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On Wisconsin *Outdoors*

With the Dick Ellis Experts



Photo By Dick Ellis

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■ Hunting, Fishing, Trapping, Travel & Outdoor Humor ■

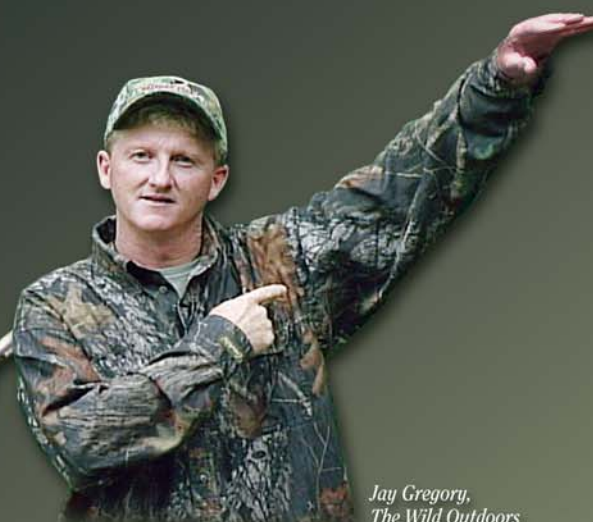
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JASON GAURKEE

ON WISCONSIN WATERS

River flathead frenzy

The summer moon rises over the lazy days of late summer and peak fishing for most species has long passed. Warm, low water, expanding weed growth and peak baitfish populations can make most fish species uncooperative. Then suddenly there are flatheads.

As Wisconsin's larger river systems keep rolling on, they also support awesome flathead fisheries. The dark, warm waters of the Mississippi, Fox, Wisconsin and Wolf are all world-class fisheries when it comes to big flatheads, but for some reason they go relatively unnoticed among Wisconsin's angling community. However, once a fisherman tangles with his or her first 30-pound-plus flathead catfish, fishing for those "other" fish will never be the same again.

NIGHT MOVES

Flatheads, especially big ones, are nocturnal feeders by nature. Sure, some trophy fish are taken when the sun is high but day to day and week to week, big time summer flathead cat fishing takes place under the pale moonlight.

Most outings I partake in begin late in the afternoon. No need to be on the water early, no need to rush, not for this fishing. Instead, I usually drop anchor in a prime spot right around sunset. My flathead endeavors go into the early morning hours. To be successful, you must become nocturnal yourself, if only for a night.

SUCKERS FOR SUCKERS

Flathead catfish have been known to hammer artificial lures of every make and creed. In fact, at certain times of the year, particularly in spring and early summer, utilizing artificials to target flathead catfish can be the best thing going but I rarely see this "artificial bite" occur in the late summer months. In July, August and September I rely exclusively on live bait.

It is a fact that flathead catfish prefer a live bait. Chubs, juvenile pan fish, carp and suckers are by far the best bait options available. Sure, the occasional monster flathead is taken with a night crawler, cut bait or even stink bait but I will guarantee a large lively sucker will out fish most other baits badly, at least here in Wisconsin.

How large is large for a sucker? I prefer suckers in the eight-to-14-inch range and would use larger ones if only they were more readily available and cheaper too. Besides suckers, redbait chubs in the six-to-nine-inch range will suffice, although they are difficult to keep alive on the hot muggy nights of July and August.

SUMMER WHEREABOUTS

Although flatheads can be located just about anywhere in a river system, there are certain areas on Wisconsin's river systems you can bank on. Remember, we are focusing on late summer flathead locations, that period of post-spawn behavior just prior to the early fall.



Areas below locks hold the key to late summer flathead locations. (Photo by Jason Gaurkee)

"Black water keeps rollin' on past just the same."

FLATS

Shallow flats adjacent to the main channel are a good place to start. Often referred to as a feeding shelf, these flats can be a couple of feet to ten feet in depth. Most flats I encounter are soft bottomed in nature. Some have weeds. The best flats are light on vegetation, close to the main channel, light on current and draw panfish and baitfish. Shallow flats are prime time night locations all summer long.

LOCKS

Lock systems are most prominent along the Fox River below Lake Winnebago and along the Mississippi. For those unfamiliar with a lock, it is simply a raised canal, level with the river stretch above the adjacent dam and used to allow boats and barges to navigate from dam to dam. Water fills the lock. A boat moves in. A gate shuts. The water is drained or raised and the boat moves on. It's actually an awesome sight to see.

In late summer the areas just below a lock can provide the best

fishing opportunity on a given stretch of river. In fact, they are my go-to spot as night sets in. One interesting phenomenon occurs every time a lock is being utilized. Countless gallons of water are discharged as a result of lowering a lock, triggering a feeding frenzy. When filming a TV show a few years back, I had three rods set off as water was being flushed out of a lock, two of which went twenty-five pounds or better. Watch for this and be ready.

HOLES

Simply put, a hole is a depression in a river's bottom. Sizes vary. Some are as large as an Olympic-sized swimming pool, others as small as a kiddie pool. Regardless, holes are perhaps the best locations when the sun is high. In other words, holes are day time locations.

When fishing a hole, it is best to anchor 20-30 yards up river. Fish will hold in the deepest areas when the sun is up. As dusk approaches flatheads will move to the heads of the



Dave Sura with 30 pounds of Fox River catfish taken with the author.

Continued on page 7

DICK ELLIS

ON WISCONSIN OUTDOORS

The Mississippi's killer kitties

An urgent call is coming over the line and Ron Gehrke strains to take in the message. A weighted blue gill hooked just behind the dorsal fin, quiet until now in the Mississippi River bottom murk near the tangle of fallen timber that just might hold a giant flathead cat, shimmers in distress. The 911 call is unmistakable.

This "telegraph" line is 63-pound braided nylon. If the predator cat, which will only stalk and eat live forage, strikes the gill, Gehrke is counting on a strong enough leash to wrestle the fish out to open water before it battles its way back to the snags. A lifetime of taking cats up to 56 pounds in this beautiful slough country of pool #8 near La Crosse, and the belief that 100-pound flatheads work these waters, will make a man prepare properly for a heavyweight bout.

"You've got to get 'em out of the wood, get 'em out in the open and hope for the best," he says. "I just tork on them. That's ripping-lips time. They're so powerful. A channel cat can fight, but they're not in the same class as a mud (flathead). The thought of setting the hooks on something that you might have absolutely no control over is intriguing. You don't know if the next cat is going to be two pounds or 60."

The bluegill flutters again, and Gehrke tunes into the "tick, tick, tick" traveling up the line. "Something chasing you, buddy?" he whispers, a question soon answered as bluegill becomes catnip.

Gehrke narrates the story of the cat finding its "comfort spot" where it will sit and eat the gill. "This is a small cat, a gar, or a snapping turtle but it's not our big cat," he says, standing to bury the hook. Soon, a four-pound flathead surrenders.

Ron Gehrke talks the talk with the Mississippi cats. And he's walked the walk on these Mississippi sloughs for four decades, since his father, "Catfish Carl" Gehrke, introduced his son to his own love of shore fishing for channel cats. By age 18, Gehrke had purchased an old aluminum boat for \$25.00 with a five-horsepower Sea King outboard. Without the aid and comfort of a map, he set out to learn the sloughs, solo.

"I got lost often," he said. "That was awesome. A tour will give you a better perspective of just how lost a person can get."

During his ongoing river education, Gehrke discovered the joys of

picking a catfight with a flathead. With literally hundreds of flatheads to his credit, he met this reporter to launch our own cat attack from Goose Island near La Crosse, a wildlife area Catfish Carl had maintained in employment years before.

Following a winding journey through these beautiful sloughs teeming with wildlife, we settled into two of Gehrke's special, timber-shrouded bluegill hotspots. Using icefishing teardrop jigs dressed with worms, we pulled gills and a lone crappie for bait. Pannies caught for live bait must be counted as part of the daily panfish bag.

We traveled and stopped to hunt flatheads at a number of time-proven snags or new, similar-looking wooden mazes preferred by cats within this often-changing river environment. With the skiff anchored, for example, in shallow, brown-running current, the gill is lowered into a seven-foot hole on a home-molded two-ounce sinker upstream from the targeted logs or snags. The presentation makes easy pickins for kitty.

"The mud cats are lying in these snags in the current breaks facing upstream," he said. "We're lowering these gills ahead of the snags which are hooked behind the dorsal fin to keep them facing downstream. The cat feels the gill, hears it and smells it. If he wants it, he can hit it head-on and never have to turn it in its mouth. These predators take live bait only. We catch flatheads here trolling for walleyes with crankbaits."

When a cat does hit, Gehrke knows generally the size of the predator by its feeding technique. A small cat will run with the bait, moving to a location where it can turn the gill in its smaller mouth, finding a haven safe from larger flatheads that could make a meal of him. A big cat will annihilate the gill immediately and never move until it's ready.

Eventually, we anchor near the protruding branches and root system of a fallen tree. Cats will hold here for specific reasons. Shallow water with vegetation housing a good bluegill forage base is adjacent to the deep water current breaks, shade and snags allowing easy transition for the flatheads moving in to feed. A big cat, Gehrke said, will move through shallow vegetation and suck gills in from a foot away.

With difficulty, we finesse our bluegills through the tangle of wood in a deep hole until the sinker hitting bottom tells us our diner is open for business. And we wait. When the cat answers the dinner bell, there is no time to think. I only react, literally catching the heavy-duty rod by the end of its handle in flight before it is ripped out of the boat, to the obvious delight of my host. After a great fight, a flathead cat just shy of 20 pounds is invited in for photos and release.

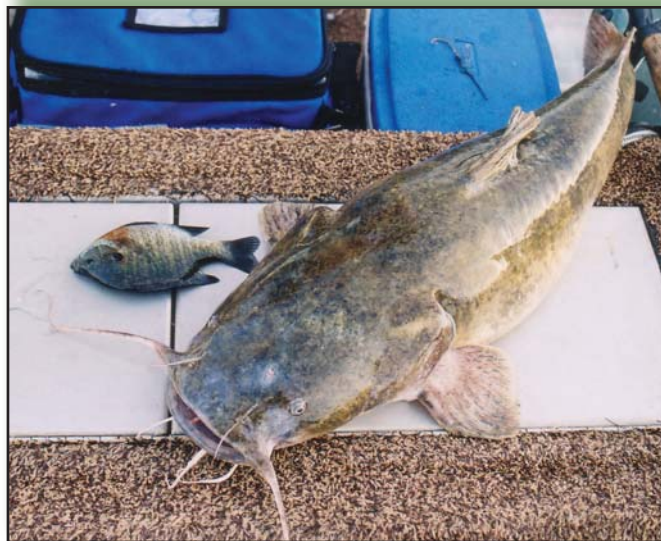
"A big cat is a vicious eater," Gehrke says. "They're an unforgiving predator when they hit. If they want that gill, it's coming home. You had your hands full at 19 pounds. I believe there are flatheads in here weighing triple digits."

"Think of the heavy current, the 40 feet of water and the great food source by the dams where these fish can just lay. We've all heard the old wives' tales of the divers going down by the dams and being frightened by the size of the cats they see. Well I believe it. And I'm sure a 100 pound cat will be caught here."

Gehrke congratulates me on "my" cat. But we both know exactly whose fish this really is. In fact, without expert catman Ron Gehrke on these beautiful Mississippi River pool #8 sloughs, one reporter would have been lost 100 yards from the landing. *W*

CONTACT INFORMATION

Ron Gehrke is a veteran hunting and fishing guide experienced in filming numerous hunting adventures for the Outdoor Channel cable television network, and lifelong resident of the Lacrosse Area. Contact him at Ace Sportsland of Lacrosse at 608.788.9950.



A 19-pound predator flathead with the live bluegill meal that led to his demise...at least until he was released to eat and fight again. (Photo by Dick Ellis)

On Wisconsin Outdoors

With the Dick Ellis Experts

Hunting, Fishing, Trapping, Travel
and Outdoor Humor

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DAVE SURA

SHORE BETS*Spoon-feeding summer salmon*

"Fish on!" I yelled as the drag on my reel sings through the night air. Each summer a situation like this repeats itself up and down the shores of Lake Michigan when king salmon migrate to the shallows in search of food. When the conditions are right, there is no need for a boat because the action from shore is incredible.

TIMING

Timing is critical when trying to catch summer salmon, and water temperature is the single most important factor. This is true whether you're in a boat or on shore. Salmon like cold water. Ideally, they like water temps to be in the low to mid 50's although salmon, especially chinooks, will tolerate temperatures higher than that. Finding cold water near shore is often difficult. As the warm southwest and west winds bring in hot weather, they also mean hot fishing. These winds blow the warmer surface water out and across the lake causing the colder water from below to upwell, or move inshore, drawing baitfish and salmon close to shore. This upwelling usually occurs in late June through mid July before the lake's surface temperatures get too high and the cold water moves further from shore. Surface water temperatures can be obtained from the Internet at www.coastwatch.msu.edu or buy a thermometer and check it yourself. As long as the cool surface water remains near shore, fishing will be good. Once the water warms too much, the baitfish (alewives) move out to deeper, cooler waters, taking the salmon with them.

Time of day is also extremely important. Since the water has cleared

up from mussel infestations, salmon generally feed only under low light. The best times are usually at night (between 10:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m.) when salmon take advantage of the darkness to ambush alewives. Once the sun comes up in the morning, most of the fish move out to deeper water. Fish can be caught during the day; however, the bite is much slower than at night.

LOCATIONS

Not every port is created equally, nor is every breakwall. The best ports are those that have deep water closer to shore. Lake Michigan is deeper the farther north you go. The ports between Milwaukee to Algoma are generally better for summer salmon as the water gets colder faster and stays colder longer because of their adjacency to deep water.

Although fish travel up and down the breakwall, certain areas hold more fish. Areas of current attract fish. The end of all piers is a great location to look for fish as these areas funnel fish through because of the current around them. Bends or gaps in the breakwall are also good locations to look for fish, as these areas also create or change currents. Other locations along a breakwall such as changes in pier composition (where it changes from concrete to rock) or rock outcroppings also attract and hold fish.

