

May/June 2010
Vol. 3, Issue 5

On Wisconsin *Outdoors*

With the Dick Ellis Experts

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Deer time in the turkey woods

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JJ REICH

The Reich Stuff

Game-cam gobblers

Trail cameras—or game cams—are not just for deer hunters. They're useful data-collectors no matter what you're chasing. Use them on your next turkey hunt to increase your odds for success and add an element of fun.

While on a recent spring hunt with Ron Bice of Wildlife Research Center (WRC) in east-central Minnesota, Ron and I used game cameras to help me tag a 20-pound gobbler with a 10-inch beard. We woke up early enough to check a few trail cameras in the dark, and decided where to hunt based on scouting reports provided by the photos.

But game camera photos not only serve a functional scouting purpose; they also foster optimistic attitudes during the hunt. If you haven't seen or heard a gobbler for a day or two, seeing a photo of a turkey not only provides you with scouting information, it gives you hope.

Photos of turkeys add to the thrills to the hunt. For example, you might collect photos of a turkey that has specific body markings, such as a bleach-

white tail feather or an extra-thick, ground-dragging beard. If you harvest that bird during your season, those game camera photos become keepsakes that complement your successful hunt.

That certainly was true in my case: A game cam photo of my Minnesota gobbler taken the night before I shot him hangs in a frame on my wall near his trophy fantail mount.

You might want to choose a camera that takes high-resolution color photos that are high-quality enough to print. Or choose a camera that captures short videos, because movie clips make great mementos of your hunt, too.

Trail cameras are useful tools to add a new level of fun and excitement to your hunt, all while helping you get the job done. *W*

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).



During the past 2 decades, Ron Bice has filled dozens of hard drives with trail cam images. To create special mementos, Bice likes to position his cameras so his hunting blind is in the background.



The author's Minnesota gobbler caught on camera the night before the hunt.



Ron Bice and the author woke up early enough to check a few trail cameras in the dark, and decided where to hunt based on scouting reports provided by the photos.

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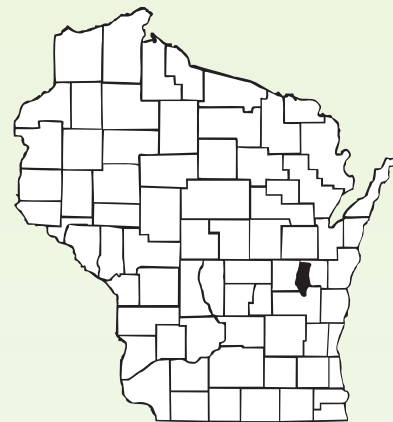


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NATALIE BEACOM

In Search of More Fishing Wisconsin's 'Wild River' Country



The Wild Rivers Interpretive Visitor's Center offers a historical and educational resource for those looking to discover Florence County.

In Wisconsin's northern highlands, nestled between the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, the border of Michigan's Upper Peninsula and the mighty North Woods, lies Florence County.

The best way to explain the feelings you experience when you arrive in Florence County is to liken it to those times you've found yourself outdoors in very remote and secluded surroundings. The gamut of emotions swirl within us ... excitement, adventure and awe tapered with a little fear because we are a part of something bigger than us. Florence County is a destination that allows you an escape within one of Wisconsin's most natural and untamed environments.

Established in 1881, the county was named for Florence Hulst, because as historical letters explain, "Florence was a woman who had the courage to settle in such rugged country." If rugged was an accurate depiction in the late 1800s, the Florence County of today has not changed much.

Eighty percent of the county is forested, 83,000 acres of its land area is Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

as well as state natural areas and county forests. There are more than 250 lakes covering 7,259 acres, 165 miles of rivers and 100s of miles of rustic hiking, ATV and bike trails traversing the county so that visitors can relish in its scenic beauty.

Angling The Wild Country

Considered the "Wild River" Country, Florence County lays claims to two of Wisconsin's three designated "wild rivers." The Pine and Popple Rivers are wild not only for the fresh, cold current that flows and meanders through the county, but because the rivers are water systems that adhere to a management philosophy with preservation at its core.

In these rivers, angling opportunities are plentiful. Trout, walleyes, northern bass and various panfish swim these waters and temperature dependent are abundant the entire year. While accessible to the public, these rivers are pristine with dense cover along the shore and offer challenges for anglers. No groomed trails, wide piers or manicured shorelines will greet you while fishing these wild rivers.

The Pine and Popple Rivers share multiple rapids, and seven cascading and multi-tiered waterfalls. Meyers Falls and Washburn Falls are a few that range

from 5-7 foot drops and offer very scenic views. The LaSalle Falls plummet 22 feet and the view and sound of rushing of water makes for an imposing and sublime sight.

For anglers, the oxygen rich tail waters of these cold water falls and the rocks that have been displaced down river by the force of the water make for optimum habitat and hiding spots for fish. In addition, fishing opportunities can be found in many of the Class 1, 2 and 3 trout streams from the Brule River at the northernmost borders of the county and throughout.

When packing for a trip to Florence County, it's hard to travel light. Hiking boots, waders, binoculars, bird calls, ATVs, mountain bikes, skis, canoes ... the list continues to grow because recreational opportunities are available for every interest and level of the outdoor enthusiast.

While in Florence County recently, hiking the trails in search of

waterfalls, fishing and enjoying the scenic overlooks, I couldn't help but think Florence Hulst had cast into these cold streams for trout, relaxed with a picnic by the falls, and hunted and trapped in these forests. The courage within Hulst to settle in this part of the state was the same thing that brought me to Florence County: pure, rugged, natural beauty. *NB*

Natalie Beacom is a librarian and freelance writer residing in New Berlin and enjoys spending time hunting and fishing throughout Wisconsin. Email natalie@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.

"There are more than 250 lakes covering 7,259 acres, 165 miles of rivers and 100s of miles of rustic hiking, ATV and bike trails traversing the county ..."



LaSalle Falls is a classic example of the natural beauty available in Wisconsin.

GARY ENGBERG

Gary Engberg Outdoors

Searching for summertime walleyes

Spring is the time of year when walleyes and saugers are relatively easy to catch because they're spending most of their time in shallow water with a hard bottom. Boating anglers can cast rocky shorelines and usually find shallow-water walleyes searching for forage and recovering from the cold-water, post-spawn period.

This is also the time when wading can be a deadly tactic. Spring is the time when walleyes are as concentrated as you're ever going to find them. But, as the water gets warmer and the forage base begins to hatch and grow, the fishing gets tougher and walleyes will spread out. The driving force for walleyes—depending on the time of year—is always either reproduction, food or safety. But, as the water warms and summer months progress, walleyes can get harder to find and sometimes just as hard to catch.

Electronic Education

The one important thing to remember is that each and every lake system is unique. During the beginning of summer walleye patterns can begin as early as the middle or end of June, and most walleyes will have moved to their summer haunts, which is usually deeper water when available, by early July. But, like everything else, there are exceptions depending on the lake that you're targeting.

Electronics with new map chips are making the learning curve much easier for today's fishermen. Though anglers have used maps for decades, the new chips available from companies such as Lake Master and Navionics make the dissection of a lake's waters much easier for fisherman.

I try to divide a lake into two distinct categories: one with clear water or one with dark water. These walleye locations can be similar, but the timing can be different because dark water warms earlier.

Darker and shallower lakes often have a dark mud bottom, which warms quicker from the sun's rays and also gets the food chain in motion sooner with the warmer water. In the clear-water lakes, you see many of the same movements throughout the year, but they often warm more slowly.

Follow The Food

The main key to finding summer walleyes is knowing where the baitfish or forage goes and where



Guide Ron Barefield on Lake Wisconsin with a summer walleye. (Photo by Gordon Dietzman)

“The driving force for walleyes—depending on the time of year—is always either reproduction, food or safety.”

they are at any particularly time of the summer. Early in spring, overall food is often scarce and often too large for many walleyes. What this means is that walleyes will feed anytime something to their liking presents itself.

After the spawn and into early summer, you can find walleyes in many different locations. Always make sure to check fresh weeds in shallow bays, narrows, flats, points, wood, drop-offs and rocky reefs. Any cover in the summer can hold walleyes, such as fallen trees and even beaver houses.

Fish the shallow and warmer water in early summer because the warmer water attracts baitfish and insect hatches, which all walleyes actively seek. This is the time of the year when everything is emerging just before the summer explosion of forage,

so check your maps and electronics and concentrate on the shallow sections of a lake when first starting your seasonal fishing.

Search The Structure

In shallow and weedy lakes that often lack natural reproduction, you can find walleyes tucked into the weeds which cut down light penetration, and most importantly hold baitfish throughout the year. Weedy lakes usually have a mud or muck bottom, which again warms quicker and should be fished in late spring or earlier in the summer.

The favorite kind of weed for walleyes is cabbage weeds, which are found in many walleye waters throughout the Midwest. These weeds give the walleyes something to relate to. Hard-bottom areas with weeds will also have walleyes close-by much of the year. The points, pockets and irregularities in the weeds are where to concentrate your fishing efforts.

A straight weed line will hold a few walleyes, but nothing compared to the irregularities. During the day, the fish will usually be on the shaded side of the points and on the bottom. On overcast days or during low-light periods, the walleyes could be on either side of a point and higher up in the water column. When you

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continued on page 23

DIANE SCHAUER

Invasive Species Awareness Month

Slow the spread by sole and tread

June is Invasive Species Awareness Month

For additional information visit, www.invasivespecies.wi.gov/awareness

To read the texts of NR 40 and WI Act 55, visit the WDNR website, or view them in Laws and Regulations at www.calumetinvasivespecies.com

To read the Best Management Practices to Prevent the Spread of Invasive Species, visit www.council.wisconsinforestry.org/invasives/



Buckthorn (pictured) and burdock burrs are too common invasive species present across much of Wisconsin. (Schauer)



Trilliums and blood root: Native plants, such as trilliums and blood roots, are among the first to suffer when an invasive species moves into their natural habitat. (Schauer)

This spring we took our Brittanys, Fenway and Wrigley, to the Brillion Wildlife Area for a romp. They were happy dogs, bounding through the grasses and splashing in the ditches.

Finally it was time to leave. In the parking lot we picked lots of burdock burrs and seeds off their ears and feet. These same seeds were attached to our socks and shoe laces, mostly from Queen Anne's lace and reed canary grass, which are two invasive species.

Invasive species are plants, insects or diseases that are not native to the area and have no native controls to keep them in check. They're usually more aggressive than the local plants and insects, and frequently out-compete native species for habitat. They can cause great economic and environmental harm and negatively impact the areas where we all like to recreate.

You may be familiar with some invasive plants such as buckthorn, garlic mustard, spotted knapweed, wild parsnip, purple loosestrife, phragmites and Eurasian water milfoil. Some better known invasive insects and diseases in Wisconsin include the gypsy moth, emerald ash borer and viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS).

New regulations have been put in place to encourage people to prevent the spread of invasive species. There will be increased enforcement of these rules in 2010, especially because of NR 40 and the new Do Not Transport bill, WI Act 55.

Fines can be imposed on people who move invasive species without taking reasonable precautions, and any

member of the law enforcement community can stop a person who is travelling down our highways with aquatic plants or animals attached to their equipment. This is serious stuff.

But we can make a difference and slow or prevent the spread of invasive species, one small step at a time.

Step One: Clean your gear

Before entering your favorite outdoor area, make certain you are not bringing in any invasive species. Remove any weed seeds, clumps of mud or other debris from your shoes, socks, clothes, equipment and dogs. Invest in clothing that's not "seed friendly," avoiding Velcro, wool, fleece and other materials that seeds and plant parts can stick to. Check your pockets, hoods and cuffs for residue from previous outings. Clean all your gear.

When you leave the woods, grassland, wetland, lake or river, clean your equipment. Preferred locations for this cleaning are areas where invasive species are already present, where equipment is unloaded or loaded, or areas that can be easily monitored for new infestations, such as along a road or at a trail head. Also, clean your boats and trailers at the landing and properly dispose of invasives.

Step Two: Avoid invasive species

Hunters hike a long way, trappers move traps, ATV riders can cover great distances, and campers haul lots of gear

from site to site. Learn to identify the invasive species in the area. They vary in different parts of the state, so learn to recognize your local invaders and avoid them. Try not to hike or ride through infested areas. If you can't avoid an infestation, remove plant parts and seeds before you move in to a clean area.

Stay on trails whenever possible and minimize soil disturbances. Invasives quickly colonize disturbed soil. This will decrease the opportunities for invasives to spread and it will be easier to spot new, small patches.

Step Three: Don't move invasive species

Don't move firewood. Use wood purchased or cut on site. Firewood can spread many destructive invasive species. Confirmed threats include the emerald ash borer, butternut canker, white pine blister rust and oak wilt. Once established in new areas, invasive forest pests can quickly kill trees in forests, parks, communities and campgrounds.

It's easy to protect our outdoors from invasive species and to preserve the places that are special to us. It's isn't just about keeping out a few plants and animals, either. Stopping the spread of invasive species is about preserving everything we value about the outdoors, the recreation, the traditions and our very way of life. *W*

Diane Schauer is the aquatic invasive species coordinator for Calumet County.

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Hunting, Fishing, Travel
and Outdoor Humor

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S. WILKERSON

Surplus Firearms

Ignorance is a two-edged sword

Ignorance can be bliss when it comes to firearm purchases. Some of my most brilliant gun buys came about through sheer dumb luck. Conversely, some of the most ill-advised were the results of hours of research.

One of the best buys I ever made without having any idea what I doing was an M1A several years ago. The rifle was put together from a virtually new government issue M14 parts kit on a new Springfield Armory receiver. (Springfield Armory, Inc., is no relation to the United States National Armory once located in Springfield, Massachusetts. Springfield, Inc., M14 replicas are marked M1A and made in Springfield, Illinois.)

Honest-to-goodness GI parts are far more desirable than newly manufactured commercial replicas. This rifle wasn't built on just any parts kit, either. Most M14s were built by Winchester and Harrington and Richardson. The "real" Springfield Armory also built some, but the most coveted were those built by rocket engine manufacturer TRW.

My M1A, with the exception of its after-market flash hider/bayonet lug and the previously mentioned receiver, is all TRW. Trigger group, barrel, bolt, charging handle—all of the important stuff—is genuine TRW.

I knew nothing about M14s when I obtained the M1A, and apparently neither did the dealer. It was sold to me as a Springfield Armory, Inc., M1A, and, according to the seller, sported a National Match barrel and a glass bedded fiberglass stock, in addition to GI parts. As I recall, he also claimed it was a 1980s vintage rifle, hence the all GI parts. Later, Springfield M1As had mostly

commercially made parts.

