

May/June 2009

Vol. 2, Issue 5

On Wisconsin *Outdoors*

With the Dick Ellis Experts

■ **Food-Plot Plans**

Plant now to earn fall bucks

■ **Surplus Firearms**

The Nagant is back!

■ **Skinny Water Muskies**

Little water can produce big fish

■ **From Pasture To Plate**

Recipes for cooking your gobbler

■ **Rappin' For Perch**

A new approach for jumbos

■ **Fish And Cranberries**

Wisconsin's undiscovered fisheries

■ **Wisconsin's Manic Muskies**

Ride the Shortline Express to success

■ **Of Morels and Men**

The other other white "meat"

■ **Lake Michigan Salmon**

How-to cash-in on Cohos

■ **Dog Talk**

Prep now for fall success

Dick Ellis

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



KEY FEATURES

- The KingQuad 750 AXi 4x4 boasts Suzuki electronic fuel injection and a 16-bit, digital engine-management system. It provides crisp throttle response and sure starting even in cold weather and high altitude.
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TODD BOHM

A TIME TO SOW

Do your plotting now for big fall bucks

As the smells, sights and sounds of spring begin to signal the end of a long and cold winter, outdoor enthusiasts envision northward flights of waterfowl, gobbling tom turkeys and the spring walleye run.

For serious deer hunters, spring signals food plot season. Successful deer hunters know that planning and preparing food plots now will likely equal big buck success in the fall. By following a few basic tips, anyone can plant and grow successful food plots that will attract and hold deer throughout the summer and fall.

PLOTTING A PLAN

Planning your food plots is the first important step to growing and attracting big bucks to your property. Hunters need to ask themselves what they want their food plots to accomplish and how the land is suited to meet those needs.

Hunters with smaller acreages will probably focus on planting smaller hunting plots, whereas hunters who have larger spans of land might want to design a plan that utilizes both hunting plots and plots that are specifically planted to improve and provide nutrition for deer.

Another part of the planning process with food plots is deciding where to put them. Obvious choices include natural clearings, logging roads, log decking areas, utility right-of-ways or newly created openings. When planning the location of your food plots, you should keep a number of key thoughts in mind. These include wind direction for stand placement, north/south orientation for sunlight, well-drained soil and access for equipment to do the planting.

Deciding what to plant in your food plots is the final component of the planning phase. There are many reputable seed dealers on the market, so hunters sometimes face a daunting process when deciding what to plant. Some of the favorites used in Wisconsin for hunting plots include brassicas, sugar beets, rye and winter oats. Food plots grown for deer nutrition often consist of corn, soybeans and clover. Working with a local agricultural specialist will help you decide what crops grow best in your area.

MAKE YOUR BED

Once the planning stage of food plot construction is finished, the fun part—and hard work—can begin. This is the preparation phase. Proper preparation of the soil and seedbed is crucial to food plot success.

Before you break any ground, you should have your soil tested. Most local feed stores offer testing services and the money—usually about \$20—is well spent. The soil test will give you an idea of how much lime and fertilizer should be added to get the best growth and production from your crops. Proper liming and fertilizing, while seemingly expensive, is critical to your food plot's growth. I can speak from experience that this is a step on which you don't want to skimp.

Once the soil is tested, you might need to add lime to your food plot areas. Hand spreaders, ATV-mounted spreaders, PTO-driven spreaders or hiring local Co-op companies to spread the lime are all options. With 7.0 being the ideal PH level, hunters should realize that it might take a few years for the soil to reach optimal PH consistencies. I've found that working the lime into the soil immediately after spreading is the best way to go.

Once your soil is limed (if necessary), you can begin working the ground. One of my favorite smells in the spring is the smell of fresh-turned earth. There are a number of tools available to the hunter to till their food plots, depending on location and size of the plots. Hunters might use hand equipment, small tillers, ATV-powered tillage equipment or tractors equipped with plows, discs, or PTO-driven tillers.

While some of the larger equipment might not fit into a hunter's budget, local farmers or independent contractors might be hired to do the actual tilling. After tilling, hunters can plant their seeds. Hand spreaders, broadcast spreaders or planters can be used to do this—again, depending on the size of the plots.

THE BIG THREE

There are three crucial points to keep in mind when spreading the seed. First, timing is everything—I try to spread my seed just before rain. This helps to set the seed and to help start the growing process. And secondly, set the



There's something about getting a little dirt under his fingernails that makes the author smile—especially when his hard work pays big bucks.

seed using some sort of tool, such as a rake, length of chain-link fence or cultipacker to ensure good contact and proper coverage with the soil.

Paying attention to proper fertilization once the seed is planted is the final crucial step. Some crops might need to be fertilized immediately upon planting, while others require waiting a few weeks until the crop has emerged. Regardless of when you fertilize, you must pay attention to this crucial step and fertilize at the indicated rate of your soil test's and crop recommendations.

Even though spring is months away from the fall hunting season, time invested now will not only create a sense of accomplishment, but it will enhance the habitat quality of your property for attracting and holding big bucks. Besides, getting a little dirt under your fingernails now is a small price to pay when that big, homegrown buck walks under your treestand this fall. *WB*

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

On Wisconsin Outdoors

With the Dick Ellis Experts

Hunting, Fishing, Trapping, Travel
and Outdoor Humor

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Published bi-monthly by ON WISCONSIN OUTDOORS, LLC. Subscriptions are mailed first class.

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S. WILKERSON

SURPLUS FIREARMS

Russian revolvers are back for an encore

Not unlike crazy relatives that can't bear to throw anything out, the Soviet Army was pathologically incapable of decommissioning firearms. And like deranged cousins that hoarded old newspapers and Spam, they kept them for a rainy day. Except for the Soviet Army, that rainy day was yet another potential invasion from the West.

In a generation's time, the Motherland was invaded three times at the cost of tens of millions of lives. Twice the Germans invaded and once, the Soviets would argue, so did the Allies at the close of World 1. In every case, Russia found itself woefully lacking in arms. It's no legend that during the opening stages of Operation Barbarossa, many Soviet troops went to battle against the Nazis without weapons. There only hope of attaining one was from the dead fingers of an armed comrade.

Apparently, it has only been in the past decade or two that the Russians have felt sufficiently secure in their stock of Kalashnikovs and Makarovs that they finally liberated at least some of the many thousands, if not millions, of rifles and pistols they stored away in the event of another armed struggle. Comparatively few Soviet-owned firearms have ever actually hit the shores of the United States.

Thanks to Bill Clinton, the spigot that briefly released some of the more desirable Soviet arms and others the Russians captured from their enemies got turned off in the mid-nineties by executive order. Some SKSs and others dribbled in at that time, but most of the Soviet-era ordnance we now see is supposedly coming from the Ukraine. Russia, according to some sources, remains awash in surplus arms and under the Obama administration; it's doubtful we'll be seeing them anytime soon.

THE REVOLVER RETURNS

One firearm that's readily available is the Nagant Model 1895 revolver, and it's so inexpensive it's practically free—thanks to our friends at Century Arms International, by far the largest importer of surplus arms in the world. Adding to the joy is the fascinating history and operation that come with each Nagant.

There's nothing like a Nagant. Designed in Belgium by brothers Emile and Leon Nagant, the Model

1895 features a cylinder that moves forward when the hammer is cocked, effectively mating it to the barrel when used with the cartridges for which it was intended. Model 1895 cartridges are seated deep inside their case beneath the rim. When a round is fired, the case expands to form an effective seal between barrel and cylinder. This



Despite a highly questionable cartridge innovation, the Nagant is a rugged and reliable relic from the 19th century.

seal prevents the leakage of gas between the two parts as occurs in every other revolver. The ultimate result is a bullet that reaches a maximum velocity of about 100 feet per second more than it would if it didn't have the seal.

Seems like a very small advantage when one considers that the hammer mechanism of a Nagant, if it wasn't already busy enough setting the trigger and taking part in the cylinder's operation, is also responsible for moving the cylinder forward. In order accomplish this feat, a very heavy trigger pull resulted. In fact, the trigger pull weight would certainly bring an approving smile from a liability lawyer. In single action, it's in the neighborhood of 13 pounds, and in double action, a mind-boggling 20 pounds.

Certainly not the precision instrument needed for Olympic target shooting matches, but certainly not something that could easily and unintentionally go off with tragic results in the hands of an unsophisticated peasant.

Like most Russian arms, the

Nagant is as sturdy and reliable as an anvil, and there was little worry that it wouldn't fire when necessary. No doubt more than a few of the millions of Wehrmacht troops that fell on the Eastern Front did so by way of a Nagant.

The Nagant doesn't fire the most potent of rounds. Its 7.62x38 round is

the Soviets and stayed in storage until Century found a good home for it. Firearms rebuilt by the Soviets don't usually sport a high degree of pride in workmanship. The Nagant featured in this article, however, exhibited a very nicely applied medium blue finish on a non-pitted surface, well-fit grips, and its numbers matched, except for the barrel, which was obviously new and unfired. A new holster, lanyard, and cleaning brush came with the package.

Like thousands of Nagants, this one was put away ready to be re-issued to a soldier or partisan at a moment's notice. Today, the Soviet paranoia of being attacked by NATO forces seems quaint to us. Of course, the United States didn't lose over 20 million citizens and soldiers during World War II like Russia did or 12 million in the World War that preceded it.

In fact, considering their nation's history and the number of NATO nations surrounding them, stockpiling firearms in defense of the Motherland seems like a good idea on a lot of levels.

Firearm collectors should think about purchasing a Nagant. Sure, they're cheap and plentiful now, but at one time, so were repatriated M1 carbines. In this political climate, it shouldn't be a surprise to anyone to wake up one morning and find that legislation is being crafted to stop the importation of surplus firearms. It happened in 1968, and there is no guarantee that it couldn't happen again in 2009. *W*

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

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

DARRELL PENDERGRASS

OUT THERE*You gotta have faith*

It's steelhead season once again, a time when each and every Wisconsin trout angler rejoices in the passage of winter.

At this time fishermen pay homage to the swelling of rivers and streams, and we celebrate the crossing over from dark to light. Finally, the lake-run rainbow trout of Superior will migrate in masses before our very eyes, continued proof that life and hope moves forward against all odds.

Dark clouds, chilled winds, rain and cold cannot keep me or my brethren from venturing to the banks of our chosen streams. In past years, my place of worship has been the Brule River, where big waters churn through Douglas County before spilling out along the south shore. I like it there ... no, I love it there. You can feel and smell and watch life awaken before you among the cedars and the pines. Everything is new again.

It's hard to describe exactly what the pull is, about why we need to stand beside a river awash with April rains, why me and others like me have to go. We must go. Yes, it's about fishing, but it isn't about fish. I feel reborn standing on

the river, as if the waters have cleansed me somehow. It's a pilgrimage I have to make.

In 2006, since my 6-year-old son was being baptized into the steelhead-church-of-angling, I stayed closer to home for the opener. I picked the Sioux River, just north of Washburn, along the Big Rock State Campground. This is where we paid our respects and this is where I wanted my son to don his waders for the first time, to cross the flowing waters to the pools and holes that hold the trout as they make their sojourn to places up above.

With Jack's hand gripped firmly in my own, I led him from the shore into the swirling waters as it rushed over rocks and boulders that were born at the dawn of time. We moved through the chaos of rushing waters to the calmness of deepened pools, carved out to give the trout a rest as they work their way up stream. Sometimes we all need some help, no matter our journey.

For the first time Jack's small hands worked the line and the bait and the rod out across the pool, his body and his mind and his thoughts learning what it

means and what it takes to be a "steel-header." I stood beside him without a rod; I did not fish.

We could not see and did not see trout before us as Jack fished. We did not see the anglers around us catching trout, as they too worked their chosen spots. But Jack is learning what it means to have faith; a faith in what cannot be seen with eyes alone.

We did not spend an inordinate amount of time on the river, just enough to set the mind to thinking and pondering. I wanted Jack to catch a glimpse of what a steelhead fisherman is, without boring him with the details. I want him to discover that "catching" is just a small part of angling.

Still, the details are this: An angler who comes to iced waters chilled from the melting snows of winter, who cannot see through clay-red waters 2 feet in front of him, who will risk life and limb to cross the weight of a river alive and on the move, for the possibility of catching a fish that may or may not have arrived at that spot, has faith. Not a religious faith—but faith in himself, but more so, a faith in nature with all its glory.

When we were finished Jack and I crossed back to shore without incident. There were no strikes for us this day; we didn't see any big steelhead hens rolling below us. For some it would appear we simply came to the river, fished for a bit and then went home. Simple. But it's so much more than that.

In the truck, heading to town for lunch, my son looked out the side window and to the river. His feet were wet, his jacket soaked and his hands were red with cold. Jack had his hat pushed back on his head, his face tan with wind burn.

"Dad," Jack said, his eyes never leaving the river. "We didn't catch anything, but I had a great time."

And the migration to the river continues. *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.

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PHIL SCHWEIK

LINES FROM A HOOKSETTER

Skinny Water Muskies



A third snapped-off line during a short period of time began to put a bit of a black cloud over what had been a very successful multi-species guiding trip on the Wisconsin River near Mosinee. Because the Memorial Day group was large, we had several boats targeting bass, walleye and crappies. The fish were cooperating all morning, but the occasional, incidental strike and snapped-off line was getting a bit annoying.

We were working shoreline areas in 1-3 feet of water, throwing jigs tipped with plastics and sometimes small fathead minnows. Our intention was to target shallow shoreline-relating bass and crappies hanging in the rocks and wood, with the occasional straggler walleye present along the structure as a welcome bonus. The problem was too many big fish bite-offs. What was taking our presentations?

After losing several big fish, we were able to solidly hook one of the line breakers in the corner of the mouth. After a good fight and strong battle on light line, a 40-plus inch muskie rested along side the boat.

I look back and think about that scenario often, especially when I'm targeting muskies early in the season. Shallow-water fish, or as some might say, "skinny-water 'skis," refer specifically to finding muskies in the springtime.

From deep clear Northern lakes to shallow rivers and streams, muskies

SKINNY STRATEGIES

A few different presentations will help put those fish in the boat. First, use plastics.

Bulldawgs, jigs with reaper-style tails and Delong Killer Eels will move slowly in shallow water or across the bottom and draw the attention of a feeding muskie without spooking it.

Shallow water muskies are often on high alert and easily skeddaddle for deep water; a careful presentation is needed when

targeting them.