EQUIPMENT

Having the right equipment makes a big difference when fishing for salmon from shore. Rods between eight and 10 feet are ideal for making long casts as well as fighting these powerful fish. Medium to medium-heavy actions are also needed for hook setting power and fish control. I personally use a medium action 9'6" St. Croix Avid series salmon/steelhead rod for this purpose. Reels need to be large enough to hold line to handle the large runs salmon frequently make. It is not unusual for larger fish to make 100-200 yard runs. The reel should hold a minimum of 250 yards of 10-pound-test line, have a smooth drag, and at least three ball bearings. I use a 5000 series Shimano Stradic. I have found this reel to work perfectly for shore fishing. It gives me the line capacity and smooth drag I desire without the bulk of many larger reels.

Line: Monofilament works fine. It does, however, have memory and

becomes stretched out after landing several fish. When this happens, it will coil up severely causing a headache for the angler. Braided lines work better. I recently started using Berkley Fireline Crystal in 14-pound test. It has the diameter of six-pound mono with no stretch or memory. That means no tangles. It also gives you more power to fight fish. I add a barrel swivel and about two feet of 17 to 20-pound mono to the end of the line. This acts as a shock absorber as well as making the line less visible when fishing during the day. If you're using mono, the swivel will also help prevent line twist.

Lures: There are several lures that I feel work the best. These are Little Cleos, KO Wobblers, Kastmasters, and Moonshine casting spoons. Sizes should range from 2/5 ounces on the low end up to one ounce on the high side.

Color: During the day the best colors are silver and any color combined with silver. At night, glow-in-the-dark colors are the best. My favorite colors are green and blue glow. All brands make glow spoons, although I prefer the new Moonshine casting spoons because they glow longer between charges. This means more time fishing and less time charging lures. Before using new spoons, I recommend changing the factory hooks. I've found that they're not as sharp as hooks that are purchased separately. I recommend brands such as Gamakatsu, Mustad or VMC.

Other than spoons, you'll need very little tackle. You'll need barrel and coastlock snap swivels in sizes 3, 4 or 5, 17 or 20-pound leader line, a flash charger to charge the glow-in-the-dark spoons, and pliers. Put this all into a shoulder bag and you're ready to go. The last piece of equipment needed is a net. The net should have a hoop large enough to fit salmon and should have a handle that can extend to at least eight feet. The long handle makes netting fish easier as Lake Michigan's water level is low, making the piers higher. Nets by Beckman and Frabill are the best. I use a Beckman Chinook series net and really like it. It has a large hoop and a long handle that allows me to reach the water.



The author dethrones a summer King from the shore of a Lake Michigan tributary

TECHNIQUES

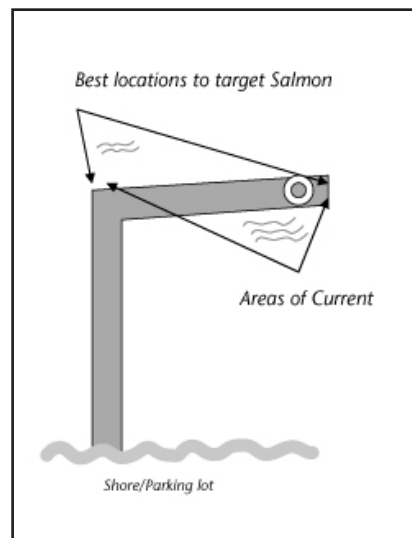
Fishing with spoons is a no brainer. However, there are a few simple techniques that will put more fish on the pier. First, vary the depth on your retrieve. Let it sink to different depths and then retrieve it. Fish will be at different depths in the water column depending on water temperatures, location of baitfish, and light levels. Second, vary the speed of your retrieve. Not all fish want the lure moving at the same speed. Change it up to see what speed the fish want on a given day. Third, change the action of the spoon. Try jigging it. Use a stop-and-go retrieve. Sometimes fish need an additional trigger to get them to bite. Again, mix it up to find the right technique to get bit. Finally, change lure sizes, styles and colors. If you see a particular color or style working, match it. I've seen one spoon outfish another many times. Bring a variety of brands, styles and colors with you. Fish don't always want the same spoon and/or color pattern every day.

CONCLUSION

Bonus fish such as steelhead and brown trout can also be caught using these techniques. These fish are great fighters and usually bite better during the day than salmon do. They will also tolerate warmer waters than salmon, allowing anglers more opportunities to catch fish from shore.

If you haven't tried spoon-feeding summer salmon, you need to try it. I can't guarantee 30-plus fish in four days as we did last July. However, if you follow these tips, I know you'll hook up some summer salmon. *WS*

Dave Sura has fished Wisconsin waters for over 25 years. He specializes in shore and tributary angling for perch, steelhead and salmon on Lake Michigan. He can be contacted at 262.930.8260 or steelheadsura@yahoo.com.



Typical Lake Michigan pier.

Summertime Fishing

"Big Time" on the Bay

By Dennis Radloff

One of the great benefits of fishing the big waters of Green Bay is the opportunity of catching big fish all season long, and summertime is no exception. Many people are under the impression that you need to battle the elements of late fall in heavy clothing for the chance at a big musky, northern, or walleye. This is when the warm summer months can really shine on the Bay in more ways than one.

The big open waters of Green Bay offer numerous reef systems that hold some of the biggest fish of the season when the tributary bays reach peak warm water temps. This is where you can target trophy walleyes in the middle of the day in complete comfort. You will find that some reefs produce better than others but the main element is to find the reefs that have a good supply of baitfish. This can be easily accomplished by using your locator to find suspended schools of baitfish.

Once the baitfish are located, you can effectively troll those reefs with either crawler harnesses or crankbaits, matching the depth of the baitfish with your presentation.

Another great summer opportunity on these reefs is the large muskies and northern pike. Targeting deep weed edges with large bucktails and crankbaits will put you in position to contact the large predators that are waiting to ambush their next meal. If you have a hard time finding weeds on the reefs, then the deep weed edges in the smaller tributary bays will work also. Find the deep weed edges in the small tributary bays that are the closest to the main bay. The G-Train bucktail and the Double #10 blade bucktails work best. Keep your boat out and away from the weed edge leaving yourself some room to bring the bucktails in nice and deep. Usually a moderate retrieve will achieve this deeper presentation, and set the hook good and hard on any little flick, tick,



Dennis Radloff's client Darrell Janacek with a 34-inch walleye caught last August trolling cranks on the big water reefs of Green bay.

"REEL" MEN BLEED

Are You a Wisconsin Blood Brother?

**Be a Hero.
Give Blood.**



Wisconsin Fishing Guide Phil Schweik and his wife, Rhonda Schweik



This SGS client took a 45-inch pike last July on the deep-weed edges casting large bucktails.

tap, or bump you feel.

As always, any time you are fishing big water, remember to stay alert and aware of changing weather conditions and allow yourself time for safe return in the event conditions change.

Have a safe summer out there and best of luck to you! W

Captain Dennis Radloff owns and operates Sterling Guide Service. He guides on the waters of Green Bay and Southeastern Wisconsin seven days a week April through November. Contact him at www.sterlingmusky.com, or call him at 262.443.9993.

GAURKEE, from page 3

holes in route to their shallow water feeding areas.

SPILLWAYS

Spillways are those areas just below a dam. Although flatheads are not big fans of lots of current, they do utilize these areas. Spillways draw numbers of baitfish. The turbulent water disorients shad and other flathead food sources, making them easy targets. Spillways can provide decent action both day and night.

When fishing a spillway, please take safety into consideration. These areas can be extremely dangerous and they take lives each season. Many dams have distance restrictions. Follow these restrictions. They are in place for a reason.

TUFF TACKLE

Tossing big suckers for flatheads requires some heavy bait casting equipment. Ever try tossing a twelve-inch sucker attached to a two-ounce egg sinker with a spinning rod? Spinning gear has no place with this type of fishing. Instead, try rigging up with a seven-and-one-half to a nine-foot heavy action bait casting rod paired with a heavy-duty bait casting reel like an Abu Garcia 6500 or 7000 spooled with Power Pro's 80/18. Due to all the abrasion associated with fishing zebra mussel-infested river systems, braided line is mandatory.

When rigging my rod with a sucker, I use a simple slip sinker type rig, a lot like a Lindy rig. I tie a swivel and about an 18-inch leader from that swivel to the hook. When selecting

hooks, go big and bold. Sizes will vary from an 8/0 up to a 15/0 or bigger when rigging big suckers. Shark hooks? Maybe. You will find though, when hooking a big sucker or chub, you will need a lot of hook gap to consistently hook large flatheads.

Sinker sizes, like the hooks, will vary too. The rule of thumb I have is to keep the suckers on the bottom. A half-ounce sinker will not keep a one-pound sucker from running all over the river bottom and into snags. You will want enough weight to keep things anchored based on bait size, depth and current flow.

There are several different sinker styles that will work for sucker fishing for flatheads. A walking sinker, egg, bell and pyramid are just a few. I have found the Water Gremlin snap-on bell sinkers to be the best for this type of fishing. First of all they have a built-in

swivel which allows a sucker to move 360 degrees. Another important feature; when a snag occurs, it is usually because the sinker is jammed in debris. The snap-on sinker will break free from your line, saving you from retying a ton of rigs.

Catfish are one of the most popular fish in the United States; however, few anglers explore this fishery in Wisconsin. Take this information and give it shot. Perhaps I'll see you on the ol' black water where I ain't got no worries cuz I ain't in no hurry at all. *W*

Jason Gaurkee has been guiding, writing and filming television shows on the waters of Wisconsin and beyond for over ten years. He can be contacted at jmgaurkee@yahoo.com or 920.851.6655.

ROY KALMERTON

ON THE PROWL WITH THE WOLF PACK

Mid-summer Lake Michigan fishing

The weather is heating up on the shores of Lake Michigan. So is the trout and salmon fishing off the port of Sheboygan. Chinook, or king salmon, once again dominate the Lake Michigan catch numbers with anglers reeling in a record number harvest of 431,000 salmon in '07, according to DNR angler (creel) survey. Last year's harvest was the highest number of Chinook that anglers reported catching since creel surveys began in 1969, making this not only a record year, but also the sixth straight year of outstanding King Salmon fishing. Anglers reported catching 398,905 Chinook in 2006 and 418,918 chinook in 2005.

In a 2006-2007 Wisconsin DNR statewide mail survey, Lake Michigan was ranked #1 in the top 10 fished waters of the state. Field & Stream magazine in 2006 picked Lake Michigan Coho Salmon fishing to be number one, followed by the Columbia River, Oregon. A record number of charter trips (2,440) from the Sheboygan harbor resulted in an average catch per trip of 10.9 fish, making Sheboygan the second-best port in the state to fish.

TACTICS

Many Kings in the 20-pound range have been caught early in the

2008 season in and around large pods of baitfish, making the season's fish-size outlook the brightest in the past five years. Cross your fingers and watch them grow! Looking back at our own records, The Wolf Pack had its best success during these mid-summer months working 100-150 feet of water. Trolling at speeds of 2.1 to 2.5 mph, typically fishing the middle of the water column has been very effective. Dodger/fly combinations with Bull Frog and Baby Blue, Howie and purple glow-colored Screemer flies produced Kings regularly 18-24 inches behind the 11 inch flashers. #4 Silver Horde in the double-cracked ice color off down riggers also proved to be deadly in the arsenal. Magnum-sized Jeff's tackle three-hour glow spoons on the riggers and side pole Slide Divers are another sure bet.

If you don't own a boat and don't have the budget for a charter trip, don't fret. Mainly, don't forget Lake Michigan pier fishing this summer. The salmon move in as the water temperatures drop. Target the river mouths after:

- 1) West winds that take warm water out;
- 2) Heavy rain that brings dark water cover and a scent trail that salmon can't pass up;



Mid-summer fishing provides best opportunities for big fish & big catches. Lake Michigan Captains Jerrad and Roy Kalmerton show off a typical King.

- 3) The ultimate—a combination of the previous two.

Fishing mid-summer means comfortable fishing, stable weather, and fast action. Don't miss the boat. *W*

Captain Roy C. Kalmerton and sons operate Wolf Pack Adventures in Sheboygan. Contact Roy at 920.918.WOLF (9653) or wolfpackadventures@tds.net. For fishing reports and hot bait of the day, go to www.wolfpackadventures.com.

Monster Tails

A Frankenstein approach to muskies

By Phil Schweik

On a recent outing to one of my favorite lakes, a soft-plastic bait was destroyed by a big musky a few cranks into the retrieve. Electrified with the strike, disgusted with the result, I threw it onto the pile of ripped-up baits at home that looked uncannily like a pile of ripped up 20 dollar bills. At least they hurt the same.

No more. Instead of tossing all that wrecked rubber away, try this simple fix for almost any soft plastic bait on the market.

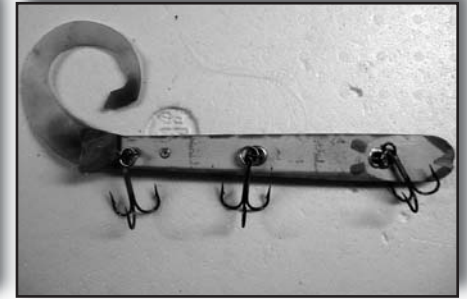
When your bait gets so torn up that it is virtually unusable but you're still on the water, use a small lighter and heat up the plastic around the tears and cuts to simply melt the plastic back together. With deeper cuts, heat up a small knife and insert the tip into the wound to heat the interior plastic first. Once heated, remove the knife and pinch the area together holding firmly until it sets up. This will fix most if not all necessary repair jobs.

If the bait is torn up beyond minor repair, save it for home. Take it to whatever serves as your workshop and perform major reconstructive surgery. I may end up removing the good tail from one bait with a ripped-up body and attaching it to bait that has a good body but a missing or ripped-up tail. Sometimes I even use pieces of one bait to remold another one back into fighting shape again. I will heat up, remold, piece together, and reheat again until I have created a working bait—sometimes a bait of different or multi-colors.

Consider cutting off a tail of one bait and switching it with the tail from another to achieve a plastic original in color or style. I have done this many times, and in some "crunch time" tournaments or guiding situations, this method has put fish in the boat. I think that the fish may become accustomed to seeing a particular bait often enough that they will not strike. Sometimes, a simple modification is all it takes to provoke that strike.



Don't throw that mangled plastic musky bait away. Consider instead minor or major surgery. Attaching a new tail from a different plastic may lead to new tales of big fish



"The dreaded Triple S: Schweik's Squirrely Suick."

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Dog Day Pike

Northern on the down low

By Dave Duwe

You have heard of the dog days of summer, when the fish shut down. But that just isn't the case when it comes to northern pike. The dog days of summer are when the pike action actually heats up. Pike prefer the coolest water to make their home, which makes them very easy to pattern in the heat of the summer.