After I got the rifle, I started doing research and, in time, learned the "National Match" mark was just a run-of-the-mill acceptance stamp. The stock was a Springfield, Inc., standard grade, meaning it was surplus GI that Springfield, Inc., had applied a textured black paint job. Other than the fact that it was made out of fiberglass, there was nothing glass bedded about it.

Eventually, I emailed Springfield, Inc., with the serial number of the

Firearms and Explosives, and the remaining parts sold. Many of these kits came from virtually new guns. After getting them from the United States, the Israelis fielded very few of them. The parts on my gun had their original blued finish and looked virtually brand new.

Quite frankly, had I known the gun was made from parts at the time I first saw it, I never would have bought it. It's now one of my favorite guns and worth significantly more than what I paid for it.

"Quite frankly, had I known the gun was made from parts at the time I first saw it, I never would have bought it. It's now one of my favorite guns and worth significantly more than what I paid for it."

receiver. They promptly replied and informed me that the receiver left their factory in Illinois in July of 2001. In other words, they didn't assemble the rifle, somebody else did. Whoever he or she was, he or she did a great job. The gun is very reliable and accurate.

Digging Deeper

In time, I posted an inquiry on an M14 discussion board about the parts kit that this gun was assembled from. I learned that it probably came from Israel, possibly in the 1980s, when the Israelis sold them off as surplus.

Upon their return to the United States, the receivers were removed from the rifles and destroyed, as per the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,

The Valmet M76

The gun I traded for the M1A was another I gun I didn't research, and one that I probably wouldn't have bought if I did. It was a Finnish Valmet M76 rifle, chambered in .223 Rem. At the time I bought it in 2002, I had some money burning a hole in my pocket and a need for a pre-Ban assault rifle. The chances of the Assault Rifle Ban being lifted were slim to none at that time, and I always wanted a "real" assault rifle. Nothing in that regard looked as cool as a Valmet or was put together as well as one, other than the astronomically priced SIGs and HKs.

Once I brought the Valmet home it became painfully obvious that it was



Research on the SAR 2 proved to be about as reliable as climate change research. (Ellis photo)

probably unfired. I was afraid to shoot the thing for fear of diminishing its value. It sat in my safe for a couple of years before I traded it, unfired, for the M1A. I got exactly what I paid for it on the trade for a rifle that I could shoot and get parts for, albeit increasingly expensive parts.

Had I known what I was doing before I bought the Valmet, I never would have purchased it. As a piece of art, it was beautiful; the thing was made like a pre-war Luger. As a rifle, it was just too valuable in the condition it was in to shoot. I miss it, in a way, but don't regret getting rid of it—most of the time.

The Romanian SAR2

If my ignorance resulted in me owning a great M14 clone, my research led me to purchase one of the most over-rated AK clones made: a Romanian SAR2 chambered in 5.45x39. If you could believe everything you read on the Web about the SAR2 in 2003 (and I did), you would have "known" that it was as



continued on page 28

SUZETTE CURTIS

Recipes by Suzette

Mouth-watering walleyes

I can't think of a more versatile and delicious fish to prepare than walleye. I've shared some of my favorite walleye recipes with you in past issues, but this time we are fortunate to hear from some real experts in the field. You should note that these recipes are simple in design. Thus, the ingredients are not overpowering to the taste of the fish, but are meant instead to enhance the natural flavor. *W*

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. recipesbysuzette@onwisconsinoutdoors.com

Jon's Favorite Fish Batters

By Jon Gafner

Fish Batter #1

1/2 c. pancake mix (the kind that only requires adding water)
1 tbsp. brown sugar

Add "room temperature" beer to the mix until consistency is that of a thin pancake mix.

Fish Batter #2

1/2 c. pancake mix (the kind that only requires adding water)
1 finely ground graham cracker

Add clear diet soda, mixing until the consistency resembles a thin pancake mix.

With either recipe, dip fish fillets in batter and deep fry in oil.

Or, if you prefer to broil, add a thin coat of dry mix to the fillets after dipping in batter and place on broiling pan prepared with olive oil or cooking spray.

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Baked Walleye

By Art Techlow, III

Cut walleye fillets into 4- to 6-inch pieces and place in a shallow, flat-bottomed glass baking dish.

Add lemon juice and pats of butter liberally throughout.

Season with lemon pepper, garlic powder and a little cayenne pepper.

Bake uncovered for 30 minutes.
Serve with excess juice as a sauce.



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Ma Plog's Fish Batter

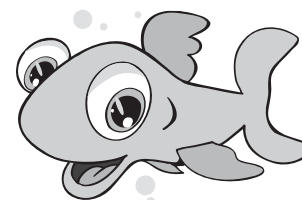
By Dr. Ron Bruch, Wisconsin DNR

Two eggs
1½ tsp. salt
1½ tsp. oil
1½ tsp. baking powder
1 c. milk
Paprika for color

Cracker Meal:

Blend salted saltine crackers in blender on lowest speed.

Beat all ingredients until smooth. Dip fish fillets in batter, and then roll in cracker meal. Deep fry in oil in a Dutch oven or a deep cast-iron frying pan.



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MADDY LENSING

Rainy-Day Turkey

Hunting is all about those special 'firsts'



The author poses with her father and her first turkey during a rainy and cool spring day.

Last year I went on my first-ever turkey hunt in the spring. The previous fall I had just gotten into the groove and loved it when I experienced duck hunting for the first time. On April 25 and 26, I once again packed up my ammo and camo and headed into the woods.

When I got my first turkey during the second season, Dad was on crutches. He had sprained his ankle but still wanted to go. We got up at 4 a.m. and got dressed, packed up our snacks and gear, and left.

Because Dad couldn't drive, his friend, John, agreed to bring us over to the property we were hunting. As we drove in the quiet darkness, I thought about the youth season a couple weeks before when I had been unsuccessful in getting a turkey, but had a lot of fun trying with my dad.

We wound around the curvy back roads and finally arrived on the private property we had gotten permission to hunt. We hopped out, grabbed our stuff and walked over to John's ATV, our motorized transportation up the bluff.

Dad and I squeezed in beside John, and off we went. As we started across the bumpy creek, I wasn't sure we were going to make it. I'd never ridden in any type of ATV before, so I wasn't sure of its ability, but it got across smoothly. It wove around trees and grass, easily following a path that wasn't yet visible in the dark—and then we were going up the bluff. Dad and his friend chatted about their turkey stories and experiences. I was only halfway listening because I was

focusing on the surroundings.

We finally arrived on the top of the bluff and I looked around. We headed through two more clearing before we came to our destination. There seemed to be a few stumps and small corn fields all surrounded by woods. As I squinted, looking farther ahead, I saw a bigger corn field. We drove over to a spot that had the smaller corn fields in front of us, woods behind us and the bigger corn field to our left.

John shut off the ATV and we hopped out and grabbed our bags with the snacks, calls, shells and my books. I took out my gun and carried it over to the spot where Dad and John had set up the blind earlier. I emptied the rest of the stuff of the ATV and onto the grass. John started up the ATV and left. He would pick us up later.

Just Dad And Me

My dad and I moved the remaining bags into the blind. I set up the chairs and organized everything and then sat down. I started to take my gun out of the case and gently leaned it against a sturdy pole in the blind. Dad came in and sat down, arranging his crutches so he could get to them easily.

I was shivering because it was raining and a little nippy. Rain came in through the mesh windows and dripped down my gun. I tried to wipe the water off, but it was no use; the rain just kept pouring in. I asked Dad if it would cause the gun to rust, but he said no if I remembered to clean it as soon as I got home.

Soon, the night began to turn into day, and as the light grew less dim, I looked around. There were stumps here and there, and they played tricks on my eyes causing me to think that there were turkeys

creeping over a hill.

One stump in particular looked like a turkey with its round shape, and few seedlings and grass jutting up around it constantly caught the attention. The screen of the window slightly blocked my vision so I peeked out a corner and Dad reminded me to keep it shut—turkeys have a keen sense of sight.

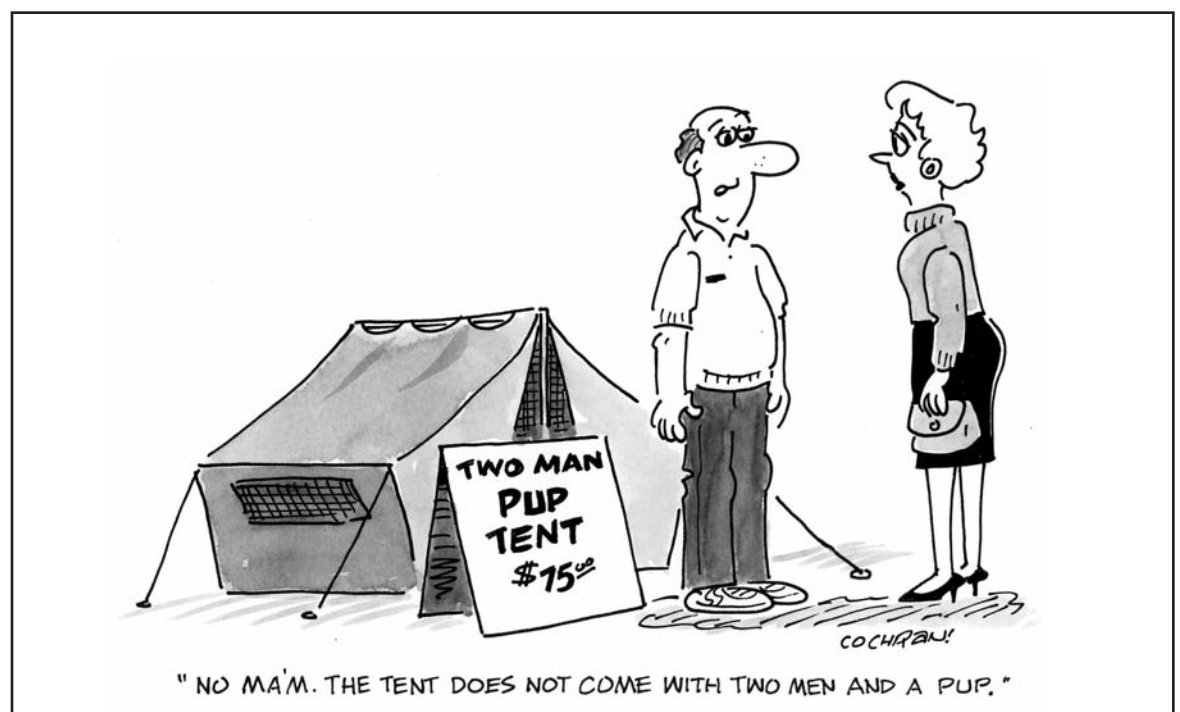
Morning was near but I was still chilly, so I grabbed my extra sweatshirt out of my backpack and put it on. While I was in there, I noticed my sandwich. A little hungry, I took Dad's out, and then mine, and we began to eat in silence. I also took out one of the books I had brought along as a last moment thought and a flashlight. As I munched on my sandwich, I quickly went into the zone of reading. It wasn't long before I would hear the first gobble and cluck.

Game-On!

I was engrossed in my book when I heard a noise. It was a kind of cluck-chirp noise and I knew it was a hen. I tensed with anticipation, but then relaxed. Hens are not in season in the spring.

Dad took out his calls and started to call the hen just for fun. As he clucked and chirped on his call, we heard a gobble from behind us, down in the ravine.

continued on page 29



DAN MOERICKE

An 'Up Nort' Report

Water under the bridge

A few weeks ago, my normal opening day fishing partner informed me that he had to be out of town on a business trip the first weekend in May. Pitiful. He felt bad about it. I felt bad about it. Then I got to thinking about what I was going to do instead of our usual multi-lake walleye assault.

I'm thinking that I might go trout fishing on opening day this year.

Growing up, "opening day" meant only one thing ... the opening of trout season. It was planned for with all the attention to detail that surrounds a major surgery. All potential contingencies were addressed. Clothes were laid out, waders were tested for leaks, lines were changed, tackle boxes were scoured, reorganized and then scoured again.

Opening day also involved a right of passage. Being 12 years younger than my brother, Jerry, I grew up watching Dad and Jerry prepare for opening day battle with the brook trout. I watched the preparations and longed for the day when I too could brave the waters of the mighty Little Wolf River in search of the wily speckled trout.

As a kid, however, my opening day was spent waiting anxiously for them to return home and then watching as they emptied their creels into the kitchen sink. I reveled in the stories of exactly how and where each fish was caught.

At age 8, Dad told me that he thought I might be old enough to enlist in the opening day trout brigade. I remember being outfitted with a pair of rubber knee boots, a three-piece bamboo fly rod, a wicker creel and an old felt hat. We always wore old

brimmed dress hats when we trout fished. I never knew why ... it was just something you didn't question. When I saw pictures of famous trout fishermen like Lee Wulff in the outdoor magazines, by God, they were wearing brimmed felt hats, too. The hats were our uniform of sorts, I guess.

Purists, we were not. Trout fishing for us meant mostly worm dunking, although sometimes we'd get a little crazy and throw a spinner. The worms were usually fished on a plain hook with just enough split-shot to take the bait to the bottom. The size and number of sinkers was dictated by the depth of the stream and the swiftness of the current.

Pre opening day night-crawler picking was a tradition ... as was following behind Dad when he roto-tilled the garden. My job was to pick up worms from the overturned earth and put them in a coffee can.

Opening day started with Dad waking us up by 4 a.m. Bacon and eggs were followed by the preparation of sandwiches for lunch. Final plans were hatched over the breakfast table and on the drive to the river. My brother would work upstream, Dad would work downstream and I'd fish the section of stream within 100 yards or so of the car. Being in position to make your first cast promptly at 5 a.m. when the season officially opened was mandatory with Dad.

To this day, I could take you to the exact rock in the Little Wolf where I caught my first (and only) trout on that



For the author, "opening day" is a right of passage flooded with water, fish and memories.

first opening day. It was the most beautiful trout in the world I believed, all 9 inches of it, flipped up onto the bank and pounced on with all the enthusiasm of a puppy on a new bone.

When we reconvened at the car for lunch, I proudly displayed my catch (which Dad assured me was "a dandy") and then watched in awe as he opened his creel to reveal his limit of beautiful trout, all neatly cleaned and laying in a bed of wet grass inside the wicker confines on his hip.

