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STEVE MILJAT

## THE GOLDEN FLEECE

### Spring-fling for a 10-pounder

A 10-pound walleye is widely regarded as a fishing milestone by the standards of most anglers. There are many great walleye fisheries today that sustain trophy walleye populations, such as Lake Erie, Bay of Quinte and Bay de Noc.

But it takes time and money to get to these waters, and then you need a guide or a big boat to get out fishing. So, how about a place in Wisconsin that has a tradition of giving up “slob” walleyes—where a big fishing rig is not a necessity?

That place is Door County’s Sturgeon Bay, and it’s arguably the best spot in Wisconsin to reach that walleye milestone.

There are two distinct bites that occur during the spring walleye run: pre-spawn and post-spawn. Timing the pre-spawn female walleye and her feeding habits is not for the person who enjoys a warm bed at night. The window of opportunity is relatively small because the fish are not aggressively feeding, but a well-placed minnow imitator can tempt even a neutral fish. As soon as the ice goes out, it’s game-on and the clock is running for the big pre-spawn fish. When the water temperature is at about 40 degrees, some females start dropping

their eggs; this is the first wave and, depending on the weather, it might take 3 weeks for all the fish to complete the spawn.

Did you notice my earlier mention about missing sleep? This is a night bite along the rocky shorelines of Potawatomi State Park, Sherwood Point and the downtown shipping channel in Sturgeon Bay. The technique is long-line trolling a Rapala Husky Jerk, Smithwick Rattlin’ Rogue or Suspending Thunderstick, trying to keep your boat in 6-12 feet of water.

As dusk comes, male walleyes head for shallow water to await the arrival of the females, but they’re not our targets. The big girls stage on drop-offs at night to grab a meal until the water temps are suitable for spawning. It’s critical to keep your lure in the zone to ambush the females as they slide up on the breaks during the night.

A sensitive 7-foot, medium-action rod is important because the hits are light: You should keep the rod in your hand to detect the light biters. A spinning or level-wind reel with a line counter is necessary to correctly measure trolling depths.

Spool-up with a Superline that has 8- or 10-pound test diameter, and attach a cross-lock snap that’s rounded



“Twilight Bite at Sherwood Point Lighthouse” by Steve Miljat.

to permit unrestricted movement of your lure. Superlines can handle numerous hang-ups with zebra mussels because of the abrasion resistant properties of the line. Also, superior sensitivity of these lines detects stowaway mussels that might take a ride on your lure after bouncing of a mussel-clustered rock.

LED lights out perform other lights in the cold, so attach one to your net and wear a headband model to aid in releasing fish and to prevent stumbling overboard. A four-stroke kicker outboard is nice to have for slow trolling—1 mph or less—but a trolling plate will do the same job if you don’t have a kicker.

The proper formula is to get the lure away from the boat—anywhere from 60 to 100 feet back—troll at about 1 mph, try to stay on drop-offs in 6 to 12 feet of water, and hang in there because the big girls often don’t show until after midnight.

The presentation of your lure is what separates you from your dream fish, so pay attention to this because understanding how walleyes hunt is the key to opening the door to consistent pre-spawn hookups.

Some nights walleyes are followers (tracking behind a lure), and other nights they’re ambushers (reaching out and slamming a bait). On nights when you’re getting light bites with no hookups, a subtle presentation is needed because the walleyes are

likely following the lure. Sweep the rod forward slowly, and then drop it back slowly, always staying in contact with the lure; the hit will occur on the drop back. Do not set the hook until you feel the weight of the fish, and set with an easy swing of the rod, not with a homerun swing.

Occasionally, pre-spawn walleyes go on feeding binges, and an erratic presentation is required to make your lure stand out from all the baitfish walleyes are feeding on. Do short double-pumps with the rod every 20 seconds, and stay in contact with the lure at all times. Again, a homerun hook-set is not needed ... just keep the hooks sharp.

A typical night of fishing (from 7 p.m. to 3 a.m.) should give you about eight hits and probably 5 hookups. That might not seem like a lot of action, but the potential for a 12-, 13-, or even 14-pounder is quite possible. The new state-record walleye will spawn again at Door County this year, and maybe one of us will get the golden fleece that so many have sought. *W*

*Steve Miljat is a nationally renowned wildlife artist and fishing guide. His artwork focuses on freshwater fish and has been published since 1995. In addition, Steve is a full-time fishing guide, specializing in catching trophy musky and walleye from Pewaukee Lake, Lake Vermilion and Green Bay.*

*So, how about a place in Wisconsin that has a tradition of giving up “slob” walleyes—where a big fishing rig is not a necessity?*



Christine Styer and her 31" walleye, guided by Steve Miljat. (Steve Miljat)



JIM TOSTRUD

**WILDLIFE VISIONS***Wisconsin's Fab Five "hog" factories*

*Pass the bacon! The author poses with a huge Wisconsin "hog."*

**"I**can't believe my eyes at the size of those 'eyes.' This is the standard reaction I receive when I show people photos of some of the big walleyes we've caught right here in Wisconsin. Sometimes, even after I show them photo proof, some don't believe they were caught right here ... in Wisconsin!

I've been fishing walleyes for most of my life, and spring-time is by far your best time to take a true trophy fish—an 'eye over 10 pounds. Many walleye anglers have only dreamed about a fish of this caliber, but they are more common in Wisconsin than you might think. Many people think you must travel to Canada, Minnesota or Lake Erie to make this dream a reality. Well, as sure as I've caught them myself, believe me when I tell you that you don't have to go far to find big walleyes right here in Wisconsin.

**THE FAB FIVE**

Here are five rivers in Wisconsin I fish for spring-run walleyes. They're all unique fisheries in their own right, and all can produce trophy-sized walleyes: the Mississippi River, the Wisconsin

River, the Wolf River, the Menominee River, and my favorite place for big walleyes—the Fox River in the Green Bay area.

In my eyes, the Fox River, from Green Bay up to the fish refuge at the De Pere Dam, is one of best places to hook a spring-time "hog" in our great state. I've fished this great walleye factory for many years and have caught more giants there then anywhere. The unique thing about this fishery, along with the Menominee River, is that a majority of these big fish live most of their lives in

the Great Lakes, and they migrate up these rivers in the spring to spawn then return to the lake.

I have fished from the mouth of the river in Green Bay all the way to De Pere, and have found the entire river can be very productive. During the past 10 years, the word has spread about this great fishery and the river has turned into a mad-house with thousands of fishermen trying to catch the fish-of-a-lifetime. The cool thing about this fishery in the spring is that it's a trophy fishery, meaning you can only take or possess one fish a day, and it must measure at least 28 inches in length to be legal. Remember: Once you possess a fish—you are done fishing for the day. I see many guys keep fishing after putting a fish in the live well; this is illegal and the DNR will give you a ticket if you're caught.

**FEED 'EM RIGHT**

Now that I gave up my five favorite walleye factories, I'm sure you want to know how I catch them. Most walleye anglers are jig fishermen; this is a great

way to put walleyes in the boat, but for me, I bring out the big sticks when I target big 'eyes and follow the old saying, "Big baits, big fish."

I like to use big stick-baits such as Husky Jerks, J-13 Rapalas, No. 9 Shad Raps and my favorite—Storm Lures Thunder Sticks. You can troll these baits or cast and retrieve them and they all catch big walleyes. It's very important to know the river you're fishing: You must really key-in on your baits, how they swim and how deep they can effectively work, so do your home work. To consistently catch fish, you must be in the fishes' strike zone, and this means contact with the bottom. I tell people, "If you're not in the rocks, you're not in the fish!"

I use deep-running crankbaits even when fishing in water that's only 4 feet deep. There are a few ways to present these baits, and proper boat position is very critical. There is the down-current, cross-current, and the up-current presentations—they're all as they sound and can all be effective when fishing around structure that the walleyes are using.

Keep in mind that boat positioning is very important, but also keep in mind that contact with the bottom is essential. By using the big-lipped crankbaits you can present your offering much differently than smaller, shallow-running baits. Plus, with the larger lips it's easier to contact the bottom and slow down the bait once you get it into the strike zone.

Make your cast; start retrieving until the bait makes contact with the bottom, then slow down—as slow as

you possibly can—while still keeping contact with the bottom. You should be able to feel the bait just "ticking" the rocks, but not banging them too hard. I like to use a 7 to 8-foot, medium/medium-heavy action rod, with 10 to 20-pound test line.

There is, however, a price to pay when looking to boat a big walleyes while fishing these baits this way: Each bait might cost between \$5 to \$20, and it seems the rocks like eating them as much as the walleyes do. If you don't know how to get the baits out of the rocks it can become expensive.

But, it will all be worth it when you hook one of those big walleyes and boat that fish-of-a-lifetime. Then you can say, "I can't believe my eyes at the size of that 'eye!'" Please practice catch and release for the future of our great fisheries—and good luck out there. *W*

*Wildlife artist Jim Tostrud of Kenosha has dedicated his life to his love for the outdoors. He uses his art to share his admiration for the outdoors and its inhabitants with others.*

## On Wisconsin *Outdoors*

With the Dick Ellis Experts

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*"Wingdam Walleye" by Jim Tostrud.*



DAVE SURA

## SHORE BETS

### *Pantastic action from shore*

**A**round the time the Brewers begin spring training, panfish return to shallow waters to spawn. This is the time many anglers head out in search of these tasty fish. For shore fisherman like me, this is the best time to catch large numbers of slab crappies and bull bluegills.

#### TIMING

Timing is everything when fishing from shore. Soon after the ice melts, the spring sun begins to warm lakes and rivers. As the temperatures of lakes and rivers warm to 50 degrees or more, bluegills and crappies will begin staging prior to spawn.

Crappies arrive first, followed closely by gills. This generally occurs in late March or early April in southern Wisconsin. But because our weather hasn't been that predictable lately, timing this migration will fluctuate somewhat as winter gives up its hold over our state. Every year the timing is different. For example, last year the best bite occurred several weeks later than usual because of the weather. Eventually the spring sun takes over and fishing starts to heat up. Once the temps increase to 60 degrees, panfish will begin making nests until the water reaches the upper 60s, which is when they begin spawning.

Fish will remain shallow for several weeks until all fish have spawned and the water gets too warm. Once they leave, shore fishing for panfish, especially big panfish, becomes difficult as the large fish move out to the deeper, cooler water of the main lake or river.

You might ask, "What time of day is best?" I've fished for spring pannies from sun up to sundown. I've done poor and I've done well at all times of the day. My advice is to get out as often as you can, fish early, midday and late—and fish all day when the bite is good. Keep some for a meal, take a photo or two and release the rest to do their thing. When these fish are shallow they bite often and they bite hard.

#### LOCATIONS

When looking to find spring panfish from shore there are several areas to key in on. These include shallow bays, marinas, creeks, boat launches on lakes and backwater areas of rivers. These locations are the best for several reasons. First, these areas

warm up faster than other parts of lakes and rivers. Second, these areas have new weed growth that provides cover for spawning fish and bait. They also provide adequate nesting areas for bluegills and crappies to lay their eggs.

Of these, my favorites are marinas, creek channels and backwaters. These areas concentrate fish into smaller areas and usually are easier to access from shore. Bays are good, but

also allows the bait to be casted long distances. Use the smallest float you can without losing casting distance. Then, once you've located fish, experiment with depth. I've found that fishing high works best. Fish will move up to your bait more often than they'll move down.

The action of the bait is also important. The best method from my experience is a twitch-and-pause-

said previously, long casts can help you catch more fish. The second is hook-setting power. Long rods allow you to lift more line off the water when setting the hook, thus giving you a better chance of hooking and landing more fish.

Then add a light or ultra-light-action reel to the rod. I prefer spooling my reels with 2 to 6-pound Superline. My favorites are Fireline Crystal and Power Pro. Since I've switched to these low-stretch lines, I've had more success hooking fish. And for additional stealth, tie a monofilament or fluorocarbon leader to the end so that you're not spooking line-shy fish.

#### LURES AND BAIT

Ice jigs and small plastics are my favorites. Ice jigs such as the Rat Finkee or the Genz bugs are good choices. Tip these with waxies, spikes or Gulp maggots. Plastics such as the Berkley micros series, Berkley Gulp Fish Fry or a local tail called a glowworm are some of my favorites. Jelensky's sport and marine carries glowworms. Reinke's in Milwaukee carries a good tail made by another local angler, known as "Plastic Joe." Try these this spring, you won't be disappointed.

Color can make a difference on finicky fish, so carry a variety. Some good colors to start with are pearl, pink, black, motor oil and purple. Change colors frequently until you've found a hot color. Miscellaneous tackle such as split shots, floats and stops, pliers or hemostats, jig heads and swivels are all you'll need. Place them in small tackle bag and go.

Fishing for panfish is easy to do and the action is often fast. It's a great time to get the family involved as well. I know I love to take my wife and daughter out this time of year. The great thing about taking kids fishing is that they don't care about size—just numbers—to keep them interested. There's no better time to do this than the spring: The weather is nice and the fish bite, too! Whatever you do this spring, don't miss your chance at some pantastic action. *W*

*Dave Sura has fished Wisconsin waters for more than 25 years. He specializes in shore and tributary angling for perch, steelhead and salmon on Lake Michigan. Contact Dave at 262.930.8260 or steelheadsura@hayoo.com.*



*The author's daughter sports a huge smile and proof that fishing can be "pantastic" during spring. (Dave Sura)*

may require the shore angler to wade in search of fish, making it harder to reach the fish, because often they'll be spread out over a large area. Wading for spring panfish can also spook shallow fish, making them harder to catch. When checking lake locations, start with those on the north end of a lake. The sun hits these areas more directly, plus warm winds blow from the south, which pushes warmer surface water to the north end of a lake.

#### TACTICS AND EQUIPMENT

When the fish are shallow catching them isn't too difficult. The key is fishing with light line and small bait. The best method for catching panfish from shore is a simple slip-float rig. This rig allows the angler to adjust the depth of the bait easily, but

retrieve. Twitch the bait a few times and then let it sit. Repeat this process until you get bit or get too close to shore. Cast out in a fan shape as well to cover more area. The fish will not be in one area, but scattered around the channel, bay or marina you're fishing. Be mobile. Move around to catch the more aggressive fish first. Once you've covered an area go back over it with different bait. Chances are you'll catch fish that you've missed the first time through.

#### EQUIPMENT

When choosing a rod for shore fishing, think length. I prefer using a light-action rod, 7 feet long or longer. Often times you'll see me with my steelhead rods when fishing for spring pannies. There are two reasons why I do this. The first is casting distance. As I



JERRY KIESOW

## FLY FISHING IN WISCONSIN

*Not as difficult as you think, more fun than you can imagine*

Fly fishing has often been dubbed as a difficult sport to pursue, or a sport for the "elite." Not so! With the proper beginning, you can be catching fish within a few hours.