The pattern I find most success with in the summer is the deep weed line bite, which starts in the first or second week of July and runs through early September. Once the cool fall temperatures approach, the bite ends because the upper water column will cool, making the northerns more comfortable throughout the entire lake. The fish in July and August are in the 18 to 28-foot depth range associated with deep weeds. The best way that I have found to catch these fish is by Lindy rigging suckers. I use a 3/4-ounce walking sinker and a 1/0 bait hook. Circle hooks will also work well. The leader length I like is 24 inches. I don't use a swivel; instead I prefer to use a small split shot to "peg" my walking sinker. This way if you get a deep-hooked fish, you can simply cut the line and release the fish. Once you re-tie a new hook, you can simply slide your weight higher. It's faster than having to re-tie a whole new leader if you were using a swivel. It also eliminates the need to bring leader material with you. Another reason I don't use steel leaders is because it reduces the number of bites.

This system is pretty basic. The key to the method is the hook set. You

need to position your boat directly above the fish before setting the hook. If you set the hook from the side, you will drag the line across the sharp teeth. I like to use seven-foot medium-heavy rods with reels that have bait clickers. Abu Garcia's 6500C3 is my first choice. The reels are spooled with 20-pound-test clear Silver Thread.

The best locations for the fish are the weed lines directly associated with shallow bays. The warm water pushes all the shallow pike to ambush points on the weed line where they remain cool and can prey on small fish.

The way that I present the bait is slowly back trolling with my Motorguide Transom mount electric motor. I always prefer back trolling because I can keep a more constant depth. I like to go into the wind to maintain better bottom contact.

I typically will take the hook out of the fish while it is still in the water and then release it. With northern pike fishing, netting the fish can cause fin damage. You can see if you catch a fish that has been netted previously, the fins will be split and bloody.

The bite can sometimes be very subtle and other times as strong as catching one on a tip-up in winter. I will give fish line for about 30 seconds to one minute to digest the bait. I prefer using suckers or chubs. With the warm summer temperatures, the only real issue with this is keeping the bait alive. I like putting my bait in a floating bucket and then putting it in a five gallon pail of cool water. Once the water warms to a similar temperature of the lake, I will put them in my aerated live well.



Author, Dave Duwe
with a Delavan Lake
39-inch Northern Pike.
(Photo by Mike Heine)

My favorite lakes in Southeastern Wisconsin for this method are: Delavan Lake, Walworth County; Big Cedar, Washington County; and Whitewater Lake, Walworth County. This summer try this method on your favorite lakes and see how well it works. You might have a chance at the trophy fish of a lifetime. *W*

Dave Duwe, owner of Dave Duwe's Guide Service, has been guiding the lakes of Southeastern Wisconsin for 15 years, specializing in Delavan Lake and Lake Geneva. Go to www.fishlakegeneva.com or www.fishdelavanlake.com.

Deinlein's

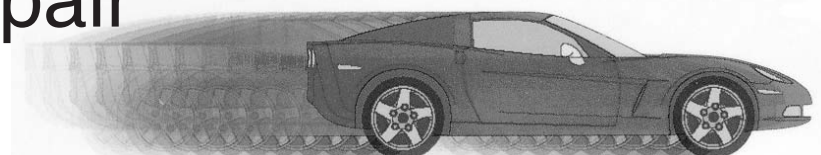
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Devils Lake

The "tough fishing" remedy

By Gary Engberg

It's that time of the year when fishing is difficult. Most of the lakes in South Central Wisconsin are covered with Eurasian milfoil and blue-green algae that can make fishing... well... *fishing* instead of *catching*. The heat of summer has driven water temperature close to 80 degrees and driven fish to their deeper daytime haunts. Night angling is a possibility because many fish feed nocturnally as the summer heats up. But not everyone has the flexibility to fish after dark.

As a fishing guide, I need a few reliable "go-to" summer locations when fishing slows or shuts down. Most people who I guide want two things—to catch fish and to have a good time. Sauk County's Devils Lake fulfills these needs and offers one of the most scenic backdrops in Wisconsin.

Devils Lake was formed when the glaciers slowly began to recede, leaving behind rock bluffs, steep hills, and a beautiful spring-fed lake. The lake is part of Devils Lake State Park, which annually attracts one million visitors to camp, hike the bluffs, and enjoy water activities. Don't let the

number of visitors scare you away from fishing this 379-acre, 45-foot-deep lake. Most visitors aren't here to fish, but to enjoy the beautiful fauna and flora of one of the Midwest's best state parks for camping and hiking.

Locals regularly fish the lake, but rarely does it have more than a handful of fishing boats. You'll find the visitors sailing, canoeing, swimming, hiking, and yes, fishing. But a vast majority of the fishing is done from shore, which limits the fishing success to pinfish and bass. Rarely do the shore anglers catch the stocked trout during the "dog days" of summer.

Annually, the DNR stocks over 16,000 legal-size brown trout for anglers to catch and enjoy. These browns bite consistently into the fall and then through the ice. Rarely do I ever go fishing on Devils Lake and leave disappointed! The trout are all over the nine-inch minimum and average 10 to 15 inches with larger trout routinely taken. The daily limit is three trout per angler. After catching your trout, there are numerous other species to fish for including northern pike, walleye, smallmouth and largemouth bass, and all types of panfish.

The pike grow large, in excess of 20 pounds, from feasting on the protein-rich brown trout. Crappies and bluegills are of good size, the largemouth average two to three pounds, and a few big walleyes combine to make this a good fishery well worth fishing any time of the year.

Addressing structure, Devils Lake is bowl-shaped with distinct drop-offs ringing the lake and falling into the deep water. There are boulders surrounding and rip-rapping the lake and good, green weed beds. The lake's bottom is a mixture of sand, gravel, and small rock.

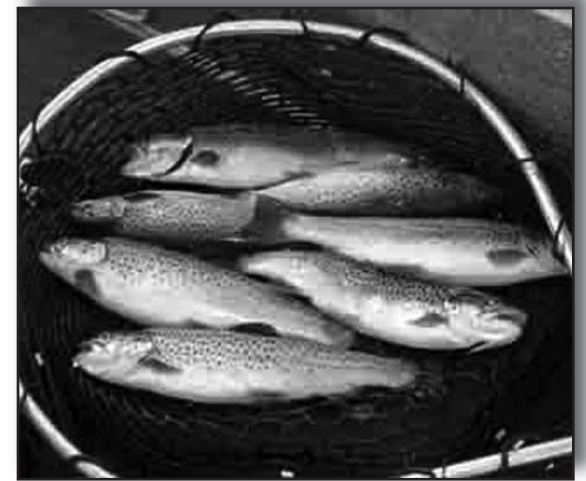
Devils Lake allows only electric trolling motors. This may keep fishing traffic down, but there are quality landings at both the north and south ends that can accommodate any size boat. Park stickers are mandatory and may be purchased for the day or season.

The best method for catching Devils Lake trout is to drift the main basin with a

lively three-inch fathead minnow (leeches also work during the heat of summer), a split shot, and a VMC #6 hook. Drift with the wind and position your boat with a trolling motor to keep it drifting horizontally. This way, you can fish multiple rods over the side of the boat. In Wisconsin it's legal to fish three rods. Try to keep your rods at different depths in the water column as you drift, searching for suspended trout.

This is low-tic fishing where a basic Lawrence LCD is about all you need to see your depth

and a quality drag are necessary. Sometimes I'll use a colored or glow



A day on Devils Lake can often take the sting out of tough fishing on other Wisconsin waters.

*"Most people who I guide want two things—
to catch fish and to have a good time.
Sauk County's Devils Lake fulfills these needs
and offers one of the most scenic backdrops
in Wisconsin..."*



Guide Wally Banfi shows an average Devils Lake trout

and mark the baitfish schools. During the summer, it's possible to even see the trout's thermocline. Trout suspend anywhere from five to 20 feet down over 40 feet of water. As you drift, cast out your minnow and try to measure the amount of line that you have let out. This fishing takes some experimentation, so vary the amount of line you have out until you catch a couple trout and then try to repeat the process. Imagine that you're using snap weights instead of split shots. Try using different weight shots to find different depths as the snap weights would when walleye fishing.

The gear that you need is also pretty simple: a good graphite rod about seven feet long with a medium or medium-light tip, and quality reels spooled in clear or green-color line armed with a # 6 hook (I recommend G. Loomis or Fenwick rods and Diawa or Shimano reels spooled with Berkley Trilene). The trout in Devils Lake attack minnows, and after losing a few trout, you'll see that a good hook-set

bead above my hook as an added trout attractor.

You're set for some trout action, especially during the "Dog Days" of summer! Devils Lake is an hour north of Madison off Highway 12 in Sauk County, just south of Baraboo and Wisconsin Dells. There's signage along Highway 12 directing you to the park's entrance. The Baraboo and Sauk Prairie areas have everything that you may need for a great summer outing. Remember, you need a valid fishing license and an inland trout stamp. Licenses are available at the park's headquarters at the north end of Devils Lake State Park. *W*

*Information, equipment, and bait:
Wilderness Fish and Game, Sauk Prairie,
(608) 643-2433. Guides: Wally Banfi,
(608)-644-9823 and Gary Engberg.*

Contact Gary Engberg Outdoors at 608. 795.4208 or gengberg@chorus.net. Or visit www.garyengbergoutdoors.com.

Terrestrial Time

And not only for trout

By Jerry Kiesow

July and August—the dog days of summer—are not the best time of the year for fly fishers. Oh, there is enough good fishing available, but it has to be done more selectively than earlier in the year. Now we “hunt” early mornings and late evenings. During the bright, hot daylight hours the fish go too deep for our tackle.

This is also the time of year to change our thinking. We want to think less about “what’s hatching?” and more about “what’s falling?”

By that I mean what kind of little critters—bugs, beetles, ants, etc.—that live by the water, but not in the water, might be splashing around, trying to get back home, after dropping into the water by accident, thereby, unknowingly, offering themselves as a meal to the fish. We who fish with flies refer to these as terrestrials.

This time of the year I revise what I put into my fly vest. I reduce the number of dry fly, nymph, and streamer boxes, and add a couple of boxes full of terrestrials.

In one box there will be: ants tied in black, brown, red, and red and brown; beetles in a variety of shapes and sizes in green, black, and yellow; and a few black and green caterpillars. Hook sizes will vary from #6 to #14's, depending on the pattern.

I will also have one box with grasshopper frauds. These include: Muddler minnows and the Hornberg, both of which can be fished to simulate grasshoppers. The Muddlers will be tied with the yellow underwing. I also include other grasshopper patterns (I like grasshoppers in season—to fish with, not eat).

Another pattern that I consider a terrestrial, but one which can be fished all year long, is the San Juan Worm. A simple pattern I usually tie it with is a beadhead for weight and a little flash. I tie them in brown and in red, and red with a brown “ring.” I have had success with these for panfish and brook trout.



(TOP) In the dog days of summer, brookies have been known to take the San Juan Worm. (BOTTOM) A selection of terrestrials the author carries in his vest this time of the year.

Two years ago I added a rather unusual pattern to my terrestrial box. An article suggested that if you can find a river or lake where elderberries grow, when the berries drop into the water, bass and carp take them like dry flies. I tied a few of the suggested pattern (they do fit the terrestrial definition—something that lives along the shore and drops into the water). Now all I have to do is find a place where they grow next to the river.

Elderberry bushes do grow in our town, but I have never seen one growing near our river—at least not the section I fish. One of these days I am going to float my berry terrestrial over the head of one of those crafty carp anyway and see what happens. Taking a carp on a terrestrial dry fly would be something.

How are terrestrials fished? If I am fishing a river for trout or smallmouths, I will cast upstream and

across, dead drift the fly on the surface through the normal glides and under the grass lined banks, just as I would a dry fly.

If that does not work, I will let the drift come to an end, then work the fly back upstream, imitating a drowned critter struggling against the current, partially wet, kicking and doing its best to reach some solid place to dry off and escape the water.

I do not put floatant on any of these flies. Most will partially sink after a bit of casting into and slightly below the film. That is just fine. So do the naturals.

I will also “dab” the fly upstream in a small pocket water when the conditions are right.

If I am lake fishing for bass and panfish, I will fish early and late and use foam beetles. Or, if the grasshoppers are about, I will fish them in the morning—all day if it is dark and cloudy and if the fish stay shallow.

I remember one morning a few years back, I was drifting in my canoe, working a new grasshopper pattern I had tied, planning on catching a smallmouth or two for supper that night. I was casting the shoreline which had a mixture of brush and lily pads.

I cast the “hopper” to the edge of whatever structure was showing, let it sit a bit, then twitched it. I never caught a single bass that morning. The bluegills wouldn’t let the smallies get to the fly. Such are the problems of a fly fisher in July and August. (By the way, the ‘gills tasted excellent for supper that night.)

Jerry lives in Grafton, WI. He fly fishes year round, teaches fly tying and fly fishing. He has also written a book, “Tales of The Peshtigo Putzer,” which includes some fly fishing tales as well as hunting and other yarns on a variety of outdoor activities. Get a copy at www.publishamerica.com, or if you would like a personalized autographed copy, send \$24 to Jerry Kiesow, P.O. Box 203, Grafton, WI 53024. The cost covers the book, tax, packaging and shipping. Makes a great gift.

Misfit

Wisconsin's misunderstood little kitty



By Chris Powell

I remember growing up in west-central Wisconsin fishing for walleyes with Mom and Dad. Once in a while we would get into something that felt a little bigger, and a little better. When we would get it up to the boat, the ugly head would poke out complete with a set of whiskers.

"Disgusting!" my Mom would yell, as Dad simply kept his distance. "Never touch the whiskers," he would tell me. "You will get stung if you do." The line was cut, and Wisconsin's misunderstood little kitty would swim away.

This was the mentality that was set into my brain as a child. One day fishing with my Grandpa and a buddy, though, we caught three channel cats that went directly into the livewell. "Aren't those disgusting?" I asked in amusement, which was met by hearty laughs from Grandpa. "One of the best eating fish there is," he said.

I also noticed the cats were being handled like any other fish. Grandpa

showed me what to really watch out for, and twirled the whiskers. There was nothing to be afraid of. Even knowing this, and pursuing cats myself in my early adult years, I was shocked to see that catfish were actually considered a gamefish, and widely popular.