A lot of water has gone under the bridge since that first opening day and, over the years, opening day changed. My brother got married and had his own family, so for a time it was just Dad and me.

Land ownership changed and our access to the river changed with it. Eventually, opening day waders, trout

and fedoras gave way to opening day boats, walleyes and baseball caps, usually on Pelican Lake. We still got up early and frequently had a nice catch of fish before it was time to come in for a mid-morning breakfast.

Fifteen years ago, Dad and Jerry went on ahead to fish the heavenly trout streams. I'm assuming that Jerry is fishing upstream and Dad is working his way downstream. Someday I'm hoping we'll meet up again on the river bank. I'm sure each one of us will be wearing our hats.

Yeah, I think I'll go trout fishing on opening day this year. Just sayin'. *W*

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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JOEL DEBOER

Wisconsin Angling Adventures

To K.I.S.S. a muskie



Saturday, May 29, 2010, will mark the opening of muskie season for waters in Wisconsin north of Highway 10. Thank the good Lord, because I don't know how much longer I will be able to wait!

While I love holidays, especially Christmas, nothing generates more excitement in me than the opening of muskie season. Perhaps you find that a little odd, and just maybe it is; however, there's something magical about going toe-to-toe with the king of freshwater, a fish that has been known to attack ducks, muskrats, the occasional small dog and even a human leg or two over the years.

We are blessed to live in an area rich with muskie hunting opportunities. I've personally caught and released dozens and dozens of giant muskies over the years from our area, and friends and clients have done the same from my boat.

Early season muskie fishing can be quite exciting, but it's also frustrating to many anglers. The key to catching more muskies before the more "regular" patterns of summer become established begins first and foremost with location.

The 'Where'

The mighty muskellunge spawns in water temperatures ranging from 49-60 degrees, with 55 degrees being optimum. Understanding when muskies spawn will assist you in understanding where in their seasonal progression they are.

Location during this timeframe is critical to consistently scoring, as the fish are in a period of transition. One of the first steps to locating muskies during the opener, especially during a below-average temperature spring or on a body of water that doesn't

warm quickly, is identifying potential spawning areas; that being said, begin your search knowing that muskies look to spawn in shallow bays and backwaters containing dark mucky bottoms.

Once you've located potential muskie spawning sites, look for transition spots leading toward more "traditional" summer haunts such as large weed beds, main lake structures or open basins. These transition spots might consist of points, shallow humps and any other structural element that might cause a fish to stop and hold for a period of time, whether to rest, feed or both.

To consistently find post-spawn muskies before the summer season is in full-swing, identify these transition spots and fish them effectively. Most muskie anglers will approach an early season attacking their usual summer milk-runs and miss a majority of the fish that are not yet into their summer home-ranges; in other words, recognize that fish don't go from point A to point C without first passing through point B.

The 'How'

In respect to tackle for pursuing early season muskies, the KISS principle (keep it simple, stupid) is an excellent approach. Sure, I've literally hundreds of muskie lures, and I'm sure I will accumulate a "few" more this season as well.

Come opening weekend, I'm banking on a small selection that I have confidence in to produce fish. Smaller sized swimbaits such as Suzy Suckers and Curly Sues are a great choice due to their versatility and ability to produce fish in a variety of situations, especially during adverse conditions such as cold fronts or high fishing pressure.

Some of the best muskie fishing of the year occurs during the early season. Although the fish can be more difficult to locate, big fish are susceptible to the proper presentation.




Next, down-sized muskie bucktails and spinner baits, such as the Mepps Musky Killer or Esox Edge Thumper Junior, are excellent for both covering water and eliciting strikes from less-aggressive muskies. Be sure and tip the treble hook with a 3- to 4-inch trailer grub such as those produced by Mr. Twister; the added flash and vibration can be the key to turning a following fish into a biting fish.

Finally, a selection of buoyant twitch baits is also a staple for early season muskies thanks in large-part to their versatility. It's a good idea to have an array of sizes in twitch baits and to let the fish dictate what size they are looking for.

There are plenty of times during the early season when a smaller twitch bait (5-7 inches long) is best; however, there are also plenty of times when the fish will simply respond better to a larger offering (8-10 inches long). If you're not getting action with the downsized versions, don't be afraid to experiment with the larger specimens.

As with any muskie fishing, be sure and carry the proper release tools on-board, including hook cutters, long-nosed pliers and a large, dipped, high-quality net such as the Frabill Big Kahuna. It's all about CPR: catch, photo and release!

I'll see you on the water. 

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

TODD BOHM

Fishing Outside The Box

Atypical walleye techniques



The author hoists a beautiful Wisconsin walleye. In the background, the structure where the walleye was caught resembles that of a bass-fisherman's haunts.

For years, when anglers were asked about walleye fishing strategies, they would respond with advice about fishing low-light periods at dawn or dusk and focusing on rocky deep water humps or points.

Today's angler knows that although there's some truth in this advice, consistently putting fish in the boat requires anglers to be flexible and to focus on fishing for walleyes in a variety of locations that any self-respecting walleye wouldn't be caught swimming in.

Along with the typical walleye holding locations, I've found three other types of structure that consistently hold big numbers of fish

Wood

The rivers and reservoirs of central Wisconsin are full of fish holding, such as logs, trees and stumps. Walleyes use this structure for cover, shade, current diversion or for the baitfish it holds. Does certain wood structure hold more fish than others? You bet!

Over the years I've found certain stumps or trees seem to hold more fish. Since fish can't talk, I've made assumptions about why certain cover

holds more fish than others. Ideal structure incorporates a mixture of depth, current break, food, and cover. As you become more adept to fishing these wooden structures, you'll get better at identifying the ones that consistently hold fish.

The equipment used by anglers fishing wood is different from the gear you would normally use for walleyes. In fact, many times it resembles bass fishing gear. Sturdy rods and strong line is a must. Fish caught in the wood will do everything in their power to burrow into the structure leaving the ill-equipped angler with a broken line. I use a braided line, such as Power Pro, with a 4-foot fluorocarbon leader that allows me to horse these fish from cover.

Angling tactics also resemble bass fishing as the angler works their jig/minnow or jig/night crawler offering into the various nooks and crannies of the structure. Stealth and noise control are also musts of successful wood structure anglers.

Because the water being fished is relatively shallow (3-8 feet deep) any unnatural noises or shadows will send fish scrambling. While certainly a

different style of fishing, fishing wooden structure has saved many a day for me and put countless walleyes into my boat.

Weeds

Fishing walleyes in the weeds is another tactic that consistently puts walleyes on the stringer. Weeds provide walleyes with things crucial to their survival—cover and food. In fact, on some lakes I firmly believe there's a resident population of walleyes that spends most of its time in the weeds during the open-water period.

Like wood structure, not all weeds hold fish. Cabbage weed and sand grass are two of my favorites. Locating good weeds in association with depth-breaks or other fish-holding structure are ideal places to catch fish.

My favorite techniques for catching weed walleyes include ripping a jig/minnow or plastic over the top of the weed beds, casting shallow-diving minnow baits like Rapala's Husky Jerks, or when applicable, using slip bobbers with live bait.

Wind-Driven Shorelines

Catching walleyes along shallow, wind-driven shorelines was a technique I learned on our annual Canadian fishing trips that I began applying to our lakes in Wisconsin. Favorite lakes that this technique has been deadly on have been the Willow, Rainbow and Eau Pleine flowages. The wind not only blows baitfish up into the shallow water but also cuts down on light penetration into the water.

Boat control and

location are crucial when using this strategy. I've found fish literally in only 1 foot of water feeding right up on shore so the angler needs to search these wind-driven shores while searching for the depth the fish are holding at.

My favorite lure choices again include jig/minnow and shallow-running crank baits. While many anglers shudder at the thought of fishing in the wind and the boat control nightmare that goes along with this, this technique has saved a day of fishing for me many times.

As you head out this spring and summer to put walleyes in your boat, consider using some of these atypical walleye fishing strategies. There's no doubt the time-tested techniques for walleye fishing catch fish. However, there will be days when you will have to dig into your fishing grab bag. Focusing on the wood, weeds or wind-driven shores will not only test your fishing finesse, but will also put walleye fillets in your freezer. *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.



Big walleyes are seldom easy to come by, but an angler willing to go to drastic measures is likely to find more of these elusive fish than the average fisherman.



DICK ELLIS

The Great Blue Heron Rookery

Safe haven and great peril for young birds

Blue Heron Rookeries in Wisconsin

NORTHERN SITES:

- Chippewa Flowage, Hayward
- Turtle Flambeau Flowage, Mercer
- Nicolet National Forest, Brule River, Eagle River

LAKE MICHIGAN AREA:

- Navarino Wildlife Area, Navarino
- L.H. Barkhausen Waterfowl Reserve, Green Bay
- Mink River Estuary State Natural Area, Ellison Bay

WESTERN WISCONSIN

- Chippewa & Red Cedar Rivers, Eau Claire to Menomonie
- Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, Trempealeau

CENTRAL WISCONSIN

- Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, Necedah
- Sandhill Wildlife Area, Babcock

SOUTHEAST WISCONSIN

- Theresa Marsh Wildlife Area, Theresa
- Horicon Marsh, Horicon
- Goose Pond Sanctuary, Arlington

From my ground stand holding vigil on the bank of the shallow and muddy creek just across from the Great Blue Heron rookery in southern Wisconsin, distinguishing young birds from adults takes a bit of careful scrutiny.

By day 45 after hatching, herons have already achieved 86 percent of what will be their adult weight. On this May 31st cloudless morning, young of year stand to greet adults returning from hunting or socializing with other members of the isolated colony to a dozen nests constructed many years ago in dead trees overlooking a large wetland.

In Wisconsin, according to numerous internet sites, migrating Great Blue Herons will return in spring to the same colonies year after year from warmer climates to find a new mate and raise their young. Virtually found statewide, established Wisconsin heron colonies are found in Hayward, The Brule River and Mercer in the north to Horicon and Theresa

and Waukesha County in the south.

An elaborate spring mating ritual allows males and females to be selective in their mates. A male, as just one example, may steal sticks from a nearby nest to reinforce his own dwelling and impress a female. Although monogynous for that year, Herons pick out new mates each spring breeding season.

Incubation period for the heron is 28 days with both male and females helping to sit on an average of a four egg clutch. First flight occurs at 50 to 60 days, with the young leaving the nests from between 60 and 91 days of hatching. With nests placed as high as 130 feet (these nests are between 40 and 60 feet), the birds also can guard against predators like raccoons which seek the eggs or occasionally, hawks or owls which occasionally prey on the herons.

Before flight, young birds grow fast on a diet of fish, reptiles, insects, crustaceans and sometimes small animals and birds brought to the nest by the parents. With good nocturnal vision, males and females hunt day and night by wading in shallow water or working upland fields for rodents. Choking to death by attempting to eat too large of prey is relatively common and listed on internet sites as among the top five causes of mortality.

This is my first visit to the site. I have walked more than a mile to reach the rookery from the nearest road, ending at the creek bottom which is part of a typical heron wetland environment that provides food and isolation. Although power lines in the distance reveal that we are not far from urban Wisconsin, large cattail stands, ponds and large stands of mature softwoods and conifers offer a feel of isolation and wilderness that the birds demand in spring.

It is an awesome experience. I move within 40 yards of the rookery slowly and the herons despite their increasing chatter seem to tolerate the intrusion. They stay with nests as I sit down across the creek in open view of close scrutiny by adults and soon their attention is not solely on me. I shoot the camera often with telephoto and a standard lens.

Adults from different nests do take flight eventually and I wonder briefly if I caused the departure. A canoe with two young men exploring the wetlands, the only people I will see in this urban jungle works down the creek and tells the real story.

The men tell me that their

ongoing search for salamanders has been futile again, but also let me know that a young Great Blue Heron has fallen to its death sometime this spring and that it still lies below the nests. With the adults gone, I take the opportunity to look for a crossing.

I use a walking stick to negotiate a fallen tree and cross the creek. The heron's staple of fish and frogs skitter for safety in front of me. One "soaker" over my hip boots and a graceful writer arrives below the colony. The young bird is decomposing. Because its size in comparison to the other young birds is small, I wonder how long it fell. Or did it fall?

In his book *The Great Blue Heron*, Robert W. Butler states that mortality among the birds particularly in the younger stages of life is high, with mortality among dispersing herons great in the first weeks after fledging. Only about 50 percent of birds from eggs hatched fledge, and according to Butler, only 14 percent of chicks become yearlings. Only one in 10 reach adulthood. But veterinarian Ken Langelier post mortems on 43 young birds discovered below nests, he said, contradict common thoughts that starvation often induces the falls.

Twenty-three of the young herons had died of trauma but nine had broken wings or legs that had partially healed before the fall. More than half of the bird's stomachs contained food. Only four had died of starvation suggesting, Butler said, that siblings kill or injure by pushing birds out of the nest or by aggressive action in the nests and for reasons other than food.

In addition to choking, common causes of death for adults include disease, predation of young and winter kill. Young are vulnerable to predation, disease, and inclement weather. For those birds that do beat the odds to survive, breeding age is reached at 22 months, or their second spring. Although a very old Great Blue Heron is 17 years, the oldest bird banded by Wildlife biologists reached age 23.

It's time for a reporter to leave. Almost 130 new shots are on the camera. Soon, it will be time for the surviving birds to leave as well. I have had an up close and personal introduction to the Blue Heron in Wisconsin.

I agree. It is indeed, great. *W*

This column ran in the Ellis syndicated newspaper column last year.



Dave's
Turf and Marine

PRESENTS

— Fishing Guide —

DENNIS RADLOFF

DENNIS RADLOFF

Early Season Muskie Mojo

May 1, 2010, will be the opener this year south of Highway 10, and southeastern Wisconsin has some great waters available such as Elkhart, Menona, Oconomowoc, Okauchee, Pewaukee, Random, Waubesa, and Wingra Lakes.

No matter which lake you decide to target this spring, here are some pointers that will help you find and catch a few early season muskies.

Shallow Bays

Targeting shallow bays can be a great starting point because this is a common location utilized by muskies to spawn. While they are spawning, muskies do not 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—there will be plenty of forage mixed in the weeds. Another great fact about these shallow bays is the water temperatures will always be warmer than the main lake temperatures. These warmer waters will host the most active fish.

Smaller 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 the 6-inch



Kelly, one of the author's early season clients, is all smiles after landing her first 50-inch muskie.

Slammer minnow bait or the drop-belly glider Slammer. These lures can be worked either with a straight retrieve or twitched with either a lighter gage seven-strand or fluorocarbon leader.

