

May/June 2011
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On Wisconsin *Outdoors*

with the
Dick Ellis Experts

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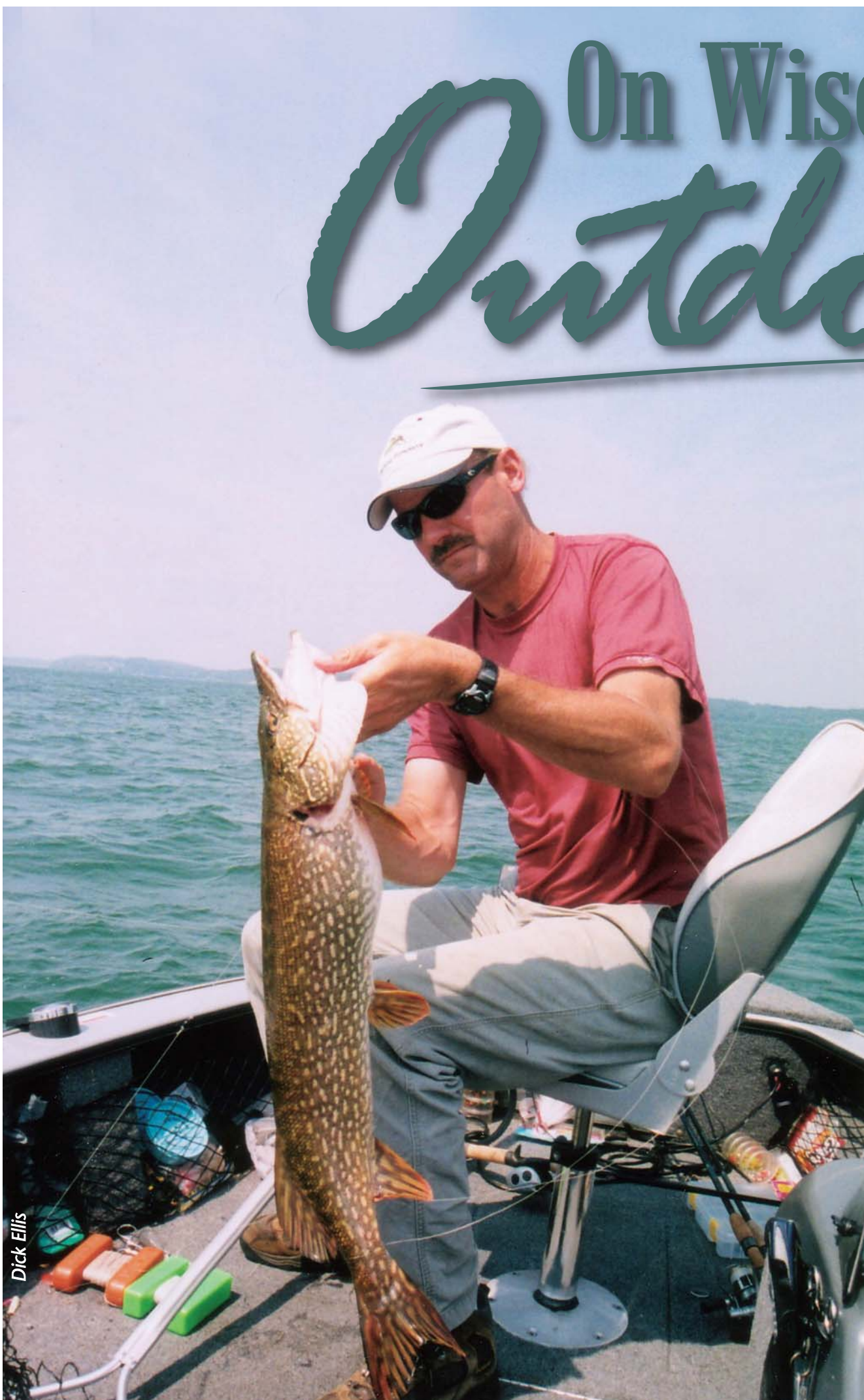
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Dick Ellis



HUNTING, FISHING, TRAPPING, TRAVEL & OUTDOOR HUMOR

OnWisconsinOutdoors.com

TODD BOHM

Summertime Bowhunting? Chasing water-bound targets



For the sportsman looking to “hunt” during the offseason while staying close to home, bowfishing offers an inexpensive experience to help the most diehard archers scratch that itch.

Bowfishing is an excellent way for hunters to sharpen their skills during the summer months on lakes, rivers and streams that are full of “targets.” Bowhunting enthusiasts can continue their passion for shooting their bows throughout the summer for minimal costs, while literally having thousands of target opportunities.