Allow me to introduce you to my favorite pastime: fly fishing in Wisconsin.

### A BIT OF HISTORY

About the year 200 A.D., the Macedonians (according to Claudius Aelian, a Roman rhetorician (writer)), were using flies to catch fish. According to Norman Maclean, author of "A River Runs Through It," the book that spawned the movie that gave fly fishing a new beginning, says of Christ's disciples: "... all first-class fishermen on the Sea of Galilee were fly fishermen and that John, the favorite, was a dry-fly man." All this, of course, assures us that fly fishing has been around for a long, long time, and that it's not a new way to catch fish.

### MY HISTORY

I began fly fishing with a popper attached to the end of a cane pole. Dad and I caught crappies after supper; we caught a lot of crappies with that crude equipment. I'm not advocating beginning your fly-fishing adventures with a cane pole, but it did

work for us at the time. That was ... well ... let's just say it was more than a decade or two ago.

### HOW TO BEGIN

(A disclaimer: What I am about to say has nothing to do with the fact that I teach fly fishing/tying classes.)

The best way to learn how to fly fish is to have someone teach you. It can be your father, mother, grandparents, friend or by taking a class. This is not a sport to begin with bad habits. If you already fish, learn how fly fishing differs from other styles of fishing—learn what basic equipment you need and how to use it properly. Then, learn two casts: the standard overhead cast and the roll cast.

Learn and practice your casts on grass, without a fly, and without a leader. And don't rush. Take your time. Casting a fly is all about rhythm and timing; the longer the line, the slower, more flowing the timing and rhythm must become. And remember: You are really casting the line, not the lure.

Once you are comfortable casting, begin your fishing for panfish such as crappies, bluegills or rock bass. You'll find that when you do this, you'll be surprised occasionally with a bass or two. All these fish will



*A first-time fly fisher and her first fly-caught fish. Does she look like she is enjoying herself? (Jerry Kiesow)*

teach you how much fun it is to catch them with a fly.

### WHERE TO BEGIN

If you can, begin by fishing a pond or lake from shore where you have plenty of room for your back cast. This way you'll be casting from the same standing position as you have been practicing (Casting while standing is a bit easier than casting while sitting in a boat or canoe). What about standing in a river you might ask? That's fine, but remember—your rod and line will be closer to the water because you're in the water. That may cause a small problem for a short time, just as sitting might, but if your first fly-fishing opportunity is from a boat, canoe or wading, then do it. The difference you notice will be brief and won't cause a major problem.

When you get your first opportunity to fly fish it should be with your mentor, because he or she will then be able to instruct you how to handle the fish on your line. You must remember to keep a taut line. As with all fishing, slack line usually means lost fish, and

fly fishing is no different.

You can play small fish on the line while fly fishing, but when your quarry grows up, you have to learn how to get it on the reel and play it from there. It's not difficult, but it does take a little practice.

### HELP FOR YOU

Obviously, I will not be teaching, via print, what I have just told you to learn from a real person. That would be folly. What I will be doing is giving you tips on the different ways to catch different fish different times of the year. I will also tell you about the equipment and flies you will be using. At some point, I will expand your world into tying flies. All in all, I will show and tell you how to have fun "fly fishing in Wisconsin. Keep a good thought!"

*Jerry fly fishes in Wisconsin year round, and teaches fly tying and fly fishing in the Grafton area. If you have questions about his classes, contact him at: mrmrsprg8@wi.rr.com*





PHIL SCHWEIK

## LINES FROM A HOOKSETTER

### *Musky club stocks the future*

**B**ill's Musky Club members, along with help from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), planted 250 muskies in Lake Wausau, and 250 more muskies in the Wisconsin River from the Rothschild's dam in Domtar down to the Mosinee dam. The group used four boats to help disperse the fish in several different areas around Lake Winnebago and up and down the river system at various locations to give the fish several opportunities for survival.

The muskies came from Kalepp Fish Farms in Dorchester, Wisconsin, with DNR approval. The muskies were all paid for by Bill's Musky Club. The 500 muskies cost the club \$12 each, for a total of \$6000.

All of the muskies were injected with a lime green dye under the chin to identify the fish at a later date, and for use in the future with reference to location and growth rate. Most of the fish were 10-14 inches long when they

were stocked, and a few were a bit larger.

The muskies were primarily planted at weed beds, rock bars, deep-water locations, shallow bays and creek mouths—basically anywhere and everywhere the muskies might have a fighting chance to make it. With a bit of time and a bit of luck, the stocking efforts will help sustain the resource for the future of musky fishing in the Central Wisconsin area.

The average survival rate of stocked muskies is about 25 to 35 percent. The average rate-of-growth is to figure that these fish will be at the legal length of 34 inches within 5 years. After 5 years, the planted muskies should grow about 1 inch per year.



*With a little luck, this muskie will be of trophy size in 8-10 years.*

## Real Men Bleed

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### PEOPLE INVOLVED IN STOCKING

- Phil Schweik - Bills Musky Club
- Glenn Moberg - Bills Musky Club
- Larry Johnson - Bills Musky Club
- Gary Lambert - Bills Musky Club
- Jerry Lawrence - Bills Musky Club
- Chuck Brod - Bills Musky Club
- Garrett Drach - Fisheries Biologist,  
Wisconsin Department of Natural  
Resources 

*Phil Schweik owns and operates Hooksetters Guide Service, and can be reached at: 715.581.2620 or by visiting [www.hooksetters.biz](http://www.hooksetters.biz).*

## Share the Outdoors

*Next time you pick up a copy of **On Wisconsin Outdoors** for yourself, grab a couple extras for colleagues, family and friends.*



GARY ENGBERG

## GARY ENGBERG OUTDOORS

### Devils Lake offers abundant trout, big pike

**H**ow many lakes can you go to in the winter and catch brown trout through the ice? Not many, but Devils Lake in Wisconsin's Sauk County is one where you can catch your limit of three trout and also have a chance to catch northern pike, an occasional walleye and panfish all in a beautiful 369 acre lake surrounded by Devils Lake State Park.

Devils Lake is managed for both trout and northern pike. Tim Larson, the recently retired D.N.R. Fishery Biologist for the area, told me that between 16,000 and 18,000 trout are annually stocked in the lake, with most being at least the legal 9 inches or larger. Larson added, "The qualities that make this lake such a good fishery are the clear water, good weeds, deep water and a quality forage base."

Most trout you'll catch are in the 12 to 15-inch range, but there are some trout caught over 20 inches. The daily limit is three trout and you must process an inland trout stamp in addition to your valid fishing license.

Drill your holes before you start fishing so you only spook the fish once. The south end of the lake, where the feeder creek enters and the shoreline is rip-rapped, are good locations for setting out your tip-ups and jigging. Start placing tip-ups just outside the weedline in 10-12 feet of water, and also put a few more in deeper water, between 20-30 feet, for suspended trout or pike. Concentrate your efforts on the weedline and breaks for most of your Devils Lake fishing.

Remember, Wisconsin allows



*Although jigging is often a productive ice-fishing technique, the author has had much success landing trout using the sit-back-and-wait tip-up approach.*

three lines per person, so it's advantageous to fish with some friends for the additional lines and a good time. A few anglers can cover a lot of water and depths on Devils Lake, which will greatly increase your odds of catching fish. There's usually a good possibility of catching a mixed bag of trout, pike and a walleye, but there also are bass—both largemouth and smallmouth—in the lake, but I've never caught either of them in the winter.

Good electronics are important for marking fish and placing your tip-ups. Using quality electronics allow you to

see the fish, the schools of baitfish and the bottom so you can then position your bait just above them.

Jigging is also a great technique for catching trout in winter. Use a lead-head jig or jigging spoon (Rapala, Hopkins, Swedish Pimple, Bait Rigs Deep Willow), and jig from the bottom up until you contact fish. If you want to use a lead-head jig, use either a 1/8- or 1/4-ounce jig and a whole fathead or chub minnow and vary your jigging cadence until you find one that the fish like. A piece of minnow or a minnow head works well with the various


spoons, and trout will usually hit the jig on the fall much like walleyes do.

There's also a fair pike population, so putting out a large shiner, golden shiner or smelt can work while you're jigging for trout. Pike cruise the weed edges feasting on the abundant bluegills and crappies. Another bonus is that you can always fish for bluegills, crappies or rock bass if the other fishing is unproductive.

Both Wayne Whitemarsh and Wally Banfi of the Wilderness Fish and Game store (608) 643-2433 fish Devils Lake regularly. Give Wayne or Wally a call (608) 643-2433 for the latest ice and fishing conditions on the lake. Gander Mountain's (Baraboo store) Chuck Pohlman is another person who knows the lake and is worth calling for up-to-date information.

Devils Lake is located just off Highway 12 and an hour north of Madison. Everything you could need is in Sauk City or nearby Baraboo. There's good access at the north end of the park and also at the lake's south end. Once there's good ice, you can drive your vehicle on it. Remember, you need a Wisconsin state park sticker for fishing, too.

Wilderness Fish and Game: Sauk City, WI (608) 643-2433 for bait and all supplies.

Gander Mountain: Baraboo, WI (608) 356-9800 for bait and supplies. 

Contact Gary Engberg Outdoors at 608. 795.4208 or [gengberg@chorus.net](mailto:gengberg@chorus.net). Or visit [www.garyengbergoutdoors.com](http://www.garyengbergoutdoors.com).

## "Heartshot" Hartle named Managing Editor of OWO



Luke Hartle has joined On Wisconsin Outdoors as Managing Editor. That's good news for us, and more importantly, great news for you. Luke is as comfortable shooting bull with a fellow hunter in the field as he is delivering under deadline another high quality story for a national outdoor magazine.

His wife Molly calls Luke an "Outdoorsaholic." He wears the label well.

Luke grew up on a small family farm in Owatonna, Minnesota chasing whitetails with bow and slug gun, which "as my aspirations and budget grew" expanded to bear and turkey hunting. When the hunting seasons close, he doesn't need an invitation to launch the fishing boat.

Following one year at UW-Stout in

Menomonie as an engineering major, Luke transferred to the University of Minnesota to pursue an English Degree. It was there that Luke's wildlife education also expanded and he learned first hand that Gophers most often are a primary diet staple of the Badger. After graduation, he moved to Iola, Wisconsin to work on the editorial staff of Deer and Deer Hunting magazine. He maintains his current position as Associate Editor with North American Hunter magazine.

Luke knows his way around these outdoor paper fields we call work. He's pretty lethal with bow or firearm in those other fields of dreams too.

Heartshot Hartle...we're glad you're here. 



TODD BOHM

# MONSTERS IN THE DARK

## Night wading for spring walleyes



The author shows the result of wading and casting for nocturnal walleyes

Sometimes it's fun to run into monsters in the dark—especially if they are huge walleyes. Wading rivers at night is a deadly tactic for catching big walleyes, and in many instances, anglers will find themselves fighting a lot less competition than during the daylight hours. Fishing at night for these behemoths has become a spring-time ritual for me with well over 20 walleyes over 9lbs. caught during spring 2008. To be successful, the wading night angler needs to concentrate on equipment, techniques, and safety.

First, choose the right equipment. I prefer to use a 7 - 8 foot medium heavy action rod with a reel that will

allows anglers to cast a considerable distance. Because of the rocks, snags, and in some cases zebra mussels I spool all of my reels with 20lb. Power Pro line. Line invisibility is not as crucial at night and I would hate to lose the fish of a lifetime because of poor line. My favorite lure in the spring is the #12 Husky Jerk. I have used larger #14's during periods of high or dirty water but I've consistently caught most of my fish using the #12. I've experimented with various colors but have found Firetiger, Clown, White, and Blue to work the best. Other lure possibilities in the spring include Thundersticks, Rapala X-Raps, Countdown Rapalas, and XCalibur Xs4's. While a



high quality rod/reel and lures are important to anglers' success, as important is a good pair of quality waders. During the peak of the walleye run, it is not uncommon for me to spend 12-14 hours in icy water casting for walleyes. Thick soled, insulated waders with suspenders will make these long nights much easier to tolerate. Retailers such as LaCrosse, Cabelas's, and Gander Mountain all carry a variety of high quality waders. Other necessities for springtime night fishing include a dependable headlamp, scale, camera, needle-nosed pliers, and a landing net.

There are a number of rivers in Northern Wisconsin that I have fished on spring nights and have had great success. However, nothing compares to the size and numbers of fish I have caught from the rivers in the Green Bay area. These rivers include the Fox, Peshtigo, Menomonee, and Oconto. As walleyes move upstream to spawn, the angler should concentrate on finding fish in shallow water riffles adjacent to deeper water and the main current. Female walleyes focused on moving up to their spawning grounds will take the path of least resistance whenever possible. So, focus your efforts on these shallow flats off the main current or areas that provide current breaks for these fish to rest when swimming upstream. When I have found my best

spots, it is not uncommon to be standing only a few feet from shore and to have fish continually bouncing off my waders.

When night fishing, safety is imperative. All of the trophy walleyes in the world are not worth losing a life. Many times these spring rivers are swollen from winter run-off with fast currents and cold temperatures. The first time an angler fishes a river, he or she should scout it during the daylight hours. Also, I suggest wearing a low-profile hydrostatic inflating life vest. They are not bulky or cumbersome and could save your life if you would happen to take a tumble while fishing. Take your time when wading through the water because the force of the current and uneven footing can make walking treacherous. Finally, always make sure to fish with a partner or let someone know where and when you are fishing.

Night fishing for springtime hog walleyes can be an unbelievable thrill. Minimal equipment needs, access to tremendous fisheries in Wisconsin, and a chance to catch a real trophy offer anglers a challenging yet rewarding experience. Please practice sound conservation when you do catch that fish of a lifetime: consider taking some measurements, pictures, and then releasing that fish to continue spawning. Most taxidermists do a wonderful job of creating replica mounts. Give night-time walleye fishing a shot and make the fish afraid of the dark. W

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. Contact Todd at 715.297.7573 or visit his website at [www.wisconsinanglingadventures.com](http://www.wisconsinanglingadventures.com).



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Puzzle on page 26



DICK ELLIS

## ON WISCONSIN OUTDOORS

# Brule River calls steelhead, anglers home

By his own words, Darrell Pendergrass doesn't catch many of the Lake Superior steelhead that come home again to the Brule River. But he remembers the first; a wild rainbow trout that came up to take a spawn imitation on his first trip to the river maybe eight years ago.