Sight Fishing

Sight fishing is a tactic you can use when 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 visually looking for muskies lying in the shallow water on sand flats.

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 it best to 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 toward the fish.

GPS And Return

While utilizing the basic tactics described here will produce a few fish 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

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, which gives you another chance at catching them.

Good luck on the water this year, and may 2010 be the year you catch the fish of a lifetime! *WR*

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 through his website at www.sterlingmusky.com, or 262.443.9993.

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JIM TOSTRUD

On The Move

Secrets from a come-to-you turkey guide

I've been turkey hunting and turkey calling since way before it became such a popular sport, and I know how important it is to have the right tools to get a big tom within shooting range. I love it when everything comes together to fill a tag.

I was introduced to this great sport by a couple great men: Frank McKean from Lacon, Illinois, and Ben Rodgers Lee from Coffeerville, Alabama. Ben was one of the best in the field of turkey hunting and did a lot to help the sport grow to where it is today. Ben's life was cut short, and he is now up in the great hunting grounds in the sky, but I feel his presence and remember all Ben taught me every time a tom responds to my call with a hardy gobble.

I've been doing the sports-show circuit for more than 20 years and have seen many turkey hunting products come and go. I'm one of those guys who likes to try new ways to mess with the turkeys and trick a big gobbler into shooting range. Ben got me into a calling contest before I ever stepped in the woods to chase one of my bearded buddies. I was immediately hooked.

My good buddy, Frank McKean, and his father, John, who owned Green Head Game Calls and Champaign Calls, also traveled the circuit with us. It was fun for the old timers to sit back and watch us young jakes sell the calls and win calling competitions and just strut our stuff.

I was so excited about going

turkey hunting with Ben; I could hardly stand the wait until I could share the woods with him. I was scheduled to fly down to Alabama and spend a week in the turkey woods with the famous Ben Lee. I was packed and counting the minutes until I was to leave.

Then the phone rang, my good friend and mentor Ben was killed in a car accident. On that day I retired from calling contests and believe now my competition is in the woods. I do turkey hunting seminars around the country and enjoy sharing the knowledge, experience and my love for the sport with others.

Guiding, Redefined

As a guide, I love turning my hunters onto a great experience in the woods. I've hunted around the country, and I've witnessed many a bird getting rolled. When I started guiding, I would take hunters on ground I hunted myself, but many times people who wanted me to help them didn't have a tag in my area.

So I adapted an idea that has since become a big hit. I now guide all over Wisconsin, teaching people how to hunt their own birds on their own ground. This can pose a big challenge, but it can also be very rewarding when a plan comes together. My success rate is very high and I believe by guiding this way I've grown as a hunter and as a person.

Sharing the woods and the experience with others has been a blessing for me. I believe one of the



Although most hunting guides require their hunters to come to them, the author offers a unique experience: He'll come to you and help you hunt your turkeys.

best things about being a guide is that I get to spend much more time in the woods and share great experiences with others. If I successfully call a big tom into shooting range and my hunter is successful, then I am also successful.

Hunting For Decoys

A couple years ago I was at the Wisconsin Deer and Turkey Expo in Madison. I got a chance to take a break from my booth and walk the show. I was on the hunt for a new decoy to add to my arsenal of tricks for turkey hunting.

There were a number of new decoys on the market, and I was excited to try one out. I was looking for a full-body jake or tom that was in full strut. I'd used a full-mount tom that a friend of mine had—and it worked pretty well—but it was hard to get it to the field.

I was on my way back to my booth when it happened: I came around the corner and saw a good-looking jake decoy. The tail was down but fanned out, and as I walked past the booth, the decoy seemed to turn

continued on page 26



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News Release

Suzuki launches 2010 KingQuad 400AS/FS

Wisconsin outdoorsmen will be happy to know that Suzuki is proud to announce the launch of the 2010 KingQuad 400AS 4x4 Automatic and the KingQuad 400FS 4x4 Semi-automatic. This is great news and comes just in time for Wisconsin outdoors season.

Perfect for fisherman, hunters and trappers, these machines offer an unparalleled combination of exciting sport-utility and reliability. Wisconsin outdoorsmen will enjoy the KingQuad on just about any terrain including twisty trails, muddy ruts or long hauls between traps.

If you're into hunting, fishing or exploring, the KingQuad 400 will get you there. Whether riders are taking on a tough job or a tough trail, they can appreciate the KingQuad's impressive torque and wide powerband. The high/low selectable sub-transmission helps provide maximum versatility in a variety of terrain. These machines also let consumers select two-wheel or four-wheel-drive operation quickly with practical convenience, giving them the versatility to handle rough trails, intimidating tasks or enjoy some time in the open Wisconsin air.

King-Sized Performance

The KingQuad excels when it comes to rider comfort and convenience. The heavy-duty front and rear carrying racks let consumers easily take advantage of superb cargo-hauling capabilities. The racks will come in handy when you bag the big

buck or bear and need to take it back to camp.

New for 2010, both KingQuad 400 machines come with large 25-inch black wheels, new wrinkle-paint finish on the racks and front bumper increase durability and scratch resistance so that Wisconsin fisherman can feel confident while hauling

clearance and 6.7 inches of wheel travel. The swing arm rear-suspension system has class-exclusive twin shock absorbers for agile handling and a plush ride. The electric start comes with a backup recoil starter for emergencies.

One favorite feature of outdoorsmen is the KingQuad's




tackle, bait boxes and other equipment.

The T-shaped seat provides maximum rider mobility and comfort during sport riding and while navigating difficult terrain. The KingQuad boasts aggressive styling and tough bodywork. Overall length is less than 82 inches so the KingQuad 400AS and FS 4x4 fit into a 6½-foot truck bed.

The front independent double-wishbone suspension design offers smooth performance, remarkable ground

clearance and 6.7 inches of wheel travel. The swing arm rear-suspension system has class-exclusive twin shock absorbers for agile handling and a plush ride. The electric start comes with a backup recoil starter for emergencies.

With all these great features and benefits, the riding possibilities in Wisconsin on the Suzuki KingQuad are limitless. Both versions of this new KingQuad are available in red and green. 



2010 KingQuad 400AS /400FS

- New for 2010: wrinkle-paint finish on the racks and front bumper for increased durability and scratch resistance
- New for 2010: black wheels
- Two Transmissions: Automatic, KingQuad 400AS, Semi-Automatic, KingQuad 400FS
- High-low selectable sub-transmission helps provide maximum versatility over a variety of terrain in work and play conditions
- Colors: Red, Green
- MSRP: KingQuad 400AS \$5,799
- MSRP: KingQuad 400FS \$5,699
- Available at Suzuki Dealers Summer 2010

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DON KIRBY

The Audacity of Hope

A hunter's perspective

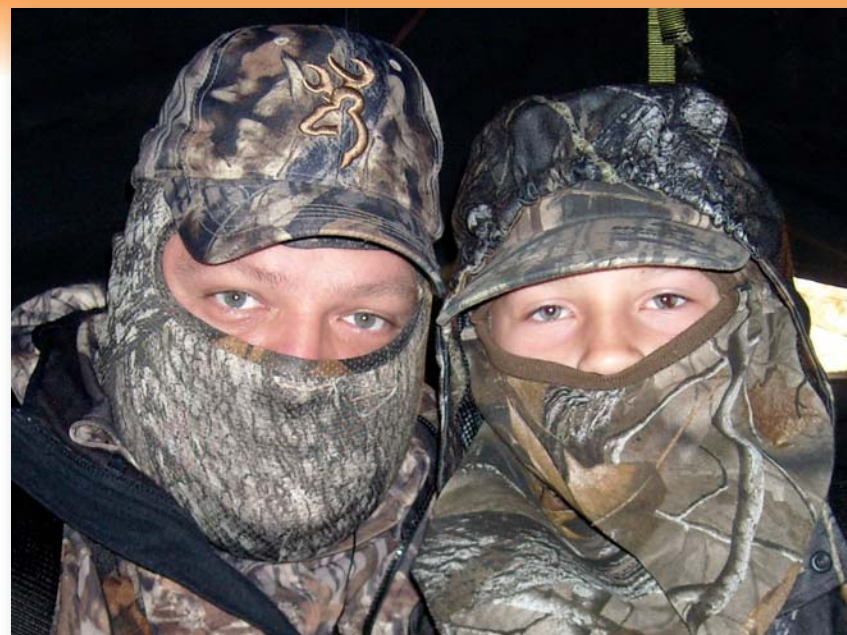
The audacity of hope. This turn of phrase, recently popular among the political set, applies just as well to hunters, particularly those who hunt waterfowl and other migratory game. It implies a boldness, a daring and courageous expectation of something positive yet to come. This is a near perfect explanation of the otherwise inexplicable pattern of behavior exhibited by those who choose the hunter's path.

What else but the belief that "the best is yet to come," would lead a waterfowler to get up at 2 a.m., leaving a warm bed and a bewildered spouse, to head out into the teeth of a cold north-eastern wind in late October? Surely, only a confident person, a true optimist, would elect to slog across the next marsh, sneaking along, nearly to

the top of their waders, to be able to secure the perfect spot, knowing all along the birds will follow, and will find his offering to their liking.

Who among us has not declared, "I'm sure they'll turn, and come around again ...," after watching a flock of ducks not quite ready to commit to our layout of decoys? Or spent an extra moment making sure the family groups of your Canada goose spread looked just right, or as right as they could, when viewed by headlamp, in the pre-dawn darkness? These, too, are signs of our consistent belief that our next attempt will be the one that works, the effort that makes the difference.

It's this mindset, this awareness of the future, that lead waterfowlers to accept, and then embrace, the first



The author and his son, Blake, share a turkey blind.

*"Who among us has not declared,
'I'm sure they'll turn, and come around again ...,'"*

attempt at securing the future—the Federal Migratory Waterfowl Stamp, more than 75 years ago. These early conservationists understood that in order to ensure the future of the birds they loved and the sport they cherished, that an investment must be made in the here and now. Those many years ago, our forefathers demonstrated their "audacity of hope."

In much the same way, we invest in our futures, and in our children's futures, today. You might choose to teach hunter's safety with your

thousands of brothers and sisters in Wisconsin. You might exercise your option on the future more directly by placing and maintaining wood duck houses or other nesting structures on your property, or others you have access to. You might join many more thousands of your brethren and support the efforts of organized groups like WWA, Delta, and DU, with your time, your attention, and your financial commitment.

continued on page 33

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The view from a duck blind of a hunter's sunset over Green Bay.

JERRY KIESOW

Fly Fishing in Wisconsin

Tying your own tackle: poppers

The first fly I ever tied to the end of a leader was a popper, and it's still my favorite fly. Nothing is as much fun as taking crappies, bluegills and bass on poppers cast along a shoreline during a calm summer evening.

My introduction to fly fishing happened on Post Lake, near Elcho. Dad and I caught fish during the day on live bait or casting lures, but after supper the lake would boil with rising fish, and we couldn't catch even one. Finally, after 2 nights of frustration, Dad went to the local store and bought a half-dozen poppers. We took the hooks, sinkers and bobbers off of the cane poles and attached the poppers. That evening, as the lake again boiled, we caught crappies—lots of crappies. That night I became a fly fisherman.

Why poppers?

I love poppers this time of year because, depending on water temperatures, you could be using them now in the south, but will definitely be flipping these little gems by the end of the month, even up north. You can also be using them, under the proper conditions, throughout the summer and into early fall. Therefore, if you learn how to tie them now, you will be getting

your money's worth all year.

Poppers are not difficult to tie, but they do take time. It's not a fly you can tie all at one sitting because it requires drying time for glue and paint. It's best to plan on tying several poppers at one time—at least through the painting process. I usually do at least six, and sometimes as many as 12.

Poppers can be made in a variety of colors, head materials and shapes. There was a time when we took old bottle corks and shaped our own heads, but, eventually, suppliers brought us cork in different sizes and configurations. Today most fly shops stock hard foam popper heads, and some stock them in various colors.

Fishing your popper

Poppers are not made to be fished in the middle of a lake during the middle of the day. Poppers are made for casting to pads, rushes, brush, fallen trees and rocky shorelines in the low light, quiet times of the day—generally early morning and dusk.

As the name suggests, poppers are made to “pop.” But they don't always have to.

continued on page 24



Smallmouths have no problem engulfing a popper cast to the right places.



Poppers can be created to do a multitude of things, depending on their design. Clockwise, from top: Simple, bass size; diving, minnow mimicker; bright-colored, flat-headed; with legs; foam headed.

Tying A Popper

The recipe below is for a standard panfish popper, and you can adapt this to larger sizes for bass.

Hook: No. 6 special “kink-shank” hook. The kinks prevent the head from turning.

Thread: Generally black. Can be any color to match the hackles if you prefer.

Head: Pre-molded, hard foam corresponding to the hook size. Some heads and hooks come packaged together.

Paint: Model enamel.

Tail: Two hackles.

Body (collar): Hackle.

Optional: Legs and eyes.



Fig. 3: When the paint is dry, place the hook in the vice and attach your thread. Select two hackles, place them back to back so they spread apart instead of hugging together. (Spreading gives the illusion of legs “kicking” when retrieved.) Tie them on the top of the hook shank so the tail is equal to the length of the hook or a bit less. (This length is important to avoid short hits; too long of a tail will invite misses.)



Fig. 1: Glue the head to the hook, inserting the hook in the provided slot. Allow to dry. If you are inclined to add rubber legs, do it before you paint.



Fig. 4: Tie in a third hackle in front of the tail and palmer it tightly to the head. Tie off. Whip finish.

Now you have your basic popper.

Depending on the size popper you tie, you might need four hackles for the tail and two hackles for the body for proper bulk to correspond to the head.

Colors: Whatever you want. On our river, all yellow is a favorite. I also like a black head with grizzly hackle. In bass sizes, green works for largemouths; a white head with a brown body/tail works well for smallmouth.

Earlier I mentioned you



Fig. 5: Punch a hole in the middle of the foam.



Fig. 6: Place the hook in the vise and tie on your thread. Push the eye of the hook through the hole, bend the foam back over the top of the hook and determine how long the head will be. Trim the foam to form a wedge. Do the same for the underside.



Fig. 7: Tie both the top and bottom onto the hook shank.

You now have a head. Finish off the fly using the steps in Fig. 3 and 4.