Next, throw bucktails. This old reliable is very versatile and works well under all different types of depths and conditions. Springtime probably registers the majority of bucktail strikes.

Third and probably the most underrated spring bait is the jerkbait. Jerkbait is easily worked slowly over shallow cover and they generally provide a good hookup.

The key to ultimately tripping a muskie to strike in the spring is to cast well past your targeted area, even if you're landing your bait right up on shore, to avoid spooking shallow laying fish. Slowly bring the bait past the area you think the muskie might be laying and prepare for the strike. If the water is clear, you might even be able to see the fish and watch as it attacks the bait.

Try a couple of these tactics this spring and you'll find that shallow water isn't reserved only for the little fishies. In fact, you might find yourself hooking into the monster of a lifetime. *WS*

Phil Schweik owns and operates Hooksetters Guide Service, and can be reached at: 715.581.2620 or by visiting www.hooksetters.biz.



Little water isn't reserved for little fish. Warming springtime temps mean warmer water surface temps—which can put the muskies in your face.

will move up very shallow in the spring simply to find warm water. The shallow water is the warmest water available and at this time of the year it will attract muskies for two main reasons.

First, muskies will move shallow to spawn. You might see fish in water as shallow as 6 inches as they prepare to lay their eggs.

Second, muskies follow their food sources. If baitfish are attracted to warmer water, the muskies will follow. Knowing where the fish are is half the battle.



Gobble-Grilling Goodness

by Suzette Curtis

It's turkey hunting season in Wisconsin again. Even though we use our grill year-round at the Curtis household, it's especially enjoyable this time of year to start spending more time outside with our family. So, grab a beer or a glass of wine and try one of our favorite gobbler-grilling recipes.

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.



Marinated Grilled Turkey

Cut turkey breasts across the grain into strips approximately 1 ½ inches wide. Place turkey strips into large Ziploc bag.

Marinade:

1 c. apple cider
2 tbsp. honey
2 tbsp. Dijon mustard
½ c. olive oil

Whisk together apple cider, mustard and honey. Slowly drizzle olive oil into apple cider mixture while whisking. Pour marinade over turkey strips and coat completely. Refrigerate 2-4 hours.

Place marinated turkey strips on hot grill. Cook thoroughly, turning and basting until no longer pink. Discard left-over marinade.

from the kitchen of Suzette Curtis

Stuffed Turkey Breast

Turkey breast (boneless, but with skin)
½ c. finely chopped onion
1 c. water
1 c. sliced fresh mushrooms (or one can)

1 c. chicken broth
1 c. chopped fresh cranberries (may also use frozen)
2/3 c. uncooked wild rice

¼ c. jumbo raisins
3 tbsp. butter
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine wild rice, water and broth in saucepan, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and cook 40-45 minutes until liquid is absorbed. Set aside.

Melt butter in large saucepan or skillet and sauté onion and mushrooms until translucent. Add cranberries, raisins, cooked rice and salt and pepper. Stir to combine.

Place stuffing mixture between the two breast halves and secure with skewers. Bake at 325 degrees in uncovered roasting pan for 2-2 ½ hours, periodically basting with pan drippings, until thermometer in thickest part of breast reads 170 degrees. Remove from oven and let stand 10 minutes before carving. Serve with gravy.

Gravy: Place roasting pan on stove over low heat. Gradually add 3- 4 tbsp. flour to pan drippings, stirring slowly to thicken. Increase heat, stir in 2 c. water, and continue stirring until mixture boils. Add salt and pepper to taste, and serve.

from the kitchen of Suzette Curtis

Barbecued Grilled Turkey

You don't have to wait until Thanksgiving to have roasted turkey. It can be a treat any time of the year, but with a fresh wild turkey, it's even more of a treat. The key to a moist bird is a long, slow cook in a low-heat oven and the addition of raw bacon.

Barbecue Sauce:

3 tbsp. butter
2 tbsp. brown sugar
½ c. finely chopped onion
2 tbsp. ketchup
½ c. finely chopped green pepper
1 c. beef broth
¼ c. lemon juice
1 tbsp. minced garlic

Melt butter in sauce pan, and sauté onion and green pepper until translucent. Add remaining ingredients and bring to full boil. Remove from heat.

Cut turkey across grain into strips approximately 1 ½ inches wide. Place strips on hot grill and cook, turning and basting with barbecue sauce until no longer pink. Serve with excess barbecue sauce for dipping.

from the kitchen of Suzette Curtis

Roast Wild Turkey

One wild turkey
One bag stuffing mix
3 tbsp. butter
1 c. chicken broth (I prefer low sodium)
½ c. finely chopped celery
1 c. white wine
½ c. finely chopped onion
½ lb. bacon (uncooked)

Pour stuffing mix into large bowl. Melt butter in saucepan and sauté celery and onion until translucent. Add broth and wine and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and pour over stuffing mixture, mixing until blended.

Stuff turkey and stitch opening closed with butcher string. Place bird in roasting pan and drape bacon strips over top; cover and bake at 300 degrees for approx. 4 ½ hours. Remove cover and continue roasting for an additional 45 minutes with regular basting. Remove from oven and let stand at least 10 minutes before carving.

This recipe seems to be a traditionally fall dish; but again, the taste is wonderful with fresh turkey. It serves 10-12 people, so it makes a great meal for company.

from the Kitchen of Suzette Curtis

JERRY KIESOW

FLY FISHING IN WISCONSIN

Back to basics: The ins and outs of fishing with a fly

The canoe eased away from the pier as I straightened the bow to point downstream, and let the gentle current take charge. Picking up the old six weight rod, I stripped line from the reel and false-cast a few times, and then presented the olive Woolly Worm to the brush pile secured by an oak that had fallen 2 years ago. The little fly settled slowly, its hackle “legs” treading water.

‘TIS THE SEASON

I love May and June. These are a fly fisher’s dream months. If there are ever 2 months of the year that are made for fly fishing, it’s now. At no other time of the year are fish more cooperative.

Last year, in the May/June 2008 issue of On Wisconsin Outdoors, I discussed the joys and methods of catching panfish on a fly rod, and I won’t rehash that. What I didn’t discuss was what you need to know to get started in this fun sport, and I apologize for the delay.

TACKLE TALK

Fly fishing tackle—the rod, the reel, and the line—is the only tackle I know of that should be balanced (matched), so casting your lure (fly), will be easier, and the presentation (how the fly lands on the water), will be as gentle as possible (there are exceptions). You can certainly cast with unbalanced equipment, but life is not nearly as good.

Fly tackle is categorized in “weights,” from No. 1 weight all the way up to No. 15 weight. The weight designation is determined by how much the line weighs—in grains—for the first 30 feet of the fly line. Manufacturers use a chart to, somewhat, standardize said line weights. The lowest number, No. 1, represents the lightest weight.

Rods are manufactured to cast each line weight optimally. Therefore, you want to match a 6-weight rod to a 6 weight line.

Reels do not change size with each line weight. One reel can be used for several line weights, but reels do vary in size as the weights rise—a 2-4 weight reel, then 5-8, and so on.

Lines, in addition to being made in different weights, are also made to float or sink, and come in a variety of “tapers.” A line’s taper determines how a line will cast and present your fly.



The author’s basic, balanced fly fishing outfit for first-timers: Six weight rod, reel and line, complete with backing and a 5X leader. Also pictured are four basic flies on the rod handle: streamer, popper, wet fly and nymph—just enough to get started.

There are three basic tapers: level taper, which has no taper at all; weight forward taper, which is most common and practical, with a lot of variables; and double taper, which is for maximum sensitivity, delicate presentation.

Fortunately, you can buy complete outfits, perfectly matched, from a variety of manufacturers, and they usually come with a leader, backing and a travel case.

Leader and backing? What are they?

The backing is, generally, 20-pound braided line that’s put onto your reel before the fly line. The amount of backing is determined by the size of the outfit. Most reel manufacturers list the amount of backing recommended for the size of the line you’re using. For instance, 100 yards of backing is recommended for a 6-weight line.

Why do you need backing? First, it fills the reel arbor so that if you don’t go fishing for awhile, heaven forbid, the line will not have as tight a memory or curl. Secondly, when you hook into that trophy, and it runs you out of fly line, you will have more line to battle it with. (Trust me, sizeable fish will take you into your backing.)

And then there are leaders. You don’t tie your flies directly to your fly line—that just doesn’t work. Think of

the smaller/weaker the leader. For example, a 7X will break before a 1X does. The ‘X’ simply represents the diameter of the tippet.

These items, described very briefly, excluding the flies themselves, make up your fly fishing tackle.

THE RECOMMENDATION

My best bit of advice: Your best, most versatile outfit to begin your fly fishing life with is a No. 6 weight, weight-forward, floating line (6WF-F), plus the appropriate amount of backing, a corresponding rod and reel, and a 5X leader. With this combination you’ll be able to fish for trout, panfish and bass with no problem. Once you get hooked on fly fishing you can begin to look at other options.

THE REST OF THE STORY

I saw the leader straighten, but felt nothing. Raising the rod while simultaneously taking up the slack, I felt the pleasant tug of the fish. It wasn’t a large bluegill, but it was beautiful in its spawning colors, and it was the first ‘gill of the season. And so the fun began. Keep a good thought! *W*

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 via email at mrmrsprg8@wi.rr.com.



DAVE SURA

SHORE BETS*Rappin' for perch: A new approach for jumbos*

Sometimes, thinking outside the box can produce big results for venturesome anglers. As the author's smile indicated, the proof is in the perch.

Each year hundreds of anglers head to the shoreline of Lake Michigan in search of jumbo perch. And during the past 5 years or so, there has been an emergence of anglers using crankbaits—yes, crankbaits—for perch. Whether it's for sport or food, using crankbaits will not only increase the number of perch you'll catch, but it will increase the quality as well.

TIMING

As summer approaches, lakes around the state warm, and Lake Michigan is no exception. During this time of year, mid-June through early July, surface water temperatures are between the mid 50s and 60 degrees. Perch, along with many other fish species, are feeding heavily now after spawning in May.

From my experience of catching

perch for during the past 20 years, perch feed on minnows, crayfish, insect larvae and especially alewives. Alewives are also feeding on microorganisms this time of year near the harbors of Lake Michigan, attracting predators—in this case, jumbo perch. These are perfect conditions to use crankbaits, namely Shad Raps. Once the water temps warm too much, alewives leave the harbors and head out in search of cooler waters, dragging the perch with them.

EQUIPMENT AND RIGGING

When planning to use this method for perch, you'll need some basic equipment. First, a 7-foot medium-light or medium-action rod, such as those made by St. Croix, will allow you to fish the bait effectively. Reels should fit the rod and have at least three bearings and a good drag. Having a good drag is

important because occasionally trout will find your crankbait equally attractive.

Spool your reel with 8-pound-test mono, and you're essentially ready to go. Fill a small tackle box with ¼- and 3/8-ounce worm weights, barrel swivels in sizes No. 8-12, Duolock snaps in sizes No. 1 and No. 2, a spool of 8-pound fluorocarbon for leaders, and Shad Raps. Shad Raps come in many sizes and colors; sizes No. 4 and No. 5 are the two that I use and recommend.

My favorite color by far is shad; silver, pearl and glass ghost are other good bets. Other colors and other brands of shad-style baits catch fish, too, so experiment with them. Be sure to also bring extra baits in all colors, because you will get snagged occasionally and lose rigs.

Rigging Shad Raps or other shad-style crankbaits is simple. If you fish for bass, you'll recognize the set up immediately—it's similar to a Carolina-rigged worm. Slide a ¼- or 3/8-ounce worm weight on your line. As always, the proper weight depends on current and the water depth. Tie the main line to a No. 10 or No. 12 barrel swivel. Tie one end of an 18-24-inch, 8-pound-test fluorocarbon leader to the swivel, and then tie the other end to No. 1 Duolock snap.

Consider removing the front hook from the Shad Rap. This helps prevent the bait from snagging the line during the retrieve. This also keeps the bait from snagging the bottom or other submerged debris. Then simply hook the Shad Rap on the snap and you're ready to fish.

PRESENTATION AND LOCATION

Fish the Carolina-rigged Shad Rap as you would a jig. Cast the bait out as far as you can, let it sink to the bottom, and then start a jigging retrieve. I prefer quick, short jerks rather than long, slow ones—perch will generally inhale the bait on the pause.

Perch relate closely with the bottom, so be sure to keep the bait down. If you must, let it sink back down again halfway through the retrieve because this technique often causes reaction strikes from perch.

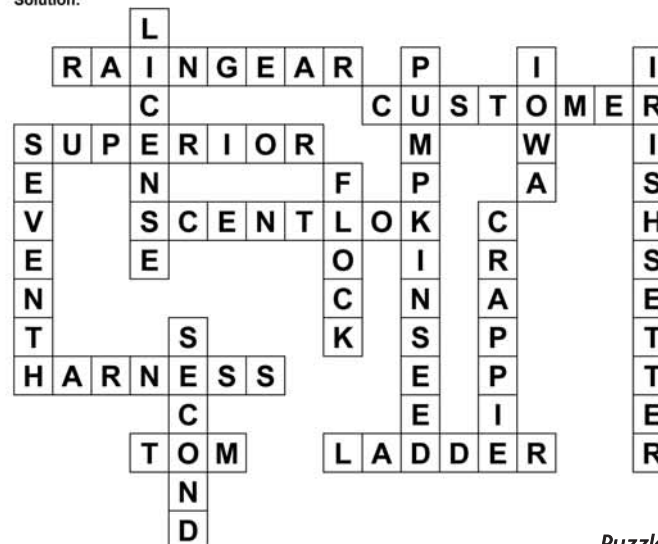
Usually, the active fish will only strike this bait. Since the Shad Rap mimics alewives, this system works best when alewives are present. Without the baitfish present, the remaining perch will feed on other available food sources.

The top spots to use this technique are river mouths, power plant discharges, harbor entrances or any other areas with current that funnels and holds alewives.

This bait system has produced more jumbos than any other I've seen or used. If you haven't tried this technique, get out this summer and give it a shot. This system will work from Kenosha to Green Bay and all points in-between. You won't be disappointed: Get out there and rap-up some perch. *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.

Solution:



TERRY BITZ

OUTDOOR CONVERGENCE

Fish and cranberries

We have some legendary waters to fish here in Wisconsin. Waters such as Green Bay, the Mississippi River and Lake Winnebago all receive plenty of media and angler attention. Other well-known locations receive plenty of pressure as well.