Equipment

There’s been a steady increase and improvement of quality in the equipment available for today’s bowfisherman. Bowfishermen who shoot frequently will often purchase a cheaper and lighter draw-weight bow because the potential to be shooting several hundred times in an evening is not uncommon.

If you do decide to use your own bow, I recommend setting the poundage down to a lighter draw weight. Not only will you be shooting a lot, but pulling arrows out of the mud shot from a 70-pound bow gets old after a while.

The reels used for bowfishing can be purchased at most sporting good stores for less than \$100, and they are high-quality reels that will last you for years. Arrows can also be bought at these same stores, and they will most often range in price from \$8–\$20. I recommend purchasing at least a couple arrows because I have lost or broken arrows while shooting, and there’s nothing that will end a bowfishing outing quicker than running out of arrows.

Once you have your shooting equipment, bowfishermen need to determine what they will be shooting from. The simplest method is to hunt

from shore or with a pair of chest waders. One word of caution if you do shoot with waders: Make sure the areas you shoot from will support you. Many back bays and sloughs are very muddy and are difficult to walk through. If you do shoot from your boat, a couple of construction lights mounted to the front will provide enough light for nighttime endeavors.

Tactics

Spring and early summer are the best months for shooting. Although you can bowfish all the way into the fall, May through July are often my best months. Spawning fish will stage in shallow backwaters, sloughs and bays, soaking in the warmth and preparing to drop eggs.

At times, it might seem that a marching band could be playing and the fish aren’t spooked, but usually a stealthy approach is best. Shooting at night is a unique experience because the fish are less apt to be spooked and will often swim lazily right by



the boat, providing easy shooting opportunities. In fact, bowfishing guides will cater to night shooting and do so relatively inexpensively.

Bowfishing is an excellent opportunity for bowhunters to continue honing their skills throughout the summer months. Rather than shooting at backyard targets, a bowhunter can practice shooting at live targets while practicing skills such as estimating distance and instinctive shooting. Give bowfishing a shot; your first arrow might be one of thousands. *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 www.wisconsinanglingadventures.com or call 715.297.7573.



DAVE SURA

Shore Bets Walking for bass

those who have boats, but the quality of fishing is second to none.

Timing

As with most inland lake fishing from shore, timing is everything. As our lakes start warming, bass will begin seeking out the warmest parts of a lake in preparation of the spawn. In the weeks just prior to opening day, bass begin staging near shoreline areas where they spawn. As soon as it’s legal to fish for bass—the first Saturday in May—get out. These fish will stay shallow for several weeks

following the opener, making them available to the shore angler.

Generally, the first few weeks after the opener are the best, as the weed growth is down. The cooler the spring, the longer the water temperature stays cool, keeping fish shallower longer. Warm springs, like last year, can greatly shorten the time these fish are shallow. Once the water warms into the 70-degree range, weeds get thick and fish begin their post-spawn migration to deeper water, making it difficult to catch fish

from shore.

The best times to fish are the low-light periods, generally the first two and last two hours of a day. Cloudy days can be great as well. These days can be fished all day due to the lower than normal light. Night fishing this time of year is also good, as bass and other game fish will cruise the shallows looking for a meal, but make sure to get a good headlamp for hands-free fishing at night.

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Each spring bass migrate to their spawning grounds where many of them will become accessible to the shore angler. The window of opportunity might be short compared to

JJ REICH

The Reich Stuff

Happy in The Husker State

Nebraska is a sleeper state for excellent turkey hunting. The state might not be listed as one of the top turkey hunting destinations, but it definitely should be. The stunning beauty of rolling hills and fingers with deep, wooded draws, spread out between massive cornfields and pastures, is home to an amazing abundance of workable gobblers. Plus, they have a ton of Merriam's turkeys roaming the landscapes. So, if you're after a white-tipped gobbler, this is a good state to try.

With two tags—allowed to be used in the same day—hunting in Nebraska gives turkey hunters double the opportunity to be successful. This late-April Merriam hunt was outfitted by Table Mountain Outfitters (www.tablemountainoutfitters.com) using a tent camp, located on a 45,000-acre ranch outside of Arnold, Nebraska.

After peeking around a steep hill, my guide and I spotted two gobblers with their girlfriends headed our direction. We hid on the opposite side of the hill and waited for the slowly approaching hens and gobblers to meander around the corner. He coaxed in the trophy with a trusty slate pot call. And soon after that, I proudly lifted my first-ever Merriam's strain turkey for the camera. The next morning I filled my second tag. That large gobbler danced in between two decoys. The public display of affection that gobbler had for my decoys ended with a fist full of No. 5s aimed at his red head. And, I smiled again for the camera.

If you're looking for an out-of-state adventure, you'll be sure to find happiness in the Husker State. We did. *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 at kampptales.com.