For good reason—when you wrestle a big cat, you are in for the fight of your life. Cats will hang right to the bottom until they have nothing left. After catching a few 20-pound class fish in a day, you may not have much left either.

Catfish, most commonly channels

and flatheads, are found throughout Wisconsin. Look for them in slow current, river backwaters, and reservoirs. Catfish feed on...well...everything! Yes I mean everything. People use hot dogs, chicken livers, minnows left out in the sun for a week...you name it. Companies such as Berkley offer products like blood bait, for example, to the public. All of these will work for catching smaller "fiddler" cats, which are outstanding in the frying pan.

But when targeting larger cats, fresh-cut bait may be your best option. Be careful to check your regulations, however. With the new VHS laws you cannot use frozen fish from other bodies of water anymore. I would recommend buying some muskie suckers and using chunks of them. It will work just as well.

When targeting cats, you will want to use a heavy duty rod and reel. Don't get too fancy because the behemoths can wear on your equipment. I usually use a mono line 10 to 20-pound test, #2 size hook or bigger, with just enough weight to fish the bottom.

Fish the low-light periods of the day. While you can catch cats at any time of day, I have found early morning and early evening to be best. Cats grow more timid during the daytime. These long summer days

also mean the start of the best time of the year to catch multiple cats.

My rule for catfish weather? "The hotter the better." Nothing beats chasing cats on a hot, humid day. Get out and enjoy the catfishing opportunities in Wisconsin. Odds are, you have a goldmine right in your own backyard.

Contact Chris Powell at Fat Guy's Guide Service in Chippewa Falls at 715.577.9771 or www.fat-guy.org.



(LEFT) The author's favorite client is his daughter Audrey, whom he guided at half price...we mean no charge...to this big Lake Wissota cat. Just who guided whom is still a topic of debate in the Powell household. (RIGHT) Audrey Powell poses with a nice Wissota cat catch. Her daddy, Wisconsin Licensed Guide Chris Powell of Eau Claire, reportedly helped.

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Trolling For Success

Summer walleye secrets

By Todd Bohm

North Central Wisconsin is home to one of the hardest-working bodies of water in the world—the Wisconsin River. The Wisconsin River and tributaries with numerous reservoirs such as the Willow, Rainbow, Mohawkskin and Eau Pleine offer anglers a tremendous walleye fishery and a true wilderness experience. When fishing these reservoirs (some over 6,000+ acres) or even your hometown lake, trolling offers anglers an excellent option to study these bodies of water and to catch plenty of fish. Whether you are trolling these beautiful reservoirs or any body of water, the angler first has several things to prepare and consider to make the outing a success.



The essentials of trolling for walleyes on the Wisconsin river system.

EQUIPMENT

Proper equipment is a must to be an effective troller. Rods and reels are crucially important. Most experts will recommend at least an eight-foot rod with a medium action. Critical to the set-up is a quality reel with an accurate depth counter to ensure the lures are being trolled at the correct depth. Most reputable rod manufacturers and sporting goods dealers offer rod/reel combinations that will work for the troller.

Line for the reels also needs to be considered. In the past, most experts spooled their reels with 10-12 pound monofilament XT. This line provided the stretch necessary to absorb the shock of trolling, especially in open

water. More recently, many anglers have begun using Fire line because of its ability to better handle abrasions and to allow lures to run deeper because of its smaller diameter.

The planer boards used also are a consideration for the angler. There are several brands available on the market and anglers have their specific reasons for using the boards they do. I personally prefer the Off Shore Tackle Company's planer boards. They are highly visible and run well even when being trolled in rough water.

Electronics are also key components for the successful troller. Graphing units with GPS capability not only allow anglers to map structure and fish, but also mark waypoints as they catch fish. Once these waypoints are entered, the angler can simply make another

trolling pass through this area where fish have already been caught. Knowledgeable trollers wouldn't be caught on the water without a copy of the Precision Trolling Book in their boat. This book provides trolling information for most crankbaits manufactured and an easy-to-read dive chart for each lure that indicates depths the lure will run at when trolled at certain distances. Rod holders and lure selection such as

crankbaits/spinners are also key components anglers should consider when equipping their boats for trolling.

RESERVOIR TACTICS

When fishing north central reservoirs, experts and beginners alike should spend time studying a map of the lake. Most of the reservoirs of the WVIC system have been mapped by reputable mapmakers or navigation chips for electronics. Structure is abundant on these reservoirs and should be considered when searching for walleyes. My most consistent pattern on these reservoir systems has centered on weeds and wood. Through map reading, observation



The author shows a nice walleye taken while trolling on one of the many North Central Wisconsin reservoirs.

during fall drawdowns, and time on the water, I have been able to locate numerous areas that consistently produce. For example, one of my best patterns on the Eau Pleine Reservoir has been a series of humps off of the river channel that rise up from 18-20 feet of water to 10-12 feet. These humps have weed growth that in the summer attracts walleyes in droves. One other spot on the Willow Flowage is similar in nature but instead of weeds has numerous stumps and flooded timber that also hold big walleyes.

As with trolling on most bodies of water, I tend to troll a variety of patterns and various depths until I hit upon a pattern that seems to be producing. Trolling a combination of deep husky jerks and shad raps in various colors until I hit on a consistent color the fish seem to like also pays off. My best colors tend to simulate forage fish of these reservoirs: perch, black and silver; and due to the large crappie population on some of these reservoirs, white. Usually during summer trolling, I will run my lures at a speed anywhere from one-and-a-half to two mph. I also employ S curves into my trolling pattern. This series of starts and stops by the lures often triggers fish and gives me an idea of increasing or decreasing boat speed if I notice a pattern. Trolling

into the wind seems to offer the best boat control, but in rougher water, this can't always be managed.

Pristine waters, wilderness settings, and huge populations of hungry walleyes can all be found in the reservoirs of North Central Wisconsin. Summertime trolling these waters can be a dynamite tactic for catching walleyes and can allow the angler to quickly learn a large body of water. Fishing these waters will also allow anglers to fine-tune trolling techniques so they can apply them to other waters they fish. This summer, get your lake picked out, your trolling gear rigged, and your biceps ready for some walleye catching fun. *WB*

Todd Bohm is a lifetime educator and principal in the D.C. Everest School District. He is an avid fisherman and hunter who guides the waters of Central and Northern Wisconsin specializing in all species of fish including trout. He can be reached through Wisconsin Angling Adventures. Contact Todd at 715.297.7573 or at www.wisconsinanglingadventures.com.

Old and Improved

Upgrading your muzzleloader for fall

By Dick Henske

If you have an older model muzzleloader, it is a nightmare to clean and keep the rust at bay. My rifle is a .50 caliber Knight Wolverine in-line ignition model. It is accurate and never failed to fire, but I hated to use it because of the cleaning mess, so I decided to make it more user-friendly for an old duffer like me.

The first problem was getting rid of the iron sights. When you are an old guy or gal you will not be able to focus on iron sights. The rear sight will be fuzzy. One way to overcome this is to put a piece of black tape on your eyeglasses with a large pin hole in line with your shooting plane. This works great at the range, but not in the woods at low light. First I went to a red-dot scope. The results were lower accuracy and it didn't feel right or look right. I really wanted a regular scope like my other rifles. Telescopes are legal in Wisconsin during the 10-day muzzleloader season, if it is one power or less in magnification. You can use any type scope during the regular gun season.

On a trip to Milwaukee we just



Taking care of your muzzleloader now means reliability when you need it most.



By upgrading your old muzzleloader and fitting it with a proper, legal scope, you can achieve groups like this at 100 yards.

had to stop at the new Cabela's and there it was: a Cabela's one power, one inch tube for under \$75. The mounting plate needed to be modified so the #11 percussion cap could be fitted to the nipple. The scope was easily mounted, and it looks and shoots great. At the 50-

yard range, the impact point was two-and-a-half inches high; one inch low at 100 yards with a 240 grain bullet.

Now to address the powder problem. The old black powder substitute, Pyrodex FFG was reliable, but

extremely messy. Every time the gun was fired you needed to clean it with soap and water, plus every fall when the gun came out it would have rust in the bore. (You can solve this problem by putting wheel bearing grease into the bore when not in use and then removing it before you shoot again). There are many new black powder replacements that have hit the market in the last few years that are sulfur-free and non-corrosive.

I selected Hodgdon's Triple Seven loose FFG powder which matches and even slightly improves the velocities

and accuracy of loads made with the old Pyrodex. Selecting the Triple Seven loose FFG allowed me to keep the old #11 percussion cap. For \$60 you could upgrade the Wolverine with a conversion kit to use the hotter #209 primer. Then you could use other powders. I needed to stick to the loose FFG powder with the #11's.

Cleaning time went from 30 minutes to under 10 minutes. Over a half dozen shots can be fired with only a damp patch used between shoots, but after six shots, the nipple started to foul, so be aware. The residue after firing is minimal. You can put the gun away for days at a time after multiple firings and still take it out and accurately shoot it and not be afraid of ruining the bore.

Saboted bullets of varying weights have always worked well in my gun with 100-grain powder loads. A sabot bullet means the lead bullet is a .45 caliber bullet in a sabot plastic sheath. After trying various types and weights I have stuck with two different bullets: a 300-grain sabot called the Alpha Gold 300 by Lightfield. It retains velocity which translates into a flatter trajectory and more downrange energy. The tables show I should be getting close to 1650 feet with the 100 grains of Triple Seven Loose FFG. However, it shoots five inches higher than my old 240 grain sabots, so I have a choice: for deer it will be the 240 grain and, if I go for elk, it will be the 300 grain.

If you are buying a new rifle, buy the new technology that shoots #209 Primers so that you can obtain better velocity and 200 yard-plus accuracy. The 209's are hotter to help ignite the harder-to-ignite FFG & stick powders.

If you find a used muzzleloader that uses the old #11 percussion caps, it will be priced right. Snap it up and use the system I have mentioned. It should work well for you, too.

I am not a black powder nut, nor do I claim any real expertise, but I have made my old unfriendly rifle very friendly. See you in the woods. Remember everything you'll ever need to know can be learned in a tree stand.

QW

Retired principal Dick Henske of Manitowish Waters hunts and fishes Wisconsin, Canada and the western states. Rarely does he miss a day in the field.



RAY HOWELL

KICKING BEAR*Tyus, Mary Lou and the Kansas gobbler*

Tyus Hoeppner, on his first hunt, tagged an impressive 23-pound bird with a 10-inch beard, sporting one-inch spurs.

As yet one more example of the generosity enabling Kicking Bear to enrich the lives of troubled and at-risk young people through outdoor experiences, Kurt Nunnenkamp from Paradise Adventures invited me to bring an aspiring young hunter to target spring turkeys on his property near Altoona, Kansas. Kicking Bear cannot help these youngsters alone, and time after time people from Wisconsin and from across the country have responded to kids in need by providing the local keys necessary for kids to escape outdoors.

Nine-year-old Tyus Hoeppner, who has attended several Kicking Bear campouts and shooting events but had never had the opportunity to hunt, would receive his field baptism against a wily Kansas Tom. After the long drive to Kansas, Tyus was quite excited to meet Kurt and to scout our hunting terrain.

Paradise Adventures has a great bunkhouse with lots of rooms to accommodate numerous mentors and hunters. After unpacking, we set the target at 25 yards and patterned the old single shot 20-gauge with the turkey's neck—our intended kill zone. From a comfortable sitting position, Tyus voiced a bit of last-minute concern that the shotgun recoil would hurt.

"No, just a little kick," I reassured him. "Keep your bead on the turkey's neck."

Tyus squeezed off his first round. The shot placement was perfect. After several practice shots, we prepared our hunting clothes and gear and got ready for the morning hunt. Tyus was able to talk to other young first-time hunters and to some who had been there before.

After an unproductive first morning, we had Toms coming into us several times that afternoon. None of the gobblers though, came close enough for a comfortable shot. Late that afternoon we drove our vehicle and crossed the creek to an area where we had heard a bird gobbling in the distance. We snuck into his showroom along the edge of a wheat field carrying a "secret weapon;" Mary Lou is a decoy that Kurt has great confidence in. Mary Lou was also the source of a few turkey romance stories and lots of laughs.

We set up along the edge of the field where Mary Lou could be seen from a great distance in all directions. After calling a few times, we had a bird respond to us but from a far distance. As the sunlight was beginning to shine through the trees, its warmth started putting me to sleep. Instead of dozing off completely, I called again. Tom gobbled from a woodline, but now just 50 yards from us. I don't know who was more surprised and shook up—Tyus or me! I told him to rest the gun on his knee and get ready for the bird to come in. At this point, Mary Lou was the only one keeping her composure.

Out of the corner of my eye, I watched a hen head right toward Mary Lou making quite a bit of noise, vocally announcing her entrance. Right behind her appeared the Tom. I was holding my breath hoping that they would come close enough for the shot. The gobbler kept stopping and displaying while the hen kept on a steady pace to Mary Lou who was just 15 yards from our ambush. I whispered to Tyus to pull back the hammer on his 20 gauge. That went very well. Tom then gobbled right in front of us! I am still not sure who shook the tree we were leaning against—Tyus...or me.

The hen was right with the decoy, but apparently not sold on our pitch that Mary Lou was the real deal. Tom gobbled again within 20 yards of us, then stuck his head in the air. "Shoot him in the neck," I whispered. It was dead quiet. Tyus did not squeeze the trigger.

The Tom was displaying again. I whispered again to Tyus that he should

shoot. The hen was leaving and the Tom was confused. Should he stay with Mary Lou? Or leave with the girl he "came to the dance with?" For the third time, I whispered for Tyus to shoot, an urgent request met only with silence. Finally, Tom realized that something was not right. His feathers unruffled and he turned to head in the same direction the hen had exited the stage.

"The Tom is leaving," I whispered again. "Shoot now!"

The scattergun report rolled across the field to end the story; Tom was

his fish, and thanked her for her help.

I discovered again that taking a youth on a hunt and being a part of his life for just a few days is an exhilarating and fulfilling experience. When the bonus means harvesting the animal you're seeking, there are no words to describe the feelings. The rewards are many times greater than had you harvested your own game, and the memories everlasting.

Special thanks to Kurt and Mike from Paradise Adventures for opening up their lodge to all the youth so they can have the opportunity to live a life-




Tyus Hoeppner accepted a bit of help from Ray Howell and one passionate decoy to tag his first Tom in Altoona, Kansas during a recent spring hunt.

flopping on the ground and I was running my fastest 20-yard dash ever to claim Tyus's first gobbler. I just stood there, holding the bird by the neck and shaking my young friend's hand. Tyus was in complete awe. I asked if he was excited, but he couldn't talk. He just kept shaking my hand, with a large grin doing any talking necessary. What an unbelievable bird—23.5 pounds, 10-inch plus beard with one-inch-long spurs.