But there are plenty of other Wisconsin waters that continue to go unnoticed, such as the cranberry flowages—many call them bogs—located in west-central Wisconsin. These stump-filled waters have been productive for decades, and few people outside of the local residents know about them.

The bulk of these flowages are located in Monroe, Jackson, Juneau and Wood counties, which are located at the heart of Wisconsin's cranberry country.

Many of these relatively obscure bogs are teeming with largemouth bass, northern pike, bluegills, sunfish and the ever-present bullhead. All species of fish can reach large sizes in these unpreserved waters: Numerous locals have bass mounted on their walls that legitimately weigh more than 8 pounds. My uncle, who taught me how to fish, has a "bog" bass hanging on his wall that weighs more than 10 pounds. Yeah, that's a big bass.

Large panfish live here, too. The state record white crappie was caught near Tomah in 2003. Big shouldered, aggressive pike also cruise many of these waters. And although 40 inch fish are rare, they do exist.

THINK SMALL FOR BIG FISH

Gaining access to these waters is generally more difficult than catching the fish. Many waters are located near roadways that allow easy access, while others require a bit more effort. A good topographic map and satellite images showing waters, including small streams and rivers, are great search tools.

Often, it will be the small streams and rivers that pass under roadways that will provide the means of access. State law allows people to use any navigable waterway to access the flowages—even if that waterway runs through private property. However, you must stay in the water. Exiting onto dry land will mean you are trespassing.

The best option is to ask the landowner for permission. These hard-working people will often grant access, especially if you agree to practice selective harvest and if you offer them part of your catch. The shore fishing on these private lands can be exceptional.

What you will not need to fish these waters is a big boat. A 12- to 14-foot craft, preferably a john-boat or a small v-bottom, is your best choice. A gas motor might be used but is often not needed. A small electric trolling motor for propulsion can be ideal, and oars work well on these smaller waters, too.

TAME YOUR TACTICS

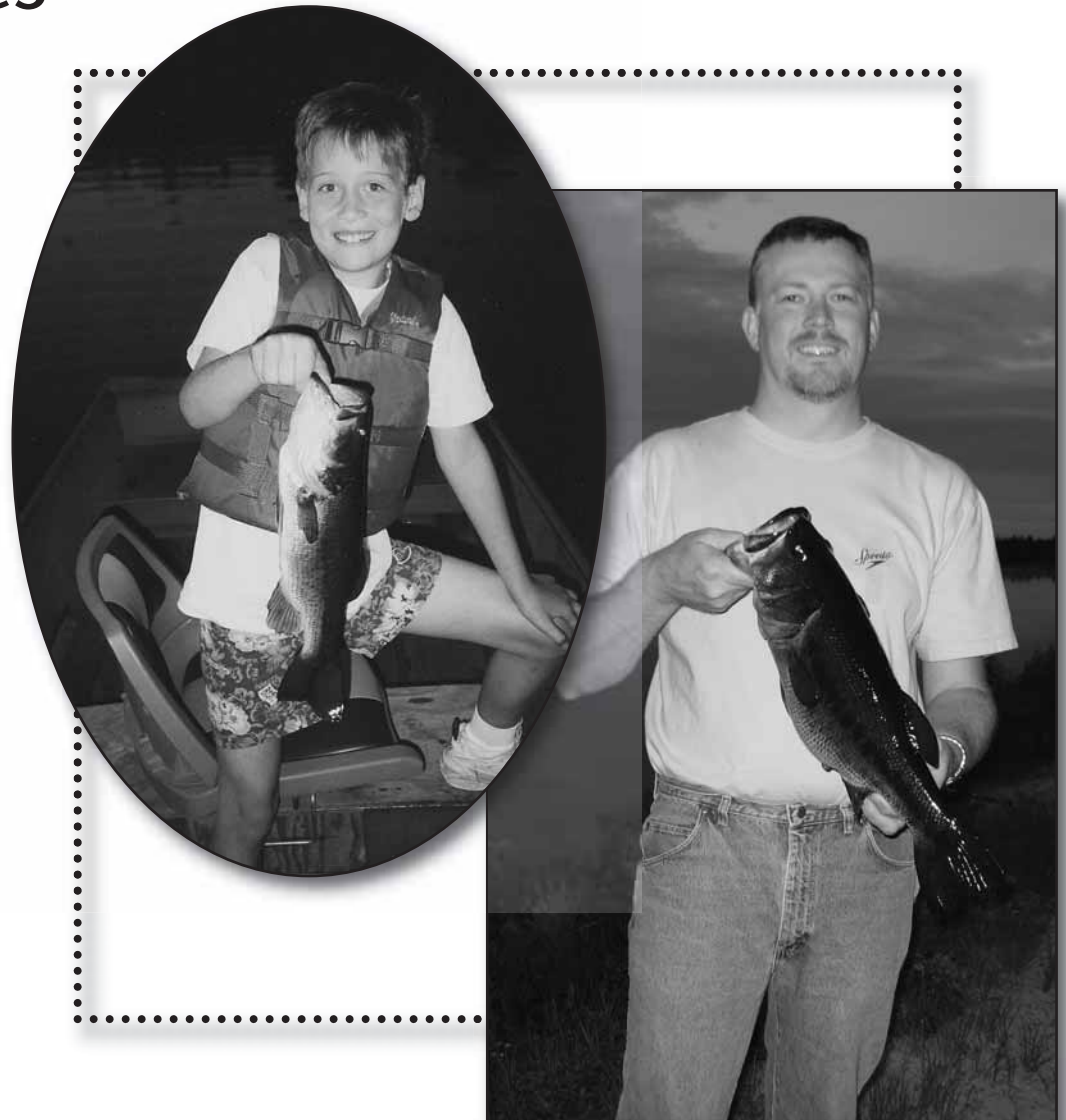
When it comes to tactics, keep it simple. These waters are rarely more than 10 feet deep and the fish are generally located near cover. This includes stumps, lily pads and other vegetation. The fish will also relate to shorelines where steep, dredged banks provide a structural element.

Because of the water depth and cover types the fish relate to, leave the ultra deep-diving crankbaits at home—unless you prefer to decorate submerged stumps with colorful lures.

I suggest bringing shallow to moderately deep-running crankbaits, plus spinnerbaits and inline spinners. If you find stumps submerged in 5- to 10-foot depths, you have found an excellent spot. If you can bounce cranks and spinner baits off those stumps on your retrieve, you might just find gold in the form of a big fish.

Soft plastics are also an excellent option. Texas or wacky-rigged worms and tubes can produce bountiful catches of bass. Cast the worms into the lily pads and bounce them off of exposed stumps to produce strikes.

Those looking for bluegills and



LEFT: The author's son, Devin, didn't allow his dad to have all the fun while fishing on a cranberry bog near Tomah, Wisconsin. RIGHT: The author shows off a bass he caught on a cranberry bog near Warrens, Wisconsin—proving that fish and cranberries go good together.

crappies should make sure various spinner jigs are in their arsenal. Of course live bait such as wax worms or parts of a crawler, rigged under a float, can be excellent options, too.

Because the waters are stained brown with tannic acid from the surrounding marshes, bright-colored lures are excellent choices. On bright sunny days, we've often found fluorescent colors will out-produce most other options, while a black lure with a silver or gold bottom works well early and late in the day or during overcast conditions.

By the middle of October, most of these waters are vacant of other anglers. Many have turned their focus toward hunting and away from fishing. The fish,

however, haven't stopped eating.

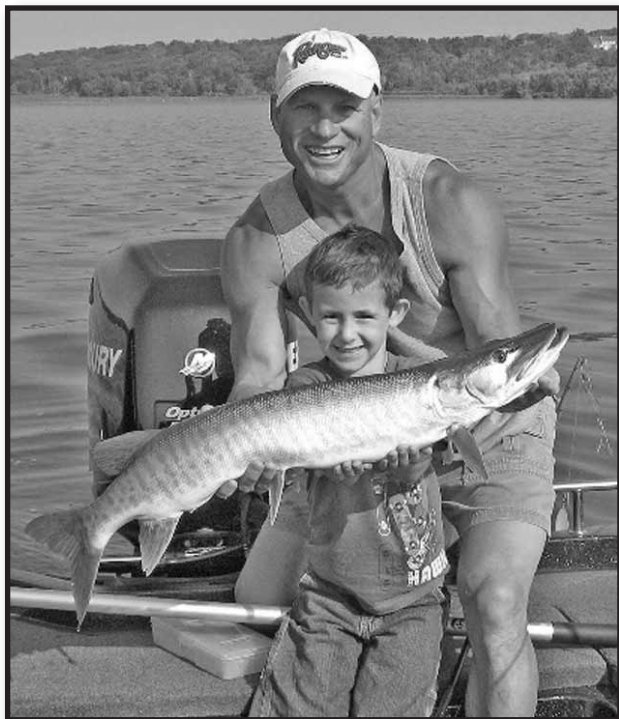
A few years ago I was fishing one late October day and found a school of ravenous crappies. In less than a half-hour, I caught approximately 20 fish, none smaller than 9 inches and most between 12-13 inches. All were caught on a small jointed Rapala. What was amazing was not that I found such a large number of quality fish in a biting mood—it was that I was the only one chasing the pot of gold. *WB*

Terry Bitz is a freelance writer who resides in Pleasant Prairie, WI. He can be contacted at tbitz@wi.rr.com, or by visiting his website at www.outdoorconvergence.com.

STEVE MILJAT

WISCONSIN'S MANIC MUSKIES

Riding the Shortline Express to success



Although the technique sometimes take a bit of getting used to, speed trolling and shortlining for muskies can provide fun for the entire family.

Shortline trollers, I believe, experience the most explosive hits in all of freshwater fishing. The technique is called shortline or "prop-wash trolling," and it's the most efficient and exciting way to consistently hook-up with muskies.

Just imagine a lure traveling at 4 mph or greater through your prop wash and, all of a sudden, an accelerating muskie grabs that lure. Now you have a water tiger by the tail and the ensuing battle is like hand-to-hand combat because of the close proximity between you and that green fish.

The highest hurdle for those new to this presentation is believing that the

motor isn't a hindrance, but rather an asset in triggering a muskie to strike. Setting aside doubt is paramount to achieving success with any new endeavor and the concept of placing a lure in a prop wash with the hope of catching a muskie does require a high level of confidence in the system—at least until you record your first shortline catch.

HOW IT WORKS

You might ask, "Why doesn't the motor spook muskies away from the boat like it does other species of fish?"

The answer is really the secret to this presentation: The propeller causes a disturbance which repositions fish from their resting spots, and this activity gets the attention of a muskie that's in the area. If this commotion activates a muskie and as your lure enters the strike zone, there's a high probability of a hit occurring. Basically, the propeller shakes things up, stirs the food chain and pushes the instinctual killing button of the predator.

Your lure is the easy target and, presto. Fish on!

What makes any form of trolling so efficient is that an angler can set multiple lines with various lures and

"You might ask, 'Why doesn't the motor spook muskies away from the boat like it does other species of fish?'"

keep the baits in the optimum strike zone until they run out of time or gas. Shortline trolling is super efficient; the lines can be checked or changed in a matter of seconds and once speed, lure and location is dialed-in, your rig is going to get numerous strikes.

First, a speed needs to be found that will trigger strikes for the given day. Experimentation is necessary within the lure's tracking true range, which means every lure has a wipeout speed; exceeding that speed will cause a major mess. Place your lure alongside the boat, throttle-up to where the lure just about breaks off its track, throttle down a bit back into the lure's true track, and now make note of the speed.

Crankbaits and spoons are notorious for wreaking a spread when trolled beyond their speed limits, so get to know your lures. As for the best speed, troll as fast as a particular lure will allow.

Most muskie lures can be trolled quickly—even large soft baits such as the Bull Dawg. Be creative, but match lures that run true in unison. I start with a crankbait/spinnerbait team; the crankbait is placed about 7 feet from the transom and the spinner about 15 feet from the transom. I've trolled top-water baits, minnow baits, bucktails, plastics and spoons on a shortline, and they all have caught muskies. The key is to keep the lures within the prop wash.

ON THE HUNT

Location is where the baitfish are, and many times the predatory fish

move off the weed edges into a flat or seemingly disappear—ghosting baitfish in the basins. Speed trolling shortlines can carve up large expanses of water, zero-in on schools of baitfish and expose neutral/negative muskies far better than any other presentation. Simply set lines (planer boards are an option) and watch the sonar for schools of baitfish. Even if a hit doesn't occur when trolling through a school, enter a GPS waypoint and return to it latter.

Also, be sure to set the drag on the "light" side because it's better when a muskie surges deep rather than being jerked airborne. And don't set the hook. As you power-down the motor, the momentum will set the hook and place the rod tip toward the water; this will encourage a run from the fish instead of a jump.

Shortlining is a great way to get the family involved with muskie fishing because everyone can participate to some degree. Pack plenty of snacks, set a reasonable time-frame and promise McDonalds on the way home. Before you know it, your crew will be begging for more! Rather than wearing the captain's hat, try the hat of conductor and make your rig a Shortline Muskie Express. *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.



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DICK ELLIS

ON WISCONSIN OUTDOORS

Hunting a delicacy: No guarantee when searching for the magical morel

To a rookie “moreller,” it would seem that the search for the wild mushroom would progress slowly, with eyes locked on the forest floor. But Gary Dresen of Cassville worked through the new vegetation of mid May, 2007, in sloping bluff country near the Mississippi River, scanning far ahead—and up.

“Dead elms are a major trigger for morel mushrooms,” Dresen said. “I’m looking for dead trees. A white elm that’s recently died with the bark still on but starting to come off is often very good. When I find one, then I search the ground. From everything I’ve read, the spore underneath the bark falls on the ground, winter passes and then—if spring conditions including rain, temperature and soil are just right—you can find morels.”

The exact science of conditions conducive to morel growth is so elusive that the mushrooms could not be grown commercially with any consistency until recently, despite the motivation of market demand driving prices as high as \$15 to \$20 per pound in Wisconsin farmer’s markets, according to a UW-Lacrosse internet site. The masses of people throughout Wisconsin like Gary and Deb Dresen, who search for morels simply as hobby and table fare, find the process similarly inexact.

“When wild plum trees start blooming and when lilac flowers are starting to die, I start searching for morels on south-facing hillsides first,” Dresen said. “Morels seem to come all at once, and then that’s it. Sometimes they’re very difficult to find.”