DICK ELLIS

On Wisconsin Outdoors

Fishing paradise found on Mississippi sloughs



When Dick Neefe led the reporter to a jumbo perch spot on the beautiful Mississippi backwaters, the guide wasn't accused of short-changing when perch like this 13 inch fish cooperated and not another boat was seen over two hours. (Ellis)

Arriving on the Mississippi River south of Lacrosse Wednesday morning from Wisconsin bluff country, we descended on paradise. Far below us, Pool 9 and a 32 mile stretch of heaven lay enveloped in cloud; the pure white of it contrasting with the grey fog that had hung low over the valleys as Dave Sura and I traveled west in the pre-dawn twilight. Down we came with the winding county road, cutting into the veil in search of the man who knows the river like the old friend it is.

With a lifetime of fishing and 11 years of guiding exclusively on Pool 9, Dick Neefe was waiting in Blackhawk Park. Soon his Honda 150 purred and carried us at a crawl from a quiet inlet to the main channel, the precipitation so thick in morning moisture that it felt like invisible rain on our faces. Already though, streaks of sunlight slashed at the morning fog and promised another flawless morning.

Total burn-off would come soon enough; in about the same amount of time it would take Neefe to put us on walleyes. When the Captain stepped to the bow with a good fish to accommodate a photo request an hour later, we were in no hurry to bid

goodbye to the last fingers of mist still clinging to the bluff-tops behind him. An angler catches more than good fishing when traveling to the big river. Some of it hangs on the stringer. Most of it hangs on the memory.

As a very young boy, Neefe began to learn the secrets of successfully fishing Pool 9 from his father. Now 82 and retired, Les Neefe and Dick's mother Sis, 81, traveled by us in the distance on their pontoon boat, still enjoying the river. Year after year, Neefe would continue to fish and come to intimately know the main river channel and intricate maze of extraordinarily beautiful backwater. After selling a business in Bear Valley he had owned with his wife, Sue, for more than a decade, he began to pursue his dream of guiding on Pool 9. Our one-half day trip with Neefe played out almost precisely like he planned it would.

Neefe had been on an extended bite for walleye for days before our arrival. The day before, a 26 inch walleye and 18 inch smallmouth had topped a day of consistent fishing on the main channel, with perch up to a whopping 14 inches active on the isolated and wild backwater sloughs. Neefe intended to show us it all, with

the game plan laid out to show us steady fishing, spots for big walleyes, and those head-turning perch in no-man's land.

"We're catching lots of short fish, (less than 15 inches)," said Neefe, who has caught a large spring walleye on Pool 9 at 31 inches and 11.4 pounds. "We caught 18 walleyes yesterday. Only four were legal in the 15 to 18 inch class but one was 26 inches. I don't like to keep anything over 20 inches."

We began off of Battle Island, tossing jigs and leeches to shallow rocks shrouded in fog that hopefully still held walleyes. The plan was quickly altered when consistent surface commotion by smallmouth bass on an early morning feed demanded our attention. Sura worked a popper until Neefe's hair jig won the affection of the large smallie that threw the lure in front of us with one protesting vault from the water.

Downriver we moved to toss jigs and leeches near current breaks off a series of wingdams. The man-made structures, designed to push current into the main river and prevent silt build-up, are also holding areas for feeding gamefish. Off of the first wingdam, an 80 yard long finger of rock and a second shorter structure upstream, walleyes and smallmouth in three to seven feet of water began to cooperate.

Neefe turned his attention to his bigger fish spots. We had no sooner camped on the first when Sura's first pitch with a leech was taken by a fat, 23 inch walleye. Other fish followed. Mission accomplished, we moved on to the backwater perch hunt. Tales of 14 inch perch remain only stories until a photo proves it to the reader.

Off the main river, we wound and turned with a narrow channel into some of the most gorgeous backwaters an angler could wish to experience. Passing just two boats anchored near the main river, we would not encounter another human over the next three hours. Far back in five to seven feet of water, we began to vertical jig one-eighth ounce jig heads with a piece of crawler, targeting both the middle of the channel and the channel edge near large pockets of lily pads.

"We need at least four feet of water to hold perch," Neefe said. "Bluegills will be in water as shallow as two feet. Normally we can find gills on the rocks by the wingdams in the current. With the cold weather



they're back here. When I do catch them they still have eggs. They didn't spawn and will absorb the eggs. We also catch some real good crappies back here by throwing tube jigs at the holes around the lily pads."

Regardless of fish activity, the Mississippi backwaters should be on a Wisconsin angler's must-visit list. But the backwaters did cooperate. Despite recent torrential rains that can change where fish are holding, Neefe was not going to tolerate perch in the 10 inch class as an acceptable photo substitute for the jumbos he knew were here. We moved several times before Sura took a perch that stretched the tape to a legitimate 13 in.