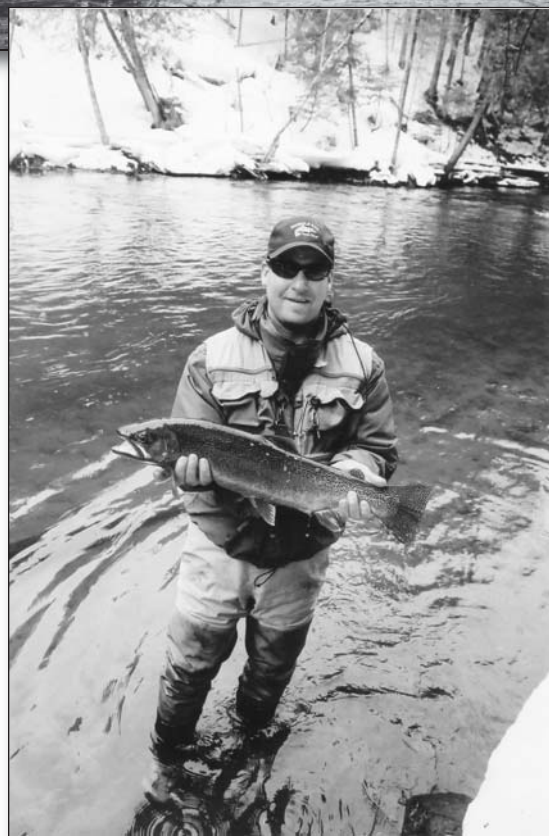
Pendergrass is a story teller. Literally. An editor and writer turned Washburn Librarian, but still, a writer. Saturday during another opening morning of the steelhead season on the Brule he let the current press against his waders and he pressed back and he sent the homemade orange fly down the run again and again to pick a fight. He worked the flyrod that had been leaned against his garage from an anonymous fisherman too old now to fish but young enough to scribble in a note that he appreciated the words of the writer. And Pendergrass told a story.

The river was crowded, he said, like it is each opening day and his father-in-law had staked claim to water downstream, a barrier of other men and flyrods between the two. A fish hit and Pendergrass felt the thrill of walking a wild steelhead, or being walked by the steelhead, up and down the river. Eventually the fish tired and Darrell knelt to do the tasks necessary to release it again.

"I could just feel its power in the current," he said. "Every once in a while you do something that you know is special. That was special. I wanted to call out to my father-in-law, 'I got one' but I couldn't. All these guys were between us, you know? I just let it go. My son wasn't born yet. But if Jack was born, and he had been standing here, we would have been yelling to Grandpa that we had caught one."

No doubt just such memories keep so many coming back to the Brule for the opening of the trout and salmon season. The steelhead come home off of Lake Superior to spawn and the fishermen follow; regardless of the crowds, the weather or predictions of good or bad fishing.

When it's good, it's really good. In 2005 for example, more than 9,000 steelhead, a monster return and the best in recent memory, were captured on video and literally counted at the Wehr barrier on the river as they moved upstream from Lake Superior to over winter. Another 1200 or more of these Great Lakes rainbows will make the journey inland to spawn when ice conditions at the mouth allow.



TOP: With early morning light and the opening trout and salmon season March 25, anglers have their stakes claimed on pieces of the Brule River as they work for Lake Superior steelhead."

LEFT: Brule fisherman Chad Hardie of Minnesota prepares to release a wild steelhead, or Great Lakes rainbow trout on the Brule River during the season of the Monster return. (Dick Ellis)

The Brule is a fertile, spring fed spawning artery of Lake Superior and the only naturally reproducing stream on the south shore. The river doesn't depend on snow run-off or rain. It's a prolific river providing the best returns of fish of all the streams on the western basin of Lake Superior and certainly in Wisconsin.

Much is done to make sure it stays that way. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Brule River Sportsmen's Club, and the Wild Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited coordinate

ongoing projects to ensure that the spawning areas necessary for the trout to naturally reproduce are adequately protected.

In the last decade regulations were also changed to close the season that had been open year-round and enforce a one-fish bag with a minimum size limit of 26 inches. The regulation virtually ensures that the steelhead will be given the opportunity to spawn at least once before being harvested. With more anglers fishing the Brule each season than there are fish, the regulation

was imperative and has already paid great dividends. The large majority of these anglers release the wild rainbows anyway, regardless of size.

A walk along the Brule through the beautiful Brule River State Forest in Douglas County offered the opportunity to watch scores of men on a precious opening day making their own patented pitches to the wild rainbows. Water conditions were low and clean. Almost everyone reported good action at first light. To ensure their favorite spot, some of these traditionalists had camped out on the banks of the river.

"It is what it is," said Jeff Pykkonen of Duluth. "It's the opener."

Pykkonen fished with Jeff Nichols' group of seven working water commonly referred to as the Sauna Pool from a cabin on the Brule built by Nichol's grandpa in the 1940s. The group reported three morning "doubles", including a 25 inch brown trout and a 24 inch steelhead landed and released together.

Far upstream, Joe Smoczyk of Hurley won the good fight with a steelhead, and then carefully released the fish back to the Brule. In the weeks to come, Smoczyk will take other trips to other rivers with partners Ben Sokol of Hurley and Bob and Franz Aukee of Ironwood. He never expected to be on the Brule this opening morning. Like so many of these trout anglers, though, something called him.

"It's just gorgeous to be here," he said. "Usually we don't come for the opener. There are just too many people. But we got the itch. The water conditions are beautiful. We came for the relaxation. Catching fish is just a great bonus. W"

### IF YOU GO...

This Ellis archive column was first published in syndication several years ago. The Brule 2009 opener is March 28. For more information on Bois Brule River fishing opportunities and daily conditions contact Northwest Outlet in Superior at 1-715-392-9838. For information on hunting, fishing, and other tourism activities offered in Wisconsin's beautiful far northwest, contact the Superior-Douglas County Convention & Visitors Bureau at 800-942-5313 or visit their website at [www.visitdouglascounty.com](http://www.visitdouglascounty.com), or email to [vacation@visitsuperior.com](mailto:vacation@visitsuperior.com).



TERRY BITZ

## OUTDOOR CONVERGENCE

### Extended season: gamefish galore



The author, Terry Bitz, finds great late season ice fishing on Lake Puckaway. (Dick Ellis)



TOP: The author and fishing buddy Jeff Waltz (above) often take long hikes to find big northern pike not pressured by other anglers in backwater holding areas off of southern Wisconsin rivers in late winter. BOTTOM:



Northern Pike like this one were pulled by Terry Bitz in number from Lake Puckaway on a late March afternoon and released. (Dick Ellis)

March in Wisconsin brings with it the end of two things: Winter and the general inland gamefish seasons.

Mother Nature, though, may not cooperate with the seasonal change like we want her to. In many years, ice cover throughout much of southern Wisconsin can become "iffy" by early March, but if last year's conditions and the current weather are any indication, we might have ice until April.

There are still some options avail-

able for those who want chase gamefish, but do not want to wait for the season to reopen the first weekend in May. The most popular are the various walleye runs that take place in various locations across the state. Pretty much every major river system with a dam will see walleyes make their runs during March and April. Anglers will undoubtedly make their own runs to the river once word spreads that the fish have shown up.

However, if ice allows and you

want to get in some late-ice fishing action in southern Wisconsin, there are spots where anglers can still utilize that gamefish tackle and not be afraid of getting pinched by a warden.

Most of the major river systems in the state are open all year for gamefish species. For anglers in the southern part of the state, that means open angling on the major waters such as the Crawfish, Fox, Rock, Milwaukee and Wisconsin Rivers.

There are also a handful of lakes,

all of which are part of river systems, which are open year-round. These include two well known waters such as Lake Puckaway in Dodge County, and Lake Koshkonong in Rock and Jefferson Counties.

Lake Puckaway in particular remains a popular destination for late-ice anglers. This large but shallow body of water contains a good population of walleyes and northern pike. The shad in this system provide fast growth rates for predatory fish, so don't be surprised if you haul in a big one.

For people looking to get away from the crowds, I suggest looking into backwater locations on the above-mentioned rivers. You shouldn't ignore backwaters on some of the smaller rivers either, parts of which are also open to gamefish this time of year. Often, these backwaters have solid ice while the main river channels have opened up with the spring thaw.

These backwater spots tend to serve as holding areas for walleye and pike. The walleyes will often enter these areas for a short time before continuing to make their way up the river to spawn near the dams. The pike are often following behind to both feed on the walleyes and to find shallow, grassy areas to fulfill their own needs to procreate.

Most of these backwater locations tend to be quite shallow, with water depths often less than 4 feet. This partially removes one fishing variable: the depth you should be fishing. The fish are often active in just a foot or two of water.

The tackle for targeting the fish remains fairly standard, with most anglers using jigging poles and tip-ups. In the case of pike anglers, many switch this time of year to dead bait such as smelt or suckers that are attached to a quick-strike rig. Pike go into more of a scavenger mode come late ice, and they are often attracted to smelly, dead fish hung under a tip-up.

If Mother Nature doesn't bring the early spring you want, take a look around your area. There might be some unexpected locations where you can still get in some fishing for late-ice gamefish. *W*

Terry Bitz is a freelance writer who resides in Pleasant Prairie, WI. He can be contacted at [tbitz@wi.rr.com](mailto:tbitz@wi.rr.com), or by visiting his website at [www.outdoorconvergence.com](http://www.outdoorconvergence.com).



# The reel reason for the season ...

by Suzette Curtis

Most everyone enjoys a traditional Wisconsin Friday Fish Fry, and during Lent those fish dinners become even more popular. Here are a few recipes to mix-up the traditional, and perhaps put a twist on your Friday (or any other night) meal.

*Suzette Curtis of Oshkosh cooks for a family of hunters and fishermen, and says she tries to fill their menu with recipes for meals made with venison, upland birds, and fish. She does just that with great expertise.*

## Homestyle Fish Boil

*One of Wisconsin's special treats is a Door County Fish Boil. My husband's Aunt Marion used to make a variation of this in her home (although it was in Alaska), and it really works.*

Fish fillets (any white fish will work)  
Small, whole new potatoes cut into serving sizes  
Small, whole onions, peeled  
Melted butter

Fill a stock-pot or large kettle 2/3 full of salted water, and heat to boiling on top of stove. Add potatoes and onions, and continue to boil for 10 minutes. Turn heat up to boil at highest heat without boiling over. Add fish and boil at this heat for 5-7 minutes. Using a strainer, remove the fish and vegetables from the pot. Serve simply with salt, pepper and lots of melted butter. *\* Usually people eat two or three potatoes and one onion per each piece of fish, but you can adjust the amounts depending on your family's tastes.*

*from the kitchen of Suzette Curtis*

## Fish Fry

*Fried fish is still a favorite, and there are many different ways to prepare this dish. While we have our special restaurant preferences that we can't stay away from, this is one we like at home.*

2 lbs. perch fillets	1/2 c. lard
Seasoning Mixture: 1/2 tsp. salt, 1 tsp. black pepper,	2 tbsp. olive oil
1 tsp onion powder, 1 tbsp.	Two eggs
parsley, 1/2 tbsp. paprika	1/2 c. milk
	1 c. finely crushed saltines

Wash perch and pat dry. Beat egg and milk together in a bowl. In separate bowl, toss seasoning mixture with crushed saltines. Dip each piece of fish into egg mixture, and then press into seasoned cracker mixture to coat entirely. Heat lard and oil in frying pan on medium-high heat until lard is melted. Reduce heat to medium, and place fish in a single layer in the pan. Fry the fish, turning once, until it is cooked through. Hint: Use the edge of your spatula to "slice" into the fish. When fish is opaque and flaky, it's done.

*from the kitchen of Suzette Curtis*

## Pan-Seared Walleye

*I love to pan-sear fish. It's so easy, and you can change the seasonings enough to create a different taste each time.*

Walleye fillets  
Seasonings: salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, parsley, basil, thyme, beaumont, tarragon, dill  
Oil (I prefer olive oil)

Rinse fillets and pat dry. Sprinkle one side of the walleye with any combination of the above seasonings. Set aside.

Heat an empty pan over medium-high heat until a drop of water "beads" when added. Remove the pan from the heat and add enough oil to coat the bottom. Place the fish in the pan, seasoned side down, and return the pan to the heat. Add seasonings to the top of the fish while the bottom side is cooking.

The best part of pan-searing is that the fish tells you when it's ready. It's time to flip when a spatula can be easily slide underneath the fish without any sticking. Cook the other side the same way. The entire fillet is done when it starts to flake and releases itself from the pan.

*from the kitchen of Suzette Curtis*

## Beer-Steamed Fish

*This is one of the simplest fish recipes I know, and it's also one of the tastiest. It works great with a fleshy, white fish such as cod, haddock or halibut.*

Fish fillets, cut into serving-sized pieces  
Butter  
One can of beer  
Salt and pepper

I don't have a special steamer, so I usually start with my widest, shallow pan and place my vegetable steamer inside of it. Bring beer to a slow boil in the bottom of the pan. Place fish fillets on top of vegetable steamer, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and add a pat of butter to each fillet. Cover pan and simmer until fish flakes easily.

*from the Kitchen of Suzette Curtis*



JIM WEIX

## WAY DOWN SOUTH

# Searching for Florida's bull gators

**I**t's the red eyes that get to you. I still see them in my sleep. That's often the only thing you see when hunting alligators—at least until you get them up to the boat—because you hunt them at night. Their dark bodies and the dark water almost make them invisible, until your light hits their eyes.

I knew that it was going to be an exciting night when Sharon Sturges, formerly from Stevens Point and now living in Jensen Beach, Florida, and I met our guide, Lewis Clayton, at the boat ramp on the south end of Lake Okeechobee. Conditions were perfect for bagging a large alligator.

Tropical storm Fay had just dumped 15 inches of rain, and the alligators were feasting on stranded marsh rabbits. The Florida drought of 2008 was now over and the alligators' territory, thanks to Fay, had been expanded.

Clayton gunned the airboat and we seemed to fly across flooded fields that had been bone dry only a few weeks earlier. We saw many small alligators greedily chomping at clumps of vegetation that the little marsh rabbits clung to, in a desperate attempt not to become dinner.

### THEN ...

The American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) is found only in the southeastern part of the United States, from the Carolinas, down to Florida and over to Texas. Alligators inhabit primarily fresh water to brackish water areas. And although they can occasionally be found in salt water, they're unable to survive in salt water for extended periods of time.

The alligator has survived almost unchanged since the time of the dinosaurs. Although hunted to the brink of extinction, this reptile has made an amazing comeback in recent years. The alligator is now considered to be a renewable resource, and since 1988, Florida's statewide alligator harvest has been nationally and internationally recognized as a model program for the sustainable use of a natural resource.