In many ways, the intangible benefits found in a search for the morel mushroom in April and May is like any other “hunt”: anticipation of being able to participate again following long months of inactivity; the challenge of knowing where to locate the morel with the very real chance of failure regardless of that knowledge; and if the hunt is successful, the guarantee of sitting down to enjoy the fruit of the harvest.

Professor Thomas Volk of the Department of Biology at UW-Lacrosse, a widely recognized expert on the wild mushroom, considers the morel “one of the most prized and delicious mushrooms.”

“It’s possible that if one finds some dead elm trees, old apple orchards, black cherry or the results of a previous year’s fire, and if there has



For hard-core morel hunters, finding the mother lode is as rare and rewarding as a Boone and Crockett whitetail is to deer hunters. Can you say ‘jackpot?’ RIGHT: A morel in the hand is worth ... well, big bucks—that is, if you’re willing to give them up.



been enough rain and if the temperature is neither too hot nor too cold, and if the winter has been neither too mild nor too severe, and if one happens to be in the right place at the right time—one may also find morels,” Volk stated.

Oh, is that all?

“It’s not easy to predict in advance of a hunt whether there will be some morels found in a particular spot, even in a known ‘morel spot,’” Volk added. “The thrill of the hunt is precisely what makes morelling so exciting ... and often so frustrating.”

“I thought it was hopeless,”

Dresen said Sunday afternoon as we pulled back vegetation to reveal scores of morels near the base of a large dead white elm. “Early in April

we had 70 degree temperatures, and I thought it was going to be an excellent year for morels. Then we had snow and cold; I wasn’t finding anything and now the foliage is getting thick. I told you to stay home. Then I found these.”

Our hunt on the Dresen’s 300-acre farm would ultimately find success in several locations, all initiated by dead elms. The treasures would range from numerous morels to just a single mushroom. Go figure. On second thought, don’t even try.

Our search concluded in the kitchen of the family’s home. Gary washed morel mushrooms and dropped the split halves to simply simmer in a skillet of melted butter. An extraordinary, unique aroma soon

told a first-time morel hunter why so many Wisconsin residents have one more reason to look forward to spring.

“Gary, there are poisonous mushrooms in Wisconsin, too ... right?” I asked.

“There are wild mushrooms in Wisconsin that can drop you over dead,” he replied.

“There are distinct differences. Deb and I have both been doing this since we were very young. These are morel mushrooms and safe.”

“You know, I don’t think I’ll be very hungry until about an hour after I see you eat one,” I said.

In reality, the morel mushroom feast Sunday was just that. May all of your Wisconsin hunts end as fine. *W*

1
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— Fishing Guide — DENNIS RADLOFF

Early Season Muskie Tactics

By Dennis Radloff



Mike Venardi with an early season, 48" Green Bay Muskie.

Early season muskie fishing can offer some great opportunities for a big fish if you're willing to take advantage of several factors. With the Wisconsin muskie season opener south of Highway 10 on the first Saturday of May, here are some things to try.

SHALLOW BAYS

Targeting shallow bays can be a great starting point since this is a

common location utilized by muskies to spawn. While they're spawning, muskies don't eat much, so upon completion of this rigorous task they're going to be looking for the easiest opportunity to feed. This becomes another great factor with shallow bays often hosting the first weed growth in the system, and there's sure to be plenty of forage mixed in with the weeds.

SMALL LURES

Down-sizing your presentation will increase your chance of triggering these often sluggish muskies. First and foremost, the smaller lures will match the smaller forage most likely in the weeds. Secondly, a smaller presentation is a productive choice when water temperatures are on the colder end of the spectrum.

Some good choices are 6-inch minnow-bait Slammers, Baby Shallowraiders and regular Shallowraiders. These lures can be worked either with a straight retrieve or twitched with either a light-gauge, seven-strand or fluorocarbon leader.

SIGHT FISHING

Sight fishing is a tactic you can use when it comes to approaching "post-spawn" muskies in shallow bays. This is accomplished by simply "cruising" along in a slow manner by use of your bow-mounted trolling motor while standing on the bow of your boat and looking for muskies lying in the shallow water.

When you locate a muskie in the distance, stop your motor and cast beyond the fish and twitch your lure back to you in a manner that presents itself directly in front of the fish.

Another alternative to using a twitch bait is using a jig-and-tail combo. A 1- to 2-ounce jig tipped with a 6-inch Reaper Tail works well with a slow presentation along the bottom.

GPS AND RETURN

While utilizing the basic tactics described here will land a few fish for you this season, you might be thinking, "What about the muskies that don't go for this presentation and just swim away?" This is where using your GPS



Shallow-water muskies can be exceptionally skittish during the early days of the season. Fishing at night, however, might be just what the doctor ordered.

becomes valuable. If the muskie you located swims away—don't worry; mark the spot with your GPS and come back in an hour or two. More often than not, these fish will return to the same spot, giving you another chance to try and hook up.

Give these early season tactics a chance this year and I'm sure you'll land a more and bigger muskies! Good luck and I'll see you on the water. *W*

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

"While they're spawning, muskies don't eat much, so upon completion of this rigorous task they're going to be looking for the easiest opportunity to feed."

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County by County, Explore Wisconsin Outdoors

Catch a Natural High

We're building something special at *On Wisconsin Outdoors* so that you can wade right into some of the best places to hunt, fish, camp, vacation or just simply travel any of our fabulous 72 counties. See page 17

As we build, keep one eye on www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com and our "Explore Wisconsin" page. Click on any shaded county, for example, "Ashland" and let the experts tell you what's up, pun intended, in Lake Superior Country.

The Ashland Chamber of Commerce offers the links and expertise of six local guides on upcoming angling opportunities from Chequamegon Bay world class smallie fishing to Lake Superior multi-species action, to inland musky and bluegill. And on and on. The Chamber itself will tell you about upcoming attractions, where to dine, where to lay your head, or, simply, how to do what, where and when. You already know

why. Because Wisconsin, and our great outdoors mean "Natural Highs". Everywhere you look.

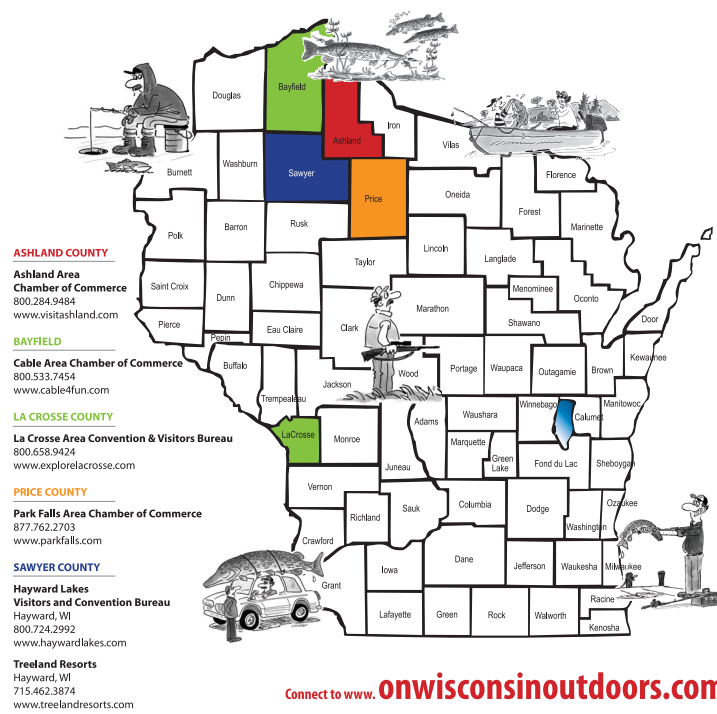
Connect right now and click on Sawyer County, Bayfield County and Lacrosse County too, for the same kind of local action that Ashland offers. Just over the horizon a bit, we'll have each of Wisconsin's 72 counties up and working. Then you can spend less time researching your trip and more time playing on the water and in those beautiful fields of dreams

We are, literally... "On Wisconsin Outdoors" So you can be, all over Wisconsin's outdoors. From Superior to Kenosha—and never more than a day's drive away.

Now that, is one sweet ride. *W*

County by County, Explore Wisconsin Outdoors.

Our new interactive web page EXPLORE WISCONSIN is a valuable resource for the outdoorsman. You'll find links to county tourism sites, resorts, hunting and fishing guide services, and other Wisconsin attractions for men and women alike. We're just getting started, so watch the map fill in, county by fabulous county! For more information about the highlighted counties featured below, go to the *On Wisconsin Outdoors* website and check out the new EXPLORE WISCONSIN page.



DAVE DUWE

MUDDY-WATER WALLEYES

Look to Winnebago's mud flats for fair-weather walleyes



Fishing pro Brad Davis, a warm spring breeze and a livewell full of walleyes ... can life get any sweeter?

When most fishermen think about the best walleye fishing of the year, most believe the spring spawning run or the fall post-turnover bite are the best. Me, I prefer the heat of the summer mudflat bite. The beauty of this time of year is the weather. The spring and fall can be really cold. In mid-summer, the only thing you might have to deal with is the buzzing of those pesky flies.

In large lakes such as Lake Winnebago, there's a combination of a hard bottom habitat—such as rock reefs and points—and main lake mud flats. These mud flats are generally located in 18-20 feet of water and, when fished correctly, can produce excellent walleye action during late spring and early summer.

I recently spent a day trolling for walleyes with Skeeter/Yamaha pro fisherman Brad Davis. We met up in Oshkosh, hopped in his boat, and then proceeded north toward Menasha.

We were moving roughly 20-25

mph searching for fish. Brad explained that with his Lowrance LCX-112C electronics, if fish were there, they'd show up on the screen.

During late spring and continuing throughout the summer months, walleyes have a tendency to suspend—constantly moving searching for bait fish—and these were the fish we were looking for. On this particular day, there had been some kind of bug hatch, which was causing the baitfish to concentrate together which, in turn, had the walleyes feeding heavily.

TROLLING THROUGH THE DETAILS

The presentation was Salmo's No. 7 Bullhead painted in the clown pattern, or a No. 3 hornet painted in yellow dace. We also used several Walleye Bandits, finding that a black/chrome color presentation produced the most fish. Because the fish were scattered

Continued on page 25

County by County, Explore Wisconsin Outdoors.

Our new interactive web page **EXPLORE WISCONSIN** is a valuable resource for the outdoorsman. You'll find links to county tourism sites, resorts, hunting and fishing guide services, and other Wisconsin attractions for men and women alike. We're just getting started, so watch the map fill in, county by fabulous county! For more information about the highlighted counties featured below, go to the *On Wisconsin Outdoors* website and check out the new **EXPLORE WISCONSIN** page.

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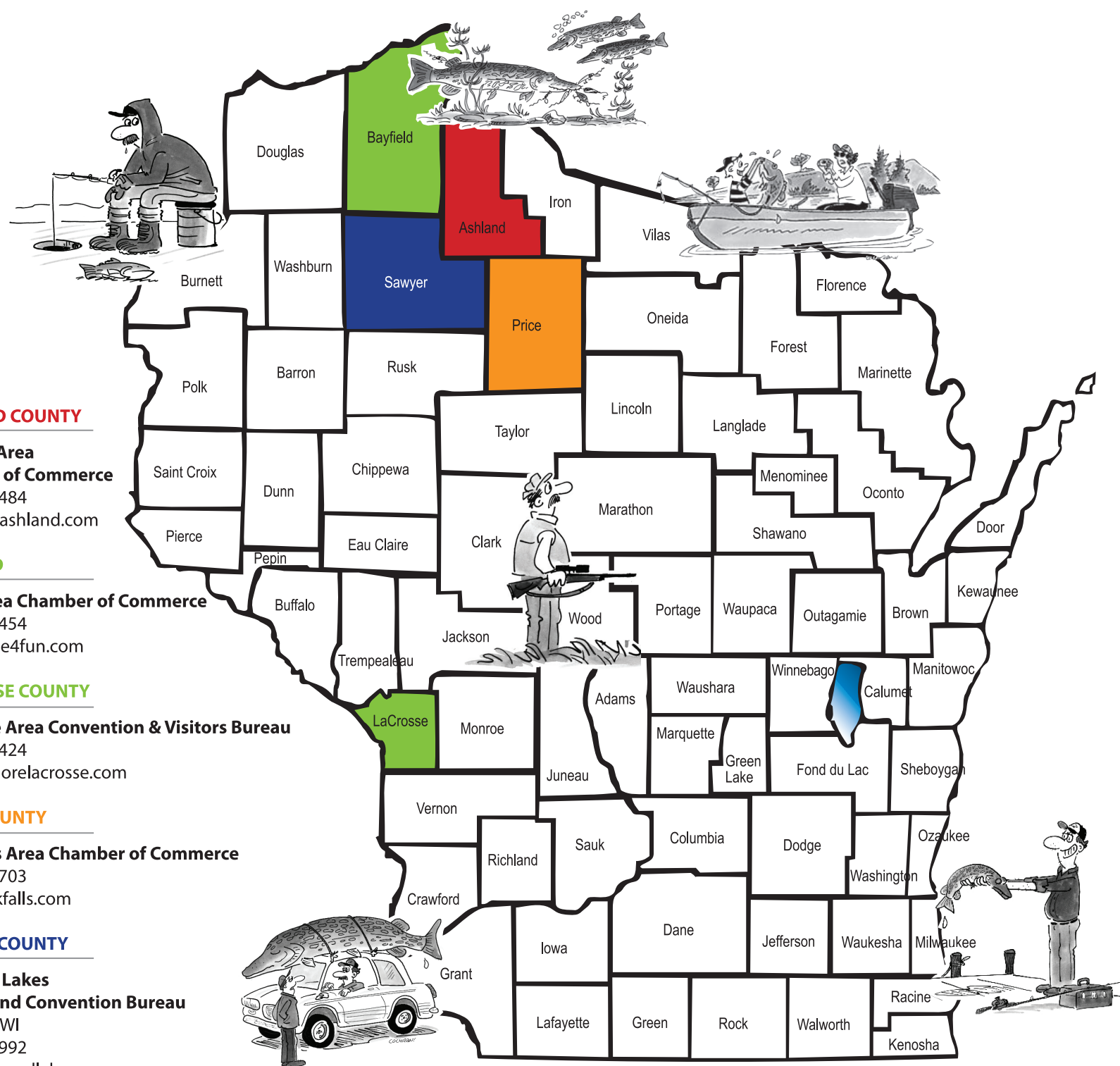
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A moment in time, after the hunt.