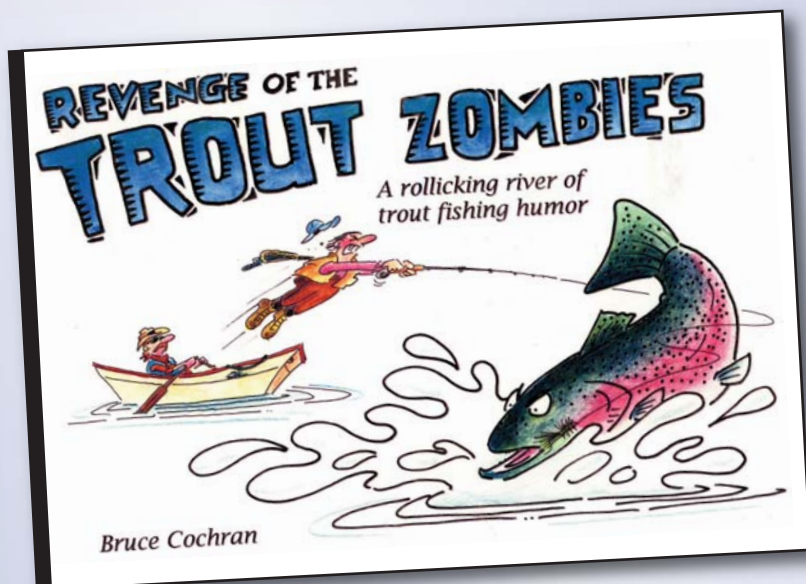
With almost all equipment packed, we were about to head for camp when Tyus walked over to Mary Lou. He gave her a kiss on the beak, much like our friend Jimmy Houston does with

changing experience. I am looking forward to taking Tyus on his first whitetail hunt in Kansas. Kurt not only has numerous birds, he also has a great area with many large whitetails. For more information, contact Kurt Nunnenkamp at 620.568.2010.

Great hunts, with great people! 

Recently honored by Outdoor Life, Ray Howell is founder of Kicking Bear, a national organization dedicated to enriching the lives of troubled and at-risk young people through outdoor experiences. Connect with www.kickingbear.org.

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To learn more about Bruce Cochran's cartoons, stories, and illustrations visit www.cochranscartoons.com

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TOM CARPENTER

BADGER BIRDS*Gray Catbird*

Because he lives in dense thickets and brushy woodland edges, you often have to locate the gray catbird by sound rather than sight. But once you know what to listen and look for, this shy and subtly beautiful bird of Wisconsin's summer will become one of your favorites.

Listen for rough-edged "meow" calls coming from brush, bushes and thickets. It sounds just like a lost or confused cat! The sound is what gave the gray catbird its name.

Look carefully for a handsome, all-

gray bird with a distinctive black eye and bill, and a black cap. Catbirds are a little smaller and more slender than robins. You'll frequently see catbirds on the ground as they search for fallen fruit and insects.

Leave a wild, overgrown corner in your yard and garden—most any type of deciduous shrubs are fine—as habitat for gray catbirds and other wildlife. Raspberries, blackberries, cherries, plums and mulberries all make great plantings.

Feed Gray Catbirds chopped-up

fruit or raisins, offered in a tray on the ground just a hop or two from cover. Catbirds will also come to an orange-half impaled on a tree branch.

Did you know that the Gray Catbird is a member of the Mockingbird family? As such, it doesn't just "meow," but also sings a beautiful song of pretty notes that run the musical scale. Catbirds also mimic other birds. *W*



TOM CARPENTER

CUB'S CORNER*Summer shooting builds confidence, makes memories*

It's not easy to get a kid into hunting these days. Urbanization takes people away from the land. Electronic and computer games mesmerize young minds. Youth sports require excellence and commitment, and eat up hours of time in practices and games.

These and other factors combine and conspire to keep kids out of the woods, fields and wetlands. But folks committed to taking kids hunting will find or create the time. That's good. Yet there is another challenge: finding a place to do some practice shooting, then conducting the session in a productive and enjoyable way.

You and I know that hunting is about much more than shooting and killing game. Young hunters do enjoy the wonders of nature and being with their parents or mentors. But kids are still very eager for success in the form of game in the bag, and you want to help them succeed. One of the most challenging and critical parts of that process is making the shot.

Today, there aren't as many places to shoot as when some of us were growing up. Gravel pits are now off limits. Local ordinances restrict gun use. Fewer folks have relatives "on the farm" where there might be an odd corner to use as an impromptu gun range. These limitations have turned what used to be a low-key outing into an event that needs planning, coordination and orchestration.

It was different when I was growing up in Southwestern Wisconsin. Opportunities to shoot were

broader. When the height of summer showed up in July and August, and hunting seasons didn't seem that far off, it meant Sunday afternoons at an abandoned gravel pit.

We'd shoot clay birds launched from an old Trius trap. I don't know how many clays we actually hit, but the process did help our shooting skills, and we sure got familiar with our shotguns. Toward late August, we'd have a target session with deer rifles and shotguns.

Getting your young hunter shooting is as important in this century as it was in that one. Young hunters want to be familiar with their firearms, and feel confident that they can make good shots. A lot of effort goes into taking a kid hunting, so shooting practice is essential. Here are a few approaches for making your summer shooting experiences good ones:

Find a Shooting Range. Nowadays, most folks have to find an established range on which to shoot. Check out local sportsmen's clubs, as many will have a day fee, and most are downright economical to join anyway. Another resource is wheretoshoot.org, a resource from the National Shooting Sports Foundation. Click on the "Find a Place to Shoot" icon and conduct your

search from there. A bounty of Wisconsin ranges will show up.

Plan Several Trips. Don't shoot all the guns in one day or you'll burn out your young shooter. If you're going to hunt upland birds or waterfowl, conduct a trap day with your shotguns. Later, have a rifle day with your center-fire rifles, slug guns or muzzleloaders. Take a plinking trip with .22's or pellet guns to stay sharp for deer hunting, and also to prepare for a fall squirrel hunt.

Familiarity Creates Safety and Success. One of the biggest missions you'll accomplish is getting the young hunter confident with each firearm and how it works—loading and unloading, where the safety is, aiming correctly, trigger squeeze, working the action ... these are all things that kids worry about, and they are best practiced under the relaxed and comfortable conditions of a warm summer day.

Teach Shotgun Basics. It's tough to get kids hitting a moving target, but young reflexes are fast and hand-eye coordination is great, so just keep at it. Teach the shooter to swing through and pull the trigger while the barrel is moving past the target. One instructor helped us by likening the shotgun's pellet stream to the stream of water from a hose.

Whitetail Session. Wisconsin's gun deer hunt is still a religion. Summer is a great time to sight in:

The weather is pleasant, the pressure's nonexistent, and the gun's zero isn't going to change between now and November. Plus, you'll be free to hunt other game on the weekends leading up to the deer hunt.

Start at 25 yards, anchor the gun with sandbags on a good permanent or portable bench, and shoot. Get confident at 25 yards. Then move to 50, with maybe a couple shots at 100 yards. With slugs, max out at a realistic 75 yards.

Create Some Reality. I like to end by tacking a few magazine pictures of game on the target board, then shooting for the vital areas. Alternatively, put up a larger paper silhouette. The goal is to teach shot placement on game. Also, try to replicate field conditions with some shots away from the bench.

Say *Yes* to fun. Keep a shoot short: one hour is good, two okay, any more than that too much. Take frequent breaks while shooting. I bring along plenty of change for the pop and snack machines, or we pack our own goodies. Food and beverages do a lot to keep kids happy.

When high summer hits, get out shooting. It's the perfect time of year to do it, and it's a small investment that will create a big payoff in your young hunter's satisfaction and success in the woods, fields and wetlands this fall. Plus, it's good time spent together. And isn't that the goal anyway? *W*

Native son Tom Carpenter watches birds across the country and writes about the avian world for many publications.



Summer shooting helps kids prepare for the fall hunt.



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MIKE FOSS

DIARY OF A BEAR GUIDE

The Hunt for the monster of Bayfield County



SUZUKI
KINGQUAD 750AXI 4x4

Wisconsin guide Mike Foss chooses the Suzuki King Quad 750 AXI 4x4 Camo ATV when guiding clients for black bear and whitetail deer in rugged Bayfield County.

Beginning in May, Foss baits several times a week for bear clients spread over 20 square miles of tough back-country near Washburn, and twice daily as the September season approaches. He needs a machine as tough as the country. For endless chores from scouting to tree stand placement, to hunter transport and retrieval of tagged game, Foss depends on the King Quad 750.

"I'll take my Suzuki," Foss said. "I also manage wildlife food plots including spraying herbicides, tillage, seeding, and fertilizing, and I transport ice fishing clients far out on Lake Superior. I need a reliable machine because Wisconsin hunters rely on me. I need the best."

Mike Foss works hard for his clients 12 months a year. Hard enough that his black bear clients enjoy a success rate of 88 percent and his deer hunters know from history that a buck for the record book is always a distinct possibility.

His Suzuki works as hard as he does.

SUZUKI
Way of Life!

While driving the dusty back roads toward my Washburn home on a hot July afternoon in 2002, I was stunned by the size of the black bear just off the gravel before me. He sat there in a sun-streaked ditch panting, the saliva dripping heavily from his mouth, while I scrambled like any veteran hunter who knows he has only fleeting moments to react and make the perfect "shot."

My hand frantically searched for the camera that would capture a true trophy forever. In 20 years as a bear and deer guide in Wisconsin's Lake Superior country with many animals tagged in to 400-pound-plus class, I had never seen a bigger bear. My double take at the first glimpse of the monster led to my foot moving to ease the rambling truck to a stop. I cringed and willed any screech of brake or tire that would send him into the brush to remain silent. I threw the truck in reverse and backed to where I could shoot him at just a few paces. My hand grasped at nothing. The camera had been left at home. I stared. He stared back.

"Look at the size of that bear," I said aloud but in a whisper that serves as a voice each time a hunter's breath is knocked out by a close encounter with a special deer or bear.

He was huge, a 500 pound black bear just a few yards away, worked into a lather in the heat of the black bear summer breeding season. His boldness and lack of caution told me that a hot sow was surely in the area. His very look told me that not only would he earn his reward somewhere in the forest on this day, regardless of the length of the chase, but also that something was just not right with Mr. Big. So close that I could scrutinize him until he decided to leave, it hit me; a tooth almost two inches in length protruded sideways from his lower left jaw. Apparently, an old injury had healed long ago and was causing the old boar no pain.

Eventually, he lumbered across the road behind my truck and down a barbed wire fence. When he found an opening large enough to squeeze through, he was gone, but not forever. My first encounter with one of

Wisconsin's most impressive black bears had only begun in that Bayfield County ditch. Almost immediately, like other Wisconsin hunters who learn to look again for a very special and identifiable animal after just one encounter,

game and trigger with motion. I set off to find out where the trail led and most of all, to find the monster bear that was making it.

For two miles I followed that trail until I came to what I now call the



Mike Foss clients achieve a near 90 percent success rate. When his hard work is done, the guide hunts too. This 325-pound Black Bear was taken with bow and arrow. Follow his 2008 quest for the 500-pound Snaggle Tooth.

the boar was baptized with a nickname. Six years later, Snaggle Tooth has been able to outwit many hunters in the area and remains alive.

I have made written record of the sightings of Snaggle Tooth from reliable, veteran hunters in the area, and even the not-so credible rumors of a huge bear frequenting this back road or that clear-cut. Each spring, many Cuddeback trail cameras are also set to capture black bear and whitetail activity as a major part of my scouting that includes shed hunting and the search for bear sign like territorial scratching trees. After countless hours of field work, I was finally rewarded with the discovery of the core area used by Snaggle Tooth.

Shed hunting in 2007 among the vast acreage of land open to the public, I came upon the unmistakable trail trampled and worn deep by a bear: not just any bear, but a huge bear. The next day I loaded the backpack with the cameras, which are set on trails frequented by

Bear's Den: a one-acre area so thick that an intruder to The Den cannot see 10 yards through the vegetation. The trail led on to a clump of small pine trees, branches hanging low to the ground. With heart pounding, I looked inside that clump of trees. There was his bed, a lair I could tell he had used many times. The impression in the ground told me so.

I could not wait to set up the Cuddebacks. One week later, a huge bear recorded by the camera was the reward for a search already years in the making. Closer inspection to his jaw confirmed an abnormality worthy of a hunter's nickname. After too long of a separation, I was looking again at Snaggle Tooth.

Shivers ran up and down my spine. The puzzle was coming together. It's time. Now ...the real hunt begins. *W*

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DICK ELLIS

ON WISCONSIN OUTDOORS

The long shot

Just what are the odds? That is the mental question that should drive every hunter's decision before he elects to squeeze a trigger or release an arrow on a deer or turkey in the fields of Wisconsin. What are the odds of a hit to the vitals and a quick kill?

If the hunter is confident that he is proficient at the distance contemplated with a firearm or bow and the animal will die fast, the shot should be taken. If he is uncertain, it shouldn't. Pre-season practice allows the hunter to know his limitations and make the right decision. The more practice, the higher the level of expertise, and the less the margin of error that the wrong decision will be made and ultimately an animal wounded. As stated repeatedly in this column over the years, with the sole exception of safety, gaining that proficiency prior to hunting, knowing personal limitations, and then recovery of any hit bird or animal are the hunter's greatest responsibilities in the field.

So then, was it a responsible decision taken by Waukesha County resident Dan Flood when he drew on a gobbler at 64 yards with his bow in Northern Wisconsin's Price County during period three of the spring turkey hunt? What were the odds of the quick kill? And, knowing that young and impressionable hunters read outdoor articles, is it responsible to spotlight the story in this column? Under almost any other conditions, the story wouldn't even be considered.

But...the odds of my next-door neighbor and friend Dan Flood being in his backyard a minimum of five days a week shooting at targets set from 20 yards to 65 yards since 2005 wasn't really a question at all. Flood would be there, across the seasons, in the snow and rain and cold and heat, with the "thud" "thud" of arrows meeting targets recording the long, slow progression of one archer's journey from beginner to expert.