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Iron County will be holding the **25th Annual Memorial Day ATV Rally** on May 27-31. Join thousands of ATV enthusiasts who will be lining up to take back the world record for the longest ATV parade in the Guinness Book of World Records on May 29. Iron County has the largest ATV trail system in Wisconsin and will offer a great weekend of riding all the way from Lake Superior to Mercer and the Turtle Flambeau Flowage. See our calendar of events. [Click on Iron County.](#)

Spring is the perfect time to pick up your paddle and head to the Flambeau River to **canoe and kayak**. An adventure awaits the beginner to novice paddlers looking to experience a day on the water, or with riverside camping, a multi-day trip. Outfitters are available to assist with your rental and shuttle needs. Pack your fishing pole...the river is home to **Walleye, Musky and Smallmouth bass**. [Click on Price County.](#)

With over 400 lakes, it won't take long to find a great fishing spot! Bring your children to the **14th Annual Kids Are First Fishing Contest** in Milltown on June 5. The **60th Annual Fisherman's Party & 100th Anniversary of Milltown Celebration** is June 19-27 and always a fun event! [Click on Polk County.](#)

Hooksetters Fishing reminds you that with temperatures on the rise and reports of several big muskies already being caught by early season walleye anglers, local fishermen are anxiously

anticipating **the arrival of the upcoming musky season**. Get ready as this year looks as though it could be even better than the outstanding season we had last year! [Click on Marathon County.](#)

Visit the **Waterfall Capital of Wisconsin** in Marinette County. With 14 waterfalls mainly located within our county parks system, you can easily spend two or three days exploring the natural, scenic beauty that Mother Nature has provided. [Click on Marinette County.](#)

By boat, land or air? On the Big Pond boats are **running planer boards for Browns**, and Wolf Pack guides are **flipping spinner baits in the streams for Steelhead** in the heart of Sheboygan. Smell the **Sheboygan Brats** in the air along the shore lines and you'll know summer is near! [Click on Sheboygan County.](#)

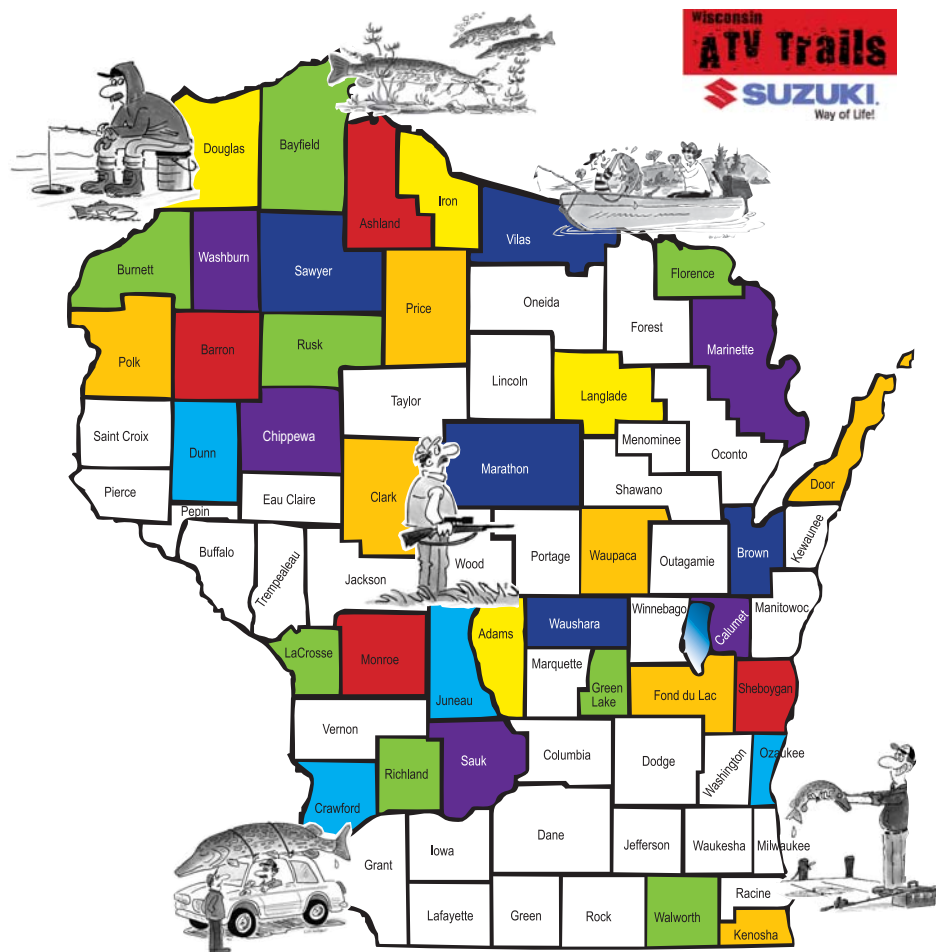
In early summer, some of the best **smallmouth and largemouth bass fishing is available in Walworth County** lakes. You will avoid the busy Summer tourism season. Give Dave Duwe's

Guide Service a call 608-883-2050. [Click on Walworth County.](#)

Join us as we kick off the summer season in Port Washington! Our **community street festival, free outdoor concerts, even a sailboat race** are just some of the free fun to be had along the lake. You may even run into a pirate or two! Check out our calendar of events. [Click on Ozaukee County.](#)

The Bass season and most others fishing seasons open May 1st. Don't miss fishing for **largemouth bass, northern pike, and walleye on one of our 500 lakes**. There is a kids fishing contest on June 6th. **ATV trails open up on May 21st**. See you on the trail! [Click on Burnett County.](#)

Connect with the Waupaca County based hosts who show you the **Ontario fishing and vacation trip of a lifetime**. Come and see why **Manotak Lodge** is where anglers fish in Canada. Call Dave & Linda Becker of New London, WI and Ontario's Manotak Lodge. [Click on Waupaca County.](#)



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Opening on May 1st, Florence County ATV & LUV trails offer over **150 great miles of trail riding**. State designated wild rivers, the Pine and Popple Rivers offer visitors **7 waterfalls** to visit and as well as **remote paddling**. *Click on Florence County.*

Are you looking for hunting land or lake property? Check out the First Weber Central Wisconsin Real Estate Online Magazine. *Click on Waushara County.*

A Vietnam Veterans welcome home event called LZ Lambeau will be held May 21-23 at Lambeau Field in Green Bay. Concerts, reunions and exhibits including **"The Moving Wall™"** and military aircraft. Preview **"Wisconsin Vietnam War Stories"** on Lambeau's jumbo televisions. A **motorcycle rally** from La Crosse, WI to Lambeau Field will kick off the event. All military groups welcome. *Click on Brown County.*

Welcome, Spring! Head to the beautiful Northwoods and experience the Manitowish Waters 10-lake chain, **6th Annual Birding Festival**, 44-mile Manitowish River, Triathlon, **Dillinger Hideout**, Discovery Center programs, and **Camp Jörn YMCA!** While you're here, check out the events & recreation to enjoy this summer! We've Got It All! *Click on Vilas County.*

With over 450 lakes and streams and over 32,000 acres of pristine forest land, Chippewa County offers something for everyone. Whether you are looking to **camp, fish, bike, ATV, or just relax**, your Northwoods Family welcomes you. *Click on Chippewa County.*

Plan your Northwoods getaway to Washburn County! Washburn County boasts over 950 lakes, hundreds of miles of trails from **horseback riding to hiking, from snowmobiling to ATVing, primitive canoe routes** and many more activities for the outdoor enthusiasts. *Click on Washburn County.*

Ashland has been designated 58th out of 200 towns in America for the **best hunting and fishing**. Enter the **Chequamegon Bay Tagged Fishing contest**, May 1- November 1 and win

big cash prizes. *Click on Ashland County.*

Richland County—where golden bluffs crop out of emerald fields; and slow moving streams and lively rivers provide a backdrop for **adrenaline, power, speed and scream**. Check out www.hybridredneck.com. *Click on Richland County.*

Summer is just around the corner and Sheboygan offers something for everyone. The excitement of Lake Michigan's **charter fishing, world-class golf and world-cup sailboat racing**, Sheboygan has it all. Visitors and residents enjoy Sheboygan's natural treasures, exciting events, and world-class restaurants and accommodations. *Click on Sheboygan County.*

Some of the **very best early season fishing in the Midwest** for monster smallmouth bass and enormous bluegills takes place on **Lake Geneva** and **Lake Delavan** in Wisconsin's southeast. Professional Guide and wildlife artist Jim Tostrud will put you on the fish. *Click on Kenosha County.*

Grab your bike and take a ride on one of the **seven mountain biking trails** we offer! You can also enjoy a nice leisurely ride on the City of Antigo's new **Walking/Hiking/Biking path**. Or experience some of the **many other activities** Langlade County offers! *Click on Langlade County.*

May and June smallmouth extravaganza. Fish of a lifetime possible. **Five, six and even seven pounders** await you on riversystems. Contact Capt Jason Gaurkee at 920-851-6655 or visit www.ariverguide.com. *Click on Marinette County.*

Summer is almost here—it's time to plan your vacation to Wisconsin's Vilas County, offering **1,300 lakes, 48 designated trails**, 12 beautiful communities and **endless outdoor fun**. These are your moments—spend them in Vilas County. Plan your Northwoods trip today! *Click on Vilas County.*

Spawning crappies came early in the northland and you can expect **walleye and bluegill action** to warm right up too. The game fishing season opens May 1. Big Chetak Resort will be open and waiting for your family or gang of anglers. Don't fish? Okay then. You'll have to "settle" for our **spring wildflowers, call of the loons, beautiful scenery, deafening quiet**, and so much more. *Click on Sawyer County.*

Be our guest at one of our four fabulous resorts located on the beautiful Lake Chippewa Flowage, a 17,000 acre wilderness lake. Join us this spring for our **26th Annual Treeland Walleye Challenge**, May 7-9, 2010. Thousands of dollars in top prizes & door prizes, 100% catch & release. *Click on Sawyer County.*

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- Green Lake Country Visitors
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- Rusk County

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SAWYER COUNTY

- Hayward Lakes Visitors Bureau
- Treeland Resort
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- City of Sheboygan Tourism
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TOM CARPENTER

Spring Means Trout

Trout fishing's Top 10

Spring and early summer is prime trout time across Wisconsin. Whether you dunk live bait, flip hardware or cast flies, you need to know where stream trout live, hide, hold and feed. So seek out these 10 "trouty" places when you're prospecting Wisconsin streams for browns, rainbows and brookies.

Riffle: When trout are actively feeding—morning or evening, a cloudy day, spring's first warm days—fish riffles. A riffle is a shallow section of fast water, a "soft rapids" of sorts. A riffle is well oxygenated and contains plentiful food in the form of minnows, crustaceans and insects. A trout is in a riffle to feed.

Fish carefully and with a low profile. Work your way upstream, flipping bait or fly ahead and letting the current tumble your offering back toward waiting fish and you. Cast hardware up- and across-current, retrieving and bouncing with the flow like your spinner or mini spoon is a struggling, injured minnow.

Run: A run moves slower than a riffle, the creek is narrower, and the water deeper. Trout in runs are less aggressive than those in riffles.

Do more dabbling and precision fishing with your bait or fly, trying different current seams and exploring positions where trout might hold. Work an artificial along with the current, letting the blades flutter or body flash to attract trout.

Pool: A pool is a deep section of water where the flow progressively slows down after entering at a rapid rate, often from a riffle or run.

Fish a pool from the side—casting

upstream and across, letting the current carry your bait or fly through and swing past you. Work the close water first, then move a little farther out with each drift. Cast a spinner, spoon or minnowbait upstream, then work it back with the current.

Always fish a pool's head—the faster water—thoroughly. This is where the most active trout will be. Don't ignore the tail end either, where the water might be deepest.

Undercut: Trout love the overhead cover an undercut bank provides. Undercuts are also great because what hides the trout from predators also hides your approach.

Position yourself across the stream from an undercut. Cast upstream and let the current sweep your bait or fly in and under the bank. Bounce a little spinner or spoon along with the current, letting it flutter and flash to entice hiding trout.

Rock: Some streams tumble, drop and hurry, always in a rush. A great trout spot in this situation is a big rock or boulder. Whether the water rushes around or slides over the top, the obstruction protects trout from the current, and provides a holding spot where the fish can watch for food.

It's natural to fish behind the boulder. An even better spot might be in front of the boulder, where a pocket of slack water is created before the flow careens off. This is where the most active feeding trout will be.

Eddy: Another fast-water trout hold is an eddy—a backwash created below rapids, behind chutes and to the side of fast flows. Here the current



Although walleyes get hoards of attention during spring and early summer, trout fishing offers big rewards from a little package.

"backs up" instead of flowing downstream. Food accumulates, and trout hold position easily.

Study the water, cast above the backwash and let the current carry your live bait, fly or hardware naturally into the whirlpool.

Snag: Downed trees, logs and woody snags combine overhead cover that trout desire with current that scours out a deep hole and also brings food. You'll lose rigs here, but you'll also find big trout.

Attack stealthily from the side. Cast upstream and let the current carry your bait or fly right where it needs to go. Guide your presentation with your rod tip as needed. With a spinner, spoon or minnowbait, let the current sweep the lure under the snag. Then make a painfully slow retrieve, letting the lure flutter close to the cover.

Roots: Streamside trees offer trout cover in the form of shade and, more importantly, roots that stabilize the bank and help form an undercut. The

best trees are next to fast water, where trout can rest in safety while watching the main current for food.

Fish the water thoroughly. Be sure you're getting your offering down along bottom where the trout are.

Bend: Any place where a stream changes direction is a good place to find trout. Here, holes get scoured out, offering deeper water. Food accumulates, too.

Approach a bend carefully from downstream, and cast upstream. Look for seams of faster current. Fish the water closest to you first, working your way across and upstream with each drift. Active fish are often on the inside of the bend, where an eddy forms, but work the outside too.

Grass: As summer gets on, long grass trails over stream banks and provides excellent overhead cover for trout to hide under.

Hop right in and work every inch of water as you travel stealthily upstream, flipping your bait ahead and fishing under anything and everything that might offer seclusion to a trout.

Conclusion

This spring and summer, hit your favorite trout streams—and explore some new ones—with an organized plan. Armed with these insights into trout fishing's top ten hotspots, and ideas on how to fish them, you're sure to find more success on the water. *W*

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

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TOM CARPENTER

Cub's Corner

Stalking the wild asparagus

Never belittle the little things. It sure didn't feel like a big thing at the time. It would usually happen around this time of year—mid to late May or even early June, depending on how southwestern Wisconsin's spring was progressing—on a sunny and warm day. Dad would show up at home early from work (his job as railroad agent at the Milwaukee Road depot allowed that), and I knew something good was up.