"Make sure you bend your arm so that the reader can see we're not holding the fish out to the camera," I requested. "Now that's a perch."

We left heaven with enough fish for a great meal, memories of God's Country and total confidence in a very good Wisconsin guide.

"To be a guide, you need a good truck, a good boat and a good wife with good insurance," Neefe said with a smile. That he has. Now, like the shirt on his back says, Dick Neefe "keeps it basic"... and catches fish.

"This," he said, turning the boat into the maze of backwater for the ride out, "is quite a place."

Connect with Dick Neefe's Guide Service at 608.583.4004, 608.648.3828 or dneefe@mwt.net or at www.lake-link.com. For more information on fishing, accommodations and family activities, contact Lacrosse Area CVB 800.658.9424 or ExploreLacrosse.com.

Read Dick's weekly syndicated column online at OnWisconsinOutdoors.com.



(TOP) The author hoists a beautiful northern pike caught and released during May on the Wolf River. (RIGHT) Kevin Wright poses with a big Wolf River white bass caught during early summer.



The Wolf River consists of 219 miles of fishable water that's mostly wooded and undeveloped. As a testament to its environmental and recreational quality, it's classified as an Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) and has a 24-mile section that is designated as one of two National Scenic Rivers in Wisconsin; the St. Croix River is the other.

It begins in the north woods of the state, with the northernmost fork stemming from Pine Lake in Forest County. The river then flows south through Langlade and Menominee Counties, where whitewater rafting is well known.

It's in these upper sections that brook, brown and rainbow trout are sought-after targets. Smallmouth bass also inhabit the entire upper section of the river along with a mix of walleye, northern pike, largemouth bass and panfish. Numerous tributaries join the Wolf in the upper section, including Swamp Creek, Pickerel Creek, Hunting River, Lily River and Ninemile Creek. Numerous small streams also join the Wolf, adding to the gentle flow as the river meanders to the south and eventually to Lake Winnebago.

To some, this is their Wolf River—the whitewater rafting, stream fishing and boulder-lined sections of river are what is most known to many. It's the Wolf River that they travel to experience and whose waters they enjoy. From Pine Lake southward through places such as Little Rice Lake, Post Lake, Pearson,

Lily, Markton and Keshena, the Wolf River has a different look and feel than it does once reaching Shawano, considered the boundary between the upper and lower Wolf River watersheds. Although I've experienced much of it in my younger days, this is not "my" Wolf River.

My Wolf River is the Wolf that collects the Red River just prior to passing Shawano, before flowing through Waupaca and Outagamie County. My Wolf River flows through Shiocton, gathering the Shioc River and then starts meandering to the west where it meets the Embarrass River at my hometown, New London. These are the northern-most boundaries of my fishing territory. I've wetted my trailer tires in little known places such as Leeman and Stephenville in search of walleyes or smallmouth bass. Although these are all good areas to fish, I still spend most of my time in the final stretches of the Wolf River where it collects the Little Wolf and the Waupaca rivers just below New London.

I also fish the Wolf where it passes through Winnebago County, through Lake Poygan and

JOEL "DOC" KUNZ

On Wisconsin Rivers

So much to do, so little time

Winneconne to empty into Lake Butte des Morts. The city of Fremont is the center of this activity and holds a friendly battle with Winneconne for the moniker as the "White Bass Capitol of the World". Personally, I'll give the title to Fremont, but must note Winneconne's Wolf River Resort owner Doug Nelson's statement, "It's only white bass that we let by, (for various reasons), that make it to Fremont". It's all in good fun as there are plenty of white bass and walleyes in the area for everyone.

Fish It Now

May and June are a great time to fish the lower Wolf River area. From the top end of my fishing zone near Leeman—perfect small boat and canoe fishing territory—to the lower lakes of Poygan and Winneconne, fishing can be fantastic for a variety of species. Walleyes are found throughout the system as are smallmouth bass. During May I often fish the areas above New London, looking for fish away from the large concentrations of white bass that can dominate the river. Many walleyes take their time returning to the lower lakes after spawning and can be targeted here as long as water levels remain ample and there is good availability of food. Lake Poygan, Lake Winneconne and the river area around and below the Winneconne Bridge can also hold excellent groups of walleyes, providing limit catches to anglers. But white bass fishing is king here in May. Mother's Day weekend is the normal peak of activity, but the big bite can happen as late as early June with a cold spring. Excellent year classes of fish should provide some great fishing in 2011. Kept on ice in a cooler immediately upon catching, white bass offer an excellent and tasty fillet of fish. Crappies are also abundant in the system as are bluegill and perch. With hundreds of acres of backwaters and sloughs to explore, it's usually pretty easy to find some panfish and the northern pike that feed on them. In fact, there are some high-quality northern pike in the

Wolf River System. I've caught numerous fish in the 42- to 44-inch range and find fish to wrestle with between 32-36 inches quite often. That's good pike fishing!

