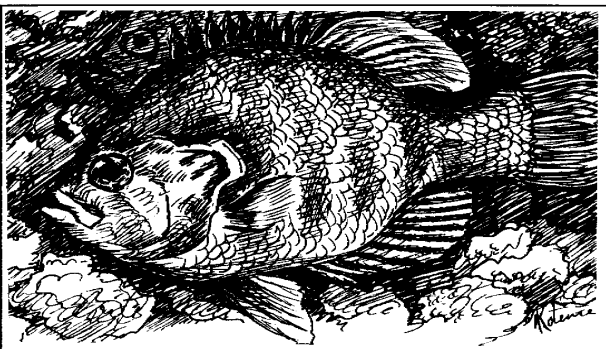
Fish populations are doing well in Foothills Park's Boronda Lake. The lake is about 10 feet at its deepest point. As Boronda Lake was refilled after dam repairs in the mid-1980s, it was stocked with Florida-strain largemouth bass, red-eared sunfish, channel catfish, and Sacramento River crayfish. The following information is about the kinds of fish in the lake, and provides a few fishing tips for new fishermen and -women.

**LARGEMOUTH BASS:** Largemouth bass grow to a weight of 20 pounds. The upper parts of a largemouth bass's body is greenish-silver; the lower part is white with a black line running along each side. They prefer shallow water and are most likely found in areas with submerged vegetation and other protective cover. Depending on its size, a largemouth bass feeds mostly by sight on a variety of foods from plankton to ducklings. Largemouth bass can be caught with both bait and lures, using a medium weight rod with six to ten pound test fishing line. Night crawlers are the best



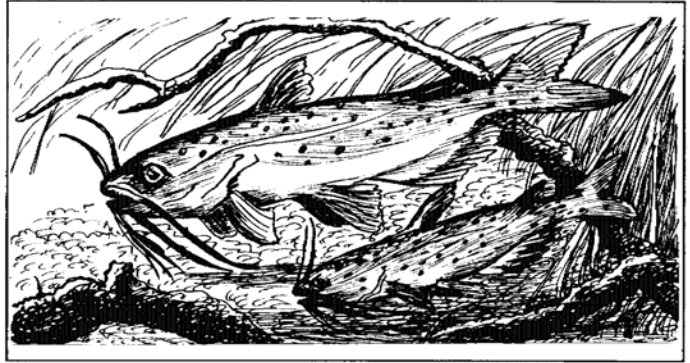
type of bait to use. They can be rigged with a bobber about two feet above your hook, or you can slowly "crawl" the worm along the bottom of the lake. If putting a live worm on a hook does not appeal to you, plastic worms are available where fishing supplies are sold. There are various types of lures that work well for bass fishing: spinners, spinner baits, plugs, spoons, and jigs. The easiest of these are spinners and spinner baits. The other lures require specific movements in order to make them look real enough to be effective.

**RED-EAR SUNFISH:** The handsome Red-ear or Shellcracker has become a most popular panfish, providing great sport. (Panfish are those species too small to be considered "game fish," or those that conveniently fit into a frying pan.) Red tips on the edges of the gill covers gives this sunfish its name. Long pointed pectoral fins also distinguish them from other park fish. They grow rapidly after the first year, but, unlike their bluegill cousin, are not prone to overpopulate. Young fish should be two to three inches long; in another year they should reach five inches and eventually nine inches. They feed upon snails and other mollusks, plankton, other invertebrates, and tiny fish. They prefer bottom and deeper areas of the lake. A light action, seven-foot fly rod with a soft rubber cricket as a lure works



well when fishing from a boat or working along the shore. You should cast toward the weeds and let the cricket slowly sink beneath the surface of the water. Light spinning tackle can be used as well, and is much easier for children to handle. Use four to six pound test line on a spinning or spin-casting rod, and use small jigs, spoons, or artificial worms as lures. Crickets and small pieces of night crawlers can also be used.

**CHANNEL CATFISH:** Channel catfish got their name because they usually live in river and stream channels. They also do very well in lakes. A channel catfish has a slender body with bluish-gray on the back and sides, shading to white on the belly. The fins are yellowish with a narrow black edge. On average, they weigh between one and five pounds. Catfish swim in schools and ordinarily feed at night. However, they can be caught during the day. They usually feed on crayfish, insects and plant material, finding food by smell and touch while working their way along the bottom of the lake. The best way to fish for catfish is with a small piece of bait laying on the bottom of the lake. The best bait to use is a piece of night crawler or worm. Use a small shot weight placed about one to two feet above the hook. It's been several years since a catfish was sighted; let us know if you catch one.



**A FEW MORE TIPS:** *Barbless hooks should always be used for better survival rate of released fish.* Remember to look, listen and feel for any movement of your rod or line; it could mean you have a fish. Set your hook, embedding it into the jaw of the fish, by pulling up and back with a quick jerking movement of your rod. Remember to keep good tension on the line as you reel in your fish, and have the drag on the reel set loose enough to that the line won't break.

**STOCKING BORONDA LAKE:** It has been many years since the lake was stocked; at his point the fish are essentially restocking themselves. The stocking program for Boronda Lake consisted of planting both adult and juvenile fish of each species. The larger adult fish are called "brood stock." These fish spawn and continue to create a self-producing, healthy population. Therefore, the park staff ask for your cooperation in doing catch-and-release of large fish in order to maintain the brood stock in the lake.

**REMEMBER:** It is illegal to use "bait fish" such as goldfish, chub minnows and shad. Once these bait fish get into the lake, they may overpopulate and out-compete the other fish for food and shelter. We ask that you help keep the the fish population as pure as possible. Also, please remember that a fishing license is required for those 16 years and older, and that all California Department of Fish and Game regulations apply to fishing in Boronda Lake. If you are unsure of these regulations, talk with a Park Ranger before you begin fishing.

Boronda Lake fishing will be enhanced for years to come with your cooperation today. **GOOD LUCK!**

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