### ... AND NOW

We spent an hour getting hit in the face by bugs on the speeding airboat. Then I spotted red eyes that were spaced further apart than most. Clayton slowed the airboat and I jammed the harpoon home.

The harpoon is actually a wooden



*Jim Weix and Sharon Sturges traveled to Florida to hunt large bull alligators, and got a taste of what it feels like to not always be at the top of the food chain.*

**Alligator season runs from Aug. 15 through Nov. 1.**

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pole with a detachable point that's connected to a rope and a large float. At the same time that I connected, Sharon tossed the float out of the boat and away from the spinning propeller directly behind her. If the timing is not perfect, you could end up with a rope wound around the propeller and a very angry alligator on the other end.

The orange float raced across the water as the alligator submerged and swam. Clayton skillfully maneuvered the boat until I could grab the line and attempt to bring the alligator to the boat. I must admit, I wasn't sure which one of us was going to win this tug-of-war.

Finally the alligator was next to the boat. I took the bang stick, loaded with a .44 caliber bullet, and touched the top of its head. You would think that it was now over, but the tricky part is just beginning.

The alligator has a very small brain. It's not often you actually kill it with the bang stick, but more likely just stun it. Now you must get the alli-

gator's head into the boat and sever the spinal cord with a knife. You do this by holding its mouth shut with one hand and using a knife with your other hand—there's no room for error. After it was



all over, the alligator measured about 9 feet long and weighed 90 pounds, which is a good eating size. Now it was time to find a big one.

### SEARCHING FOR HULK

We spent several more hours looking and passed up several alligators. Suddenly Clayton stopped the boat. He sniffed the air and announced that he could smell a big bull alligator.

He was right, amongst the typical smells of a swamp you could detect a strangely different musk-type odor.

We slowly circled the area, using both sight and smell to locate the bull gator. Suddenly marsh grass next to the boat moved and I saw a large tail; the harpoon hit him at the base of the tail and off he went.

Due to the size of this animal, I pulled the boat to the alligator instead of pulling the alligator to the boat. Sharon was busy loading the bang stick. When she could make out the body in the murky water, Sharon reached over the side of the boat and plunged the bang stick into the water.

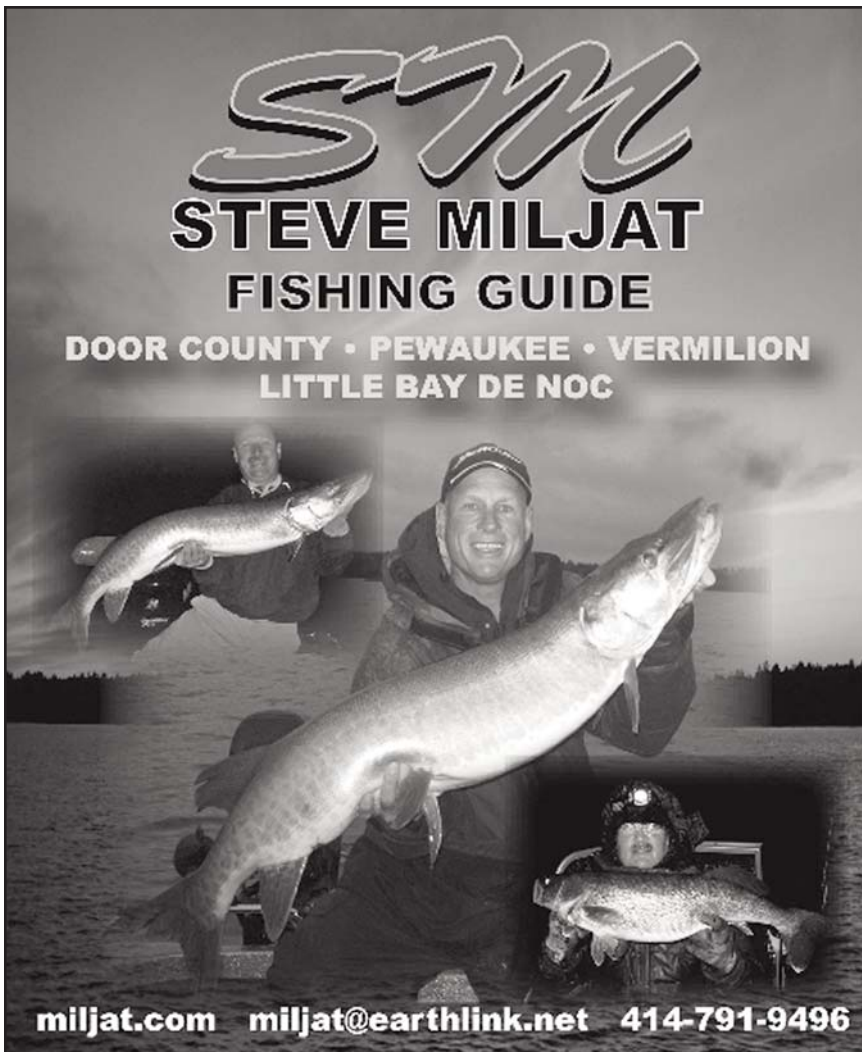
It was a perfect hit. All 300 pounds went limp, but the cervical cord still needed to be severed. The last thing you want is a 12-foot alligator reviving in a small boat.

We had a great hunt and it was certainly a unique hunt for two transplanted "cheese heads." Unlike Wisconsin, in Florida you are not always at the top of the food chain.

Alligator Guide Lewis Clayton can be contacted at: 772.201.1732. *W*

*Jim Weix is best known for his diligent work to see the mourning dove season adopted in Wisconsin. Weix and a friend, Rob Kieckhefer, began the Wisconsin Dove Hunters Association in 1995. It took 8 long years, but Wisconsin now has a dove season. He moved to Florida in 2001, and still returns to Wisconsin every year for opening day of dove season.*





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## HUNTING TROPHIES

# ATVs like you've never seen before

By Ben Hart



Salem, Wisconsin native Doug Gust is a multi-time champion ATV racer.

**D**oug Gust, of Salem, WI, has used his ATV to bag more trophies than you can imagine. He never gets off his four-wheeler to do it; he shoots 'em down right from the seat of his Suzuki.

No, I'm not talking about wild game. I'm talking about mowing down the competition during an ATV motocross race. And if you think racing ATVs is like racing lawn tractors, you're mistaken.

"Everybody who has ridden a Suzuki KingQuad or other four-wheeler needs to get out and see what a race quad can do," says Gust, multi-time Pro ATV motocross champion, "you'll really be impressed."

### BUILDING A RACER

ATV enthusiasts have been racing for many years. Even three-wheelers were raced back in the early 1980s. (I mean, if it has a motor, someone's gonna modify it and race it, right?) But it wasn't until 2006 when Suzuki introduced the QuadRacer R450 ATV that quad racing really took off at the professional level. And Doug Gust was there to race the that brand new Suzuki to a 2006 National Championship.

This revolutionary ATV – designed by the same company that created the Suzuki KingQuad 4x4s –

changed the high-performance four-wheeler industry three years ago. Straight from the Suzuki dealer, the R450 ATV came with a low and wide racing stance, race-ready long-travel suspension, a fuel-injected four-stroke engine, and details like center-mounted exhaust, a durable steel swingarm, and a removable headlight. This ATV allowed anyone with the proper riding skills to compete in a motocross (MX) race without spending thousands of dollars for racing modifications. Almost every other ATV manufacturer has followed since suit.

To be honest, Gust was winning races and championships before this ATV was created. The 42-year-old Gust won his first ATV racing national championship in 1999. That's why Suzuki asked him for help designing this ATV. In 2005, the Wisconsin native traveled to Hamamatsu, Japan – Suzuki HQ – and worked with engineers and designers to make the R450 a real championship-winning ATV. Once on site, Gust – a do-it-yourself Midwesterner – hopped in a small bulldozer to modify the test track to suit this new ATV. No problem for "Digger Doug" Gust, who ran an excavating business for years.

### RACE READY

Fast forward to 2009, and Gust, along with his Rockstar Makita Suzuki teammate Dustin Wimmer, are preparing for the new ATV MX racing season, beginning March 7, 2009 in Southern California. Both these riders compete on the Suzuki QuadRacer R450, but Wimmer's machine wears the champion's #1 plate after his dominant 2008 racing season.

Gust has been training hard in the off-season to give his younger teammate a serious challenge for this season's title. "I ride snowmobile snocross during the winter," said Gust, "at my home track to stay in racing shape. And I use my Suzuki KingQuad to do much of the work around the track and house. The KingQuad is awesome – I don't know what I'd do without it."

An ATV MX race is a grueling physical test of man and race machine. A typical race "moto" lasts about 30 minutes, and a competitor will run a

couple motos a day each day of a race weekend. The outdoor MX course is built into a natural setting modified to include high-flying jumps, tight S-turns and hairpin corners, long and rough bumps sections, plus hills and high-speed straights.

The 11-race season stops at different tracks around the country from March through August. Most of the races take place east of the Mississippi. On May 2 and 3, this ATV National Motocross Championships series will visit the Sunset Ridge MX Park in Walnut, Ill, just a short trip

south of the Wisconsin border.

If you've never seen a professional ATV MX race, a visit to this Illinois park is worth the trip. It's pro-level competition without the pro-level attitude and egos. The racers and teams are highly accessible in the pits between motos. And for anyone into ATVs, a close look at a QuadRacer R450 in all its racing glory is a beautiful site.

Plus, you need to be there to cheer on our own Wisconsin boy, Doug Gust, as he hunts another trophy – racing trophy, that is.



It's still a four-wheeler, but this Suzuki is built specifically for motocross racing.



The start of an ATV MX race is an amazing thing to see, hear and smell – you gotta be there for those last two sensations.

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DICK ELLIS

# BLOOD BROTHERS OUTDOORS

## Hunting marsh bucks



Blood Brothers Outdoors partner Jarrod Erdody helps show hunters how to locate and hunt big bucks on public land.

Lee Gatzke stood bluff-high over Buffalo County valley country and pointed out the mid-winter puzzle pieces of the trophy buck hunter. In streaked sunlight that came and went, rubs jumped out periodically among the saplings that had sprung up in the wake of a logging project carefully planned to provide whitetail browse and cover. Rolling acres of standing corn sprawled over the plateau top before blending with the surrounding hardwoods.

Two man-made water holes pocketed the ridges, which ended at sharp, high points where this 54 year old landowner of 200 prime acres knew the biggest bucks liked to bed. Where one glacial backbone fell off into a steep valley, the half-rack of a 140-class buck lay in the February sun. North, just two miles as the crow flies, the now-famous Buffalo County monster buck first showcased in a Field & Stream video had fallen to a Wisconsin archer during the 2008 rut; more evidence that we stood in the best big buck county in the best big buck state in the nation.

According to the 64-page Whitetail Report 2009, published last month by the Georgia-based Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), Wisconsin claimed more entrees into the Boone & Crockett and Pope &

Young record books from 1995 to 2005 than any other state. "The Badger State is amazing for its sheer number of entrees," the report states in directing big buck hunters to "Anywhere, Wisconsin."

"Although Illinois has more B&C entrees in the 10 years covered, 540 to Wisconsin's 437, Wisconsin has 4,976 total entrees including P&Y entrees compared to 3,699 for Illinois. Wisconsin also dominated the top-50 county table, with 26 counties. Whether it's the northern lake country or the southern farmland, every region of the state has high potential. Buffalo County, bordering the Mississippi River in the west central part of the state claims the title as the highest ranking county in the nation with 520 total entrees."

Gatzke, of Lake Mills and "Blood Brothers Outdoors" partners Dan Infalt of Rome, Wisconsin and Jarrod Erdody, of Plainwell, Michigan add their share of contributions to the book. Collectively, the trio has notched about 50 P&Y record book bucks. Blood Brothers Outdoors operates a website and produces DVDs that teach the hunter how to find and hunt big bucks...with a huge, appealing asterisk.

Although all three hunters own or

lease property in regions with reputations for producing big bucks, they also hunt public land extensively. They spend more time on public land than private property in pursuit of big bucks. And they show you, the hunter usually without the luxury of access to special private property, their secrets learned by paying dues over decades of hunting on public land. No catches.

"We're hard core guys who scout hard and hunt hard accordingly," said Gatzke. "We think outside the box in our hunting and scouting and look for things we had not been taught and that we don't see written about."

Blood Brothers Outdoors first DVD, available through their website and other locations including Gander Mountain stores, is "Hunting Marsh Bucks". "Big Woods Bucks", "Hunting Hill Country" and "Farm Bucks" are in the planning stages.

"We let people know what works for us," Gatzke said. "We hunt the cattail marshes a certain way. To those who have struggled with it, our methods help make them successful. We're not afraid to tell other hunters how we do it. We hope that they're successful. But they won't always be, so what do they do next? Deer learn how to avoid you. So you always have to be scouting, always have to be working."

Problems facing the hunter and tactics detailed in "Hunting Marsh Bucks" include locating tracts of public terrain large and small, wind and scent, off-season scouting, locating bedding grounds and specifically buck beds, approaching the stand, stand placement and height, ground stands, and how often to hunt stands. Cattail marshes, Gatzke said, offer big bucks and other pressured deer a sanctuary with potentially huge payoffs for the patient hunter.

"When we hunt elk we don't pick up a bow for days because we're scouting," he said. "That's how we approach the cattails. We scout this time of year real heavy. Get in a tree, glass and find out where you want to hunt. With these long

seasons we have right now the deer get chased into the cattails. If deer are pushed deer are going to go where they can survive."

The worst enemy of the hunter, Gatzke said, is wind. Playing wind including approaching and as importantly exiting stands is vital. Another key to success in hunting public marshes is having enough public terrain to hunt to ensure individual bucks are not pressured into changing patterns. The Blood Brothers use topographical maps, plat books, googleearth.com and terraserver.com satellite sites in part to help them locate terrain and initially determine how to get in and out of bedding and security cover.

"You're going to scout new areas and add to existing areas you hunt," Gatzke said. "I hunt dozens of areas in Jefferson County alone. It takes a lot of research."

What it doesn't take, surprisingly, is advertisers to bring the Blood Brothers message to the masses. Gatzke, for example, shoots an old bow and doesn't endorse any one scent cover despite labeling the wind the hunter's biggest enemy.

