

Perfect day for fishing

Peaceful opening at Loch Lomond

By JOHN ROBINSON
Sentinel staff writer

LOCH LOMOND — A lone fisherman sat on a stump, at the tip of a forested finger of land that pointed into the water of Loch Lomond reservoir.

A few feet away, dropping into the darkness was a thick night-crawler, curled around a hook — waiting for a passing lunger that might, or might not, bite.

"It's one of those days where you don't care if you catch anything or not," said Mark Edwards, a Lompico fisherman enjoying the opening of Loch Lomond. "It's better than working or doing housework. What a day."

As Edwards fished Wednesday, the sun shone upon perfectly still water, the temperature was in the 70s, and the air filled with the smell of redwoods and songs of birds.

The reservoir opened this week for fishing, hiking and other recreational use under perfect conditions. All that has been missing, according to rangers, are crowds of people.

"It's as quiet as I've ever seen it for an opening week," said park ranger Walt Cacace. "The water is clear for this time of year and the fishing has been good."

About 300 people showed up for opening day Tuesday, and only a couple of hundred on Wednesday. Opening days usually draw about 600 to 800 people, most of whom are looking to catch big fish.

According to Cacace, the biggest fish caught Tuesday was a 7½-pound bass, and a few trout about 17 inches long, weighing over a pound.

While rangers and visitors reveled in the idyllic day, Cacace said the city hopes business will pick up, as the salaries of park employees are paid from entry fees.

The small turnout was a welcome change from 1992, when the reservoir opened to the public for the first time in five years and thousands of anglers descended upon the loch, creating huge traffic jams and neighborhood complaints.

While the reservoir opened without fanfare this year, dozens of fishermen were waiting.

"I've got to get some bass," said Larry Phillips, a city trash collector who loaded his boat and drove to the reservoir as soon as he finished his route. After lifting 1,100 cans of garbage, Phillips was ready for some relaxation.

"I come out here a lot," Phillips said. "There's some bass in Pinto Lake, but that place is kind of trashed. This is nice."

On Tuesday, Phillip's fishing buddies left with stringers full of



Dean Misner ambles back to his car with his catch Wednesday at Loch Lomond. Dan Coyro/Sentinel photos



One ranger says opening week this year at Loch Lomond has been the quietest in years.