

Indulging roadside impulse provides the perfect perch



**JOE FITZGERALD
CHASING PISCES**

Always have a fishing rod in the car. It does not have to be your best, and you do not need all your tackle there. Just keep a cheap telescopic rod and reel in the trunk along with a few hooks, spinners, and swivels. Like a jack, tire iron or first aid kit, the fishing rod may come in handy at an opportune moment.

I was driving on the highway toward Halifax when a small body of water came into view. It was one of those ponds you see every day, year after year. One of those ponds that makes you say to yourself, "I bet there are fish in there," but you never stop. You've got to get to work, or home, or somewhere else.

Well, on impulse, I slowed down and pulled over onto the shoulder of the road, just past the pond. I popped the trunk and took out my telescopic fishing rod and rigged it with a snelled hook and spinner. It sounded like the Daytona 500 as cars and trucks whooshed past me. So much for the quiet solitude of fishing.

The embankment had some surprisingly high bushes. In the summer it would be pretty much impassable. I climbed down and found a rock to cast from. It was

overcast and drizzly, but there was not a breath of wind. It was a weird combination, hearing the endless traffic in the background while delicate mist dappled the water. It was as if I'd stepped through a portal and into a world of hushed stillness, while the clamour of the other world continued on the other side.

I put a small, soft plastic grub on the hook and cast. The splash it made disappeared in the light rain. I reeled it just fast enough to give the spinner some action. About halfway back I felt a tiny nibble. My heartbeat sped up. I cast again and got another bite. And another. I was getting lots of

bites, but no hook set. I cut up the grub and put a piece on the hook. Another cast. Almost immediately another bite, and with more hook exposed, a set. The small fish jumped out of the water twice before I reeled it in. Black bars ran down its scaly, greenish-yellow sides. Its fins were deep orange at their base.

It was a yellow perch, and despite its small size, it was fat. There was a jelly-like substance on its belly. Eggs. It was a spawning female. I put it back

and cast again. I immediately had another one. The pond was full of them.

After half an hour of nonstop action, I turned hesitantly toward the highway and passed back through the portal into the busy noise of civilization.

An impulse and a handy fishing rod had solved a mystery. I smiled and melded into traffic as the tiny pond shrunk in my rear-view mirror.

Joe Fitzgerald is a freelance writer living in Halifax.

ABOUT PERCH

● Nova Scotia is home to two species of perch, the yellow and the white. The yellow perch is more common. Neither is related to the ocean perch, although the white perch can live in salt water and is occasionally sea run.

● The yellow perch is scaly and spiny, and generally does not grow more than 30 centimetres. Many anglers consider it a pest when pursuing trout or bass, but the fish can put up a great fight when hooked.

● It's not looked on as a food fish in Nova Scotia, but the flesh of the yellow perch is white and tasty. In other parts of Canada, such as the Great Lakes, there is a huge commercial fishery for perch.

FISHING FEVER
FLY AND TACKLE SHOP
www.fishingfever.ca

Fishing Fever Fly & Tackle Shop has the right equipment to outfit everyone from beginner to pro. We have the largest selection of fishing gear and fly tying materials in eastern Canada featuring quality brand name products.

454-2244

1-877-617-3474 • Fax: 455-4151

2858 Agricola Street,
Halifax, N.S. B3K 4E7
info@fishingfever.ca