Spawning bluegills again? Maybe another trip to a trout stream? I remember being a little disappointed at the announcement that invariably came a couple times during that magical outdoor time of year that was still spring but almost summer: "Let's go asparagus hunting!"

But any inkling of sadness soon faded. We were together, in the country, cruising backroads in our old blue Impala, looking for the telltale, tree-like stalks indicating where last year's asparagus had grown tall and went to seed. We'd often park, get out and hike a grassy fenceline—up one side and down the other—to expand our range.

I would run ahead when we spied an old stalk from a distance, push back last year's grass, and find our prizes: the tender, emerald-green stalks of new, wild asparagus. Dad would cut them off at the base (so the perennial plant's roots would stay intact) with his hunting knife and carry them in a

mesh potato bag.

As we always quit a bluegill bed before we caught every sunfish there, or exited a rabbit covert with a couple bunnies left to go on our limits, we always left a few new asparagus stalks intact as "seed" for next year's harvest. And to pull asparagus up by the roots was a sin equivalent to shooting too many quail from a covey.

One other ritual needed taking care of though, especially on the roadsides. Dad would carefully cut last year's tall stalks down to hide our "goldmine of green" from other asparagus hunters. Asparagus hunting wasn't a competitive sport, but just like your favorite fishing hole or treestand, you just didn't share your best spots with the general public. Though I never confirmed it, I suspect that in his old rolltop desk Dad kept a logbook of wild asparagus beds in the Green and Lafayette County countryside.

Our asparagus adventures happened almost 40 years ago now, in a simpler time when brushy, grassy fence lines and corners of idle land bordered crop fields, hayfields and pastures. The land wasn't tilled to its limit. In the years since, we have lost many of these wild asparagus strongholds, but there are still many suitable areas out there.

You need a sunny spot, often next to a fencepost, with short-grass surroundings. Roadsides may be your best bet. Look for last year's stalks, and take only what you need for a meal. It's

a great pastime to conduct with your kids—what young boy or girl doesn't like a treasure hunt? They might not eat your prizes, but who knows? Certainly, they'll have fun being with you and going on the stalk for asparagus stalks.

I suspect that the simplicity of the outing was part of the attraction for Dad. No boat to hitch up or worms to cajole me into digging, no other real preparation work to take care of. The only equipment you needed was a vehicle (and gas was cheap), a pair of legs, a knife, and a mesh potato bag. The rest of the experience was taken care of by blue skies, warm sun and fresh air on a breezy day.

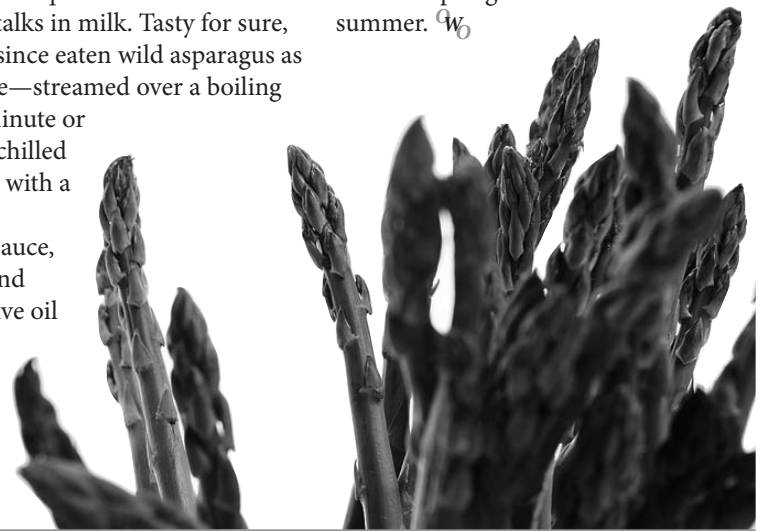
I have only two regrets regarding those asparagus adventures.

One is that we never really enjoyed the true taste of wild asparagus. Mom's cooking technique was to cream the beautiful stalks in milk. Tasty for sure, but I have since eaten wild asparagus as it should be—streamed over a boiling pot for a minute or two, then chilled and served with a delicate béarnaise sauce, or a light and garlicky olive oil dressing made at home.

Unbelievable.

The other regret involves the memories. Like so many other activities that one thinks are routine when they happen, we never took any pictures of our asparagus hunts. They didn't seem special at the time. Now I know better. What I wouldn't give to have a picture now—to see me as I was, and to see Dad young and strong, just out there wandering the countryside with his boy.

But that's okay. Those memories are just as sweet, and probably more permanent where they are: lodged somewhere in a corner of my mind's eye, a part of who I am and who I hope my own boys will be. I can still close my eyes, feel the warm sun on my back, and smell the freshly turned earth as Dad and I stalked the wild asparagus together, somewhere between spring and summer. *W*



ENGBERG WALLEYES, from page 5

find the fish higher up, you should be in for some great action.

As the summer progresses, the baitfish or forage explodes, flooding the system with food. Walleyes will feed heavily now, but finding food is much simpler when compared to earlier in the year. Feeding can come in short time periods which makes finding the "feeding window" much smaller and more difficult. Those reefs, shoreline breaks and points that drop off into deeper water will begin to hold fish and this is where to start concentrating your efforts by early to mid summer.

The areas between two shallow structures or "saddles" can produce great walleye fishing. Deep water structure—such as sunken islands, rock bars and steep drop-offs—are locations where summer walleyes spend time. Use your electronics to try and zoom in on these locations because they should be holding large numbers of walleyes.

The key is the presence of baitfish. Walleyes will stay in an area if there is feed. If not, they'll move until they find food. Many experts think that all walleyes are nomads—here today and gone tomorrow. But, this all depends

on the availability of food.

Dig Deep

Anglers might also to find other areas where walleyes—often big walleyes—are schooled in large groups during the summer. Walleyes will suspend in deep water to chase and gorge themselves on smelt, alewives, ciscoes, tullibee and whitefish.

These locations often have little if any structure, but they have the main component that walleyes are constantly looking for: schools of baitfish. Walleyes can also be caught by trolling

crankbaits and spinners near sunken islands and deep-water reefs during the warm-water period.

You can catch summer walleyes by jigging, rigging, casting and trolling. The method or tactic you use depends on the current conditions on that specific lake. If one method is unproductive, keep experimenting until you find what the walleyes want when you're on the water. *W*

Contact Gary Engberg at 608.795.4208, gengberg@garyengbergoutdoors.com or visit www.garyengbergoutdoors.com for good fishing information.

DAVE DUWE

Thoughts on The Bluegill

Little fish, big memories

Each early summer brings back the memories of fishing with my dad. Our quest each May was the scrappy, hard-fighting and delicious bluegill. The bluegill, which is a member of the sunfish family, can be found in large numbers throughout Wisconsin.

In May and early June, when the lakes reach a temperature of about 70 degrees, bluegills will spawn. During this time of year the bigger bluegills are readily available. These fish, often affectionately known as "bulls," are big and fight like a fish five times its size, which is a real test for light tackle.

The best locations for finding spawning bluegills are hard sandy bottoms with scattered weeds. The depth I work most actively is 1-4 feet. The bluegills will clear the bottom down to the sand in a circle before the female will lay her eggs. This circle in the sand

is called the bed. The female will lay between 40,000-50,000 eggs. Once the eggs are fertilized, the male will guard them from predators.

Fishing in very shallow water makes it quite easy to sight fish the spawning bluegills. I use my Minn-kota bow-mounted trolling motor to slowly cruise the shallows to spot spawning bluegills. The circles the bluegills create in the bottom vegetation are a dead give away to their location.

I make a long cast past the bedding fish and pull the bait back to them, which helps prevent them from being spooked. Long, accurate casts are imperative. My preferred setup is a Thill slip bobber with a single hook or an ice jig. The ice jigs I use are Lindy's Genz worms; I like the fact that they are heavier so I don't need a sinker.

I prefer jigs that are chartreuse or pink. I tip the jig with a wax worm or small red worm. For the plain-hook presentation, I like leaf worms or hellgrammites. Hellgrammites, or stone flies, are probably the best bait; however, their price can be a deterrent.

When using a slip

bobber, I use the smallest bobber possible for the light biting fish. For slip bobber fishing rigs, I use a long pole. It allows a better hook set. A 6-foot, 6-inch pole with ultra-light action, teamed with a Cardinal 300i series reel and 4-pound test Trilene, is just the ticket. It aids with those necessary longer casts.

When sight fishing the shallows, fish can be quite easy to catch and limits can be bagged in a very short time. Due to the fact that the fish are spawning, I seldom keep more than a few. These spawning fish are the future of our lakes so we want to keep them producing for

years to come.

This time of year is a great opportunity to take a child fishing. Now, I'm the dad and someday, when the weather starts to warm, my kids will think back to those happy memories of fishing for bluegills. *W*

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



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FLY FISHING, from page 19

I cast to structure, allowing the little rings created when the fly lands to dissipate, and then shake the rod tip a bit to make the fly wiggle, like a struggling critter. Sit ... wiggle ... sit. Then I bring the fly back with a series of quick pulls making the lure pop.

If this doesn't work after many casts, I simply cast and leave the fly sit—motionless—for a minute or two. Sometimes that's what a fish wants. Sometimes they just don't want their meal to move, but not most of the time a fish prefers some action.

Once my dad and I got the hang of

"casting" with the cane poles (we just flung them out as best we could to get the little poppers away from the boat), we caught crappies. We liked our new found way of fishing so much that, later that year, we each got a real, honest-to-goodness fly rod from Santa, and life became good.

Keep a good thought! *W*

Jerry Kiesow 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.

KEVIN MICHALOWSKI

Dog Talk

Hot dogs: Working in the heat requires caution

Every year I get the same questions. And every year I try to issue the same reminders, but still dog owners seem to make the same mistakes concerning dog training in the warm weather. Heat is a killer for dogs for two main reasons.

First: Dogs can't reason—they do what we tell them to do. Second: Dogs can't sweat and that's what kills them.

Let's look at the sweating aspect first. The only way dogs can rid their bodies of excess heat is to pant. The panting expels warm air, but also carries a lot of moisture with it. Heavy panting is a sign that you should stop your dog's activity, be it playing or training, and give the animal some water. Not only is the dog hot, but it might be suffering the early effects of dehydration.

Now let's talk about the dog not reasoning. Remember, you are doing the thinking; the dog is just reacting to your commands. Training or exercising in the summer heat is a dangerous situation that can lead to serious problems.

Avoid training from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. when the sun is most intense. Despite the issues with bugs, the best times for training are the first 2 hours of daylight in the morning and last 2 hours in the evening. Even then, keep a close eye on your dog. Even if you feel comfortable, nothing says a dog can't get heat stroke when facing high humidity and elevated activity levels.

A lot of factors come into play, and dog owners need to know the signs and take action quickly. Serious symptoms of heat stroke that must be treated immediately include: confusion, diarrhea, excessive panting, seizures, staggering or vomiting.

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

Most dog owners don't think about

how hot it gets running a dog through deep grass. The shade of a tree can cool surrounding air by as much as 20 degrees, but tall grass has just the opposite effects on a dog. There are no cool breezes deep down in the grass and there is very little shade from the overhead sun. If you plan to work your dog in tall grass, the morning is the best time. You'll have to contend with some dew, but you won't end up with a dog suffering from heat stroke.

If You Must

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

Living arrangements in the heat should also be reviewed with an eye toward avoiding heat stroke. Fresh water should be available to dogs at all times, especially those dogs kept in an outdoor kennel. Provide fresh, clean water at least twice a day. Dogs also need shade, which can come from a simple tarp to a fully shingled kennel roof. Even an insulated doghouse will work.

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

Losing a pet is a tragedy, but losing one to something preventable such as heat stroke is something no one should have to go through. ☾

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 Kevin Michalowski at askdogtalk@hotmail.com.



Summertime produces many heat-related threats to a dog's health. Offer plenty of water and give your dog ample time to rest.

REAL MEN BLEED



Danny Flood, OWO Archery Advisor

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**Can You
Spare
A Drop?**



TOM CARPENTER

Badger Birds

Northern flicker

A flicker presents a handsome sight as it hunts for insects on a lawn, meadow, field or other open area next to trees or forest. This ground-feeding habit is unique among Wisconsin's woodpeckers, letting the flicker exploit its own unique and attractive niche without competition from related species. The key is the bird's long, curved bill ... and a tongue 3 inches longer yet! These tools help the

flicker probe for ants, beetles, insect larvae, crickets and other bugs.

Listen for the distinctive wicka-wick-wick-wicka call, very urgent-sounding and quite boisterous. In spring, males hammer on wood, power poles and even tin.

Look for a rather large (about 12 inches) bird with brown, barred back and a spotted tan or creamy belly.

Attract flickers with a nest box featuring a 2½-inch diameter entrance hole 15 inches off the box's floor. If safe, leave up old dead trees for nesting holes, too.

Feed flickers peanut butter, suet, apple chunks or raisins. *W*

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



Did you know that an eastern flicker sports yellowish underwings and red nape on

the neck? Western birds have salmon-colored underwings and a plain nape. Eastern males have a black "mustache" behind their bill, western males a red one. In Wisconsin, we see mostly the eastern version. The varieties hybridize where they meet in the Great Plains.

TOSTRUD TURKEY, from page 16

and follow me—and then it went into full strut. This stopped me in my tracks. I'd finally found just what I was looking for.

The company is Timothy Creek Decoys, and the decoy is the Spin-N-Strut. Jeff Wartgow is the innovator and he introduced me to his partners, Ken Davis and Scott Conrad. We hit it off like old friends; it was a start to a great relationship and I could hardly wait to get in the woods and try the decoy.

Even a veteran turkey hunter has those toms that hang up just out of range. This really drives me crazy, and I was hoping the Spin-N-Strut would help in this situation.

Decoy To The Rescue

The season was upon us, my gear was ready and I was fired up. It was game time, and the Spin-N-Strut was going to see some time on the field.

The decoy was like having a new quarterback on the team, and I was looking for a winning season. We made a few mistakes getting to know each other, but a winning season we

had! Everyone got their birds—six hunters in all—and everyone had a great time watching the decoy at work. Plus, we filmed some of the best turkey hunting action we'd ever captured on film. I was hooked.

The following winter I worked along with my new-found friends from Timothy Creek Decoys and proudly produced the first turkey hunting video featuring the Spin-N-Strut, titled "Turkey Tales."

This past season I was involved in 10 hunts, and we went 9 for 10, again capturing all the action on film. It's fun to see how different birds react to my set up and the decoy.