There are times when friends get together, tell hunting stories and dream of the things they love in the outdoors. Smells, sounds and feelings can be brought to bear in such a way that each person listening can imagine the moment. The thrill of the game planning and preparations. The heart pumping excitement of successfully calling in a big tom or a trophy buck entering the kill zone. The sight of the arrow just after release or breath halting moment when squeezing the trigger. The expectations of a positive result and the feeling one gets when the arrow or bullet strikes its intended target. Those are the feelings that forge the heart of a true outdoorsman. Those who have a passion for hunting that drives them to excel at the sport beyond being a casual hunter. To learn, practice and be a steward of the sport, remembering its history, innovations and innovators. To pass along what you've learned and to teach the younger generation the need for conservation and how to leave the smallest footprint possible on the land they use. Well, I've met a group of young men who are tantamount to that description. Sportsmen, AVID bow hunters and outdoorsmen who respect and cherish the valuable outdoor resources around Iola, where they live. Proponents of the sport of hunting and the "outdoors lifestyle" that they all love. So much in fact that they are working together to continue a tradi-

tion born in the Fox Valley now lost to the sands of time, and hold a "hands on" outdoor festival at the Iola Old Car Show grounds.

The Living Wild Outdoors Festival is the brain child of 3 very enterprising hunting enthusiasts, David Loken, Tom Sharp and Tom Kellnhauser. One evening they were discussing the loss of the Ducks Unlimited Festival at the EAA grounds in Oshkosh, and the need to continue a show that brought hands on experiences to those who would attend. A place where someone could shoot a bow, ride an ATV, bring the dog, learn the art of fly fishing and do some of the outdoor things not available at any other show. Iola residents, they knew that the "Old Car Show Grounds" was the perfect location. Nearly 300 acres with modern facilities for concessions and bathrooms, the location has a large main building and plenty of outdoor space for all activities planned for the show. No stranger to crowds, the grounds hosts the Midwest's largest old car show in July, averaging 125,000 visitors and a Military Show in August that draws well over 10,000 people to the area. Plus, the location, although seemingly far away from the major metropolises, was in the heart of some of the best hunting and fishing land in Wisconsin and home to countless outdoors enthusiasts. So the seeds were planted, phone calls made, sponsors lined up and the Living Wild

Outdoors Festival was born.

One of the main reasons for putting together such an event was to provide a place where families could spend the day together in the outdoors and a venue for introducing and teaching children. They all thought back to the days when they were young and how their fathers influenced the beginning stages of their hunting careers. How the days in the woods, time in the stand and lessons learned shaped their love and respect for the sport of hunting. For instance, Tom Sharp wrote me about following his Dad into the woods starting when he was about 8 years old. Jay Sharp was a science teacher for 29 years, a 25 year member of the Ducks Unlimited committee and hunter safety instructor. Considered an "ultimate conservationist", he taught Tom to hunt for duck and grouse and spent every weekend of the fall in the woods. They started hunting turkey together 10 years ago, an event that ended with Jay's passing in March of 2009. Forever an influence in Tom's life, he plans on using his Dad's old Browning 16 gauge to hunt turkey this year.

So, now committed to the event, they thought of the things that they could do to bring people together. They have had some success organizing "big buck" contests and have one scheduled for the Living Wild Festival. Hunters enter racks in various categories and vie for accolades and prizes. A shed antler display and trail cam photo contest are also planned as are an archery competition, kids fishing pond & BB gun shoot, along with camping, RV and cooking demonstrations. Animal mounts will be on display plus there will be fishing demonstrations, a

dog pond, dock jumping contest and more. Food and beverage booths will be manned by local non-profit organizations and there will be an area to test ride ATV's and hopefully the latest in 4WD vehicles. There will be antler scoring and a list of speakers, seminars and workshops designed to help outdoor enthusiasts of all ages find something of interest. Up to date information on the seminar schedule, activities, exhibitors and sponsors is available on their web site at www.livingwildoutdoors.com along with an interactive map with driving directions. It should be a great way to spend the day with the family in the Wisconsin countryside and don't forget, you can bring your dog.

So if you are in to hunting and the outdoors lifestyle, please take time on

June 20th & 21st to visit the Living Wild Outdoors Festival at the "Old Car Show Grounds" in Iola, Wisconsin. As an outdoor writer, I understand the importance of such events in their ability to network with others and to introduce children to the wonders of the outdoors. Having a large outdoor show allows people to learn hands on



Tom Sharp with a nice buck taken with bow and arrow.

how to set up a tent, cook over an open fire or the safe use of a deer stand. With plenty of "stuff" to do and things to see, it's also easier to keep the youngsters interested than in the confines of an indoor sports show. Come out and support an effort to give back to all types of outdoor sports in a manner which is much needed in our area. Be a part of the first annual event and give yourself a chance to say that you were there at the beginning, when hunting, fishing and conservation in Wisconsin truly needed you.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

TOM CARPENTER

BADGER BIRDS

Bobolink

A male bobolink makes a bold and elegant statement as he clings to a tall stalk of grass, swaying back and forth in the breeze and singing his namesake song. A citizen of prairies, fields, grasslands, meadows and abandoned pastures, the bobolink does best where some of the landscape escapes mowing, hay-cutting and row-crops. May and June are great times to spot these warm-weather birds. I've enjoyed the beauty of bobolinks from Massachusetts meadows and Nebraska prairies to Wisconsin pastures and fallow fields.

Look for a "reverse tuxedo"—white backside, black underside—to identify a male bobolink. He also sports a creamy-yellow patch on the back of his head. Females are camouflaged in buff and gray.

Listen for the distinctive song from which the bird gets its name: Bob-o-link, bob-o-link, bob-o-link. Feeding birds make nasally "pink" or "enk" calls as they flutter about.

Marvel at bobolinks' incredible migratory journey: They winter on the plains of southern South America, and nest in grasslands across the northern United States and southern Canada.

Attract bobolinks during migration with a little grain such as millet, oats, wheat and shelled sunflowers. During summer, bobolinks primarily eat insects. Leave fields and roadsides unmowed until August to help these grass lovers find food.

Did you know that bobolinks are actually members of the blackbird family? And, in the South, they are sometimes known as "rice birds" for their love of the grain? *W*



TOM CARPENTER

CUB'S CORNER

A multi-species river fishing adventure



There's nothing better than being on the river on a fine June afternoon, with the sun warming your arms and the glory of early summer surrounding you—deep blue sky, warm red sand, dark green oaks, bright green grasses—and the clean, tannin-stained waters of the St. Croix swirling below as you push the boat off shore.

I do this with at least one of my boys every summer: Make this pilgrimage to "The River" (it could just as easily be the Wisconsin, Chippewa, Flambeau, Wolf, Fox, Black, Rock or any number of other sizable Badger State rivers). Our goal could be a fish fry, a trophy walleye or smallmouth, or just a quiet day on the lonely water. These are all good reasons, but one aim trumps all: To see how many species of fish we can catch in one day.

Rivers are perfect for this kind of angling, "just fishin'" as I like to fashion it. Bait up and see what bites! Rivers support an incredible variety of piscatorial life—from "rough" fish to game fish to panfish. You never know what you're going to pull in, and that's the adventure.

The fishing is simple and fun—perfect for kids of all ages. We use medium-light to medium weight spinning and spin-casting combos, spooled-up with high-quality 8-pound monofilament. The do-all rig consists of a barrel swivel as stopper for a ¼-, 3/8- or ½-ounce egg sinker (depending in water depth and current speed) on a 24- to 36-inch monofilament leader ending with a blood-red size No. 4 hook.

Baited up with wriggly night-crawler, you can catch anything that swims on this versatile slip-sinker rig. Cast it out and let it sit in a hole. Tumble it through fast water. Cast into fishy-looking pockets. Vertically jig as you slip the boat along. Take off the weight and work slackwater areas.

Just upstream from the bridge, we fish a deep (about 6 feet) run, and soon have a hit. I set the hook, think snag, then feel the surge of a big fish. I hand the rod to Ethan. A spirited, bulldogging fight ensues, and finally we see our prize: a lake sturgeon! We leave the fish in the water, and clip the line so the prehistoric 10-12 pounder can swim off. A good start.

Before moving, we land a couple of river redhorse—sleek, silvery beauties with blood-red fins. We take special

care landing and releasing these delicate but hard-fighting fish, which are actually barometers of clean, unpolluted water.

Working upstream, we stop to vertically jig along a chute of fast water, working the edges, seams and eddies. Wham! After a zinging fight and two spectacular leaps, an 18-inch smallmouth comes to the net for Ethan. Though the fish would be legal to keep, we release the old red-eye to fight another day.

Even though it's mid-afternoon, we pull in two perfect-sized (17 inches or so) eater walleyes. Rivers are like that, especially dark-water ones such as the Croix: Mid-day is as good for fishing as any time of day.

We stop and anchor in a hole behind a log jam. Cat water? Tap-tap-taps confirm it: Fiddlers, or small channel cats. Finally we get a good take and a 3-pound channel catfish grudgingly comes to net. He joins the walleyes in the livewell. A fish fry is secured.

Ethan pulls in a bull of a carp here, and it stretches his spin-casting equipment to the limits. Finally, just before we leave, a mooneye or skipjack takes my crawler.

We're seven species in, and prime-time is coming. We stop on a sandbar for a late lunch, then hit the water again as the long June evening begins. I have a spot in mind, but on the way we fish a slackwater pool where bluegills reign, and land a half-dozen that are plenty big to fillet up. River sunfish are always

beautiful—deep-colored, yellow- or orange-bellied, and thick across the back.

Then we hit "the spot." The full force of the St. Croix pushes up against a point, then shoulders off against it as the river makes a turn. You can anchor in 4 feet of slack water behind the point, and fish into fast, medium or slow water in a hole that reaches 15 feet in depth. It's the perfect spot to spend a summer evening and fish the time away.

Some more ever-present and hungry smallmouths come to net. Ethan makes a cast into the slack water and a sizeable largemouth hits. A herd of white bass come through, and we catch and keep a couple. A white sucker finds our bait. We take three or four "sheep of the deep" (freshwater drum or sheepshead), another catfish, and even somehow land a toothy pike that couldn't resist a crawler in front of his snout.

The spectacular June evening seems to last forever, and I wish it would. You can't stop a turning world, but you can make it slow down a little bit in a fishing boat, out on a beautiful river, amidst the magic of June. My boy and I count-up our take—a lucky 13 species in all—and then head back down the river, feeling mighty lucky indeed. *W*

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

GARY ENGBERG

GARY ENGBERG OUTDOORS

Panning for blue

Soon the Madison Chain of Lakes will be prime water for catching America's favorite panfish—the hard-fighting bluegill. “Water temperature is the key to catching spring bluegills,” said Madison tackle manufacture (Bait Rigs Tackle) and fishing guide, Joe Puccio, of Cottage Grove. Joe is one of the areas' premier panfish anglers and gives great seminars in most of the Midwest.

While many anglers are now fishing walleyes, bass and muskies on area lakes, Puccio prefers to fish for bluegills and other panfish. This year, Joe started fishing crappies at the end of March and has been fishing panfish since the early spring.

GOIN' FOR 'GILLS

By late May, the water temperature is generally between 60 and 70 degrees in the shallows of both Lake Wabesa and Lake Kegonsa. Bluegills will begin to spawn when the water temperature is in the mid 60s and above. Cold fronts and water fluctuations can affect spawning and push the bluegills back out to nearby deeper water until the weather again warms and stabilizes.

The male bluegills make the spawning beds by fanning their tails on areas (sand and gravel bottoms) where the females come and deposit their eggs. Then, the male bluegills will guard the beds against any intruder or predator that might try to devour the eggs and/or fry. Most spawning beds are located in water between 2-5 feet deep, but some fish will spawn deeper at times.

'GILL GEAR

All you need to catch bluegills is an ultra-light rod and reel and a few more



When toting tackle for early-season bluegills, less is definitely more. Small, light tackle is the key to landing more and bigger 'gills.

items. Light monofilament line is very important and the old “standard” Berkley Trilene fits the bill. Joe suggests using the green color mono to match the algae-stained water in most area waters in 4-pound-test line. The smaller diameter line can often make the difference on finicky fish. But early on, the fish are active and aggressive, so an angler could get by with 6-pound-test line.

Next, attach a small jig, such as the Bait Rigs Cobra, in size No. 14, to your line. When fish are active, about any color (purple, green, orange, and firetiger are personal favorites) seems to work. Then, use a few micro-split shots and a small stealth bobber to balance the rig. Set the bobber or float anywhere

from 1 ½ feet to 2 ½ feet from the jig, depending on the water's depth where you're fishing.

Spikes, wax worms and red worms have all been effective, but when the fish are aggressive, you can use plastic or artificial baits. Gulp maggots in chartreuse have worked as well or better than live bait for me during this time of year. You could potentially catch multiple fish on one piece of Gulp before you have to re-bait, which was much easier than and not as messy as using live bait.

Another key to bluegill fishing is to approach likely fishing locations as quietly as possible and make long casts to the bedding fish. The last thing to do

is to come into an area full-speed and expect not to spook and scatter the shallow-water bluegills. Stop a good distance away and use your trolling motor to get within casting distance.

A must is to wear polarized glasses, which allow you to see the spawning beds and the fish. Rising temperatures can cause weeds and algae to grow quickly during late spring, often making visibility and sight fishing difficult. As June progresses, this will do nothing but get worse.

Try to fish Lakes Monona, Wabesa and Kegonsa as soon as possible to get in on some great bluegill fishing. Big Lake Mendota warms up last due its deep water, and is generally a week or two behind the other “Chain” lakes in water temperature and bluegill spawning. If the weather stays warm and stable, Lake Mendota can and will turn-on quickly.

One last suggestion, don't keep any or many female or “hen” bluegills. Leave these females alone and let them go spawn and reproduce. You don't have to catch a limit every time fishing to have had a good day on the water. Practice catch and release even with bluegills, so that the Madison lakes have bluegills for the next angler and future generations. Keep enough fish for a few meals, but not the whole year!