One can "practice poorly," at anything. But Flood's journey consisted of quality practice driven by a near addiction to the sport. He became a student of the game, or as he would say...a "nut." If he wasn't in the field, he was on the computer or at various archery centers of southeast Wisconsin to gain more knowledge of the best equipment, including bows and sights, and the methods to improve his shooting. As he improved, deer and turkeys in Price County didn't stand much of a chance if he elected to take the shot.



Shooting at the Ojibwa range in Waukesha County to challenge his skill in front of the writer on 28 animal targets from bobcats to moose set in field conditions at 20 to 53 yards, Dan Flood scored a perfect 280 points. Following the walk-through course shooting, Flood hit an equivalent kill zone with each of three arrows shot at an elk target set at 77 yards. (Photo by Dick Ellis) INSET: Flood made a calculated and well-practiced 64-yard shot on this 20-pound Tom turkey in Price County. The gobbler had a 10-inch beard and one-inch spurs. (Photo by Jim Flood)

With his brother Jim Flood, Dan made the 270-mile trip north to their 40-acre Price County property as April slid to May. Weather forecasts for rain meant that locating and tagging a gobbler in northern Wisconsin, not often an easy proposition, would probably need to be taken care of on Wednesday, or day one of season three. Dan came ready with a Mathews Switchback, Spot-Hogg Hogg-Itt sight and Carbon Express arrows tipped with Slick Tricks heads.

Hunting their own property on morning one, Dan and Jim discovered what would become routine gobbler behavior. Roosted Toms would respond to the hunters' hen calls and approach the ambush point, but "hang up" or retreat at the sight of decoys.

"That first bird came right in but took off when he saw the decoy," Flood said. "He got happy feet. That was it. We got a call from a neighbor that they had two birds tagged on their farm one mile away as the crow flies. We grabbed our double-bow blind and a cup of coffee and headed over there."

Setting the blind where Jim Flood had tagged a gobbler in 2007, the brothers began to call and converse with three "workable" Toms. "Jim and I play a game with calling combinations,"

Flood said. "He calls, I call and we don't wait more than seven to 10 minutes between calls at this time of year and that time of the morning. It was about 8:00 or 8:30 and we were competing with real hens. After one half-hour we saw the Tom's head coming over the hill at 80 yards. It was perfect. But he saw the decoy and hung up. He wanted that hen to come to him."

Similar scenarios would repeat themselves through the morning and into early afternoon. Active, boisterous Toms and hens made for an optimistic morning, but with the gobblers taking on extreme caution near "shot" time. Eventually, the woods quieted and Dan Flood elected to walk.

"Normally, I get one opportunity at a Tom during the spring hunt in Northern Wisconsin," he said. "That's it. There was rain in the forecast and no gobbling, so I decided to walk. After about a half-mile, I peeked around some pines and there were four Toms in a meadow. Two were strutting and all four eventually would be fanned out at 60 to 70 yards."

Flood placed his range finder on one gobbler and verified that it was at 64 yards, the exact distance that he had been extensively practicing at in Southern Wisconsin. Flood waited for the bird to



face away in full strut, drew the switchback, stepped from behind the pines, placed the pin where it needed to be and released the arrow.

"I've taken that shot literally 1,000 times," he said. "I knew I was going to hit him good. Very often, I'm going to hit a baseball at 60 yards. But nothing is guaranteed. Things can go wrong. I aimed here (pointing at the base of his neck). I hit him here (pointing an inch above). It almost severed his neck. He didn't go 10 yards."

Flood knows that his shooting decision will receive skepticism, even criticism. So do I, although I've seen Flood shoot so many often that this story was well underway even before receiving an invitation from my neighbor to join him at the Ojibwa Bowhunters Club in Waukesha County, where he is a member.

I followed Flood through the forest, where he shot at 28 three-dimensional animal targets from raccoons to moose set in heavy foliage from 20 to 53 yards. A perfect score is 280 points, 10 points for each target earned by hitting a softball size circle in the kill zone. Flood scored 280. Our day ended when Flood sent each of three arrows into the kill zone of an elk at 77 yards. His attempted shots at 100 yards, a distance he had never before challenged, placed the three arrows in a basketball-sized circle, just to the left of the ultimate kill zone.

"I'm not trying to give people the impression that they should take a shot at a Tom like I did," Flood said. "I am not. They should not, unless they know they are going to make that shot. I knew I was going to hit him good. I felt confident that I was going to tag that bird. Under the conditions, it was my best opportunity."

The odds makers might call it a long shot. And indeed it was. But when Dan Flood is the shooter and practice makes almost-perfect, the real odds are surely stacked squarely against the bird.

You can bet on it. *W*

Musky Magnets

Man-made structure

By Joel DeBoer

When you think of traditional musky cover, what comes to mind? Weeds and wood, bars and humps, and more I'm sure—all definitely prime summertime musky hangouts. What about those "other" hotspots, those that Mother Nature had nothing to do with creating? Perhaps at this point you're scratching your head, or, perhaps you're nodding knowing exactly what I'm talking about. I'm referring to man-made structures. If you're not fishing them, you're missing out. They can be absolute musky magnets. Here's a run-down on two types of man-made musky magnets to help put a few more esox in your boat this season.

DAMS

Perhaps one of the most common form of these structural types are dams. Dams attract fish including muskies all season long and for a variety of reasons. First, they act as a barricade for fish migrating upstream in a river or reservoir, often resulting in a concentration of prey. During the heat of mid-summer, dams also provide a source of cooler, more oxygenated water, due to the relative constant flow. A word of caution from the start: fishing below

dams requires a solid dose of caution and common sense. Water levels and flow rates are subject to rapid change and tricky currents, especially during periods of higher water, and can make for interesting boat navigation. That being said, a musky angler with access to dams on waters containing the king would be wise to investigate further.

Not all dams are created equal. When locating potential fishing areas, size is not always as big an issue as with other cover. As a general rule of thumb, dams with typically higher flow rates will hold more fish. While this is not always the case as other environmental factors come into play, it will help narrow your search to start out. Guiding on the Wisconsin River system, I am privy to an array of dams, most of which have produced muskies for my boat at some point in the season. When searching a dam area for muskies, begin by keying on current breaks. These breaks may be at the dam face itself, near other structures off the dam or sides of the dam, or a bit downstream.

Although a variety of presentations will work, I keep my lure selection fairly simple. For starters, heavy rubber lures/swim baits seem to excel in this situation. Lures such as Shack Attack Suzy Suckers and Curly Sues as

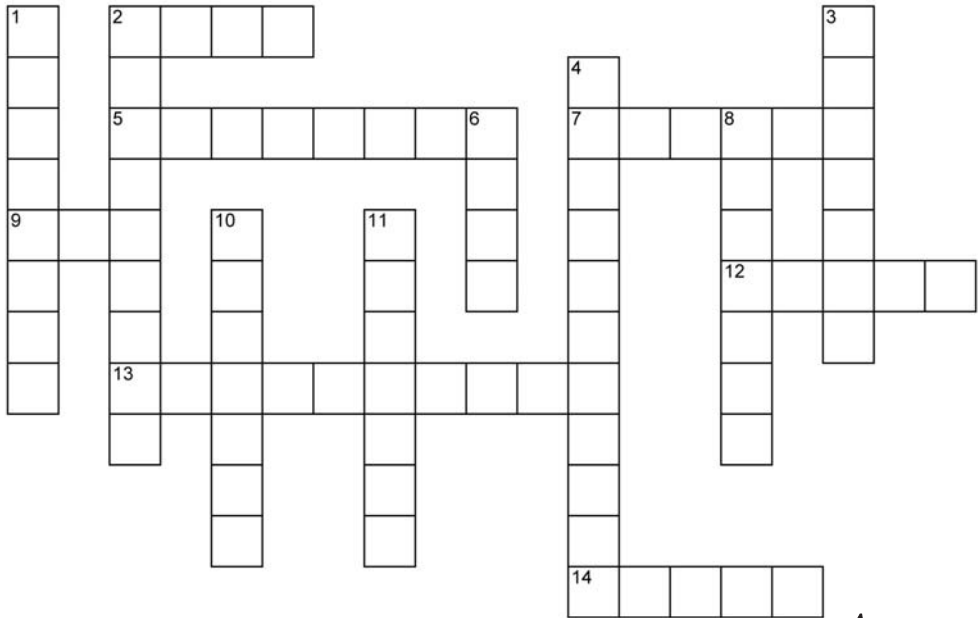
well as Bucher Tackle Fluttertails are all staples in my repertoire. I generally work these baits in a straight swimming retrieve, varying the speed to impart additional action. A well-executed figure-eight is critical as muskies will often follow these style lures right to the boat. Speed and depth changes during the maneuver will help turn followers into biters. Crankbaits are my other "go-to" lure due to their versatility and high hooking percentages. My favorites include



Joel DeBoer with a river musky taken and released from bridge pilings.

Continued on page 28

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ACROSS

- 2 The main part of an antler.
- 5 Gander Mountain's slogan: We Live _____.
- 7 A gun's firing pin strikes the _____.
- 9 A "new" kind of ultra bright light.
- 12 The first name of Rapala's famous jerkbait.
- 13 Lures that are not alive.
- 14 An arrow's stiffness is known as it's _____.

DOWN

- 1 Using old or fake antlers to call deer.
- 2 The point on a hunting arrow.
- 3 Safe treestand hunters use a _____.
- 4 Hunter's _____ (Maker of the Butt Out).
- 6 A deer trophy found on forest floor.
- 8 A popular compound bow manufacturer.
- 10 A spinner maker: _____ Martin.
- 11 The size of a bullet.

Answers on page 30

S. WILKERSON

SURPLUS FIREARMS

Don't believe the hype

Surplus firearms can turn even the most cockeyed optimist into a chronic pessimist. That's why it's best to have low expectations when making gun and gun part purchases sight-unseen through the mail, on the phone, or over the Internet. Oh sure, you may get lucky from time-to-time, but where there's a ying, there's a yang. Be forewarned. There are some very unscrupulous sellers out there, and some of the main culprits are the most well-established.

In the interest of corporate liability, no actual companies will be named in the ensuing article.

Each month, a purveyor of M14 stocks takes out a large advertisement in one of the major firearm publications, half of which features his wares while the other half is reserved for his ramblings about the UN's imminent takeover of America. This guy, we'll call him "Ted," bought his goods for a song from Uncle Sam. When the idiots in charge of the armed services during the Clinton administration needed some storage space, they destroyed nearly a million M14s to obtain it. Ted purchased literally thousands of stocks and handguards left over from this folly. Some of the stocks came from literally brand new rifles. I bought one such pristine example to put on my Springfield M1A and did so knowing that Ted had a reputation for fouling up orders, losing orders, and taking months to deliver. My stock came in less than a week and it was beautiful, and cheap. I was the exception to the rule, this time in a good way.

M14 stocks are fairly inexpensive and plentiful, especially when compared to original Garand stocks. They come in fiberglass, walnut, birch and cherry. Some of them look like they belong on custom rifles. Owning an M14 is like owning a Barbie doll, you can dress them in all sorts of different ways. So, when I came across a brand new, US government issue, fiberglass M14 stock for \$30 at a gun show missing its buttplate, I snagged it. I figured I would order one from Ted along with a new guard and I'd be in business. Three months later, I'm still waiting. Fortunately, my credit card hasn't been charged, and considering Ted's rep, I'm just going to forget it.

I'm doing the same with the stock I bought from another major advertiser, we'll call them "Stinko." Anyone with even a little knowledge about gun

part dealers knows to use them only as a last resort. To be polite, their parts often are not as advertised. Unfortunately, they have a lot of parts that no one else does. Sometimes you get lucky. I did once, years ago, when I purchased a new, surplus Carcano M41 rifle stock from them. It was a replacement made in Finland, which fielded the Carcano on a limited basis during their wars with the Soviet Union. It was a beautiful, arctic birch piece of wood with lots of striping.

Last month, when I ordered another from Stinko, I thought I would get something similar. Instead, what I got was an Italian replacement stock with two large pieces of wood missing from the forend and the rear tang. No one with any kind of cognitive activity taking place in their head could have missed these obvious defects unless they were drunk, high or blind. I promptly sent it back and, in Stinko's defense, they promptly sent me another, although I still had to pay shipping. It looked really good, too, so I slapped some tung oil on it and put on the new metal pieces I bought from another parts dealer.

When I tried to put the barrelled action into the new stock, it wouldn't fit. Why? Because it was warped, something I never experienced with all of

"Be forewarned. There are some very unscrupulous sellers out there, and some of the main culprits are the most well-established..."



If it's not one thing it's another. The first replacement stock sent to the author was missing large pieces of wood. The second version, featured here, was curved like a compound bow. (Photo by Dick Ellis)

the gunstocks I've ever purchased. Of course, I had altered the stock and Stinko was under no obligation to take it back. It was an expensive lesson that I won't repeat because I will never buy from them again. I should have learned that lesson when the safety of the "new" 1903A3 bolt I bought from them last year was defective.

One of my main historical interests is the Eastern Front during the Second World War. That being the case, I had to have one of the Russian-captured Mauser Model 98K rifles currently on the market. Having gotten burned three times in a row with sight-unseen, luck-of-the-draw purchases from the Civilian Marksmanship Program, and knowing that Russian 98Ks could be pretty scruffy if bought under similar circumstances, I went with a small dealer who hand-picked them. I told him I wanted one with a cupped buttplate, decent wood, its swastikas intact and a pristine barrel.

A week later, he called to tell me that he found one and the stock numbers matched the receiver and the barrel and receiver had their original finish, as opposed to being re-blued by the

Russians. He even offered to send me pictures before the purchase. I declined and told him to wrap it up and ship it. I paid \$20 more for him to handpick it than I would have had I simply ordered one from a major distributor.

The rifle arrived and didn't look too bad - until I looked at it closely. Underneath the bluing on the barrel, the metal was freckled, which is another word for lightly pitted. A sure sign of a re-blue. The serial numbers on the stock did, indeed, match those of the receiver, but they were stamped on top of some previous numbers that had been sanded, a typical practice when the Soviets rearmored the rifles.

Worse, though, was the barrel. Granted, it looked good before it was cleaned, but gunk removal revealed some significant light pitting. Sure, the rifling was strong and sharp, but the barrel was hardly the pristine example I expected.