"We use the products we believe in," he said. "We use Lone Wolf tree-stands. We'll buy another treestand when we think someone builds a better one. We have had success as hunters because of our mistakes of the past. And we have all kinds of horror stories. We think the fishing industry is light years ahead of the hunting industry

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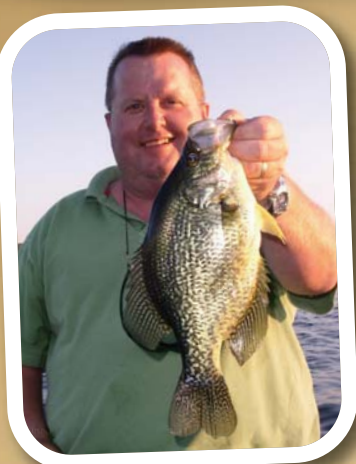


Lee Gatzke of Lake Mills, Wisconsin picked up this half-rack on his Buffalo County property in mid-February. The Blood Brothers Outdoors partner prefers hunting Wisconsin's public lands.





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MIKE FOSS

# TO HIRE A BEAR GUIDE

## Top 10 questions for success

Through years of experience and many phone calls from prospective clients, I would like to share with you some simplified questions that should help you when hunting for that Wisconsin bear guide. Many States and other countries offer bear hunting, and no two are exactly the same. Wisconsin has a straight-forward season, starting in September—bait or hounds—and lasting on an average of 30 days. In Canada, for example, depending on where you choose to hunt, has different seasons and methods at different times of the year, so different questions would apply compared to Wisconsin.

Many of the questions I recommend you ask your next potential bear outfitter are tailored for the Badger State. Usually, each question expands out with other questions answered within that question (I know I'm starting to sound like a college professor in his class room—but "bear" with me.

There's one huge difference when we get that platinum class "A" bear permit in this great state: We've had to wait 7-9 years to get one. The pressure is on, and with so many bear guides offering their services, which one do I choose?

For starters, there's a basic list of questions you need to ask before committing:

- 1) How many years has the outfitter been in business? It's reassuring to know that there's some experience under the belt.
- 2) What's included in the hunt? Lodging, meals, treestands, etc.

3) How many hunters will be in camp with me? If there's not enough hired help, it might take away from the quality of your hunt.

4) Can I see a reference list (successful and non-successful)? You should like to know how the overall service was.

5) How does meat processing work? What happens if I get a bear, who will skin it, and is there an extra cost for this?

6) Are there any hidden prices? Can I bring a guest with me, or are there any trophy or wounding fees?

7) What are the bait stations like? How many per hunter, what kind of bait is used, will I be hunting over bait pits that have already been hunted?

8) Are you licensed and insured? Find out if that guide service is properly licensed and insured. If not, something should smell fishy.

9) What's all this going to cost? How much is the deposit, and how many days will I hunt? If I don't get my bear can I come back and try again?

10) What's the average size bear that's harvested? Note: The hunters themselves—not the guide service—are the ones that dictate how that season went or what the average harvest-weight was. We have huge bears hitting our bait

*Continued on page 30*

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### BEAR ESSENTIALS

By Bill Kurtz

#### Pack Light, And Leave The iPod At Home

He was the last of my clients I needed to drop off at his bait station, and it was getting pretty close to "bear time." I told him he needed to get in the tree because we had already made our presence known to the local bruins just by our occasional whisper and dumping the bait bucket into the pit and covering it with the logs.

"A bear could show up at any moment because the preverbal dinner bell just rang," I told him. He rolled his eyes at me because somewhere he read bears only come in the last 15 minutes of shooting light, and he started going through his large back pack stuffed with every gadget and gimmick one could imagine. He was looking for something—but I didn't dare ask him what—thinking that his explanation would take up even more precious time.

Finally, after finding his iPod, he climbed into his stand. I wasn't even going to suggest he not use it so that he could hear a bear's approach. It was his hunt.

I made sure he was belted in and I left for the truck. Finally, with the last hunter in his stand, I could head back to camp and wait for the first hunter to show up with a bear story. I wasn't yet back to my truck when my client's rifle sounded! I just smiled and wondered what song was playing when the bear came to the bait.

#### Da Bear Bag

As a guide for Northern Wisconsin Outfitters, I get asked what equipment is needed to hunt bears over bait. First of all, I say, you can leave the large back packs at home. I personally like fanny packs; they're big enough to hold the "bear essentials." My pack includes:

- a) 20-foot tote rope
- b) GPS or compass
- c) Glow in the dark tacks or glow sticks
- d) Knife
- e) Two small flash lights
- f) Several plastic hose ties
- g) Small snack in plastic sandwich baggie
- h) Extra small bottle of cover-spray or Scent-A-Way spray
- i) Water bottle

#### Contents Defined

This is it. The string, compass and knife are self explanatory. I

*Continued on page 30*



Part of the bear harvest at the 2008 Northern Wisconsin Outfitters camp in Washburn Wisconsin. Fourteen hunters tagged 13 bears, with 100 percent shot opportunity.



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JEFF NANIA

# WETLAND HABITAT RESTORATION:

## *A journey to success*

Many years ago the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association became concerned regarding the status of wetland habitat restoration. A very well known biologist from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service gave a presentation at the University of Wisconsin at a time when wetland restoration was in its infancy. People had recognized that the loss of wetland habitat was having a negative impact on waterfowl numbers. They correctly assumed that if some of these wetlands could be reclaimed, the result would be an increase in valuable habitat and a corresponding increase in waterfowl numbers.

This gentleman announced that the early attempts to restore wetlands had shown good results and that putting water on the landscape was sufficient to increase waterfowl usage in these areas. He said they were disturbed by the fact that in the first couple of years post-restoration, birds seemed to use the site extensively, but as time went on this usage declined. To the WWA this was of great concern; we had many members who spent extensive volunteer time raising money to fund these projects. Why were they going through all this trouble if the results were questionable? So began the quest for better quality wetland restorations.

The first step was to look at different wetlands; natural wetlands, created wetlands, and restored wetland were reviewed by WWA field staff. We visited well over 100 different sites. These were not casual site visits, rather, but fact-finding missions. We tried to pay attention to and record as many details as possible. Much time was



*Students at the River Crossing Environmental Charter School in Portage assist the WWA and author Jeff Nania in researching and restoring wetlands.*

spent on the ground to try and determine the reasons one site functioned better than another. Soon interest in the project spread and people from across the state and nation became interested and offered to help. This group of dedicated professionals wanted to answer two questions: Are wetlands restorable? If so how do we do it?

Wetlands, we found, may in fact be restorable if the site is looked at from a broad perspective. The old saying was "It's the hydrology stupid!" This meant the amount of water in or on a site was all that mattered for success. That statement has changed to: "It's soils, hydrology, and plants stupid!"

Wetlands are very special; they are not just water. They are a combination of water (hydrology), wetland (hydric) soils and wetland (hydrophytic) plants.

It became spring water clear that if the goal was to actually restore a wetland that functioned as one, the plan needed to include how each one of these critical pieces of the wetland puzzle

would be put in place. This alone changed the face of how we approached projects. Instead of launching a fleet of D-6's to change the land to suit our idea of what it should look like, we began to look at and measure the natural features of the land.

Most of the sites we were looking at were highly degraded; areas that had been ditched, filled, drained and tiled for agriculture, only to find that after just a few years they once again became too wet to grow corn, yet remained too dry to grow ducks.

Looking out across this changed landscape and trying to envision the wetland that once was there was a daunting task. So we shrunk it down. Just like the journey of 1000 miles begins with one step, the restoration of a 1000-acre wetland begins with one square foot. We walked our boots off trying to locate those remnant landscape features of the original wetland and map them.

What we found was truly amazing. With rare exceptions, distinct features of the original wetland remained. While individually they meant little, in combination they painted a clear picture of the unique features of our site. We noted remnant wetland plant communities, soil types and evidence of water. This information was combined with maps publicly available at most county offices that showed soils and aerial

views of the project area in some cases dating back to 1939. Then we completed a topographic survey of the site and the picture became clearer. All these things together would not give us a fool proof plan but would at least give us a much better picture of where we were headed.

This process was very time consuming and not without its very vocal critics in the conservation community. "Just put water on the land and be done with it," was something I heard time and time again. We felt so strongly that we were on the right track that we went ahead anyway, working long hours, sunset to sundown. We believed, if someone gave us a 1000 piece jig saw puzzle without the box and told us to put it together, we might eventually get it done. However if we had an idea or a picture of what the completed puzzle was supposed to look like, our chances of success would be much greater. So why would we be so naive to assume that we could restore a wetland with millions of interactions unless we had some idea or picture of what it should look like?

We worked closely with landowners who had restorable sites; they knew their own properties very well and helped us locate these special features. We began to plan our restoration projects not based on what we thought, but on what the land told us.

We tried only to reverse the manmade impacts and set up a circumstance that would allow the wetland restoration to reassume its natural place in the landscape.

The results were remarkable. Our projects were not perfect by any means, but the closer we got to integrating our restorations into the landscape the better they worked. Landowners worked shoulder to shoulder with us as we worked on their land. Soon it became clear: the key to all habitat restoration was diversity. The more diverse the plant and animal community, the more successful the site. It was clear the wetland was as important as the woodland that was as important as the grassland. Ducks together with frogs, bugs with birds; each piece finding its place in the puzzle. The Wisconsin landscape changing again...and all of us better for it.

Happy Trails. 

*Jeff Nania is executive director of the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association.*



*Properly restoring wetlands after extensive historical research is crucial to assisting numerous species of wildlife including waterfowl.*



TOM CARPENTER

## BADGER BIRDS

### Brown creeper

While its name might not be pretty, the brown creeper is a delight to observe. This tiny, brown- and gray-backed bird employs the unique feeding strategy of working its way up a tree trunk while probing between the bark's crannies and crevices for tiny insects, and their eggs and larvae.

By working a tree trunk in this upward-spiraling fashion, the creeper exploits food sources that cousin nuthatches miss on their downward-spiraling searches for food. Late winter and early spring are the perfect time to spot brown creepers in the Wisconsin's forests and woodlots.

Look hard for brown creepers. Their mottled brown-gray plumage blends perfectly with most tree bark. But creepers'

bellies and throats are creamy white.

**Notice** the long, slender and curved bill—perfect for probing cracks and nooks in bark.

**Listen** for brown creepers' lisping, high-pitched "tsee" calls as the birds feed along with mixed groups of chickadees, downy woodpeckers and white-breasted nuthatches.

**Attract** brown creepers with suet, or smear peanut butter on tree trunks, swiping upwards as you go to match the creeper's hunting strategy. Peanut butter feeders work too.

**Did you know** the brown creeper has an extra-long and extra-stout tail for its size? The bird uses it as a brace and balance while climbing tree trunks. *W*



TOM CARPENTER

## CUB'S CORNER

### Turkey hunting with kids takes special planning



The author and his son, Ethan, pose with a gobbler and the blind they hunted from. A comfortable blind is priority one if you want to have a successful turkey hunt with any youngster.

As winter wanes and spring makes its first feeble promises, I get excited for the first turkey hunt of the year: Wisconsin's youth hunt. This special kids-only weekend (scheduled for April 11-12, 2009) has become one of the highlights of the sporting year for my boys and me.

The weather has been rough and tough these past couple years—bitter cold, driving blizzards, more like winter than spring—but time spent together is worthwhile no matter what the conditions ... specially if you have a warm place to stay. There are always a few gullible gobblers around if you can

stick-out the cold, and if you have enough determination to pull a bird away from its big winter flock.

We'll be in the Dunn County woods with our friend JJ Reich come opening morning; he's a guy that wouldn't miss a turkey hunt for anything. He acts as chief guide, as he, better than anyone, knows the Dunn County woods we have the privilege of hunting for the youth season. And he's a good entertainer too—from card games to storytelling to working on one of the outdoor-related projects he's always got going when we're not in the blind.

While my oldest boy "graduated" in February by turning 16, I still have a middle child who can take advantage of this special hunt—and another son coming up behind him. So, as of right now, I'm still feeling pretty good about myself—not too awfully old. When boy No. 3 graduates to the adult hunt though, there will be a big void to fill. I guess I'll have to find another boy or girl to take into the field for the youth hunt ... and look forward to tagging along with JJ and his son in a decade or so.

But no matter what kind of youngster you're taking into the field—boy or girl, offspring or not—it pays to be prepared for this youth hunt ... or for that matter, any other turkey hunt where you'll be guiding a youngster. Here are a few principles I put to use every spring from Wisconsin to South Dakota to Nebraska, when I take kids turkey hunting. Just as turkey hunting is different than other kinds of hunting,

so are the considerations you have to make for young hunters.

**Use a Blind.** Invest in, or borrow, a good turkey hunting blind. Kids just can't sit still enough, for long enough, to be able to kill a turkey. You need this "cover" to hide fidgeting, stretching, eating, whispering (don't miss this opportunity to just talk with your kid), performing the moves needed to run a turkey call, and making a shot.

**Get a Heater.** Do you want to hunt for one hour or three? A heater makes all the difference in the world. Buy one of the models where you screw in a propane tank—and always bring an extra tank. I've used a heater on every youth Wisconsin hunt, and even carried it into the blind well into May on some of those frosty mornings.

**Dress Right.** Even with a blind and a heater, dress right. That means right for the conditions (warm, soft, comfortable clothes) and right for turkey hunting (camouflage clothes, including face mask).

**Let Them Call.** Don't worry about your young protégé making a bad call. Heck, some of the worst turkey sounds I've ever heard have come from live turkeys! Rather, engage your young hunter in the hunt by letting them participate in the calling. The only thing you have to watch is this: Kids will call non-stop if you let them. Just explain why that's not a good idea. On the other hand, if things get real slow, I'll let the kid rip.

**Bring Food and Drink.** Sometimes I feel like a walking grocery store when I take kids hunting, but raising three

strapping boys has taught me that the route to a good hunt goes through the stomach. If kids are hungry, thirsty, or both, they'll pack it in. I carry granola bars, oatmeal-raisin cookies, sandwiches if we're staying in the blind for lunch, fruit juice or water (not pop), and apples or other fruit that we usually don't eat but who cares—it's a hunting trip.

**Be Prepared.** One of the most "prep steps" you can make for any turkey hunt is this: Practice aiming, shooting and building confidence. Talk about what it's like to have a turkey coming in (I find that a turkey makes a kid more nervous than a deer). And get out to the range or the back 40 and shoot a few turkey targets. Here's one trick I always employ. Have the young hunter aim and shoot at close range with light trap loads so they don't pound themselves silly and get gunshy. Once they have that down, give them a turkey shell and step them out to 25 or so yards. It works every time.

These basic but essential ideas will go a long way toward making your turkey hunt with a kid—whether it's during Wisconsin's youth season, or any other season or place—more enjoyable and successful. Watching my boys shoot their first turkeys made memories that will stay with me forever. The rewards far outweighed the time and effort it took to get them their birds. *W*

Native son Tom Carpenter writes about the outdoor world for a variety of national and regional publications.