Contact: Joe Puccio at: (608)-839-3638; Wally Banfi at: (608)-644-9823; Travis Richardson at: (608)-838-9877; or Ron Barefield at: (608)-838-8756, for guiding on the area lakes. *W*

Contact Gary Engberg at 608. 795.4208. gengberg@garyengbergoutdoors.com or visit www.garyengbergoutdoors.com for good fishing information.

DUWE, from page 16

throughout the water at various depths, the Bullheads were trolled 80 feet back on planer boards while the Hornets and Bandits were trolled 100-120 feet behind the boat.

The key depth was keeping the bait approximately 10-13 feet from the surface in 20 feet of water. And to maintain this accurate depth, a good line counter reel was essential. As a rule of thumb, Brad chooses 10-pound-test line, which allows the lures to run at the desired depths while avoiding any break-offs. To complete the winning combination, we trolled

our crankbaits at between 2 and 2 ½ mph.

Second to lure selection, the off-shore planer boards with “tattle-tail” flags were crucial to our success. On the Lake Winnebago system there are a lot of “undesirable” fish such as white bass and sheepshead that can inhibit good walleye catching. With the tattle-tail flags, small fish pulled the flag back, which indicated that there was something wrong with the lure; this helped to alleviate any wasted time trolling with a small fish hanging on the lures.

This bite often lasts all day, and fishing really got good for us in the late morning. We caught a lot of walleyes between 15-25 inches, and sorted through the catch, only keeping fish measuring less than 20 inches—which resulted in eight keepers by the end of the day. Keeping smaller fish helps maintain the population by leaving the spawning-sized fish in the system.

The summer bite lasts from late June or early July, through early September. After early September, the walleyes migrate back to the rivers—

that's a story for a different time.

Mud walleyes are relatively easy to catch once you find them, so try trolling the Winnebago mud flats later this spring and throughout the summer for some excellent walleye action. You won't be disappointed.

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

ANDY DERWINSKI

FROM THE CAPTAIN'S CHAIR

Cashing in on crazy Cohos



Coho fishing is always incredible, but the catching is generally exceptional in May.

Spring is finally here. May 2 is opening day for Wisconsin's fishing season, and as a charter captain, there's nowhere I'd rather be than on Lake Michigan in Kenosha. Fishing here in May is as good as it gets.

By the first week in May, large schools of Coho salmon have moved into the area from the state line all the way to Racine. Coolers full of fish are the rule for the next 6 weeks, and fishing out of Kenosha puts you directly in the middle of the action.

May Coho fishing makes everyone look like a hero. The fish are hungry, aggressive and usually not the least bit picky. A simple selection of plugs, spoons, dodgers and flies is all you need to get started. Jointed Rapalas and Yozuri minnows work most days. Both magnum and standard size spoons will take fish, and don't worry too much about which color to use—these aggressive fish will hit most anything.

SURE-FIRE TECHNIQUES

Several techniques work this time of year. Even with the fish moving between the shoreline and as deep as

150 feet of water, fishing is simplified because most of the action occurs in the top 20 feet. Down riggers will take fish from 10-25 feet deep; spoons and dodger/fly combos both work with the down riggers. Keep the baits close to the balls, approximately 5-10 feet back. The shorter leads will mean fewer tangles with rods set so close together.

Dipsy Divers will also take a lot of fish. I typically begin by running them just far enough back so I can still see them on a clear day. It's exciting to sit up on the bridge and watch a silver streak bolt in and hit a lure running 5-8 feet below the surface.

Because most of the spring Cohos are caught near the surface, flat lines tend to catch most of the fish. They can be trolled straight back with small plugs and crank baits, but the preferred method is to spread the lines out with planer boards.

The No. 1 presentation year-after-year is a Luhr Jensen orange Dodger with a small fly. Start by running the fly 8-12 inches behind the Dodger, and attached a swivel 5 feet in front of the Dodger. A 1/4-ounce egg sinker is placed in front of the swivel to keep



Taste the rainbow. Although the Coho can be non-stop in May, it never hurts to have a variety of options.

the bait just below the surface.

The best fly color changes daily, but you can catch all you want with an assortment of greens, blues, blacks and whites. Let the lure back 25-40 feet behind the boat. Attach the planer and set it out to one side or

the other.

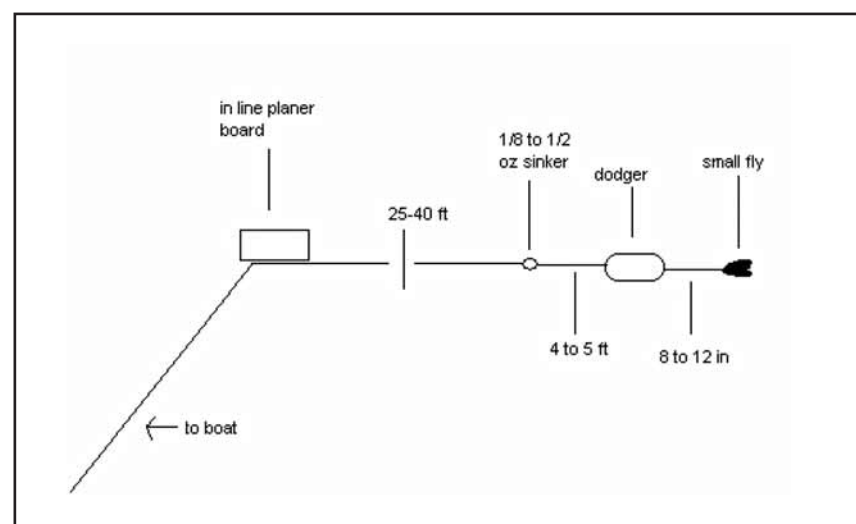
If you're new to Lake Michigan fishing, this is the perfect time to try it. The May learning curve can be short. But to really experience this great fishing, book a half-day charter. There are a number of great captains

that fish from the port of Kenosha, and you will learn more in 5 hours aboard a good charter than you could learn in a month on your own.

The JEDI runs on a daily basis. I've been fishing Lake Michigan for 25 years. The one guarantee is a great time; plus, we do have a "no fish, no pay" policy—but we won't need to worry about that.

For up-to-date fishing information, contact Harborside Bait and Tackle at 262-605-9001. *W*

Captain Andy Derwinski operates JEDI Sportfishing in Kenosha, Wisconsin. To book a charter aboard the JEDI, call (414) 788-6603 or visit his website at www.jedisportfishing.com.



The author reveals secrets for crafting a successful Coho rig. Even when the bite is heavy, a few tricks always come in handy.

MIKE FOSS

PREPARATION FOR THE HUNT

Beating the post-hibernation blues

SUZUKI
Way of Life!



Spring marks the end of hibernation for bears and humans alike. The author's estimate of "Snaggle Tooth's" fall weight was approximately 700 pounds. Will he show this year?

The Wisconsin bear season looms on the horizon. You've found your guide, or plan to select bait sites, maintain the stations yourself and hopefully be rewarded on a cool September morning or evening by fastening a tag to a Wisconsin black bear. But now what?

During the winter months, just like those bears we pursue, we seem to slow down and gain weight. It's nature's way of preparing us for winter. But it's exactly the opposite of how we should be preparing for the hunt. It's time that we wake up from our sedentary winter state and get in shape.

Personally, I feel your pain. Despite living the active and often strenuous life of a professional guide, my couch almost swallowed me whole during the long, cold winter months. I didn't exercise and put on weight, but the true wake-up call came when I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

Just like a big bear coming out of hibernation, I've shed some pounds, eaten healthy, exercise weekly and finally have my diabetes under control. I've not felt this good in 10 years. I'm ready for the bears, and ready to properly fulfill my client responsibilities as a guide.

The physical part is easy to diagnose: We relate to terms such as "spare tire," "couch potato," "beer belly," "junk-food junky," ... and the list goes on. Although not as easy, we know what we must do to address the problem; get out and walk, scout, take the wife and kids on a hiking excursion, bike or run.

Your local fitness center is the real priority. On doctor's orders, I work the elliptical machine for the best cardio-vascular workout that's also easy on the joints. Don't laugh too hard, but for me, each session on the elliptical becomes an imaginary journey in the woods, shed hunting, climbing steep ravines, running or jumping over logs like I did when I was young. It makes the workout go faster and I guarantee this: two or three times a week on the elliptical and you will have more energy and feel better. And feeling better means that you will better withstand longer hours in that tree stand or ground blind, waiting for that trophy to appear.

Mental preparation is just as important. Most often, a Wisconsin bear hunt isn't like the bear hunts shown on the outdoor channels in which a 5-minute wait on stand culminates with a big bear strolling in and a well placed shot ensues. More than likely, you'll spend days on stand, sleep deprived, bug bitten, and sometimes frustrated. Like any worthwhile endeavor, dues are paid in the form of preparation and diligence, and when all is said and done, you'll likely have your bear.

Some of you will get lucky, and your hunt will be done in a short time. Fourteen of our 15 hunters in my camps in 2008 tagged bears—with 100 percent shot opportunity—and several hunters had their feet up in camp by day No. 2. But what if you're one of those hunters who, despite doing everything right, doesn't score early?

Mentally, you must prepare for just that scenario. If you're on an outfitter-guided trip, trust your guide. He knows the area and stand sites. Believe in him. Prior to the hunt, call your guide. There's no such thing as dumb questions. I invite my clients to Bayfield County during the summer months to help bait for a few days. It's a perfect way to alleviate some anxiety and learn exactly what to expect.

Gain all the information you possibly can. Purchase bear hunting videos and read. But ask yourself ...are you physically and mentally prepared for the hunt?

SPRING IS IN THE AIR

This is an exciting time of year for me. The snow in the North

Country is gone, and the bears are out of hibernation and looking for food. My trail cameras will be out spying, and I will be looking at each photo with great anticipation, wondering if the most special among Wisconsin black bears has been "captured" again.

In the next issue we'll find out if the massive bear, "Snaggle Tooth," has survived the long, cold winter. For more than a year in On Wisconsin Outdoors, we've followed this largest bear I have ever encountered in the northern Wilderness of Bayfield County, Wisconsin, capturing him several times on motion cameras on our baits.

Last year, my estimate of his weight at 500 pounds-plus was conservative. After viewing other pictures of him, I know that Snaggle Tooth was 600 pounds coming out of his den this past spring and more than 700 going in late last fall.

Last year, when I left a bowhunter over bait station No. 01, I thought Snaggle Tooth had an excellent chance of showing. He didn't, but the hunter did tag a 412-pound black bear that scored 19-7/16 Pope and Young club points—we had also captured this bear on camera from the same stand.

Snaggle Tooth makes the tagged 412-pound bruin look like a cub. Hopefully, this September, one of our hunters will help us write a final ending to the ongoing saga of the monster of Bayfield County. *W*

Northern Wisconsin Outfitters is now booking for the 2009 bear season. Go to www.northernwisconsinoutfitters.com or call them at 715.373.0344.



TOM CARPENTER

POND FISHING*Big fun, little water*

Although often overlooked, little water can produce big fish and a laid-back experience.

In many ways, we've turned fishing into another modern-day rat race. Cram the boat with gear. Hitch up. Scurry to the lake. Deal with the boat-ramp crowd. Make a long run to your fishing area. Hope a dozen other boats aren't there. Crank-up the electronics. Cover water.

Why add stress and frenzy to your fishing? Wisconsin offers abundant opportunities to fish farm ponds, backwoods potholes and other "little water" that's literally packed with fish ... and the opportunity to slow down.

Pond fishing's simplicity is its allure. But effective pond fishing still requires knowing your quarry, finding the fish and making an effective presentation.

UNDERSTAND THE QUARRY

Bluegills and largemouth bass are the feature fish. Both these adaptable species are well suited to small water.

Bluegills are king. Though usually hungry, pond bluegills can be surprisingly persnickety. Catching big-sized,

little-water bluegills involves a lot more than tromping up to a pond, skewering a gob of worms onto a huge hook hanging a foot below an oversized bobber and heaving the offering out.

Largemouth bass are incredibly versatile, living everywhere from saltwater estuaries to sprawling manmade reservoirs to tiny ponds. Largemouths eat big things. So promise them something large, lively, bright and flashy. But treat

reach it. You'll be surprised at the fish you catch right at water's edge or inside the weedline.

Work cover well. Wood—a downed tree or submerged brush—is classic. Weeds are, too. Fish the edges of weeds, and also fish directly in them. Lily pads make superb fish cover, too. So does the shade from a dock, swimming platform or tree. And don't ignore long grass hanging over a bank.

In springtime, on a dammed pond, fish the inlet area. The water coming in will be warmer. Conversely, in summer's heat, this area will have the coolest water.



them with respect: Pond bass will scatter at danger signs such as heavy footsteps and shadows on the water.

FIND THE FISH

A pond offers a limited amount of water, which you can usually cover from shore. Take your time, go slow, relax. No running and gunning—but fish smart.

Pond fish often hold close to shore, so approach cautiously. Don't barge up to the water's edge or throw your shadow on the water. Instead, stand back. Fish the water close to shore first to catch the shore huggers before casting over and spooking them.

Work your way out to deeper water. As you slowly fish your way along, cast ahead along the shore as you go, fishing new water before you

Work the base of the dam. When fishing for bluegills, a slip-bobber rig can help you get down to where the fish are. For bass, try a deep running spinnerbait or diving minnow plug. Always look for weedy shelves or places where shallow and deeper water meet.

If the pond is bigger than an acre or so, consider using a float tube. This gets you outside the weedline, casting to its outside edge (often a more effective approach than trying to work that area from shore). On marshy-banked ponds, a float tube might be the only way to fish, but move slowly and quietly to avoid spooking fish.

Shallow water often outproduces deeper water. Shallow water is where the cover, food (both aquatic and terrestrial) and oxygen are.

MAKE EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS

For sunfish, go with a sturdy light-action spinning or spin-cast rod, paired with a reliable reel spooled with high-quality 6-pound-test monofilament. Ultralight isn't necessarily better. Bluegills can still put up a good fight on light tackle, and you might get into a tussle with a good-sided bass.

Keep terminal tackle and bait simple. My favorite is a slip bobber rig—slip-knot, bead, small bobber, small split-shot and a plain, short shank size No. 6 hook. Rigged this way, you can fish 1 foot or 10 feet down, with live offerings of earthworms, nightcrawler halves, waxworms or small minnows (which will attract the occasional bass, too). Also, grasshoppers or crickets are great fished dry or wet.