This decoy isn't a magic guarantee, but when worked correctly, it's deadly on dominant long beards. *W*

Wildlife artist Jim Tostrud of Kenosha has dedicated his life to his love for the outdoors. He uses his art to share his admiration for the outdoors and its inhabitants with others. Check out JT's website at www.wildlifevisions.net.



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LEE GATZKE

Blood Brothers Outdoors

Deer and turkey multi-tasking



For the deer-crazed author, there's much more to do while turkey hunting than just hunting turkeys.

I'd drawn the first week in May for my turkey tag. The landscape was turning green as I looked over my choice of camo clothes to select something to match.

Rummaging through my hunting closet I pulled out stuff I'd need while chasing turkeys, and it seemed strange to leave my portable treestand behind. The treestand was a fixture of the gear I carried with me from September to January last bow season while deer hunting. It felt weird to be wearing the camo without that stand on my back.

It was time to get into a turkey hunting mindset of runnin' and gunnin' gobblers. Bow season for deer was 4

months away; surely I could put that out of my mind to concentrate on bagging gobblers for now.

I finished gathering up the remainder of my turkey hunting gear to be ready to go for opening day. Shortly after sundown I slipped out to locate a gobbler on the roost, and got multiple responses to my owl call.

Opening morning found me setup within 125 yards of the gobblers I roosted 9 hours before. I made a little hen talk in the pre-dawn darkness and got gobbled at by three different toms. Oh boy, game on!

The toms kept talking without me having to call, so I kept quiet and waited

for daylight, expecting them to fly down into my lap. About 20 minutes after first light the toms all flew down into my neighbors field and taunted me by gobbling every couple minutes. My calling to them was ignored and after a while they walked further away in the direction of a real hen.

I didn't have permission to hunt where the birds were headed, and my neighbor, Ed, would soon be at work. I backed out of my position and drove to where Ed works to ask him if I could go after the toms on his place.

After catching up with Ed I told him the situation and asked if I could go after them on his property. He laughed and said, "Sure, go get 'em. But why come all this way to ask? You don't think I'd ask you permission if I saw a big buck on your place and you weren't around, do you?"

I tried not to look shocked by his statement—after all, he'd just given me the OK to turkey hunt his land. I bit my tongue and managed to thank him. Ed and I definitely needed to talk later.

For Bucks Or Birds?

It was back to the chase at Ed's place and I was trying to close the distance on the toms that were now in the woods, gobbling occasionally. Cautiously advancing, I carefully examined the woods ahead of me for a red, white or blue gobbler head. I didn't see any gobblers, but I got distracted by a buck rub high on the trunk of a 10-inch diameter white pine.

A short distance along my path, another half-dozen rubs appear on similar sized pines, and I had forgotten about turkeys. Continuing on I discovered large buck tracks, scrapes

and more rubs; it was all too much for me to ignore.

Out of habit, I began looking for spots where I would've set up a tree stand, but didn't notice any sign of Ed having done so. Because this was hilly country, I suspected the buck would be bedding higher in elevation, so I started climbing uphill to see if I could locate his bedding area.

Half way up the hill a gobble rang out—not far away—and it reminded me of why I was in those woods.

I quickly sat down at the base of a large ash tree, I made some hen talk on my box call and set it down. Resting my shotgun on my knees, I waited for a tom to show himself. After 15 minutes, I called again but got no gobbler to answer. I remained still and pondered the recent events: Big buck sign found and turkeys still active had me thoroughly enjoying my morning hunt.

I decided to wait another 15 minutes before moving on. Sitting there I thought about how turkey hunting and deer scouting is the only multi-tasking I've ever been able to do. The combination has revealed some good deer hunting spots for me in the past; it's no wonder why the more I turkey hunt the more I like it.

Suddenly one thing became very clear, Ed and I would definitely have to have a talk. As I pondered how the talk might unfold, a blue head appeared from behind a deadfall, and a minute later I was wrapping my tag around that gobbler's leg. *W*

Lee Gatzke is a member of Blood Brothers Outdoors, creator of practical and tactical deer hunting videos. Gatzke can be reached at www.bloodbro.com.

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The author's son, Devin, holds a respectable bass caught out of a small, "low-tech" 14-foot aluminum boat used to fish small Wisconsin lakes.

TERRY BITZ

Outdoor Convergence

The cost of happiness

of months last year that these issues of equipment costs have occupied my thoughts. Though I've always been relatively frugal when it comes to my equipment purchases, the focus of what I really need to spend had become even sharper in the light of the current economy and how it impacted my own life. Will I catch that many more fish if I spend \$5,000 versus \$500 on a fish finder? Will I shoot bigger bucks if I buy that \$1,000 rifle scope? Probably not.

I have no intention of picking on the producers of outdoor sporting goods. The market is extremely competitive and more expensive products often bring higher profit margins along with their advanced features. The manufacturers were also just following the trend that had been gaining steam for the past 20 years in the outdoor marketplace; people were willing to shell out big bucks for new or high-tech equipment.

Probably the best example of this trend was seen in the boating industry. It was not long ago that an 18-foot boat with a 150 hp outboard motor was considered big. Nowadays, a boat is not considered big unless it is more than 20 feet long and carries a 250-300 hp motor. Such a craft doesn't come cheap with prices often surpassing the cost of the trucks towing them.

Considering that hunting and fishing now are basically recreational activities, expenditures on such pricey

*"Maybe it's time we learn
how to get the most
out of the equipment
we already own."*

items have taken a hit in this economy. It's hard to justify plopping down \$200 on a new spinning reel when one costing a third as much will get the job done, albeit with a bit less refinement and maybe some reduced quality. Boat sales have certainly hit the skids with the industry reeling from the impacts of buyers unable or unwilling to purchase watercraft that were flying out of showrooms just a couple years ago.

In the face of all of this economic mayhem, people are likely re-evaluating what equipment they really need in order to partake in the outdoors; maybe that's not such a bad thing.

I think many of us, me included, looked too much toward new and better equipment as a substitution for increased knowledge and better skills. Instead of learning more about seasonal movements of fish and animals, we've spent our time trying to figure out all the features on the newest gadget or wandered store aisles searching for a magic fishing lure or deer scent that

would bring us instant success.

In the same regards, sometimes we spend so much time staring at fish finders and GPS units that we miss the natural scenery around a lake or fail to see wildlife as we walk "dazed and blind" through the woods.

Maybe it's time we learn how to get the most out of the equipment we already own. Many of us have boxes filled with fishing lures we rarely use, all replaced by newer models that we honestly thought would bring with it fishing nirvana.

Again, I have no intentions of turning this into a rant against sporting good manufacturers. They produce products that help me enjoy my time in the outdoors, and I can honestly say some of those products have meant the difference between having a productive versus unproductive outing.

However, a well known fishing writer, who is sponsored by some large outdoor firms, once told me that sporting goods are just tools. I think we need to make sure the costs of these "tools" do not get in the way of our outdoor pursuits.

That is unless someone really does invent the magic fishing lure—then go ahead and buy it. *W*

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

I was recently scanning an outdoor catalog looking at some of the newest equipment available for purchase. In several instances, I was stunned at the cost of some of the products being offered.

Maybe it's because I'd found myself amongst the unemployed for a number

SURPLUS FIREARMS, from page 7

the SAR2 in 2003 (and I did), you would have "known" that it was as accurate as an AR15 and a lot cheaper.

Oh sure, some of them had canted front sights, gas blocks and trigger slap, but they were in the minority and, best of all, they shot 2-inch groups or less at 100 yards with inexpensive Commie Bloc ammunition. Why should I spend \$900 on a common-as-mud AR when I can demonstrate my exclusivity, good taste and marksmanship with an SAR2? So, I bought one after closely examining it for front site cant and hoping it didn't

have excessive trigger slap.

Turns out it had both, and it didn't shoot too hot, either. I've actually fired a few sub-3-inch groups after installing a Russian sniper scope on it. Once the barrel warms up after 10 shots or so, it starts patterning rounds at 100 yards as opposed to grouping them. Despite its inherent inaccuracy, it always fires, which is more than I can say about some ARs I've been acquainted with.

Despite the fact that it rarely actually shoots anything remotely resembling a group, my SAR2 will place

all of its rounds on a standard small-bore target at 100 yards. Some guns might shoot minute-of-angle groups at 100 yards; my SAR2 shoots "minute of watermelon" at the same distance. But, by golly, it will shoot without fail all day long, unlike most hunting rifles.

If I had known my SAR2 had canted sites, trigger slap and shot amazingly large groups, I never would have bought it. After expending some money on a new trigger group, fixing the front sight cant, and adding a folding stock, muzzle brake and super "zoomy"

Russian Kobra red-dot sight, I shoot it more than any other gun I own, which is saying something because I don't even know how many guns I own!

Yes, when it comes to firearms ownership, ignorance can be bliss. Just as importantly, mistakes can be traded and other guns bought until true joy and happiness is found. *W*

S. Wilkerson is an award-winning Wisconsin journalist, firearms expert and student of the Second Amendment. Email cheapshots@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.

LENSING TURKEY, from page 9

Then Dad really started on his call. As he called, we could hear the turkey moving closer. He called again and then ... nothing. The turkey had left, but it was sure exhilarating.

The same thing happened a couple more times before things took off. Day grew more and more prominent as it got brighter out. From the left side, by the big cornfield, we saw some jakes curving to the right, heading right for us. My dad took out his binoculars and looked through the mesh. Slowly but surely they were hidden from view behind a hill.

Then all of a sudden, three silvery bluish-red heads popped up in front of me coming up from one of the smaller cornfields, their necks jutting back and forth in a kind of rhythm.

"Shhh," Dad whispered, "Get your gun up and ready."

I did what he said, and then kneeled on the ground, ready to shoot.

Their heads came up higher and higher and Dad pointed out which one to shoot. I saw him, a tall long-necked turkey. It was still raining and I carefully focused my sight on his head.

The two parts of the sight aligned and I clicked the safety off. I slipped my pointer finger onto the trigger, took one last check for aim and pulled it back.

I saw the bird fall and was excited to run out and get the turkey. Dad reminded me to unload the gun and put the safety on. Then Dad grabbed his crutches and hurried out toward my turkey as fast as he could.

I followed him and saw the turkey

flopping around and I was excited and really proud of myself. The turkey soon fell silent and in the chaos of it all we remembered to call John for a ride, and then my mom to tell her the good news.

It was still raining slightly, just enough to make the turkey's feathers wet and sticky. I leaned my gun against a sturdy tree and then we started to pick up. I removed everything from the tent and then we folded up the blind.

Soon we heard the sound of the ATV's motor coming up the bluff, and then saw it round the last curve. John quickly stopped the motor and jumped out to congratulate me.

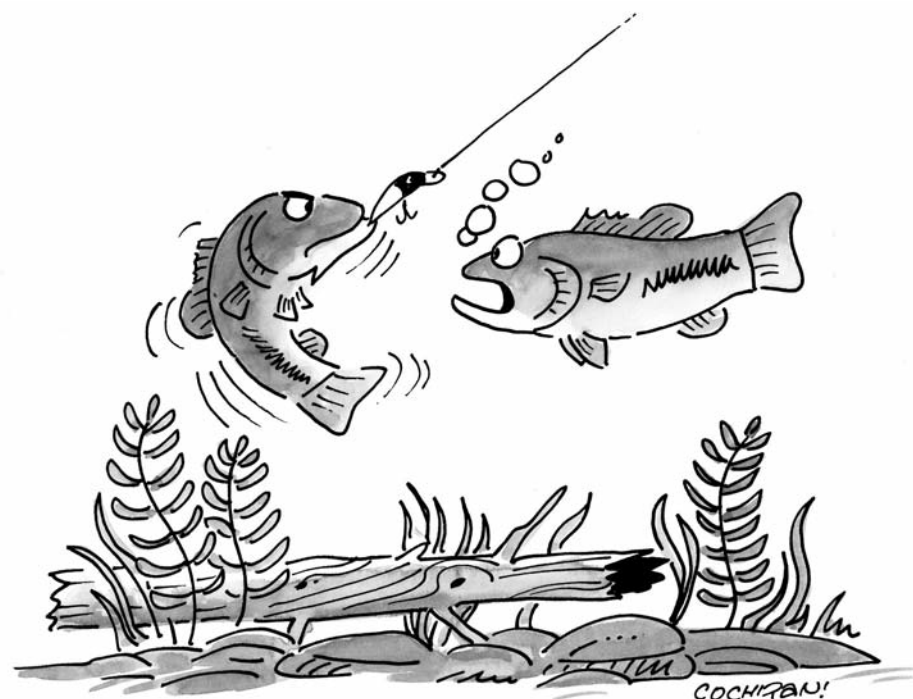
We packed up our stuff, threw it in the ATV and away we went down the bluff. I kept looking behind us just making sure my turkey was still there.

When we arrived on the bottom, the owners of the property came out to congratulate me, too. We talked a bit and then Dad, John and I headed home to clean the turkey.

When we got home, my mom and sister wanted to see the turkey. We took a few more pictures and then walked up to the cleaning house.

I will remember this day forever. Like the quote on the duck band from Dad's 2008 duck guiding season: It's all about the experience. Even though I didn't shoot a turkey youth or fourth season, I still had a great time and can't wait for next season. *W*

Editor's Note: Maddy Lensing is the daughter and hunting partner of regular OWO contributor Todd Lensing.



"DON'T LET HIM HORSE YOU IN ... GET DOWN BEHIND THIS LOG...
WRAP HIS LINE AROUND A ROCK!...."



Maya of Rockland, Wisconsin, caught this 18-inch large mouth bass on the Black River in La Crosse last summer 2009.

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TOM LUBA

A Handful of Aces

Worms aplenty

If I tell you that I had Shakey, Wacky, Texas and Jig over at my place recently, you'd probably think we were just settling in for an all-night Poker marathon. Cowboy hats, visors, sunglasses, Harley shirts and maybe a .44 Rem. Mag. or two—just to make it interesting.

While each of the aforementioned can be an ace in the right time and place, when all of them get together, it's not to hurt anybody's wallet. Now, hurting the bass population of your favorite lake, well, that's another story.

In the world of bass fishing, the plastic worm was once the premier bait for fishing success. And while a lot of the flashy, expensive hard baits—some that probably look more like certain baitfish than the real deal—have taken center stage in today's bass fishing lure marketplace, I'll still put my money on the plastic worm to more than hold it's own, day in and day out.