ROGER LOWE

# CAPTURING A MEMORY

## Improving field photos in one simple step

Sometimes, the secret to creating “WOW” photographs involves just one simple step. This step, called the “rule of thirds,” is a step that concentrates on the composition of the shot. It is extremely easy to learn and can be implemented immediately as one way to improve your photography.

Let’s start this lesson in Las Vegas, Nevada, where we played hooky one afternoon and went to the desert. A couple of us were in Vegas to attend the SHOT Show—billed as the outdoor industry’s largest trade show. As it wound-down on the last day, we took the opportunity to pursue our other passion—outdoor photography. Our goal on any trip is to find something to record that depicts what we consider best represents the overall trip. We found that photo near Red Rock Canyon, 15 miles west of the city. This area, as does Las Vegas, lies in the Mojave Desert in an arid valley surrounded by mountains.

The scenery changed rapidly from drab brown sand and dust, to shades of red sandstone in a sparse forest of gray-green yucca and other spiny desert plants, just before we arrived at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. The slanting sunlight of the late afternoon sun and the clear air created a scene absolutely riddled with detail and vivid color. We slammed the rental Impala into park and jumped out with cameras at the ready. Two of the shots we made—perfect examples of the step mentioned in the first paragraph—are included in this article.

The “rule of thirds” involves visualizing a tic-tac-toe diagram in the camera’s viewfinder. The lines are arranged so as to divide the scene into thirds (or to say it another way, each line is one third of the way in from the edge of the viewfinder). Now, move the camera around the scene that you want to photograph. Place the most important or emphatic parts of the scene on the intersections of the lines or along the lines. This rule comes to us from the Old Masters that used oil and canvas to create those million-dollar pieces of art that auction houses sell. In fact, these artists believed the strongest place in the picture occurred at the upper left intersection of the lines. I favor the lower left juncture. We all bend the rule to our own preferences and advantages. Play with it and make it your own.

Examine the following photos as they pertain to the “rule of thirds.”

In photo “A,” the Joshua tree is centered in the photograph. While it is a good photo, rearranging the scene will make it much stronger and therefore more apt to elicit a “WOW” from a viewer.

Photo “B” is an attempt at rear-



Photo A



Photo B



Photo C

*The final version of good placement of elements, beautiful slanting light, clarity and color. This is an interesting photo that will provide memories and tell the story of the highlight of our trip.*

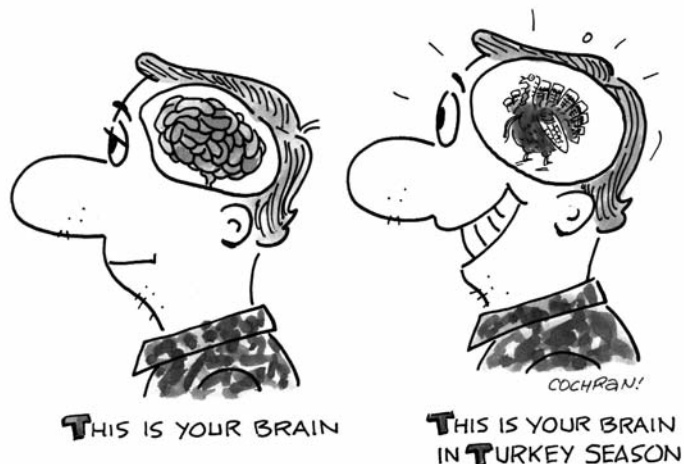
ranging everything in the viewfinder. The camera is turned to shoot in the landscape format, and we placed the point of interest (the Joshua tree) on the left line with the top line defining the horizon. This placement produces an interesting shot that allows the eye to rove around and take it all in. It seems balanced and interesting.

Photo “C” is the final result without the lines.

This “rule of thirds” is an old one—seems like it has always been used in art—and is a great tool. However, it is just that, a rule that is not hard and fast. Modify it to suit your needs. Its strong suit is that it requires

the photographer to slow down and consider the composition of a scene. That simple fact alone will undoubtedly help you accomplish more than a snapshot. By the way, if you get to Vegas, go west late in the afternoon and photograph some gorgeous country. *W*

*Roger is an avid outdoor photographer, writer, and hiker. He is currently attempting to learn the fine art of fly fishing. He is the author of several outdoor photography and weather related articles and is working on a collection of humorous outdoor short stories. [www.lowephoto.net](http://www.lowephoto.net).*





S. WILKERSON

## SURPLUS FIREARMS

# Nothing says "Don't tread on me" like an Uzi



The late, lamented Vector Uzi makes a bold statement.

Image is everything in the world of firearms. One person's symbol of freedom is another's weapon of mass destruction. For example, the AK-47 is viewed as the tool of liberation among third-world revolutionaries. Conversely, the masses they "liberated" often see it as the means to keep them docile. I say AKs are fun to shoot, which is why I own two.

Lugers will always be associated with Nazis. Colt Peacemakers with cowboys. The Winchester Model 94 with deer hunting.

For decades, the Uzi was the symbol of Israel's promise to its people, "Never again." Never again would they permit themselves to be slaughtered by their enemies without a fight. Guns, like the Uzi, have ensured that nation's continued existence in the face of numerous wars and an onslaught of suicide bombers. Period pictures sent an unmistakable message to their nation's enemies: "Don't tread on me."

Here in America, the Uzi and other "evil black rifles" are referred to in some circles as "instruments of mass destruction." How anyone can equate a firearm with a nuclear weapon is beyond me. The instrument of mass destruction tag became prevalent among those who sought to outlaw a certain class of guns because they thought they looked scary. It was at that time the Uzi became the poster child of anti-gun nuts. Supposedly, it was the preferred weapon of crack gangs and other bad guys due to its high rate of fire, portability, pinpoint accuracy and, I guess, menacing appearance.

An honest-to-goodness Israeli Defense Force Uzi possessed most of these traits. On the other hand, it was a far different animal than the one sold to American civilians. The real Uzi was a

fully automatic weapon that fired 9mm Parabellum cartridges at about 600 rounds per minute through a 10-inch barrel. The US version was semi-automatic only and sported a 16 1/2-inch barrel. Most were of the 9mm variety. A limited number were built for the American market in .45 ACP and the forgotten .41 Action Express. Every version was built like an anvil and nearly as heavy.

The gun's designer, Uzi Gal, had a thoroughly reliable, inexpensive, easy to produce, compact weapon in mind when he designed the Uzi—and he succeeded. The gun's action is of the simple blowback variety and fires from an open bolt. Its receiver is made of stamped steel and the magazine is fitted into the pistol grip, making for a very compact design. Uzis do not have a lot of parts and they are easy to clean and disassemble. Production started in 1953, and the Uzi was only withdrawn from IDF service in 2003 after more than a million were made by Israeli Military industries.

The Uzi featured in this article is a "Frankengun," chambered in 9mm and made by the now defunct Vector Arms Company from an IMI receiver and surplus South African parts. Vector-built Uzis were a hit-or-miss proposition, although the company enjoyed a reputation for good customer service. If

it didn't work out of the box, they eventually would get it to work. Mine works well—which is a good thing because, unlike an AR-15, there are few Uzi specialists around. Many armies fielded the Uzi, ironically, even the West Germans. Parts, with the exception of the receiver and semiautomatic version bolt, are pretty numerous, obtainable and cheap.

When IMI sold civilian Uzis, they were painted a semi-gloss black over parkerizing. The Vector versions were only parkerized. I'm not aware of any other differences, although I would guess the IMIs were fitted and finished better. The IMI version, however, will bring about 50 percent more on the open market, although since the election of Obama, prices on the Vectors have skyrocketed. The Vector Uzi that sold for \$600 in November of 2007 will now go for about \$1,000. They are unlikely to ever be made again.

Notwithstanding its evil good looks, the civilian version of the Uzi really doesn't have a whole lot to recommend it. The gun is accurate and reliable, and 9mm ammo is fairly cheap compared to some others. Although primarily a short-range weapon, civilian Uzis with their 16 1/2-inch barrels are capable of shooting 4-inch groups at 100 yards. That's about what I can do at 50, and that's because it's one of the most uncomfortable guns I've ever shot. As an added "bonus," it also has the heaviest trigger pull.

Only a desert dweller wouldn't

think anything of fitting an all-metal folding stock to a gun, and only a lawyer would advocate for a 10-pound trigger pull. The last time I shot the Uzi, it was cold and that stock can be pretty chilly on the cheek. But whether it's warm or cold, the stock is always thin and gnarly and difficult to obtain a decent cheek weld.

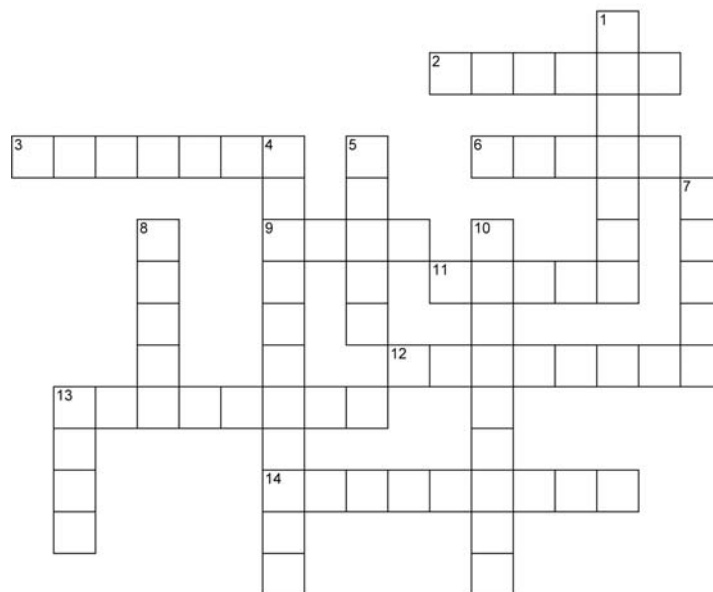
One of Samson's descendants must've designed the magazine. Fitting all 25 rounds is a painful, sometimes futile, pursuit. The magazine springs are firmer than the suspension of a lumber truck and even harder to compress. Considering its lithe appearance, Uzis are also surprisingly heavy—nearly 10 pounds when loaded—the same as an M1 Garand.

But in terms of image, there's still nothing that says, "Don't tread on me" like an Uzi. Anyone who knows more than beans understands that a civilian Uzi is no more dangerous than any other gun, and there's no reason why a legally qualified person should not be allowed to own one. Lots of people who don't know beans, on the other hand, break out in hives at the mere sight of an Uzi and, simply based on its appearance, want them banned.

My Uzi tells them, "I don't care what you think. Leave my guns alone, and don't tread on me." *W*

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

## Outdoor Criss Cross



### ACROSS

- 2 A walleye's generally-smaller cousin.
- 3 A male turkey's nickname.
- 6 Panfish love to stay near what?
- 9 An eagle's home.
- 11 Popular deer food: \_\_\_\_\_ clover.
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_ bow.
- 13 A type of jig head.
- 14 Formal name for a turkey mouth call.

### DOWN

- 1 Found on a bowhunter's wrist.
- 4 Yardage teller.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Oak camo.
- 7 Skin flap located near a wild turkey's beak.
- 8 The "best" kind of perch.
- 10 Rounds are \_\_\_\_\_ in a gun.
- 13 A pickup truck manufacturer.

Answers on page 9



**BLOOD BROTHERS, from page 19**

Even when field dressed, this monster buck taken with bow and arrow by Blood Brothers Outdoors partner Dan Infalt of Rome, Wisconsin exceeded the capacity of a certified, 300-pound scale.

and that's where we're trying to go with Blood Brothers Outdoors. We're trying to educate hunters. In hunting videos today guys are just up in a tree whacking something. They're not just regular guys anymore, they're celebrities."

Gatzke, Infalt and Jarrod are regular, but very successful hunters. Gatzke will return often to Buffalo County to hunt. He calls it a place for family. But, his heart and most often his time, is spent on the wild places that belong to all of us.

"Some guys with private land right next to public acres might never step on the public land," Gatzke said. "When they do it becomes obvious real quick that the public places with the thousands and thousands of acres where you can just keep going is so much more fun. It's true. That's a real hunt. That's what hunting is; the chase."

"You have to be so careful on private land. You manage wood lots to create thick bedding and browsing areas. You plant food plots. Everything you do is meant to hold the deer. It's almost like they're your deer...but they're not your deer."

Scouting on public land beginning right now in mid-winter until green-up when all clues left by deer last fall will be erased he stressed, is the most important time of the year. Because of the scent trails a hunter lays down and the wariness of a big buck and his instincts to survive, Gatzke will only hunt areas discovered now several times a year.

"So you have to find a lot of places to hunt," he said. "Too many hunters think public land is bad. But there are many public places that are just awesome. You can kill big bucks on public land. We'll show you how we do it."

Blood Brothers Outdoors will be writing a regular column for On Wisconsin Outdoors. To visit their website, or to purchase "Hunting Marsh Bucks", connect with [www.bloodbro.com](http://www.bloodbro.com). The DVD is also available at many Gander Mountain stores. *WB*

Blood Brothers Outdoors will write a regular column for "On Wisconsin Outdoors". To learn more, or to purchase "Hunting Marsh Bucks," connect with [www.bloodbro.com](http://www.bloodbro.com).

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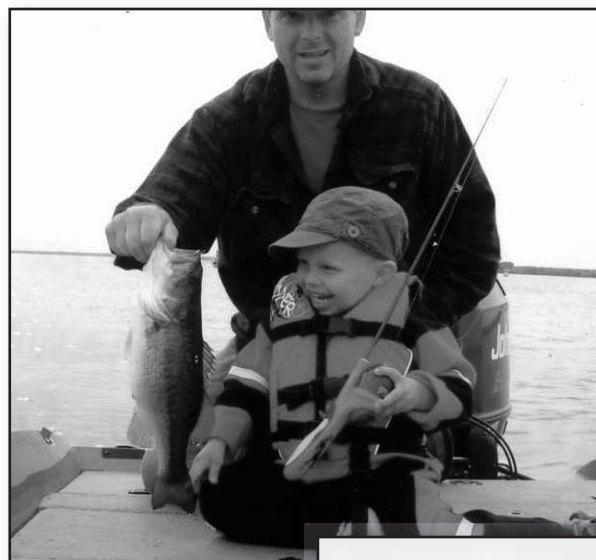


# Kuehl Kids PHOTO CONTEST Winners...

## Additional Submissions ...



Twins **Deakin (L) and Donevin (R) Buchkowski** went fishing with their grandpa at Scout Lake.



← **Braydon Ricker** age 4 caught this large mouth bass on Shawno Lake in May while fishing with his Papa Darrin Fields. He caught it with his new Spiderman fishing pole. Photo by Grandma Terri.