For bass, you must balance lightness (for careful presentation and a fun fight) with enough backbone to be able to steer chunky 2- or 3-pounders away from cover. A quality medium-light graphite rod, 6 feet long, paired with a good spinning reel and quality 8-pound-test monofilament, is about right.

Weedless spinnerbaits are tops for bass. Silver blades and chartreuse or yellow skirts work because of their flash and brightness. The old, standard floating blue Rapala minnow also produces. It's so versatile! Cast it out; let it sit next to weeds or lily pads, twitch it occasionally and you might get a savage surface strike. Work it deeper as you retrieve, and stop and let it suspend and struggle.

Plastic worms are also a much needed standard. Ten-inchers, rigged weedless and worked in, through and around weeds or next to cover or the bank, account for many pond bass.

If the bass aren't complying, I'll lug in a bucket of 4- to 5-inch sucker minnows and fish them on a size No. 1/0 hook below a slip bobber, or free-line them. Irresistible!

Pond fishing is about getting away, having fun, catching fish ... and making life simple again. Give ponds a try this spring and summer. *W*

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

KEVIN MICHALOWSKI

DOG TALK

Manners afloat make hunting safe and fun



Even if your dog knows basic commands, learning to heed these commands in a boat is an entirely new venture. Begin your teaching lessons on land, and then graduate to shallow water before getting into a hunting situation.

Remember the old saying, "There's no time like the present?" That means now—yes, springtime—is the right time start teaching your dog to sit still while in your boat or canoe. This is important stuff. Your gear, your hunt ... and even your life can depend on it.

While in a boat, and especially in a canoe, you need a rock-steady retriever that's in complete control at all times. There's not enough room in a boat for dog to be pacing around, and a canoe is nowhere near stable enough to put up with a lot of that nonsense.

If you're going to have a dog in a canoe or a boat, you must introduce the

dog to the new surroundings long before you get on the water. The best place to do this is, of course, on dry land, where there is no danger of anyone taking a swim. By placing a canoe on the ground in your backyard you can easily teach the dog to get in and out of the craft, while at the same time rocking the gunwales a bit to mimic some of the instability common on the water.

Getting the dog in and out of the craft is easy, but the most important element is to instill a comfort level. You'll notice right away that the dog will be confused and anxious the first

few times in the boat. It's your job to reassure the dog, point out the place where you want the animal to sit or lay and calmly lead the dog there each and every time.

While repetition is the key to any training, the single most important thing you can do while training a dog to be still in a boat is to remain calm. Anger and rough training will only make the dog more uncomfortable. Calm words and positive reinforcement will work much better than harsh corrections and a booming voice.

The goal is to make it fun for the dog. You want the dog to enjoy sitting in the boat. You want the dog to jump into the boat happily, rather than be afraid of what will happen when it gets to the gunwale.

And additionally, don't rush this. Encourage the dog with happy talk, whistling and even treats. Just get your companion to hop into the boat or canoe on its own. Once the dog is in, give it lots of praise, but don't let it get out. If your pooch tries to get up and get out without your permission, immediately command, "No. Sit." When the dog sits, heap on the praise again. If need be, you can use the vibration setting on your E-collar to get the dog's attention—but do it carefully. You don't want to cause any issues that associate fear with the watercraft.

When it comes time for the dog to get out of the boat, that action must be done only on your command. You simply cannot have a dog that breaks while in a boat. The best way to accomplish this is to command the dog to sit

in the boat or canoe and hold its collar. Then, toss a retrieval dummy a short distance away—but still hold the collar. If the dog tries to move, give the "No. Sit," command and hold tight to keep the dog in place. Praise the dog for staying put, and then send the dog to fetch the dummy. Again, gentle stimulation from an E-collar will help with this.

Ideally, your dog is well trained in the basic commands before you start this, but this new environment will be a big distraction. You'll need to train through it thoroughly. All this is best taught through daily repetition.

Always give the dog the opportunity to get it right. As you continue the repetitions you should increase the amount of time you keep the dog sitting and waiting for the fetch command. Once the dog is solid on the in-boat commands while on land, you can move to shallow water. Get a dog ramp and start using it right away. Teach the dog to always get in the boat via the ramp.

Constant correct repetitions will teach the dog the correct way to act in a boat. Unless you want to be testing that new floating gun case, you've got to get this right.

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.

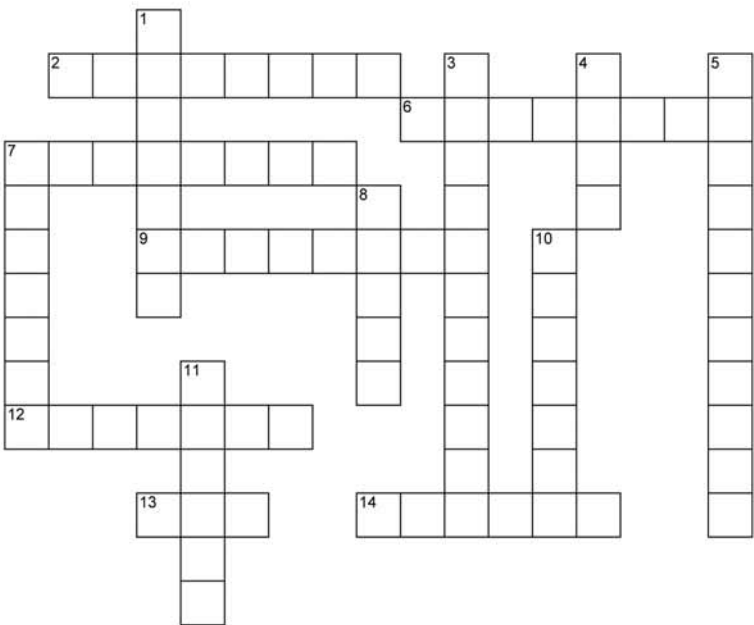
Outdoor Criss Cross

ACROSS

- 2 A product needed for May showers.
- 6 Memorize your DNR _____ Number.
- 7 A WI great lake.
- 9 Brand of an odor elimination technology.
- 12 When hunting in a treestand, always wear this.
- 13 A male turkey's nickname.
- 14 "Lean-to" is another name for this type of treestand.

DOWN

- 1 If you fish, you must buy one.
- 3 A type of panfish.
- 4 One of Wisconsin's boundary-water states.
- 5 A boot brand (two words).
- 7 The early inland trout season started on March _____.
- 8 Congregation of wild turkeys.
- 10 Another type of panfish.
- 11 The general inland fishing opener is May _____.



Answers on page 10

JOEL DEBOER

WISCONSIN ANGLING ADVENTURES

Muskie Math: Little things pay big dividends

May is a magical month to fish in Wisconsin—especially with the opening of muskie season. While I enjoy fishing for just about anything that swims in the diverse waters of our state, without question my favorite quarry is the muskellunge. No other freshwater species invokes more magic and mystique than this toothy predator.

Preparation for musky season, especially for the ardent angler, begins months before opening day and is critical to success on the water. Just as crucial are the “little things” to making every moment count during the actual pursuit, beginning with the first day of the season; after all, in musky fishing, it’s the little things that add up to big things.

THE ARDENT ANGLER’S CHECKLIST:

Sharpen your hooks. Properly sharpened hooks are one of the first and most important steps in getting a muskie to your net. Although the technology of hooks has continued to expand—with a number of companies such as Mustad producing innovative and high-quality hooks—no factory hook will ever be as sharp as one filed by the angler prior to use.

When it comes to creating the perfect point on a hook, I prefer a straight file such as the model produced by Luhr Jensen; they’re inexpensive, readily available and work excellent. The best way to get in the habit is to sharpen your lures as they come out of the package, before you place them in your tackle box.

Once sharpened, hooks should be touched-up after each fish or snag—or even after a long day of casting. There are few guarantees in fishing, but I guarantee you that properly sharpened hooks will result in more boated muskies for you each and every season.

Avoid ‘the rut’: No, I’m not referring to deer hunting, but rather the “rut” many anglers fall into each season: fishing the same locations on the same lakes with the same baits at the same time of year ... you get the idea.

While it’s good practice to make note of patterns you discover from year-to-year and look to use them to your advantage, it’s equally important to continually challenge yourself and look to discover new patterns, especially when what you’re doing isn’t working.

This might mean fishing a different lure type, body of water, time of day, structural element or any combination

thereof. For example, if you typically fish small bucktails all through opening weekend, don’t hesitate to try something different if the fish aren’t responding. Likewise, if you aren’t moving fish in the weeds or from a particular section of a lake, try somewhere else, such as working suspended fish or working the timber. The bottom-line is this: By keeping an open mind as a muskie

the boat on the retrieve; at no time should the lure stop moving—keep the bait working smoothly as you ease into the boat-side technique.

As I move into position to perform my figure-8, I hit the free-spool mechanism on my reel and crimp down hard on the spool with my thumb; this allows me to feed line to a big fish in close quarters should I need to do so after the

(set into the fish).

Once hooked, I like to submerge my rod tip in an effort to keep the muskie from jumping; jumps are exciting to watch, but all too often they spell the premature end to a battle between man and beast. If you’re truly serious about catching more muskies this season, add the figure-8 to your routine.

Be prepared: A successful musky season hinges on good equipment as much as any other factor. I don’t remember where I first heard the statement, “Don’t bring a knife to a gun fight,” but nothing could be more true when pursuing muskies. From rods and reels to release tools and nets, use the right equipment.

In addition to having the proper equipment, it’s imperative to properly maintain your gear. For starters, replace your fishing line annually. While I continue to be impressed with the quality and durability of my Power Pro line, I re-spool each of my reels every year. There’s no substitute for fresh line; after all, it’s what will be connecting you to that fish of a lifetime.

Another good idea is to check each line guide on your rods for any cracks or chips. Every season I check each of my rods, from panfish rods to muskie rods, from tip to butt section. Checking the guides can be done by running a Q-tip around the inside of each guide and observing if there appear to be any “snags.” If you do notice a crack or chip, don’t use that rod until the guide has been replaced or repaired.

Split-rings, hooks and leaders also need to be reviewed for any potential weaknesses, and then replaced as necessary. The cost of a quality muskie leader, such as those manufactured by Stealth Tackle, are insignificant when compared to the “cost” of a fish lost due to damaged or weakened terminal tackle.

Challenge yourself to do a little muskie math this season—you’ll be surprised with how the little things can and do add up to big things for you! I’ll see you on the water. ... *W*



Properly maintained equipment can mean the difference between landing a big fish and having a bad day on the water.

“Figure-8’ ... EVERY TIME:

As with keeping hooks sharp, properly performing a figure-8 after each cast is one of the surest ways to boat more muskies each season ...”

angler, you’ll increase your knowledge base and ultimately your success.

‘Figure-8’ ... EVERY TIME: As with keeping hooks sharp, properly performing a figure-8 after each cast is one of the surest ways to boat more muskies each season. If it’s not already a part of your muskie fishing routine, plan to make this maneuver a habit while out on the water this year. I can’t begin to count the number of times a fish or two caught on a figure-8 during the course of an outing has saved the day.

For the move to work correctly, there are a few key concepts to note. A proper figure-8 begins as the lure nears

hook-set. My figure-8s are actually in the shape of a big ‘O.’ I prefer the this shape because it allows a big fish to turn easier, and thus hopefully strike more accurately on my presentation.

To be successful with hooking and landing muskies on boat-side strikes requires an angler to be mentally sharp. The figure-8 (or ‘O’) must be performed correctly after each and every cast. While working your bait boat-side, be sure to remain vigilant for any sign of a fish—this includes observing the area around you, not just behind your lure. When a fish strikes, be mindful of what direction the fish is moving and look to set the hook in the opposite direction

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

JOEL "DOC" KUNZ

ON WISCONSIN RIVERS*Living large on Wolf River smallies*

Garrett Guthrie poses with a "golden nugget" produced by the Wolf River.

Often overlooked by visiting anglers this time of year, the Wolf River and its tributaries offer some exceptional fishing for smallmouth bass. Traditionally, most anglers who visit here in May and early June are here for the fantastic white bass fishing. Walleye are also prime targets on the list of area anglers as post spawn fish filter throughout the system.

But there's another inhabitant of the river that provides a level of action, fight and legendary acrobatic ability that few freshwater fish can muster: the smallmouth bass.

While most anglers are looking for a "Friday-night date," guys like Terry Hilbert of New London are playing catch and release with Wolf River bronze backs. Sure, Terry might spend a bit of time catching a few walleyes or white bass, destined for that Friday night fish fry, but his love of bass fishing and position in the Wisconsin's Bass Federation Nation keeps him looking for a certain tug on the line.

"Wood, sand bars, points, tributaries, weeds and deep water abound in every stretch of the river, and that adds up to a lot of smallmouth habitat."

That tug belongs to the area's smallmouth and largemouth bass population. Contrary to popular belief, the Wolf River Country area has good numbers and some quality fish.

As a lover of the big, brown, hard-fighting fish, I often try to find a few smallmouths to wrestle with this time of year. One thing I'd like to pass along is the fact that I never keep any of these fish, always practicing catch and release when fishing for smallies. This is because it's my belief that there are fish available here on any day that are much better table fare and, if allowed to grow, the Wolf River system could provide some trophy smallmouth potential. Sure, we may never see the 7-pound fish as occasionally caught in Green Bay, but a 5 or 6 pounder wouldn't be too much to ask for.

River fish are usually built different than their often larger Great Lakes cousins, but they have one thing in common: They put up a great fight. Their hard-tugging, acrobatic aerial jumps make catching even a small fish a lot of fun. Put a hook to a 3 pounder and you'll feel what I'm talking about. Catch a four or five pounder and you'll have your hands full for sure.

The Wolf River country provides a large number of opportunities for those who like to fish for smallmouth bass. From the mouth at Lake Poygan to the far reaches of its tributaries, the Wolf River system has most every type of river smallmouth habitat you can think of.

Rocky points and rip-rap walls provide countless opportunities throughout the system, and there are plenty of options with 32 miles of river between Lake Poygan and New London. Wood, sand bars, points, tributaries, weeds and deep water abound in every stretch of the river, and that adds up to a lot of smallmouth habitat. That's one reason the lower Wolf River's smallmouth territory is a place where you'll see quite a few high-powered "tournament style" bass boats: There's good fishing to be had and room to run.

But it's also a place where you could see a rental boat from one of the local resorts drifting along working a tube-bait, or a pontoon boat anchored in prime position to work a point.