Catfish is another Wolf River staple fish. Although flathead numbers are down, the fishing for channel cats is excellent. The DNR is currently doing a study on the flatheads. Transmitters are allowing DNR personnel to "follow" the fish to spawning areas and help understand their movements. New rules have also been put in place as to the harvest of flatheads, including rules for set lines and bank poles—a locally popular method of fishing. For channel cats, cut bait, stink bait, fish livers, red worms or night crawlers will catch fish. They are good eating, fight well and are usually pretty easy to find this time of year. All you need is access to deep water and you will find catfish. Simple slip-sinker or Wolf River rigs work well, and make sure to be ready for a battle with 10- to 12-pound test line and a 6½- or 7-foot medium-heavy action rod. They bite well during the day and also can provide some good night fishing action.

So that's it in a nutshell. "My" Wolf River—a place that is only a small part of the 219 miles of wonderful waterway we have been blessed with here in Wisconsin, a river blessed with a great multi-species fishery and miles of mostly uninhabited shoreline. My Wolf River might not be your Wolf River, and that's the beauty of the expansive and diverse waterway. Your Wolf River might be the whitewater rafting, kayak or canoe Wolf River of the upper Wolf or canoe-able areas of the river below Shawano. No matter. It's here for us all to enjoy, and, it is in fact, our Wolf River. *W*

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

DAN MOERICKE

An 'Up Nort' Report On the bubble

"Looking back on it, I can now appreciate how clever Dad was in introducing me to popper fishing with a bubble."

As I write this, we are fresh off "March Madness." Leading up to the tournament, there was a lot of speculation about which teams would be in, which would be out and which teams were "on the bubble."

All of that bubble banter got me to thinking about another kind of bubble, one that I was introduced to at a very early age and one that I still use today—the casting bubble. Bubble styles have changed over the years, but the casting bubble remains a staple in my tackle box and an effective tool for catching bluegills, crappies and even trout.

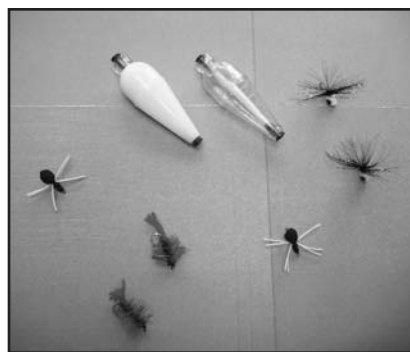
My dad worked a lot of hours, often at two jobs, when I was growing up. But there were a lot of summer evenings (when he finally got home) where we'd eat a quick supper and then hurry off to the local millpond to make the most of the last hour or so of daylight. The tools were simple: a spinning rod, a casting bubble and a popper. We'd fish until we couldn't see the poppers anymore and then call it a night. I can't even begin to guesstimate how many bluegills we pulled from that old pond over the years.

Looking back on it, I can now appreciate how clever Dad was in introducing me to popper fishing with a bubble. What a great way to get a kid hooked on fishing! The kid gets to do a lot of casting and reeling, there's no live bait to mess with, and best of all you get to actually see the strike! Just ask any dry fly fisherman and he'll tell you that one of the greatest thrills of the sport is seeing the fish take the fly.

I went to Gander Mountain the other day, and, for less than \$15, picked up an assortment that I'm confident will spell trouble for a lot of panfish this summer. I picked up two casting bubbles (one clear and one bright yellow for windy conditions), a pair of poppers, foam spiders and wooly buggers. Having this little stash in my tackle box will allow me to quickly switch from whatever else I might be using over to an effective fly fishing outfit in minutes.

Sliding the line through the "a-just-a-bubble," I'll pull through about 30-36 inches of line before twisting the ends of the bubble to secure it on the line. The a-just-a-bubble can be partially filled with water to increase its weight and allow for longer casts if desired.

My leader material of choice is 4-pound Vanish. On the end I'll tie a popper or fly and simply cast it out. Sometimes the big 'gills will prefer a slow, steady retrieve; sometimes a twitch; sometimes they'll want to study a stationary popper for a while before inhaling it. You'll just



Casting bubbles and flies, or poppers, allow for effective presentation at distances not attainable with fly rods.



A big cutthroat trout that fell to a prince nymph presented via casting bubble.

have to experiment to see what's working on any given evening.