→ **Makayla Lenz** is showing off the nice perch she caught while visiting Grandpa and Grandma's on Lake Poygan.



← **Joe Beda** (with hat) of Boulder Junction and **Conner Nelson** of Rockford, Illinois and Boulder Junction fish Trap Lake Lake in Vilas County. 45" musky hit a 3 lb. smallmouth bass. Photo submitted by Grandpa John Beta.

**To enter the Kuehl Kids Photo Contest** in *On Wisconsin Outdoors*, submit your photo of a kid in the outdoors! Submissions will be printed in *On Wisconsin Outdoors*. If your photo submission is selected as the winner, the original caricature drawing will be made to you at no charge. Photo scans or digital files must be provided at high resolution 300 dpi and emailed to [ads@onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:ads@onwisconsinoutdoors.com). Please include name of child and your mailing address (address will not be published). Interested in purchasing a caricature drawing made from your photo? Contact artist Johnathan Kuehl directly at [kuehlarts@gmail.com](mailto:kuehlarts@gmail.com) or call (612) 812-9600.



TOM CARPENTER

# TIMING SPRING TURKEYS

## Week-by-week Wisconsin turkey hunting guide

Gobblers change from hunting period to hunting period. Your approach has to change with them.

Six weeks is a long time—especially during a Wisconsin spring. But weather isn't the only thing changing. Turkeys are changing too—living the natural cycle of their spring breeding season. To notch a tag on a gobbler, you have to hit the turkey woods with a game plan that matches what the birds are doing at the time.

### EARLY SEASON ABUNDANCE, PERIODS A AND B

#### Situation

This far north in the wild turkey's range, periods "A" and "B" comprise the early season. Gobblers show intense interest in hens, but hens don't always return the attention. The birds often haven't broken out of their big winter gangs, although by the end of the second week they might be starting to bust up. Gobbling is great on the roost now, as toms are feeling their oats and raring to go. But the gobbling stops when the birds hit the ground and the males dutifully follow the hens.

#### Hunting Strategies

**Scout Hard.** Cruise the back roads and scout with binoculars from a distance the week before your hunting period starts. Know the local birds' travel patterns. Then set up along a route from roosting areas to feeding and strutting fields, or other well-traveled paths.

**Stay Put.** Early season is not run-and-gun time. Bare woods mean that vegetative cover is nearly nonexistent—barely emerging at best—so your maneuvers are sure to be spotted by sharp turkey eyes. Use a blind.

**Hit 'Em Hard.** If you like to call aggressively, early season is the time. Sometimes you can entice an eager 2-year-old to come over and see what's up with that horny hen making all the racket. It only takes one curious tom to make your season.

### MID SEASON CHALLENGE, PERIODS C AND D

#### Situation

By the time seasons "C" and then "D" arrive, the wild turkeys' mating season progresses into full swing. Wild turkey flocks are conducting their spring break-up in earnest. This is good: With smaller groups of birds roaming the countryside, it becomes easier (that's a relative term!) to find a cooperative or lonely gobbler. But because breeding has started in earnest, the gobblers are now hooking up with attentive, receptive hens. This is classic "henned-up" time.

#### Hunting Strategies

**Don't Give Up.** Don't quit just because you don't shoot a bird before the sun clears the horizon. If you're in a good spot, stay put and wait. The gobbler that ignored you, or one of his buddies, might come back later. Don't go to town for breakfast—hunt, hunt, hunt—especially those late-morning hours from 9 a.m. to noon.

**Subtle Calling.** The gobblers have heard some calling, so mid-season is the time to go subtle with your calling—clucks and gentle purrs, soft yelping if any at all. Play hard-to-get.

**Start Moving.** With decent cover emerging in the woods, don't be afraid to switch your setup position to try and intercept or head-off a gobbler that might not quite be cooperating.

### LATE SEASON OPPORTUNITY, PERIODS E AND F

#### Situation

Periods "E" and "F" represent Wisconsin's late turkey seasons. By now, wild turkeys have been gobbling, carrying on and breeding for quite some time. But the action isn't over. Hens might not be actively pursuing gobblers, and that can be a real positive. Hens start laying their eggs now, and by Period "F," some females are already incubating their clutch. Gobblers are lonely and still want action.

#### Hunting Strategies

**Pinpoint Birds.** Invest serious time to roost a bird the evening before any hunt. Don't rely on luck to find a gobbling bird in the morning. Use the leafy cover to sneak in tight the next morning. Call sparingly with a few light tree yelps, and then



The author with a late-season Wisconsin gobbler. Early or late, to find success on Wisconsin's spring turkeys, you have to adjust your hunting approach to the stage of the birds' breeding season.

.....

*"To notch a tag on a gobbler, you have to hit the turkey woods with a game plan that matches what the birds are doing at the time..."*

.....

a couple clucks. Subtlety works now, because real hens aren't so hot.

**Call Smart.** Don't go nuts with loud and aggressive calling until you've exhausted your options with the soft approach. Sweet clucks, soft purrs and whines, delicate little yelps ... and not too much of any of them ... are usually the ticket

**Afternoon Delight.** About 3 p.m. on a sunny day, gobblers seem to head out to the fields to strut for hens that are coming off their nests for a feeding session. Field hunting isn't easy, but if you've scouted well and stationed yourself along a good travel route, you can find success.

**Go Trolling.** Do a little trolling in the late seasons, in attempt to find a gobbling and active bird. With plenty of cover on the landscape now, you can sneak about and call (always with safety in mind), trying to strike a cooperative bird.

### CONCLUSION

As a Wisconsin spring passes and wild turkeys conduct their annual breeding rituals, you must adjust your hunting approach to match what the birds are doing during your particular hunting period. A gobbler in period "A" and a gobbler in period "F" are two very different birds, and a one-strategy-fits-all approach isn't likely to succeed on either tom. Timing spring turkeys is the key to killing a gobbler no matter which letter of the alphabet your tag bears.

---

Tom Carpenter hunts turkeys in many corners of the country, but Wisconsin's gobblers steal the biggest part of his heart.



DARRELL PENDERGRASS

## OUT THERE

# Yes Jack, there is a Santa Claus

When Santa Claus slid down the chimney at my home this past Christmas, among the toys of electric cars and Lego building blocks, he left behind a shotgun for my 8-year-old son, Jack.

This is not a plastic toy shotgun mind you, but the real deal. Seriously.

At first, as Jack wiped the sleep out of his eyes and focused on the mountain of sparkling presents before him, he didn't realize this gift hid under the tree. Instead, when he found that he had gotten a gun case he simply held it up and smiled—he didn't know why he'd gotten an

empty gun case, but it was a gift nonetheless. Then, when he found a box of clay pigeons he innocently exclaimed that he'd be happy to pitch them up in the air for me to shoot at. It would be fun. But when he noticed the pigeon launching apparatus that had his



name on it, and two boxes of shells, his curiosity was sparked and things became clear. "There must be a gun under here for me," he pondered aloud.

Indeed, there was a gun for him: a .410 single-shot shotgun, and his first gun.

So, as the excitement of Christmas morning began to fade a bit after 7 hours of game playing and toy-putting-together, Jack and I pulled on our boots, jackets and knit hats and headed out behind the barn; before us stretched a field of snow and isolation, perfect for up-and-coming shooters like us. We strapped the pigeon-launching machine to an old tire for balance and loaded it up for the first flight of the day. Jack cracked the gun's action, I slid in the shell with a reminder to always be safe, and we were set.

Jack has seen this done a thousand times on television and he knew what to do now. He put the shotgun to his shoulder, took a calming breath and confidently called for the pigeon to be let loose. "Pull!"

Before we continue you must know that I'm about 6-foot, 1-inches tall and weigh about 200 pounds. I toss roughly 400 hay bales to the rafters of our barn each summer. I have and will continue to wrestle with ornery horses and carry 10-by-6-

boards a quarter-mile to fix broken fences. I'm pretty solid, if I say so myself. Jack is not any of that; in fact, he's far from it.

In my grownup recollections a .410 shotgun simply doesn't kick that much. Not in comparison to the 12-gauge I shoot. When Santa dropped off the gun I figured he knew like I did that a .410 was the perfect size for a little guy like Jack. Santa must be as dumb as I am.

As the pigeon sailed out and over the field I kept an eye on Jack, ready to etch into my mind's eye forever and always the image of him shooting this gun for the first time. I wanted a memory that would last a lifetime. He's my boy and this is his first gun. This simple gift will be with him long after I'm gone. This present carries with it the endless possibility of a lifetime afield. In all likelihood this gun could and will be passed through generations of my family. I smiled the smile of a proud father.

When Jack touched off the gun—and the reverberation of the shot echoed out to the far-away pines and back—the subsequent kick of the 3-inch shotshell rocked Jack's little-boy world. Clearly, it kicked him way more than he had anticipated. And a heck of a lot more than I had thought it would. Jack's shoulders pitched back and the barrel jumped skyward.

Jack's eyes grew big and wide, and I waited for a look of pain to sweep across his boyish face and for the tears that I knew would come.

But neither did. Instead a huge smile stretched across Jack's face as the pigeon sailed into oblivion unscathed. "Wow!" Jack exclaimed. "This is great!" This was equally great for me, because for an instant there I thought perhaps Mrs. Claus might have a few choice words to say about this little endeavor of mine.

During the next 20 shots or so, Jack learned to keep the shotgun tight to his shoulder, keep his eye focused down the barrel and to lead his target just a bit. And he managed to knock a few down. Later he proudly showed off to the rest of the family the little purple bruise on his arm that he'd acquired—his badge of honor. We had a perfect time.

Memories of childhood Christmases might fade with time, but memories of fathers and sons ring clear forever. Yes Jack, there is a Santa Claus. *W*

*"Out There: Twenty years of family, fishing, farming and a life afield," a collection of stories by Darrell Pendergrass, can be purchased by sending \$15 and \$3 for shipping and handling to Darrell Pendergrass, 52405 Otto Olson Road, Grand View, WI 54839.*

### BEAR GUIDE from page 21

stations every year; and I have the pictures to prove it. But with the long wait for that tag comes a lot of pressure, and the hunters often feel they should take the first bear that comes in. I always tell my interested prospects that the average black bear only weighs 130-150 pounds. If the hunters waited for those big bears, my average would increase. But it is your hunt. Have fun. It's not the size of the animal. It's the experience. With many very qualified Wisconsin guides available, do your homework, remember those 10 questions, and enjoy the hunt you've probably waited years for.

There are many good bear guides in Wisconsin, so do your homework. And if you follow these 10 basic questions, I'm confident you'll have a great hunt. *W*

Northern Wisconsin Outfitters is now booking for the 2009 bear season. Call them at 715-373-0344 or see their website at [www.northernwisconsinoutfitters.com](http://www.northernwisconsinoutfitters.com).

### BEAR ESSENTIALS from page 21

always carry glow tacks or glow sticks to mark a blood trail. Tracking a bear's blood trail in thick heavy September cover is difficult enough at night, let alone trying to find your way back to the stand. You don't have to go far before everything starts to look the same, and glow tacks or sticks can light-up the trail back to the start—possibly saving you a night in the woods or a couple of hours of panic.

I always carry two flash lights instead of one, just in case a bulb breaks or the batteries die. I use the plastic ties to attach the license to the bear. I need my boot laces on my boots, and these ties are very strong if attached through the

lower jaw of the bear.

A small 2-ounce spray bottle of Scent-A-Way comes in handy, especially in the hot, dog-days of bear season if I sweat during my walk into the stand. And lastly I like to bring water and a little snack. I'm always sure to take the snack out of its original, loud, crackly wrapper and put it in a soft plastic sandwich baggie prior to the hunt. Ever try to get a candy wrapper back into your pack without making any noise? A soft plastic bag is much better.

If your one that needs something to drink, then I recommend a 20-ounce pop or water bottle with a screw-on cap. Plus, a bottle with a screw-on top can also be used if your bladder wasn't quite as empty

as you thought it was prior to getting to your stand. The great thing about bear hunting is eating on stand will not hurt your hunt if a bear gets down wind.

Keep it simple and light. The more non-essential equipment you bring, the more you have keep track of and bring back out of the woods. Oh yeah, after finding the clients bear, I asked him what song was playing on his iPod. He said, "Nothing. I forgot to charge the batteries." *W*

Contact Bill Kurtz, Northern Wisconsin Outfitters at 715.373.0344 or at [www.northernwisconsinoutfitters.com](http://www.northernwisconsinoutfitters.com)



# On Wisconsin Outdoors Board of Directors



Conibear Smith

*Dear Conibear Smith,  
I finished my trapping education course last summer and should graduate from hunter's ed after the test next week. Then I can turkey hunt. Just wonder'n' what kind of changes you've seen in your years in the field?*  
—Danny White, Medford

Dear Danny,

The question is, Danny, what kind of changes are you about to see. First, about your hunter's Ed test. As part of the 1100-page stimulus package that our elected officials had 27 seconds to review, the government has mandated that you'll get a "C" on the test. Remember comrade—I mean Danny—you're just average, no better, no worse than the next brain-washed little kid. Also, the government has mandated that no one feel bad if they don't fill that turkey tag. So, everyone will receive a smile, a hand-shake and nice butterball turkey from a government official at each registration station...as long as you hand in your shotgun.

—Conibear Smith

*Dear Rex Rodsalotta,  
I'm not sure if it's really fishing, but did you know that a 105 year old Wisconsin resident speared a 105 year old sturgeon on Winnebago? How cool is that?*  
—Susan Cash, Eau Claire

Dear Susan,

I heard about that, but it seems there was also a down-side. Spearer and speared looked so much alike that there was a mix-up at the registration station. The lake sturgeon was last seen driving south with the spearer's wife on highway 151 south of Pipe. The real spearer, Frank Thompson, was tagged, measured, weighed, sexed and, as of this reporting, is still at Joe's Taxidermy in Fond du Lac.

"If there's a bright side," said DNR Sturgeon Biologist Ron Bruch at a press conference, "it's that Mr. Thompson came in at a very respectable 60 inches and 126 pounds. We can also verify that he was indeed a male. The incident really wasn't our fault. Neither was moving much, there was this kind of gurgling noise coming from each, and they do look an awful lot alike."

—Rex Rodsalotta



Rex Rodsalotta

**EDITORS NOTE: Hunter Daily is on vacation. Like the other steelheads, he will return in April ...**

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KEVIN MICHALOWSKI

**DOG TALK***Early puppy care is key*

**P**eople often ask, "At what age should I start training my puppy?" This question seems to just pop out, as if training is some sort of program with a set schedule and finite goals. On the contrary, dog training is an ongoing process that begins the day your puppy is born.