TACKLING THE TRIBUTARIES

The tributaries are the key to May and June smallmouth movement in the Wolf River system. As water levels drop each fall, most smallmouth move out of these rivers and back to the lakes. As other species of fish move back in to the system, the smallmouth follow, driven by warming water temperatures.

Some smallmouth in the system prefer the rocky, shallow areas such as those found in the Waupaca, Little Wolf and Embarrass rivers, tributaries to the Wolf found between Fremont and New London. Others find the smaller river habitat preferable in the

Wolf and will venture far past my campsite at Rivers Edge in Leeman, finding plenty of smallie habitat in the miles below the dam at Shawano. These are perfect areas for those who like to find their fishing spot in a kayak or canoe.

I've got a float trip planned from Rivers Edge where the river, oars and an electric trolling motor are the only mode of propulsion for the small Jon boat. Walleyes and smallmouth bass will be the target, golden rewards from the tea stained waters of the Wolf. Small crank baits, tubes, plastic worms and other typical smallmouth tactics apply.

The plan is to put-in up stream from Rivers Edge and float back to the campgrounds, working the shoreline areas of the river along with the deeper holes and other fish-holding structure. I like surface baits and shallow divers for this type of fishing and am looking forward to trying out some hand carved "gems" I received recently from a friend.

With world-class fishing available right here in Wolf River country, make the most of your angling opportunities in the "up north, so close to home" atmosphere. With 85 miles of navigable water way between Lake Poygan and the dam at Shawano, there are boat ramps and places here on the river to suit all your desires.

There are miles of uninhabited shorelines where waterfowl, eagles and osprey share the land with herons, bluebirds, deer and turkeys. Plus, the fishing's just too good to pass up. *W*

Joel "Doc" Kunz is a 2005 "Readers Choice" Award winner, member of the Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers (AGLOW) and a member of the Wisconsin Outdoor Communicators Association (WOCA). Visit Doc's website at www.wolfrivercountry.com.

Kuehl Kids
PHOTO
CONTEST
will return next issue!

Send In Your Photos!

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 mailed to you at no charge. Photo scans or digital files must be provided at high resolution 300 dpi and emailed to ads@onwisconsinoutdoors.com. Please include name of child and your mailing address (address will not be published).

ARNIE GROEHLER

A TIMELESS TRADITION: TRAPPING

Paying homage to the beaver

I leisurely paddled my skiff down the flooded Rock River, taking advantage of the swollen current to glide downstream toward two trap sets I'd made the previous day. What a wonderful feeling: to once again have open water after a long winter of chopping ice. The warm springtime sun felt good to these old bones as I absorbed the sights, sounds and smells of ice-out.

All around me nature was quickly coming back to life after being frozen in for the past four months. As I quietly floated around a wooded bend in the river, a cloud of several hundred mallards rose up from the water, their wings producing a chorus of noise, raspy quacks protesting their disturbance.

As I approached the location where the beaver traps were set, my pulse quickened with eager anticipation, as there were some new chewing's on the branches of the fallen aspen tree, which indicated recent beaver activity. I'd made two castor mound sets, hoping to entice interest from these resident beavers to investigate the smells of a new "intruder" to the colony's territory.

After landing my skiff up on the bank, I went over to check the traps. The first trap was undisturbed, still set just like I had left it the day before. As I walked over to the second set, I could see that something had torn up my castor mound and the surrounding grass—a good indicator that I had made a catch. I could see the cable going out to the deep water, but the trap was not where I had set it. Slowly, I started pulling the cable in, hand-over-hand: There definitely was something heavy on the other end.



Even when the weather is wet and miserable, two beavers caught from one site will always put a smile on this trapper's face.

This is the moment that all trappers cherish, the anticipation of "what did I catch." Kinda like that feeling you get opening presents on Christmas morning.

As the cable got closer, I caught the first initial glimpse of a wide, flat tail break the water's surface. Big tails are only attached to one thing: big beavers.

With a hefty groan I lifted the 60-pound beaver into my skiff. Resting for a minute, I was filled with a deep sense of contentment. My thoughts wandered, thinking of all the trappers who had gone on before me down this very river. The first French explorers who traveled this very same river, sending reports back to Europe of a new land teeming with beaver, of the mountain men and



The author poses with two 50-pound beavers caught in a backyard pond after they'd worn-out their welcome by snacking on the owner's trees.

free trappers who followed them, then the first German settlers who trapped the beaver for both food and fur, and now I—and hopefully someday my own grandson.

This beaver was large enough to grade as a "blanket beaver," a term which dates back to the days of the Hudson Bay Fur Company, when one large beaver of this size could be traded for the much coveted Hudson Bay wool blanket.

The beaver population in southern Wisconsin has been slowly expanding. When I first started trapping in the

1960s, there were very few beavers around. Now, you can find them in just about every stream, creek or river.

Beavers are one of the few animals that can alter their habitat, and in doing so, create conflicts with man. I receive many calls from land owners to remove "problem" beaver that have plugged culverts or flooded farm fields. I even get calls from residents in the Milwaukee suburbs who have beavers snacking on their backyard trees. One of my hunting buddies has 80 acres "up north" where he deer hunts. His favorite deer stand, built within a clump of three birch trees, fell victim to a few beavers who felled the trees cleaner than a chain saw cut.

Then, to add insult to injury, they damned up the creek, flooding more than 20 acres, including his food plot area which he'd invested much time and effort.

Trapping ice-out beavers can provide a few extra dollars which will help pay for your other outdoor expenses. You'll likely never get rich trapping, but at a \$20 average per pelt, it will help in these difficult economic times. Think of it this way: Ten spring beavers should get you one patron license. Plus, the real value in trapping comes from the memories made out in the great outdoors.

Most people are already trappers and do not realize it, for if you ever set a mouse trap or cage trap intended for raccoons raiding the bird feeder, you're a trapper. Trappers are needed to help manage the proper balance of animal populations. Are you ready to move up to a larger, more challenging quarry?

Arnie Groehler is a Wisconsin trapper education instructor. When not serving his country, he serves as the Director of the North American Fur Auction.



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DAN MOERICKE

AN "UP NORT" REPORT

Ode to the net man

Sitting on a solid sheet of 2-foot thick ice staring down a hole the other day, my mind wandered off to thoughts of May and open water. Making an actual cast, setting a hook with a rod longer than 3 feet long and playing a fish from more than 10 feet away ... I can hardly wait. During the course of this daydreaming, I got to thinking about the unsung hero of all open water fishing trips—the net man.

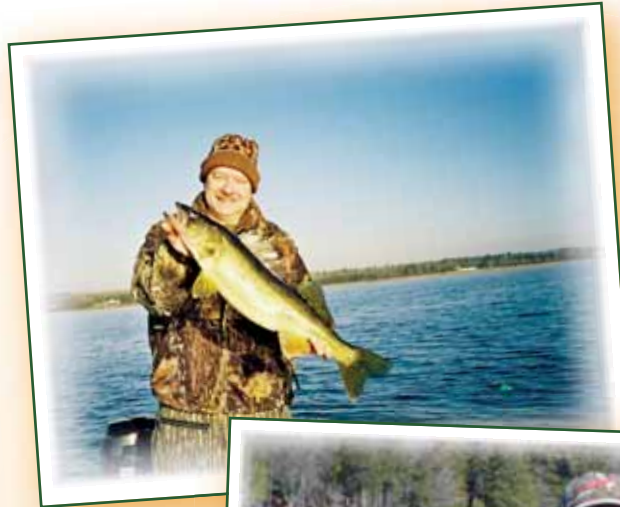
The net man, you see, is sort of like the offensive lineman in football. They never really get any attention at all unless they screw up, and then they are often the subject of ridicule and abuse—potentially for years and, depending on the severity of the transgression, maybe the rest of their lives.

I remember being in Alaska many years ago when TV programming was interrupted with the story of a Minnesota man who was fishing just south of Anchorage, doing battle with what was believed to be a new world record king salmon. Periodic updates were displayed throughout the night and into the following day. News crews were dispatched to the scene. The battle raged for more 30 hours, went from boat to boat to land and, at the conclusion, the guides bungled the net attempt and lost the behemoth. The angler slumped to the ground in tears. Pitiful.

Recently, I've seen Rapala ads featuring the "extreme net men." I can't honestly say that I want my net man to be extreme; I just want him/her to be efficient.

COMMON NETTING MISTAKES

You can click on the TV anytime of day or night and find experts giving



Pictures like these don't happen without a reliable, over-worked and under-appreciated net man.



advice on how to catch fish, but rarely is there ever any talk of how to properly net a fish. Here are a few of the 'how-not-to' methods I've witnessed:

The 'come-from-behind' sweep. This is a common mistake made by novice anglers who somehow think it'll work better if the fish doesn't see the net coming. Here's a fact: Virtually every fish alive can swim faster than a human can sweep a landing net through the water. This maneuver usually results in

giving the fish a 'goose' that initiates a line-breaking run.


The jab. While a landing net can be flailed through the air with rapier-like quickness, once it hits the water, it's an entirely different story. Novice anglers who believe they can somehow stab the net into the water and then make a quick motion underwater to quickly engulf the fish find out in short-order that they indeed cannot. Result: fish lost.

The premature lift. The correct way to net a fish is to lead it head first all the way into the net. Many fish are lost when the net is lifted after less than half of the fish is in. The result is frequently a lure caught in the net and fish swimming in the lake.

The 'green' fish attempt. Sometimes, fish are just not ready to be netted. Muskies and northern pike are especially good at coming to the boat 'green.' A net attempt on a totally green fish generally results in an eruption of energy ending in a whirling dervish of twisted nylon and tangled hooks that, even if the net job is successful, creates one heck of a mess to untangle.

PROPER NETTING

The good net man generally does the following: He has the net in the boat. He has the net in an accessible place and in an untangled condition. He immediately clears his line(s) and all other lines when a "netable" fish is on. He has the net ready and at the water's surface before the fish is to the boat. He makes a clean, head-first sweep under the fish, not lifting until at least 80 percent of the fish is in the net. He swings the net quickly and smoothly into the boat.

So here's to you, all of you good net men (and net women) out there! I salute you with a tip of the Leinie's hat! 

Dan Moericke is an avid and successful Wisconsin fisherman from Wausau and an occasional guest on outdoor fishing programs. On the water, he always tells us some version of the truth.

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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 you might find useful in the woods, fields and waterways. We did.

LINDY X-CHANGE JIGS

For \$4, the X-Change Jig System lets you switch your jighead weight or color without retying your line—the slot-designed jigheads simply snap to the shank of your hooks. The master pack includes one X-Change Max Gap hook with one 3/8-, 1/4-, 1/8- and 1/16-ounce weight.



I hate tying on jigs because I'm super-slow at it. But I love this idea—simply and easily customize your jigs on the fly. Many round-ball weight colors and hook colors are available, and extra hooks and round-ball weights are sold separately, too.

LindyFishingTackle.com

MATHEWS BOW TRAX

From \$70-\$200, The Bow Trax Compound Bow Display System is an easy-to-install, handsome wooden rack that secures your bow for storage and display on your wall. Several models are available, including a single-bow model through a six-bow model.

We've all seen decorative gun racks that proudly showcase rifles and shotguns, and finally there's a decorative way to show the same respect for compound bows. Bow Trax comes with a bare wood finish, stained, engraved

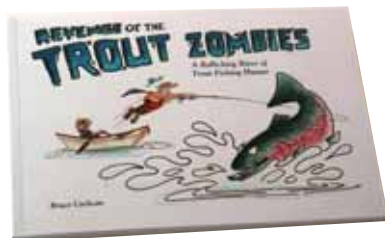


or dipped in Mathew's Lost camouflage. Plus, you can also purchase them as a custom-built cabinet.

BowTrax.com

TROUT ZOMBIES HUMOR

For \$10, this soft-cover, full-of-laughs book is the latest release from award-winning cartoonist, illustrator, writer and OWO contributor, Bruce Cochran. The 96-page *Revenge of the Trout Zombies* pokes fun of trout-fishing die-hards.



OWO readers are familiar the Bruce's cartoons because there are a few in every issue. But this book often takes breaks from Bruce's normal one-panel comic format to showcase Bruce's talent to write humor situations every fisherman can relate to.

CochransCartoons.com

PERMANENT WATER GUARD

For \$9-\$16, Atsko's Permanent Water Guard in a new 10-ounce aerosol can or 17-ounce trigger spray can creates or restores a water-resistant coating on your hunting garments. These treatments are guaranteed to bead water even after 25 washings (when used in conjunction with Atsko's Sport-Wash residue-free laundry detergent).



It's a fact—you must properly clean and maintain your weather-proof hunting clothes using Durable Water Repellent (DWR) products, or they simply won't last. So once your hunting clothes start to lose their ability to shed water, don't trash them—simply restore their water-shedding capabilities with this stuff.

Atsko.com

H.S. STRUT UNIVERSITY COMBO

For \$18, Hunter's Specialties' H.S. Strut Mouth Calling 101 combo pack includes a 30-minute instructional DVD. The pack also comes with a



Single D, Double D and Split "V" II

Gold Premium Flex diaphragm call with a call case.

Has a sly ol' gobbler ever schooled you? If you honestly answered "yes" or "sometimes" (like I did), then you need get smart by attending H.S. Strut University (like I did)! The DVD provides excellent advice from H.S. Strut's Pro Staff, and these easy-to-blow mouth calls sound great.

HunterSpecialties.com

SCHRADE X-TIMER COMBO

For \$35, this knife and flashlight combo includes a Schrade X-Timer folding knife, which has a blackened 3-inch blade and a stylish finger-grip handle. The combo also features a Schrade Tough, nine-bulb LED flashlight, which has a bright, pure-white light.



I think this is a perfect turkey-hunting combo. But mine often finds its way into my deer-hunting pack, too. The well-balanced, skeleton-handled black knife looks slick, stays sharp and has a secure blade lock. And, the flashlight is sized-right and has long battery life.

TaylorBrandsLLC.com

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

The advertisement is set within a rustic wooden frame. The background is a photograph of a group of people gathered around a large, crackling campfire in a forest at night. The scene is warmly lit by the fire. Overlaid on the top half of the image is the word "Leinenkugel's" in a large, stylized, light-colored script font. In the bottom right corner, a condensation-covered bottle of Leinenkugel's Classic Amber beer stands next to a tall glass filled with the same beer, topped with a thick head of foam. The bottle label features the Leinenkugel's logo and the text "CLASSIC AMBER".

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