Although my trout fishing friends—who are fly fishing purists—will probably cringe at this, I've used the casting bubble to effectively take trout from Wisconsin to Yellowstone to high mountain lakes in Colorado. The only modification to the aforementioned setup was to lighten my tippet to 2-pound test and downsize the flies. I've actually caught "doubles" by tying on a large wet fly and then a smaller trailer nymph about a foot behind it.

Obviously, when you're fishing wet flies and nymphs, you're not going to see the strike, so it's a matter of watching the bubble. Sometimes the strike is a twitch, sometimes a pop, and sometimes

just a gradual veering to one side or the other. Whatever it looks like—set the hook!

So if you've ever thought about taking up fly fishing but were put off by the high prices of the gear, the fancy lingo or difficulty in learning to cast, here's a way to turn your spinning gear into a fly rod for less than the cost of a decent cap. Get on the bubble! It's fun and effective. Forget about March Madness. I'm looking forward to June madness behind my bubble!

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.

**On Wisconsin
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With the Dick Ellis Experts

Hunting, Fishing, Travel
and Outdoor Humor

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TOM CARPENTER

Little Water, Big Walleyes

Techniques for early-season, small-water walleyes



Most Wisconsin walleye fishermen love opening weekend. And who wouldn't? It's tradition, open water, brotherhood and good times all rolled into one. Sometimes, a few marble-eyes even make their way into the boat!

But let's also look at May and early June's realities. Unsettled weather and multiple storm fronts produce gusting winds. Cold air temperatures result in cool waters and scattered fish. And big-time fishing pressure—especially on opening weekend—means that boats line up at launch ramps, and hotspots turn into bumper-boat adventures.

But there are good alternatives to fishing classic, sprawling and crowded lakes. Instead, fish some of Wisconsin's small walleye waters this spring! We're talking lakes with acreage counts in the hundreds of acres, not thousands.

The Case For Small-Water Walleyes

Five factors make smaller waters great for May walleyes:

1. Warmer water. Smaller lakes feature more shoreline per acre of water, so they warm up faster, approaching that magical 60-degree range where walleyes really start turning on. Early in May, the difference in walleye activity between a small lake in the 50s and a big one in the 40s is tremendous. Through the 60s, walleyes near their top activity levels, reached at about 66 to

68 degrees. We usually don't see that until mid-June, but you have a chance in smaller lakes as May wears on.

2. Less wind. Everybody wants some "walleye chop". But too much of a good thing keeps you off the water when the wind is whipping on big lakes. May is a windy month. Smaller waters are more protected, and they offer less of a "run" for a wind coming off one shoreline and heading for the other. On smaller lakes, you'll lose less fishing time because of the wind.

3. Consistent fishing. Weather is unsettled for the first month of walleye season. We do get some gorgeous days. But there's a lot of junk mixed in, with fronts barreling in every three or four days. Smaller lakes "recover" faster than big waters, conditions settle down quicker and fish hit again sooner.

4. Fewer hideouts. At this time of year, walleyes are often scattered, and there's no pattern. You'll catch one fish in 4 feet of water, the next 18 feet down. There are infinite places for the marble-eyes to be on a huge lake. On a smaller lake, the options aren't as daunting. Just get to work and fish.

5. Reduced competition. Have you ever been to a boat ramp on a big or big-name lake on opening day? Yes, some folks will get fish on the big water. But it's amazing how few boats will be on a smaller lake. You can have plenty of water all to yourself.

Techniques For Small-Water Walleyes

In May, slow and simple are the orders of the day. Live bait is the ticket now—fished either on a slip-sinker rig or a jig. Slip-bobbers don't come into their own until June, when the fish are a little more concentrated and predictable. Now walleyes are scattered about.

Walleyes eat meat now, so you'll want to use minnows. Rainbow shiners are tops if you can find and afford them. Otherwise, I go for the poor man's shiner—fatheads—and high-grade through the bucket to find the silvery females, which are much more attractive to walleyes than the black, wart-headed males.

Stay on the move to find May and early June small-water walleyes. But go slow. The water is cool, and fish aren't going to chase bait. Use your trolling motor and inch along, slowly enough that you can vertically jig as you go. If you're pulling a live bait rig, bounce it along not quite below the boat, but close; a severe line angle means you're going too fast.

One beauty of small-water walleye fishing is working a variety of structure and water types with minimal travel time on the lake. A

mid-lake reef is only a short run from a gravelly shoreline break.

Start fishing along those shoreline breaks. Walleyes spawn near gravelly shores or up in marshes, so the fish will be close by. They might be 5-6 feet down, 12-14 feet down or maybe more. Explore different depths each day.

If there are classic bars, humps or reefs, they are worth checking out, too. Work the shallower areas, where walleyes will be feeding, instead of the deeper water you might hit in summer. On a May day, fish the places and depths you might work on a June evening. The water is a little warmer there, and more forage is available.

