

reduce snake populations, but indiscriminate killing of all snakes regardless of species accomplishes little and may create or intensify other problems, such as rodents.

If it becomes necessary to remove turtles from a pond, turtles are easily trapped using a trap that is easily constructed from chicken wire. To make the trap, roll a piece of one-inch mesh chicken wire 60" wide and 60" long into a cylinder 60" long. On both ends of the cylinder, make 4 cuts, 15" apart. Each cut should be 12" deep. Now fold these ends of the cylinder inward and reattach the cut ends to each other to create funnels pointing inward with a small end opening of approximately 12" by 6". A trap of this size will catch all but the largest snapping turtle. To trap a very large snapping turtle that weighs more than 20 lbs., start with a piece of chicken wire that is 6 by 8 feet. Follow the previous directions but this time make the opening of the small end of the funnel leading into the trap approximately 10" by 18".

To use the trap, place it in shallow water where turtles are most likely to feed. Make sure that the top part of the trap is above water so that entrapped turtles or other animals accidentally trapped do not drown. Nylon rope or metal cable should be fastened to the trap and tied securely to a tree, rock, stake or other non-moveable object on shore so that entrapped animals do not roll the trap into deeper water and drown. Almost any meat bait will work effectively in the trap, but one of the most convenient and effective baits available is a partially opened can of sardines. Place the partially opened

can into the trap before putting the trap in the pond.

Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes don't generally thrive in fish ponds. If much of a fish population exists, the mosquito larvae will be eaten. Moreover, mosquitoes need calm water surfaces for development. Any parts of a pond that wind ripples will be unsuitable. Only very shallow, protected pond edges will support them. Small fish usually dispose of most larvae in these places.

Most kinds of mosquitoes that cause problems for people come from temporary puddles that lack fish. Keeping a stable pond water level prevents the frequent flooding of shoreland which would make isolated puddles for mosquito breeding. Don't try to control mosquito breeding unless you have found exactly where they're breeding. Then confine control efforts to those sites.

Beware of using insecticides near ponds to control mosquitoes. These chemicals are very likely to kill the fish.

A safe, effective, and pleasant mosquito control is to install a purple martin house near the pond or at the area of human activity. One colony of martins will usually keep mosquitoes at a tolerable level during daytime and early evening.

Another biologic way to control mosquitoes is with gambusia fish. These small warm-climate fish can be stocked in marshes, swales and seasonal puddles where our native mosquito-eating fishes are frozen out in winter. Gambusia also die in cold weather, but it's easy to recap-

ture a few and keep them indoors during the winter, then stock them again in late spring. A few in each separate water area will multiply fast and keep mosquito larvae cropped down.

Leeches (Bloodsuckers)

Michigan has about 50 species of leeches, of which only four attach to humans. Most kinds of leeches feed on other animals, such as turtles, or on dead matter. Therefore, the first thing to determine is whether leeches are attaching themselves to people—or whether leeches have merely been sighted in the water. No control is needed unless the leeches are definitely causing a problem.

Often, the most effective way to reduce leech populations is to reduce the amount of organic debris on the pond bed. Leeches dwell in accumulations of twigs and leaves at the bottom of the pond and swim up or reach out to attach to host animals. Some leeches attach to aquatic plants and stretch to amazing lengths in search of passing food. Preventing or controlling beds of dense vegetation may also help to control leeches.

Another method for controlling leeches is to have plenty of bass in the pond—or trout, if it is a cold-water pond. Such fishes are avid predators on most of the troublesome leeches. In fact, some kinds of leeches are highly effective fishing baits, and they are a hot-selling item at bait shops. Stocking 25 to 50 yearling (6-8-inch) bass per acre should reduce leech populations so that they are no longer a problem.