If you have done all your homework and selected a reputable breeder, the socialization of your puppy very

likely began within a few minutes of its birth. All puppies should be handled almost immediately. They need to be dried, inspected and cuddled and should be removed from the whelping area and kept warm as the mother delivers the next pup. This early activity starts the process of showing the pup that it must submit to the wishing of humans. There's nothing defined or directed about this activity, but such

handling is very important in getting the young dog acclimated to the life it will soon lead.

Most puppies arrive at their new homes at about eight weeks of age and the "training" should begin that day. By training, I mean to say that the new owner should immediately establish a routine. Feeding, playing, quiet time and potty breaks should all revolve around a schedule that serves to show the puppy that you are calling the shots. There's no need to be harsh or attempt to correct a puppy's behavior at this stage, simply establish a routine, spend plenty of time with the dog and do simple things to make the dog understand that you are the boss. Some of those things include holding the dog back from the food dish for a few seconds or a minute, rubbing on the shoulders and neck area (sign of dominance) and picking the puppy up and holding the animal until it stops squirming. All these things show the dog you are in control. This will help you later on.

Once the puppy is about 3 months old you can start to work on things like housebreaking and simple obedience commands. With housebreaking, the key is to keep a strict schedule and control food and water at all times until the dog is completely housebroken.

Simple obedience commands like "sit" and "come" can be taught at this early age, but you must remain patient and kind as you repeatedly show the dog what you want it to do after you issue the command. But at the same time, you should continue handling the puppy and gently showing the animal your dominance which makes the dog more willing to comply with your commands.

After a couple weeks of basic obedience training you should begin taking your pup out in public, so the dog learns how to act around other people. This requires real patience on your part. During the first few trips to crowded parks or busy sidewalks, your puppy will undoubtedly ignore your commands completely. Keep the dog on the leash and simply reinforce the commands. Above all, stay calm. Yelling, or worse yet, hitting the dog will only prove to the dog that crowds and other people are something to be afraid of. In doing so, you might never be able to easily control your dog in such situations.

At the same time, you'll want to have a helper or other family member

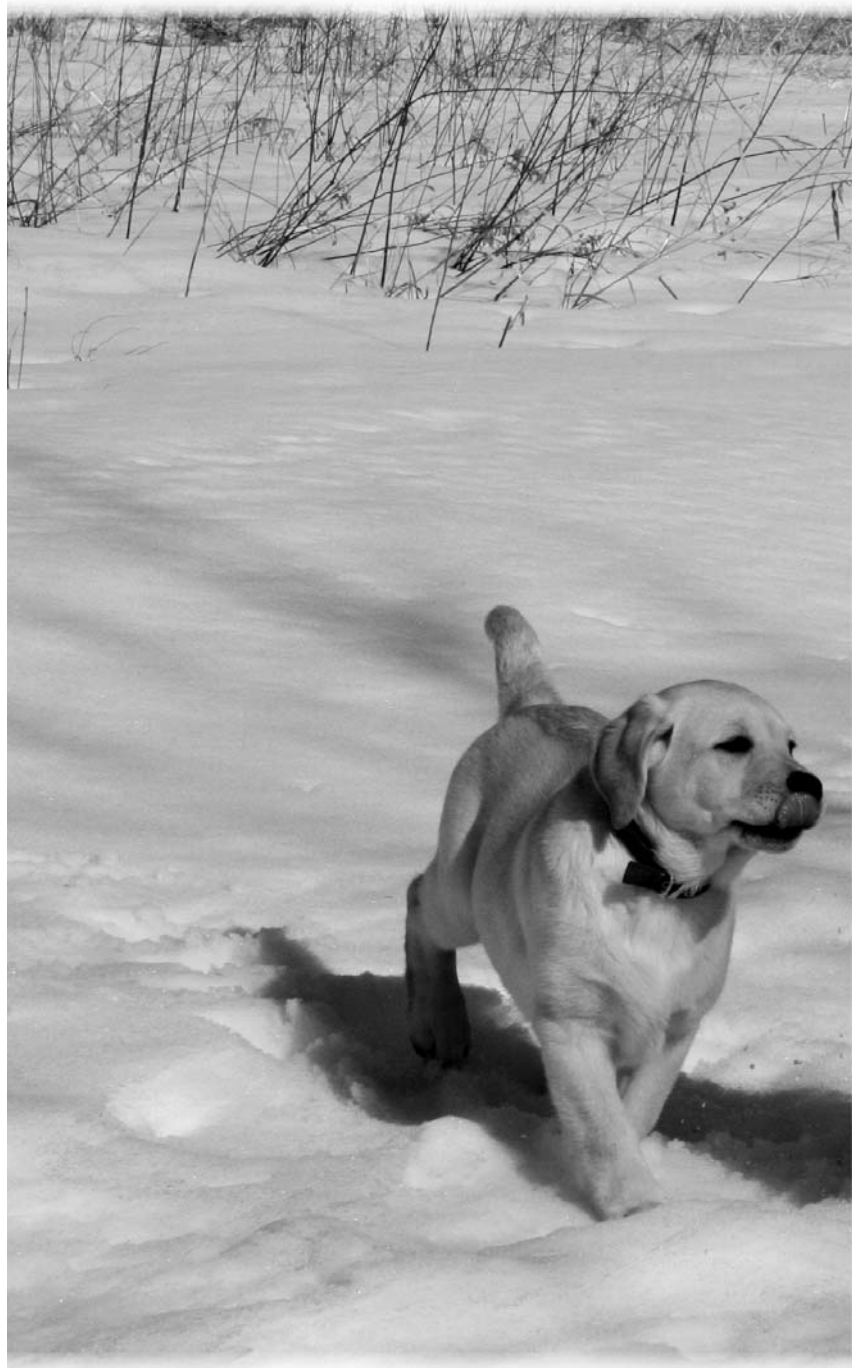
**PUPPY TRAINING**

**Eight Weeks:** *New owner establishes routine with puppy.*

**Three Months:** *Housebreaking and simple obedience commands.*

**Four Months:** *Begin socialization by taking dog out in public; practice having others give basic commands to puppy.*

**Six Months:** *Introduce avoidance training; introduce electronic collar.*



*Puppy training is an ongoing process and includes everything from basic commands to how and when you provide food. Do it right and you'll end up with a great dog.*

start giving some of the basic commands. This helps the young dog to understand that commands must be obeyed, no matter who gives them.

When a dog is about 6 months old you can start introducing avoidance training. That is, the dog learns to obey the command in order to avoid the correction. At first this begins with the leash and the choke collar. Again, consistent but firm correction shows the dog what to expect. This is also the time to introduce the electronic collar. This must be done properly and its introduction was covered in a previous column. I love the little booklet offered with the DT Systems training collars. Good communication like that could put me out of business as a writer, but I love it when people follow the directions and end up with a good dog.

In all cases, keep your training time short in duration and finish the training when the dog has succeeded in task. Ending on a positive note reinforces the idea to the dog that the training sessions are something to look forward to. If you start training early and remain consistent your progress will be amazing. It's never too early to start training your pup. *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 askdogtalk@hotmail.com.*



TERRILL A. KNAACK

**SACRED GROUND***Painting outside the lines*

According to the author, the best way to capture light is to stand directly before it—even if that means braving the elements of a Wisconsin winter. At right, “Union River” by Terrill Knaack.

When one thinks of winter activities, many possibilities come to mind, including skiing, snowshoeing and ice fishing. Carrying an easel and paint-box into the field is not one of the outdoor activities that’s likely to come to mind for the average reader, even among those who collect or have an interest in outdoor and nature art.

The importance to the artist of working in the field cannot be overlooked. It has been a standard working method for artists of the past that have created master works, and it’s critical to the artist who is putting down his vision as a contemporary landscape painter. In fact, nothing teaches the art of observation as standing in front of one’s subject with brushes, canvas and a dozen colors spread out on a palette. Light and color are inseparable: There is never a change of light that does not equate to at least a subtle change of color. To capture light, the best way is to stand before it.

While painting in the field can be a difficult ordeal at any time, painting in the winter has its own special challenges. Oil paints get really thick and viscous below 20 degrees Fahrenheit, and watercolor is out of the question. It’s hard to paint with gloves on, so fingers tend to suffer. As with all winter activities, a warm fire nearby is a great idea though seldom possible.

As contemporary landscape master Richard Schmid explained, “You can’t really capture the feel of snow in a painting unless you are standing up to the tops of your boots in it.” For me, heading into the field to

paint is always a new adventure. One never knows quite what’s going to happen. Mosquitoes, wind, rain and numbing cold take their toll. Then there’s the task of getting your work back safely to your truck.

We’re all familiar with the images of painters comfortably working in their studios and their studies with reference materials placed around them. In fact, depending on the goal, there’s nothing particularly wrong with this approach. However, learning to observe, to see colors and capture light comes from being there.

The camera’s shutter captures an image on a sensor or film in a fraction of a second, while the outdoor painter finds him or herself challenged with the need to draw with a brush, mix color quickly and get down the essence of the subject without a moment to spare. The continual changes in light and shadow require maximum attention year round. The added dimension of cold in the winter adds to the fun.

Looking at wildlife and landscape art today, we see much that does not give us the sense of anything but a contrived artificiality. For those looking for that “something else,” outdoor painting is the key. Carl Rungius, the unquestioned first great painter of North America’s large mammals, as well as master painter of the western landscape, is often reported to have refused to look at a young artist’s work without seeing their field sketches first. According to Rungius, it was the field sketch that was the basis for learning to paint the landscape.

Whatever the case, the human eye does not see like a camera lens. It focuses on one plane at a time and shifts focus continually to give us the illusion of depth-of-field. We do not

experience the world with a continuous depth of focus. The artist’s job, according to most great painters, is not just to capture what’s in front of him or her, or their emotional reaction to it—but to evoke that something else that comes about when the painter and the subject communicate, that gives the image its compelling power.

The Midwestern landscape does not soar in front of us with the vast sense of visual scale of the Western mountains. The prairies, woods and wetlands of the Midwest are a more intimate space; however, the spirit of the wild speaks through them just as strongly. Capturing that spirit in paint, though transcendent and evasive, calls the outdoor painter to the field despite the odds against him. *W*

*Terrill Knaack has been painting Wisconsin landscapes and wildlife for 30 years. He is also a photographer and a perpetual observer of Wisconsin’s natural history. To learn more about his work, see [www.terrillknaack.com](http://www.terrillknaack.com).*

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# Great gear for the woods, fields and waterways

By JJ Reich

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

## QUAKER BOY FIREBOX

For \$25, this versatile turkey call is crafted with cherry and eucalyptus hardwoods. The call's contact points on the lid are coated with a new-and-improved waterproof solution to produce good, raspy sounds when



dry or wet. The Firebox also features Curved Lid Technology. But what's really uncommon about this new call is the matching curved sides, which adds comfort, good looks and a unique sound. I've killed several gobblers using Quaker Boy's reliable Hurricane box call, so I'm looking forward to calling with the brand-new Firebox this season.

**Quakerboygamecalls.com**

## TURKEY TEARRORS

For \$28 per three-pack, these 100-grain broadheads have three stainless-steel blades that create a 13/16-inch cutting diameter. Their specialized blades also have large notches, which are designed for limited arrow pass-through so they ultimately kill with kinetic energy, which packs a deadly punch. Since the blade design keeps your arrow from passing through, turkeys don't run away after the shot. Several bowhunters have told me



these broadheads fly accurately and have knockdown power that will make you say, "Wow!"

**Americanbroadhead.com**

## ROCKY BOBCATS

For \$170, these durable and waterproof boots use Gore-Tex waterproof lining for breathable comfort, and are lined with 800 grams of Thinsulate Ultra insulation for warmth. They also feature full-grain leather and are available in all-black, all-brown or brown/Realtree camou-



flage (pictured). I like the extended ankle guards and their tread works great in muddy fields, which keeps me from being injured (again). Plus, you got to love having warm, dry, comfortable feet on cold, early-April, Wisconsin mornings.

**Rockyboots.com**

## KNIGHT & HALE SILVER HAMMER

For \$24, this slate-style call features an aluminum calling surface and a plastic-composite pot that features an innovative, integrated soundboard for a unique, high-quality sound. The call comes with a water-proof-tipped, composite/hickory



striker and a conditioning pad. If you don't own an aluminum pot call, you're missing out: Its hard-metal calling surface creates a different, higher-frequency sound that could bring you more success. I think the Silver Hammer has excellent turkey sound at a reasonable price. It's definitely a good buy.

**Knightandhale.com**  
(479) 782-8971

## WINCHESTER XTENDED RANGE HD

For \$50 per box of ten, Winchester's Xtended Range HD shotshells provide a high-speed and high-impact load while maintaining a tight center pattern. The tungsten-based shot is 10 percent more dense



than lead and delivers excellent downrange results when turkey, waterfowl or coyote hunting. Winchester has several other good turkey loads, including Super X and Supreme. However, their Supreme Elite Xtended Range HD (High Density) loads are as premium as they come. I've harvested gobblers at 35, 40 and 45 yards using size No. 5. These shotshells drop turkeys in their tracks.

**Winchester.com**

## QUIKSLIDE STRINGER

For \$15, this fishing stringer has removable stainless-steel fish-snaps to add fish easier and cleaner. Once you catch an eater, attach a fish-snap to its jaw. Then, clip the fish-snap to the top of the stringer and slide the fish down



the line and into the water. Yes, somebody turned a stringer high-tech, and for good reason: This thing works slick. Since all the fish-snaps are separate from the stringer, a handy "snap carrier" is also included—it clips onto your belt or almost anything in your boat—to always keep a fish-snap ready for action. Stringer systems are available in 3-, 6- and 14-foot lengths.

**Quikslide.com**

*JJ Reich is an outdoor writer who contributes product-related articles to several national publications and is the author of Kampp Tales™ hunting books for children (www.kampptales.com).*



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[TAMotorsports.com](http://TAMotorsports.com)

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[Sportland2.com](http://Sportland2.com)

### Ecklund Motorsports and Marine

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715/234-8174  
[BearPawMotorsports.com](http://BearPawMotorsports.com)

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[SoutheastSales.com](http://SoutheastSales.com)

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[WorkNSportzSuzuki.com](http://WorkNSportzSuzuki.com)

### Leisure Time Sports

Tomah, WI 54660-1705  
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[LeisureTimeSportsTomah.com](http://LeisureTimeSportsTomah.com)

### Schauer Power Center

Union Grove, WI 53182-0186  
262/878-3344

### Action Power Sports

Waukesha, WI 53189-7928  
262/547-3088  
[ActionPS.COM](http://ActionPS.COM)

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[GCMsport.com](http://GCMsport.com)

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