This year, try something new. Save the big, famous walleye lakes for that prime fishing time of later June. In May and early June, head to smaller waters. The fish are easier to find, the lakes are productive now and fun to fish and you can relax a little bit—except when you're setting the hook on another small-water walleye. *W*

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



SUZETTE CURTIS

Recipes By Suzette Summer Traditions

My husband and I are always on the lookout for new recipes. We certainly have our tried-and-true favorites, but we really enjoy experimenting with new sauces, different marinades and unique combinations of spices and seasonings. So, I'm happy to share with you two "new" recipes that we recently obtained from good friends along with one that I developed out of the necessity for a "comfort food." *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. Contact her at recipesbysuzette@onwisconsinoutdoors.com

George Dahl's Famous Venison

by Suzette Curtis

1 backstrap of venison, cut into chops of desired thickness
Famous Dave's Steak and Burger Seasoning
Bacon

Coat Venison chops with seasoning and wrap each with a strip of bacon. Place chops on plate and cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for about an hour. Remove chops from plastic and grill to desired doneness.

Mushroom and Onion Sauce

1 red onion, sliced
2 8-oz. packages baby Bella mushrooms
½ c. water
1 shot Jack Daniels
Dijon mustard, to taste

Add above ingredients to sauce pan. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until desired consistency. Serve with venison chops.

• OnWisconsinOutdoors.com •



Wild Turkey Pot Pie

by Suzette Curtis

Breasts of wild turkey, cut into bite-sized cubes
3 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 stalks celery, chopped
3 Tbsp. butter
1 onion, diced
3 Tbsp. flour
1 14.5-oz. can low sodium chicken broth
⅔ c. half-and-half
1 bag frozen mixed vegetables (peas, carrots, corn)
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
½ tsp. thyme
1 tsp. parsley
2 9-inch pie crusts (unbaked)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place cubed turkey breasts, potatoes and celery in medium saucepan. Fill pan with just enough water to cover turkey and vegetables. Bring to boil, reduce heat to low and simmer for 25-30 minutes until meat and vegetables are tender. Remove from heat, drain and set aside.

Meanwhile, melt butter in sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add onions and cook until soft. Stir in flour to make a paste. Gradually add chicken broth and half-and-half, stirring constantly. Add frozen vegetables, salt, pepper, parsley and thyme. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally until sauce thickens.

Spray deep pie plate with cooking spray. Place one pie crust in bottom of pie plate. Spoon in turkey and vegetables and pour warm sauce mixture over all. Top with remaining pie crust, pinching edges and removing any excess dough. Make slits or poke fork holes in top crust. Bake 30-40 minutes until dough is golden brown and filling is bubbly. Remove from oven and let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

• OnWisconsinOutdoors.com •

Craig Cutts' "No Longer Secret" Fish Recipe

by Suzette Curtis

Bluegills
3 Tbsp. butter, margarine or other cooking oil
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 bag pretzels, finely crushed
Mrs. Dash
Garlic salt
Dill weed

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Melt butter in bottom of baking pan in preheated oven. Remove pan from heat and stir in lemon juice. Place fish in pan and cover with crushed pretzels. Sprinkle with Mrs. Dash, garlic salt and dill weed as desired and place pan back into oven.

Bluegills take about 12 minutes, but this recipe works with other fish as well. The only difference is cooking time adjustment based on the thickness of the fish that you are using.

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NATALIE BEACOM

Out With The Old

The more you know the more you'll catch, right?

There was a time not long ago when heading to a new area to fish I would wing it and rely solely on the generous givings of the local bait shop owner. If I wasn't feeling particularly spontaneous, I would prepare with a more academic approach by pouring over the good 'ol contour fishing maps while feverishly writing notes on everything from depths to cover to markers for back-county roads.

This option was problematic as I would then carry around at least five Post-It notes with sayings such as, "2 miles SW to gravel road, hard right" scribbled by a bank pen and stuck to my wallet. All this legwork done in the hopes of determining the best game plan for a successful fishing adventure.

However, I've recently succumbed to the ease of technology, for when looking for the perfect place to wet a line, I begin by powering up my laptop.

Times Are Changin'

We are culturally on the grid in a big way. At times, it feels as if I'm not being true to those before me who spent time showing me the ropes of fish finding and map reading and who might not have had or even imagined Google and the possibilities for quick access to information afforded us today.

I don't feel true to the great American explorers Lewis and Clark who mapped from St. Louis to the Pacific without aide of a 4G network at their fingertips, but only the sun to guide them. But, as a society we are literally surrounded by opportunities to access digital content in a relatively cost-effective manner in both service and devices.