I'm pretty certain the dealer would have refunded my money or found me another. In some ways, I wish I would have sent it back in hopes of getting something better. I kept it because, unlike many Russian 98Ks, it was configured correctly (buttplate, triggerguard, stock, and front band were all correct for its manufacturer and vintage), barrel lands and grooves were sharp, and the stock was in excellent shape. For goodness sake, it had also gone through a war. This was no barracks queen and, compared to most of its brethren, it was pretty exceptional. I could have done a lot worse and I can shoot corrosive ammunition through it without guilt.

When it comes to surplus firearms and parts, it pays to be philosophical. Remember, your definition of "poor" could very well be the dealer's idea of "excellent." A big ad does not equate to good parts. If in doubt about a dealer's reputation, do an Internet search. It's hard for a crook to hide in the information age.

Buying surplus guns and parts without actually seeing them is a gamble. Always make sure there is some return policy and examine the goods closely before installation. If you don't like the odds, don't play the game. *W*

S. Wilkerson is an award-winning Wisconsin journalist, firearms expert and student of the Second Amendment.

KEVIN MICHALOWSKI

DOG TALK*Avoid heat stroke by keeping dogs cool*

This is heat stroke season for dogs. While we hear constant warnings to never leave a dog in a closed car in the summer, other danger factors are sometimes overlooked.

Dogs can't sweat. The only way they can rid their bodies of excess heat is to pant. The panting expels warm air, but also carries a lot of moisture with it. Heavy panting is a sign that you should stop your training or play time and give the dog some water. Not only is the animal hot, but it may also be on the verge of dehydration.

Training or exercising in the summer heat is a dangerous situation that can lead to serious problems if the dog gets too hot. Avoid training from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. when the sun is at its most intense. The best times for training are the first two hours of daylight in the morning and last two hours in the evening. Even then, keep a close eye on your dog. Nothing on a thermometer says when a dog can or can't get heat stroke. A lot of factors come into play and dog owners need to know the signs and take action quickly. Serious symptoms of heat stroke that must be treated immediately include:

- ✓ Staggering
- ✓ Dog looks confused
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Diarrhea
- ✓ Seizures

If any of these symptoms appear, get the dog to shade, offer water and call the veterinarian immediately. Other steps to cool the dog rapidly, include running water on the dogs neck and abdomen. Water on the neck helps to cool the major arteries. Don't use ice because the rapid chill can cause problems of its own. Water from a hose will work, but if that's not available, take the dog into a nearby river, pond or lake. If the vet determines the case to be severe enough, the dog will likely be treated with intravenous fluids, steroids and oxygen.

Another contributing factor many dog owners don't think about is running a dog in deep grass. The shade of trees can cool surrounding air by as much as 20 degrees, but tall grass becomes an oven when training a dog. Down in the grass there are no cooling breezes and there is very little shade from the overhead sun. If you



*"Heavy panting is a sign
that you should stop your training or play time
and give the dog some water..."*



plan to work your dog in tall grass, the morning is the best time. You'll have to contend with some dew, but you won't end up with a dog dying from heat stroke.

If you feel you must train on hot days, work the dog in the water. Swimming is a great way for the animal to get some exercise, work on basic skills and keep cool all at the same time. But remember, swimming is hard work for dogs and they will be working up considerable body heat. The water will help, but you'll still have to give dogs ample rest during the training sessions. Don't ask too much of the dog when it gets really hot.

Living arrangements in the heat should also be reviewed with an eye toward avoiding heat stroke. Fresh water should be available to dogs at all times, especially those dogs kept in an outdoor kennel. It's wise to provide fresh, clean water at least twice each day. Dogs also need some

sort of shade, which can come from a simple tarp to a fully-shingled kennel roof. Even an insulated doghouse will work.

Kennels that are built on the east or south side of buildings get especially hot in the summer months. A sunshade will provide cooling shade even on the hottest days. Kennel covers or slats in the chain-link fence are also great ideas. Just about anything that will add to the cooling effect will be appreciated by the dog.

Losing a pet is a tragedy, but losing one to something preventable like heat stroke is something no one should have to go through. *W*

Kevin Michalowski is author of "15 Minutes to a Great Dog" and "15 Minutes to a Great Puppy" (Krause Publications, \$12.95 each) and has been training dogs for 10 years. If you have questions or comments on dog care, email him at askdogtalk@hotmail.com.

TRAVEL REVIEW

EAGLES NEST*A new outdoor experience*

By Jeff Schilling

Invited by owner Pat Hintze and the Outdoor Junkies television productions team to participate in a spring turkey hunt on the 300-acre Eagles Nest property near Portage, I entered an outdoorsman's paradise almost immediately upon exiting State Highway 127. Eagles Nest promotes itself as the "ultimate outdoor corporate retreat" that also caters to private family gatherings including outdoor weddings, reunions and vacations.

An outdoorsman, though, notices first those outdoor "things." The pen holding gamebirds off the gravel road reaffirmed that Eagles Nest is a registered Wisconsin game farm offering over 180 acres ideal for upland bird hunts. Pheasant, chucker and grouse await wing shooters, along with full hunting dog services when needed. Field training for dogs is also available and a trap shooting range enables hunters to tune their skills onsite.

Twelve fishing ponds stocked with rainbow trout, largemouth bass and hybrid bluegills are scattered over the property and more than five miles of hiking trails allow guests to wander away from a hectic work week. New and more seasoned whitetail tree stands across the property enable the owner and his group to hold vigil over prime terrain in the fall. This is fair chase. The deer, indicative of the abundant wildlife and waterfowl that frequent the property, come and go from Eagles Nest.

The task at hand for this trip, though, was to hunt and hopefully harvest on film a Tom or two from the flocks of free-roaming spring turkeys for the Outdoor Junkies cable television program. I hunted with Outdoor Junkies hunter Matt Rynearson. On the second morning of the hunt, we



LEFT: One of two Eagles Nest lodges on the 300-acre property. RIGHT: The author enjoys trout fishing on one of the Eagles Nest 12 ponds after using his calling expertise to help the Outdoor Junkies television program harvest a free-roaming spring Tom.



teamed up to take a Tom, thanks to his shooting and my calling. That same morning, two other hunters from Outdoor Junkies harvested their birds. Hunting with the Junkies was quite fun. They're a great group of guys and they put together a quality outdoor show.

After the hunts, I did find time in the afternoons to take advantage of the stocked ponds on the property and enjoyed catching the fish. Even though these are stocked ponds, the fish provided more of a challenge to catch than I had initially thought. In the evenings we took advantage of an outdoor fire pit to cap off the day's events. It was great to hear the hunting

stories of the day as well as past experiences from the field.

We enjoyed excellent food, prepared by our host and lodge manager, Mike Hintze. When it is time to retire, Eagles Nest offers two beautiful lodges that sleep two to six and six to 14. Natural fireplaces, full kitchens, bath facilities, big screen satellite television and wireless Internet make the stay extremely comfortable.

Though currently it mainly functions as a corporate retreat facility, the Eagles Nest does offer a variety of packages for the outdoorsman and outdoor sports family. The professionally maintained nine-hole golf course

is a challenge for any level of player with other recreational activities available including horseshoe pits, sand volleyball, bocce ball and lawn darts.

Even skiing is an option, because the lodge is 10 minutes from the Cascade Mountain ski resort. Eagles Nest is billed too as "peaceful and private, yet only 15 minutes from shopping, casino gambling and nightlife."

Eagles Nest management is currently considering offering limited spring turkey hunting opportunities. I highly recommend the Eagles Nest to those looking for a quality hunt and a great chance at a free-roaming wild bird. Just don't forget the rod, gun or clubs.

The Eagles Nest is open year round and offers packages ranging from a half-day to as long as your calendar permits. Lodge manager Mike Hintze is an outstanding host. He will go out of his way to make sure that your stay is memorable. Mike took great care of us and helped us with whatever we needed.

To learn more about the Eagles Nest, contact Mike Hintze at 608.213.4140 or connect with www.ultimateretreatsllc.com. For more information about the Outdoor Junkies, visit their web page at www.outdoorjunkies.tv. According to Brian Wickersham of Outdoor Junkies, footage of the hunt at the Eagles Nest will be available on podcast in July.



Jeff Schilling is an avid Wisconsin hunter. Contact him at 414.651.5836 or Acres809@cs.com.



www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com

Cat Nipped

Taking the stink out of catfishing

By Jeff Schilling

The strike nearly snatched the rod from my hands. After the ensuing battle, a face emerged from the river that only a mother could love—a nice three-pound channel catfish.



Though an unexpected catch, that fish taken on a live fathead minnow joined the ranks of several walleye already in the live well. Many people think of smelly, stinky and sometimes slimy bait as necessary to catch catfish. Though I have used such stinky bait myself, I have also found that catfish can be readily caught on much less offensive baits ranging from worms and minnows to artificial baits. Catfish readily take these baits more associated with game fish and often use the same types of structure in rivers as do the more targeted walleye and smallmouth.

Just like the walleye and smallmouth, the catfish look for their meals in the swift-moving currents, oftentimes taking cover behind rocks, downed trees or any structure that can offer shelter from the current. Though this now seems obvious to me, it did take a few successes catching catfish inadvertently while fishing for walleye, smallmouth and other game fish before these

approaches became my planned cat tactics.

Some of the more surprising catfish experiences occurred while fishing with artificial baits in the Wisconsin River. For instance, while fishing for northern pike with a friend, we caught a nice catfish on a crankbait. Neither of us could believe that the catfish would take a crankbait, but the evidence was there before us.

Another friend found that he could catch catfish on the Wisconsin River using flies he discovered while in Idaho. His best fly was a minnow imitation known as a Muddler Minnow. Flyfishing for catfish is a striking deviation from the more “stinky” techniques, but it does demonstrate that very diverse methods can be used to take cats.

Catfish use their whiskers, also known as barbels, located around the mouth. The barbels contain tastebud-like structures that are very sensitive in

touch, taste and smell. The whiskers allow the catfish to find food in poor visibility conditions, including muddy waters or a nocturnal environment. Such sensitivity to smell contributes to the effectiveness of “stink” bait.

Interestingly, in channel catfish greater than 16 inches, small fish, not stinky decaying matter, are the primary source of food. So, the use of fish and fish-like lures can be a good bet for bigger cats.

Catfish taste good—the very reason I love to catch them. But I am not too fond of foul-smelling baits and their after-effects on my hands and clothing. I choose the non-stinky methods, and you can too.

Catfishing is a lot fun. And it gets a lot better when you take the stink out of catfishing. *W*

Jeff Schilling is an avid Wisconsin hunter. Phone 414.651.5836 or Acres809@cs.com



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Walk-ins Welcome



DE BOER, from page 24

both the Shallowraider and Depthraider, depending on depth of water. Seeing how the substrate below most dams consists of a hard bottom, I prefer to make occasional contact whenever possible to aid in eliciting strikes. Again, tip the odds in your favor with a sound boatside follow-through.

BRIDGES

Many of us drive over them daily, and yet few of us view them as sound options in the pursuit of the mighty musky. Bridges excel as musky habitat like dams, for a variety of reasons. Often, bridges are constructed in neck-down areas; if not, their construction may create such a zone. The beauty to these areas is that they act as natural funnels for fish of all species, including bait—you can guess what follows next. The funneling action also creates additional current, providing breaks for the angler to key on. Low bridges add the element of shade, a tool that ambush predators such as muskies utilize especially during the sunny days of summer.

I begin my assault on bridges by fishing adjacent to and behind the pillars themselves. You'll be surprised by the number of fish you contact, even over deep water, that are riding high in the water column in close proximity to them. Willow-leaved bucktails such as

those by Mepps or Llungen Lures are good bets as are crankbaits. After directly working the pillars, I look for the wash-outs found behind those pillars with the strongest current adjacent to them, and search through the entire hole beginning at the head. My favorite lures for this scenario are crankbaits, and I work them vigorously to help simulate an injured or dying baitfish. Finally, I look for leftover pilings from old bridges or shallower flats jutting into deeper water next to the bridge. These areas containing current and rapid depth changes are excellent from summer through freeze-up.

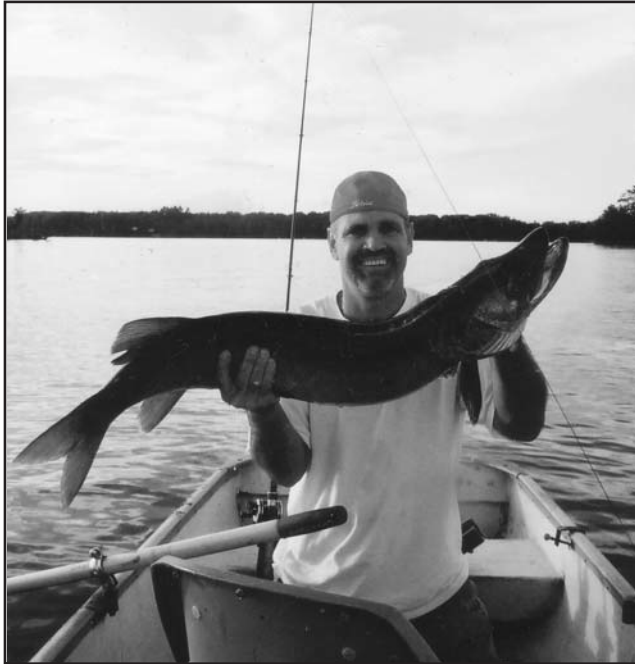
No, they're not the most picturesque areas to fish, but dams and bridges, along with a host of other man-made elements, hold muskies year-round. Learn how to identify and fish them effectively, and I guarantee you'll boat more muskies. After all, that's what it's all about. I'll see you on the water. *W*

Joel DeBoer owns and operates Wisconsin Angling Adventures guide service, and specializes in musky, walleye, and smallmouth bass, based out of the greater Wausau, WI area. He can be reached at 715.297.7573 or visit his website at www.wisconsinanglingadventures.com

DICK ELLIS

ON WISCONSIN OUTDOORS

Mayfly mania triggers musky madness



Ed Ruemler of West Allis rowed with the author during the Ellis brother's week of Mayfly Musky mania to catch and release his first fish, this 42-inch beauty.

By the tens of thousands, the mayflies dried their wings on the glass surface of Island Lake and lifted into the black, declaring a kind of independence from their larval nursery. Above the pier, the night sky hummed and moved as the insects wandered through a new life that would ultimately be measured in hours.

Bad news for walleye anglers, I thought, watching the night take on a life of its own as the sand ran out on the final day of June. The abundance of mayflies was an abundance of food for walleyes, and natural competition by the ton for any angler offering a jig with a minnow or a leech.