As long as you have the following techniques in your bag of tricks, odds are good you'll always put some fish in the boat.



Four worm rigs every bass fisherman should have in their tackle box (from left): Texas rig, shakey head worm, jig worm and wacky worm.

Shakey Head Worm

Shakey head worms start with a jig head, which has a device or hook to anchor the worm to the head, much like the barb on a grub head for holding the grub from slipping. Then, the hook is buried in the worm like a Texas Rig to make it weedless.

The head usually has an eye coming out of it at about a 45 degree angle and the eye is flat. The flat eye helps the head shake when you tap it. The head sits so the worm tail points up rather than laying down flat on the bottom—this makes it easier for the bass to see it. Once the bait hits bottom, just lightly shake the rod tip so the worm quivers and acts like it's alive. If no takers, move the bait a little and repeat the process.

Shakey heads are good post-spawn baits because they can be fished slower around the spawning areas. Post-spawn bass might move around the areas they spawned in before moving back to the drop-offs and summer locations.

The shakey head allows you to cover the area very thorough. This bait is not just limited to post spawn, however. Use it in any season, especially after fronts in the summer when the fish might not move.

Wacky Worm

Rigging a worm wacky style means hooking it once through the middle of the worm, so that equal length halves bend back in a "U" or "V" shape as the worm is worked through the water.

Use a standard worm hook for an un-weighted bait and jig it along as it slowly sinks. Or, if you want to get deeper on a break-line or drop-off, a weighted jig head can be used to provide the extra weight.

What this does is create another look for the fish and a different vibration. So, if the fish are not reacting to a standard worm or plastic stickbait, this might be exactly what the doctor ordered.

Wacky rigging is generally a slower retrieve and, again, it works well when you are fishing a smaller area for fish that are cruising. Again,



A jig worm works great for weedline bass. When largemouth and smallmouth both exist in a body of water, if weeds are the main cover, you'll often find the bass species mixed together.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

"... I'll still put my money on the plastic worm to more than hold it's own, day in and day out."

this is a retrieve that can be used at different times during the year when you want to give the fish a different look.

Texas Rig

The old faithful: Run the hook into the worm head about ½-inch from the end. Thread the hook through, then reverse it and bury the barb back into the plastic worm.

Set up with a slip sinker that snugs up the hook on your line. Based on conditions, you can peg the sinker close to the hook, or let it slide free and crawl it across bottom and through weeds.


Since it's weed free, it can be worked and crawled into the weed cover and slid through to tempt the bass hiding there.

Jig Rig

The jig worm, a plastic worm on a simple mushroom head jig, where the worm head is snuggled up to the lead-head is a great weed-edge bait and works best along deeper weed lines.

Rig the worm just like you

would a grub, so the hook remains exposed. Crawl, snap, pop and hop it along. When the bass are active, this setup is deadly. It's usually the simplest to use since the hook is exposed and the hook set doesn't need to be quite as powerful during light bites.

Trying to figure out where the fish are and what the preference is can change daily. Having the versatility of these options as part of your tactics provides just a few more options. Give them a try this year and I'm betting you'll end up with a winning hand. 

Tom Luba is from New London, Wisconsin.



On Wisconsin Outdoors Board of Directors



Rex Rodsalotta

*Dear Rex Rodsalotta,
Did you know that the DNR is fastened sonar transmitters
to spawning sturgeon in April below the Shawano dam to
monitor their travels?*

—Bill Rasmussen, Oshkosh

Dear Bill,
Yes, and it's already paid off with some surprising data.
Sturgeon number 11742, for example, headed back to Lake
Winnebago as expected, but then caught a cab south, a Brewer
game and after a few beers, scattered a school of late spawning
crappie on Geneva. "That was total surprise," said a perplexed
DNR Fisheries Biologist Ron Bruch. "He had a few too many
in Milwaukee, yes, but that's no excuse, and now were afraid
to see what the the young-of year crappie class on Geneva
looks like."

—Rex



Conibear Smith

*Dear Hunter Daily,
I was one of 4,360 people who attended the 2010
Spring Hearings held in every county of
Wisconsin so sportsmen and women can provide
their input on proposed fish and wildlife rule
changes. Pretty impressive huh?*

—Jerry Richard, Brule

Real impressive Jerry,
But the other numbers are even more so. 1,296,034
Wisconsin sportsmen stayed home but promised to
complain about those rule changes in 2011.

—Conibear Smith



Hunter Daily

*Dear Conibear Smith
You know, if the OWO Board of Directors
keeps ripping the Left, you run the risk of
losing advertisers and readers like me....an
old UW-Madison hippie who believes in
share and share alike.*

—Lovey Brainsburnt

Dear Lovey,
Lovey?
B.O. Healthcare stinks. And so does his
House and Senate. Remember in November.
Repeat in 2012. Repeal.

Love,
Conibear Smith

**On Wisconsin
Outdoors**
With the Dick Ellis Experts

Share the Outdoors

Next time you pick up a copy of On
Wisconsin Outdoors for yourself, grab a
couple extras for colleagues, family and
friends. And don't forget to see us online
between issues at ...

onwisconsinoutdoors.com

We have a
Winner

Congratulations to **William Bromwell
of New London**, the winner of our
Mar/April Explore Wisconsin contest. Jim
won a \$100 cash!

Our thank you to all of the "Loyal
Readers" who entered the contest!

JOEL "DOC" KUNZ

On Wisconsin Rivers

Lake Poygan: Nursery to the Winnebago System



The author poses with a white bass, one of the many fish species available in the Winnebago System.

Averaging at between 6-7 feet deep, with a maximum depth of about 11 feet, the sprawling 14,102-acre expansion of the Wolf River we know as Lake Poygan is truly a nursery to the Winnebago system. Here, large schools of walleyes roam open water, weeds, rock piles and river channels in search of food. And, because of the make-up of the large but shallow lake, there's plenty of it for them to find.

Because of the number of creeks and wetlands that feed Lake Poygan, the fertile lake provides an abundant source of nutrient rich, oxygenated water. The shallow back bays and weedy areas are prime for the proliferation of the small zoo plankton fish need to grow. This abundant food source also provides forage for the vast minnow population which uses the shallow areas to spawn.

The vast wind-swept waters provide a variety of structure, too, such as the "cane beds," a well-known areas of emergent plant growth. The cane beds are made up of a variety of plants, including water celery or eelgrass (*Vallisneria Americana*), and the emergent canes or common reed (*Phragmites Australis*). These areas provide shelter for bait fish and a feeding area for walleyes. Walleyes also feed on the many small rock piles, near creek mouths, river channel and the well known "Horseshoe Hole," deepest area on the lake. The Horseshoe Hole

Named due to its shape, Horseshoe Hole is a common area for trollers who pull crankbaits spread

out with the use of planer boards. Trollers also pull crawler harnesses with large Colorado blades to catch walleyes that use the lake post-spawn.

But trolling is far from the only way to catch walleyes out on Lake Poygan, and Horseshoe Hole far from the only hot spot. The lake has many contours, rock piles and places that hold fish all spring. There are also tried-and-true ways to catch walleyes on Lake Poygan developed long before trolling techniques, boats and equipment became so popular.

Simple methods such as drifting with slip bobbers or drifting and casting will catch fish. Old-time anglers also used to drift with cane poles and Beetle Spins tipped with a leech to catch walleyes. The wave-induced rocking of the boat provides a great action to the small baits which can produce a great day of fishing. I'll be using the new Atomic Guppy and small spinner rigs tipped with leeches to do the same. For casting, small suspending baits or Little Cleo's, which can be cast a long way, will catch fish.

Making A Game Plan

Walleyes use the lake post-spawn due to the availability of food, so finding the food is the key to catching fish. Paying attention to what the wind has been doing can help you make a game plan. Wind will push the food throughout the lake and congregate schools of walleyes where they can take advantage of it.

I like the subtle depth changes and contours on the west end of the lake, with light west or south wind. With a stronger west wind, horseshoe hole and areas to the east might hold better numbers.

Wind also makes the cane beds a hot spot where pitching small jigs tipped with a crawler or leech at the edges will catch fish. You can also let the wind push live bait suspended below a slip bobber toward the edge or pockets in the weeds. The fish are there because the wind stirs up the weeds, making the hiding food more accessible. The up-wind side is usually best, but strong winds can make the down-wind side the hot spot. Tournaments have been won fishing in this manner.

Getting On The Water

Lake Poygan can be accessed from anywhere on the Winnebago system, with Winneconne the hub of springtime Lake Poygan activity. Here there is plenty of lodging, cabins, access points, bait shops and qualified information on fishing the lower lakes of the Wolf River system.

Anglers can expect excellent fishing for walleyes along with white bass, northern pike, catfish, smallmouth and largemouth bass, crappies, perch, bluegills and even trophy-class muskies. All of these species are active during this time of year. Make sure to check your regulations booklet for size, length and

bag limits on all these fish.

With multiple access points within an easy drive, boat owners vacationing in Winneconne can pick where on the system they want to fish. On windy days a short drive to Kiesow's Landing on the Rat River can make the lower end of the Wolf the place to be. A jig and crawler, minnow or leech worked in the deep holes will catch walleyes, catfish and white bass.

To the east a short drive down highway GG is Lake Winnebago, and the west end of Lake Poygan can be accessed from Captains Cove or the boat ramp in Tustin. Or put the boat in and get anywhere on the Wolf River and Winnebago system right from your temporary home port in Winneconne. There are plenty of gas stops and places to see, visit and fish from New London to Oshkosh, and then on to the big lake itself. Fremont is just a short ride as are numerous water front restaurants and docking options in either direction, up stream or down.

Often over looked as a world class fishery, look to Lake Poygan this year for some great fishing. If you are new to the area, you'll find guides who can show you repeatable ways to catch fish. There's also boat rental and plenty of good fishing information if you want to tackle the fishery on your own.

If it's walleye you are after, you can always visit for local fishing information. Plan a close to home vacation this year in Fremont, Winneconne, New London or anywhere in Wolf River Country and take advantage of what the area has to offer. Lake Poygan is just one of the many jewels. *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 www.wolfrivercountry.com.

Explore Wisconsin

County-by-county:



Online at
www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com

HOPE, from page 18

All these efforts make the same statement about you as a sportsperson: You are more than simply a participant in an activity. You are not a person who goes hunting. You are a hunter. You have been overtaken by the totality of the process. You strive not only to take, but also to give, to enhance, to teach.

For each person, this epiphany may occur at a different time. I've had the good fortune to come to this realization as a fairly young man. While it may have reduced my overall bag, it certainly enhanced my enjoyment of my time afield, as well as helping to connect the rest of my life, and my work, to my pursuit of my sporting passions. At this time of year, when we as waterfowlers can only dream of the start of the September goose season, or re-string decoys in preparation for their work in November, I challenge you to apply your audacity of hope: make a difference in our habitat, lend a helping hand with a fundraising effort, find a youth to mentor. Each of us can make a difference, if only we have the courage to believe in a better future. *W*

Don Kirby is Executive Director for the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association. He joined the group after 16 years as a Store Manager with Gander Mtn. in Wisconsin. Prior to his time with WWA, he did extensive outdoor media work on radio and TV. He has an MBA from UW-Milwaukee, and lives near Green Bay with his wife Kathy and their children. Don has been an avid waterfowler for nearly 30 years.

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JJ REICH

Product 6-Pack

Great gear for the woods, fields and waterways

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

BUSHNELL TROPHY CAM

For \$240, This compact game camera boast a compact size, long battery life, high-quality photos or video, and a large photo storage space: A 16GB SD memory card can store more than 10,000 images when the camera is set on 3 megapixels. And under normal use, this new camera will continue to take photos for up to 1 year on the same set of Lithium AA batteries.



Realtree AP camo. With 360 days of power and the capability to store

Three models are available: a standard model, a model with a built-in color viewer and the new Bone Collector model in

10,000 images, my Trophy Cam is always setup in the most remote, hard-to-check areas of my hunting land.

Bushnell.com

GAMEHIDE STORMHIDE TYPHOON OUTERWEAR

For \$149-\$159, this high-quality rain suit is made of Gamehide's highly-breathable HydroCore laminate with sealed seams. The Parka features waterproof zippers, neoprene inner cuffs, D-ring attachments for outdoor gadgets, 11 pockets and more. The Bibs have a reinforced seat, non-slip fabric on the knees and a full-length zipper.

StormHide gear fits and feels great. I've worn my set for two full



seasons now and I'll testify that this stuff will keep you warm and dry. This good-looking Parka and Bibs combo can even make a fishing hack like OWO's Rex Rodsalotta look like a pro!

GameHide.com

SCHRADE SPECIAL OPS KNIFE

For \$40, Schrade's assisted opening Special Ops knife (model SCHAS1) features a 3-inch partly serrated, stainless-steel, clip-point blade with both an assisted-opening mechanism and a thumb-open ramp on top of the blade.

The Special Ops knife is very lightweight, balanced, solid and durable. The handle has a stainless-steel lock liner with black Zytel grips and a pocket clip. But, the blade's trigger lever is quite impressive: With just a flick of the switch it opens fast. It's perfect for both hunting and self-defense.

TaylorBrandsLLC.com



STAG ALL-TERRAIN SEAT

For \$108, this heavy-duty, lightweight seat has four fully-adjustable legs to provide level seating on various terrains at multiple seat heights. Each leg adjusts independently, plus they detach to stow inside the seat. Additionally, its backrest folds down and its padded seating surface swivels 360 degrees.



Need a good, lightweight, portable seat for your ground blind? If so, learn more about this one. The foldable design makes it easy to transport, and the backrest is very comfortable. But the best feature is the individually adjustable legs that work great on hills or uneven ground.

QuakeInc.com

BERKLEY TRILENE TRANSOPTIC LINE

For \$8.95-\$10.95, Berkley Trilene TransOptic line is the first nylon monofilament that changes color depending on the presence or absence of UV light. Below the water's surface,



the line is clear and nearly invisible to fish. Above the surface, the line turns a vivid gold—enabling you to keep your jig tight to the

bottom, for a better feel and more effective hook sets. It's also durable, sensitive and easy-handling.

Wait a minute, let's get this straight: This line reflects light and glare off the water, so you can see the line better when vertical jigging for walleyes, but when the line is dunked in the water, it changes color and becomes invisible to fish? Yes, that's correct. Cool!

Berkley-Fishing.com

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Just a short note to tell you that bar none, the Lake WeedRazer works absolutely phenomenal. I have used every conceivable gimmick on the market for cutting weeds and this one works the best as advertised. -J. Murphy

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

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