

## Don't leave home without your fishing guide

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You wouldn't think of taking a trip in your car without checking a map to plan the route. These days, you just might use a dash-mounted global positioning system (GPS) for even more accuracy.

The same should be true when fishing any water that's new to you. Unless you go with someone who has experience on a particular lake or river, you should get some reliable local information before you begin.

Ask at bait or fly shop, go on the web, or get a map like a HotSpot to obtain that information.

Thanks to the years of work by men such as Birmingham resident John Long, the Challenge Chapter of Trout Unlimited has been publishing Stream Guides and hatch schedules for a long time.

The newest edition is "A Fisherman's Guide to Pigeon River Country."

The good news is it's in color. The bad news — if you plan on a trip to either of these rivers, invest in a guide.

That's because of the swiftness of the river (Sturgeon), the amount of private property you'll encounter and the difficulties with wading and fishing. From fast water, to large slippery boulders and overhanging banks, fishing can be tricky. So can wading or canoeing.

A partner, preferably someone with prior knowledge, would be a good idea. This updated version is dedicated to George Featherston, who is responsible for converting the guides to color. He died in April.

Three guides that include the Sturgeon, Black, and Pigeon Rivers are included in this guide, along with detailed information about hatches, directions to 46 access points, and stream conditions, including current, river depth, and potential for wading difficulties.

Maps and site descriptions are in color and very readable, as are the selection of flies for these rivers.

Freeway exits and driving directions are included and clear, along with amenities at access points such as portable toilets and parking.

Distances back to the parking areas are listed and include whether riverfront property is state owned or private.

This spiral-bound guide is just one in a series. Start by purchasing the guide for the river you currently fish, and then add more as you begin to move around.

I carry mine in a bag, along with a separate emergence schedule, a journal to jot notes from my trip, and other odds and ends I think may be useful.

When it's time to head north for the opener, just grab the guide and go. "A Trout Angler's Guide to northern Michigan's Pigeon River Country," produced by the Challenge Chapter of Trout Unlimited, is available at the chapter's Web site and through retail outlets.

Color photos of the area, a history of the Pigeon River Country, photos and patterns of popular flies and an emergence schedule are also included in the 46-page book. The cost of the book is \$32.

The Challenge Chapter's web site is <http://www.challengechapter.org>.