But what about the muskies? Between stories scheduled in Sawyer County and Ashland County, I'd be row-trolling several of these lakes on the Manitowish chain over several days the week of the 4th of July with my brother, Jim Ellis. Would this intense hatch cause musky fishing to decline, improve or not be influenced at all?

It probably wouldn't matter anyway. I rarely catch a musky on

my home waters, despite real effort and just enough knowledge to be dangerous. I have "piloted" guests to muskies, but over the past seven years have personally ridden the crest of a slump rarely felt among serious musky anglers. Row-trolling has been more of an exercise in camaraderie, and an exercise in exercise, than a productive method of fishing.

Jim and I pushed our narrow, beat-up 16-foot fiberglass Tomahawks from shore with the first light the next morning and rowed out to pick a fight. Little did we know that over the next several days we'd find 15 fights with muskies in a welcome frenzy apparently directly correlating with the mayfly hatch. Two lines trailed from rod holders off the back of each of our skiffs as we began a familiar circuit that would take us on an unending search of the roving schools of baitfish that attract an active predator. A variety of hand-crafted and store-purchased lures predominantly in perch and Cisco finish wobbled below the surface, the rhythmic bounce of the rod tips sending a constant "all's well" message to the rowers.

Jim read the flasher mounted on the back seat of his Tomahawk, periodically calling out a change in depth, a rock hump, or schools of baitfish. I hung within 50 yards of his course, camera ready and anticipating the welcome bend of a rod. With the lake void of traffic and the sun an orange ball rising in the

east, the water remained flat. Like a natural chum line, thousands of mayfly carcasses littered the surface water in a tight and winding path painted by the winds and current and stretching hundreds of yards into the distance.

Jim's handcrafted perch imitation cut through and along the mayfly line and his rod doubled over under the weight of a big fish. He set the hooks and immediately watched the other rod bend with the strike of another musky. Double ecstasy was also double trouble. It's chore enough to retrieve a second line or at least avoid that line while playing one fish. Two fish hooked in a less than stable, narrow rowboat would be a considerable challenge and an extremely rare opportunity.

The fight on the bigger fish stretched from two minutes into three. Jim took a good look at the musky near boatside and estimated the length at 45 inches before she threw the lure. With no time to cry, he turned his attention to the other rod and with a good share of luck, the musky remained hooked. The 38-inch fish surrendered and soon after was released safely to fight again.

I didn't catch a musky, but observed consistent surface activity by several larger-class fish. We theorized that the food chain was in full motion, the mayflies congregating the baitfish, with walleyes and opportunistic muskies in close pursuit. Despite wave and wind action making our distinct mayfly lines a widely-dispersed scattering of carcasses and a less-defined rowing target, I went on a musky tear the next day.

A 40-inch musky was taken and released at 6:30 a.m. on a perch crank bait. With my wife, Lori, riding shotgun that evening, we rowed out looking for number two. Uncannily, despite my long-standing drought, if Lori is in the boat I can expect a strike.

"We'll get a fish right up here where I caught that musky last

time," she said. "This is our good luck spot. Just watch."

The rod bent in half seconds later. A 38 1/2-inch musky that had fallen for the same perch lure was measured and released. After informing Lori that our course would take us over the deep water, she set me straight.

"Now listen to your wife," she said. "If you just do a little circle and come right back here to this same spot, you'll catch another fish."

With Lori declining the rod, five minutes later I was releasing a 33-inch musky on the same drop-off. We rowed in under the glow of running lights, a million stars, and the knowledge that I was just one inch short of three legal fish in five hours of fishing.

The run would continue rowing the first and last hours of several days with Jim. In 25 hours of trolling, I would experience nine strikes. The final tally would be 40-inch, 38 1/2-inch, 38-inch, 36-inch, 33-inch and 30-inch muskies taken and released. Three fish were also lost, one after a good fight, and two immediately in deep water. And Jim, by far the more successful musky man in recent years, would entice six strikes total but land only one fish.

At week's end, two theories relating to muskies and the musky angler had gained more credence. One, under the right conditions, the mayfly hatch just may be the trigger to extraordinary fishing. And two....even a blind pig finds the occasional acorn.

I stood on the pier Saturday night, picking out the satellites cruising across a brilliant Vilas County night and savoring the great musky breakout. And I couldn't help but send a little prayer to any of the billion stars willing to listen.

"I wish I may, I wish I might, see a mayfly hatch tonight. With Cisco, perch, and muskies cruising....I'll stop this seven years of losin'."

Amen. 

On Wisconsin Outdoors Board of Directors

*Dear Hunter Daily,
I have just one hunting friend who takes grouse off the road. The rest will not. Is ground-swatting
ethical as long as you properly care for the game?*

—Jeff Jansen, Peshtigo

Dear Jeff,
I'll bet this guy moves his golf ball if his lie is poor and then takes y
\$5.00 bet after he "beats" you. I'll bet he "cheats" on his wife. I'll bet
on his I.Q. test. I'll bet he uses Grecian Formula. But, really Jeff, I
and let live and not be too judgmental.

—Hunter Daily



Hunter Daily



Conibear Smith

*Dear Conibear Smith,
Did you hear the great news?
Arnold Groebler is back from Iraq!*

—Trapper John, Eau Claire

Dear Trapper John,
All of us here Oat
Wisconsin Outdoorsare proud
and thankful to have Arnie
back in Wisconsin after he
put it all on the line in
Iraq like so many other
American servicemen and
women who the rest of us
could never thank enough.
Arnie was wounded three
times and needs work at the
VA Hospital in Milwaukee...
but he will be fine. We got
the call from Arnie as OWO
went to press so we will
have to wait until next
issue to welcome him back
properly. But Wisconsin,
very soon expect to read
again his fabulous field
adventures inOn the
Trapline with Arnie
Groehler.

—Conibear

*Dear Rex Rodsalotta,
Catfishing is really catching on in
Wisconsin (get it?). How did they get
their names?*

—Tim Belling, Racine

Dear Tim,
Flatheads got their names
because they have flat
heads.Coincidentally, Hunter
Daily wears a hat because he
has a flat head. Channel cat
are predominantly found in
channels. Blue cats are bl
in color. And may I just
Tim, that I have a hunch yo
as dumb as a brick. Are yo
sure you're not from Illinois

—Rex



Rex Rodsalotta

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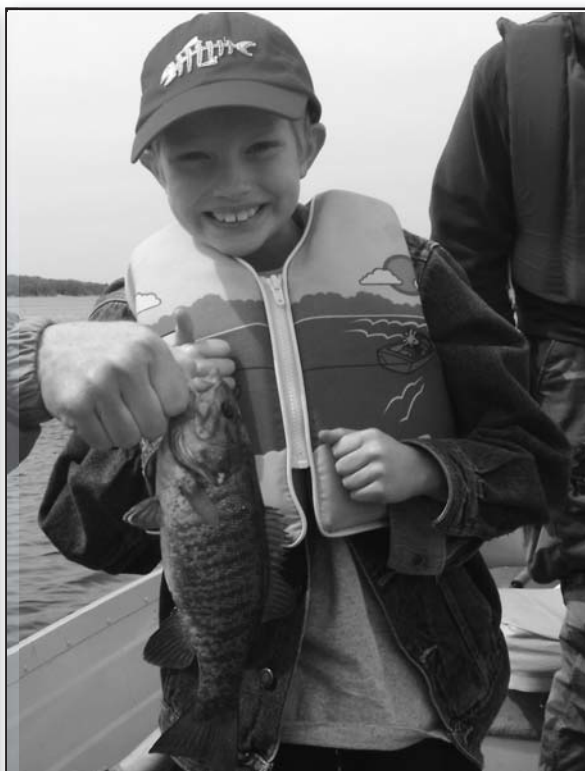
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Kuehl Kids Photo Contest

And the winner is...



Hunter Pecard will receive the original artwork of this hand-drawn caricature of his photo by artist Johnathan Kuehl.



Hunter Pecard with his first smallie caught on Delavan Lake in the summer of 2007.

Additional Submissions



David Pecard with a smallie caught on Delavan Lake in the summer of 2007.



Interested in purchasing a caricature drawing made from your photo? Please contact artist Johnathan Kuehl directly at kuehlarts@gmail.com or call 612.812.9600.

On Wisconsin
Outdoors
With the Dick Ellis Experts

Kuehl Kids PHOTOS



sample photo



sample caricature of photo

Submit your photo of a kid in the outdoors! If we select your photo, we'll print the caricature in an edition of *On Wisconsin Outdoors*, and send YOU the original artwork as our gift!

Photos scans or digital files must be provided at high resolution 300 dpi and emailed to submit@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.

If we select your photo, the original caricature drawing will be mailed to you at no charge.

Interested in purchasing a caricature drawing made from your photo?
Contact artist Johnathan Kuehl directly at kuehlarts@gmail.com or call (612) 812-9600.

NEW! "SHOW 'EM WHATCHA GOT!"

PHOTO PAGE

Attention On Wisconsin Outdoors readers:

To submit your photo and brief story for *On Wisconsin Outdoors*, log onto www.MyHuntingPage.com and register. It's free and easy.


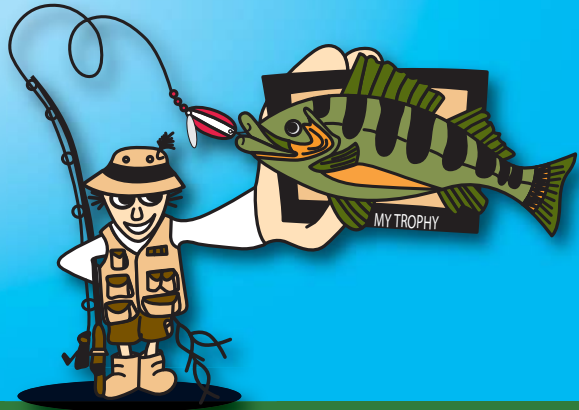
By submitting your entry, you will become eligible to WIN trips and prizes! [Current trips include parent/child bow hunt and North Dakota pheasant hunt.]

Send a message to "Bigshot" from your profile page requesting your submission to *On Wisconsin Outdoors*. A limited number of photo submissions can be published in OWO, but all are published online at www.MyHuntingPage.com, and categorized into your local county areas too! Come on' ...

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Temperance River by Terrill Knaack.

JJ REICH

PRODUCT 6-PACK

Great gear for the woods, fields and waterways

Here's the rundown on six hunting and fishing products that you may find useful in the woods, fields and waterways. We did.

ARDENT C400

For \$170, this high-performance casting reel features a 6.3:1 helical gear ratio and a Comfort Grip frame made of corrosion-resistant aluminum. Its Strike Saver drag system provides smooth and reliable performance.

Ardent is a relatively new reel



company that is earning a ton of good publicity because professional angler Alton Jones used an Ardent baitcasting reel to win the 2008 Bassmaster Classic. Ardent's high-quality fishing reels are made in the USA and are backed by a full three-year warranty. They are definitely worth a look.

ardentoutdoors.com
(660) 395.9200

BUTT OUT TOOL

For \$10, this field-dressing tool quickly removes a deer's anal cavity without awkward cutting or sawing the pelvic bone. Just insert, twist and pull to extract a portion of the anal membrane, then tie it off and cut. Once



this membrane is removed, you can easily continue the field-dressing process.

Hey, I know what you are thinking...and this isn't a joke. It's true these tools might have sold well at first because people bought them as gag gifts. But, now they are selling because they work! I cleaned five deer using the tool last year, and I'll definitely use it again during the upcoming 2008 deer season.

hunterspec.com
(319) 395.0321

BERKLEY LIGHTNING IM6

For \$40, this six-foot, six-inch medium-light spinning rod uses a strong, lightweight and sensitive IM6 graphite blank. The rod handles 1/8- to 5/8-ounce lures and four to 10-pound line.



When going on a week-long camping, canoeing and fishing trip, I like to take along relatively inexpensive equipment, because I usually end up breaking something along the way. I like the Berkley IM6 Lightning Rod because it is durable, smooth-casting and reasonably priced.

berkley-fishing.com
(800) 237-5539

FLEXTONE BUCK RAGE PLUS

For \$20, this dual-call combination includes the versatile all-in-one deer call that is able to create growls and grunts, plus bleats and distress bawls. You also get an attached Killer Wheeze call used to create aggravated snort-wheeze sounds.

I'm a gadget guy, so carrying four or five calls with me in the woods is



standard practice. But this year I am slimming down. These two calls provide all the vocalizations of deer that I need, and the lanyard helps me avoid losing them (again).

wildgameinnovations.com
(866) 995-4263

SALMO BULLHEAD

For \$9, Bullheads are available in floating, sinking and deep-diving models, as well as several color patterns. A flat head gives the Salmo Bullhead a unique wobbling action ideal for bass, walleyes, trout and other species.



I am a fan of Salmo lures, ever since I caught a limit of crappie using the smaller-sized Salmo Hornets. These crankbaits have a tight wobble due to their expertly shaped high-density foam bodies. And, their selection of color patterns is simply excellent.

salmofishing.com
(952) 224-3649

ULTRATHON INSECT REPELLENT

For \$10, Ultrathon insect repellent lotion resists perspiration, rain and water and contains 34.34 percent Deet to repel mosquitoes, ticks, biting flies, chiggers and gnats for up to 12 hours.



Going GREEN is all the rage lately. Alright, so Ultrathon lotion has almost 35 percent Deet which might not be considered "all-natural" or "green." But a high amount of Deet is proven to protect you against ravenous bugs in swampy waters and thick backwoods. That's the goal, right? And at least it's in a green-colored bottle!

3m.com
(800) 430-5000

JJ Reich is an outdoor writer who contributes product-related articles to several national magazines and websites. He is also the author of *Kampp Tales Outdoor Adventures* hunting books for kids. Learn more at: www.kampptales.com.



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KEY FEATURES

- The KingQuad 750 AXi 4x4 boasts Suzuki electronic fuel injection and a 16-bit, digital engine-management system. It provides crisp throttle response and sure starting even in cold weather and high altitude.
- A handlebar mounted, push button switch lets you select 2WD, 4WD or 4WD with the front differential locked for maximum traction in the most challenging conditions.



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De Pere, WI
920/983-8326

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920/922-8521
ProMotorsportsSuzuki.com

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525 American Drive
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WildRiverSportCycle.com

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Door County Motorsports

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