Rarely will you hear the once popular saying, "I'm just not computer savvy — I will never understand those things", as if "technology" were a huge building-sized mainframe run by men in lab coats and not palm-sized devices operated by tweens. Technology has transcended every generation and aspect of our lives from the workplace to our homes. So why shouldn't it find us at the lake? Why shouldn't it mean bigger fish?

Accessing fishing information on Wisconsin waterways using the Internet as a medium is quick, easy and comprehensive. Many anglers depend on Lake-Link, viewed at Lake-Link.com, for its up-to-

date fishing reports, blogs and expert analysis.

More than a simple website, Lake-Link operates like a fishermen fellowship offering blogs, angling advice from pro-staffers from the area, real-time posts on safety conditions, best bait and much more. The Lake-Link "lake finder" also provides useful statistics on the lake as well as satellite images.

Obviously, the Wisconsin DNR is a resource for fishing as it licenses and serves more than 1.4 million anglers, but one helpful map links is the "DNR Boat and Developed Shore Fishing Access Inventory," found on the DNR website at dnr.wi.gov.

Offering a true bird's-eye view of all 72 counties, this navigable application will become a favorite to help you determine locations interactively using a very simple interface. While it's a site still under development, the ease for which you can locate existing public shoreline and boating access and simply better understand the water resources in the areas you are searching will have you "favorite" this site and return often.

Sponsored by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) and viewed at takemefishing.org, this organization's site offers boating and angling enthusiasts searchable maps by state as well as species and habitat information. This site is comprehensive for children or new anglers interested in fishing.

Arm Yourself

Technology has certainly allowed for access to information on the Internet, increasing the knowledge we can absorb to be smarter fishermen—but innovations in equipment have drastically changed how we used to fish with Gramps. Carbon helix core rods, reels with anodized aluminum or graphite housings and frames and copolymer core line with fluorocarbon coating in a bevy of different colors all with the fish and his predator's optimal performance in mind.

One can simply look to the advent of marine electronics to see how technology has altered fishing. Back in the 80s, rarely would you find a boat or angler that had sonar equipment. Yet today, fish-finding devices have become so advanced and



the retail demand so high that anglers can enjoy the technology using basic depth finders to motor-mounted wireless GPS trolling systems that allow us to fish on auto pilot, guided electronically on cruise control, to the fish. What could be next?

Gradually, I'm reaching those "remember when days." It's with a little apprehension and a small dose of guilt that I value the ease of iFishing, but I also understand that reminiscing to the days of yesteryear can offer special memories when looked at in a continuum of change.

Technological advancements don't change the fact that, in order to catch fish, we need to know fish. Nor does it negate what we have learned about fishing from those before us.

Technology is just a new source of information and a new way to get to the prize. As the sun goes down, whether it is by chance or by touch-screen that you reel in that sport fish and net yourself a trophy, what will always stand true is that there is nothing electronically reproducible about that all-natural exhilarating feeling. *W*

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

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— Fishing Guide — DENNIS RADLOFF

DENNIS RADLOFF

Early Season Muskies *Start small, start slow*

The “southern” opener for muskies will be upon us once again on Saturday, May 7, 2011.

This can be a great opportunity to catch some big muskies because the large females will still be in shallow water in a post-spawn pattern.

You might be used to hearing the “go big or go home” standard when it comes to selecting muskie lures, and while this is the norm for targeting big fish, early season requires some different tactics.

Smaller lures can have a greater degree of success for a variety of reasons during the early season, starting with presentation. Early season water temperatures are generally in the mid- to upper 50-degree range. These colder water temps are usually the host to some “sluggish” muskies requiring a slower

presentation. Slower presentation keeps the lure in the “strike zone” longer and maximizes the chances of triggering a strike.

Small Bucktails

The No. 5 Mepp's is an industry staple. The great thing about a No. 5 blade is the amount of “lift” the blade gives the bucktail. This lift keeps the bucktail from sinking to the bottom at slow retrieve speeds, while the blade gives the illusion of a faster moving presentation along with good water displacement. When shallow-water weeds begin to grow, the No. 5 blade can be worked above the weed tops easily by adjusting your speed to just tickle through the tops.

Glide Baits

Glide baits come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and the great characteristic of this lure is the amount of water it covers on the side-to-side portion of the retrieve. My



Although early season muskies can be sluggish, the post-spawn timeframe makes many big females linger in shallow water — and makes them very accessible.

—◆◆◆—
“Give some of these smaller lures a try this spring and see what a difference small and slow can make while the muskies are still sluggish in the colder water.”

personal favorite is the 6-inch Slammer Drop Belly because it can be worked slowly while getting a good glide. The added bonus on this presentation is that it can be paused to generate some “hang time,” enticing a strike when re-engaged after the pause!

Twitch Baits

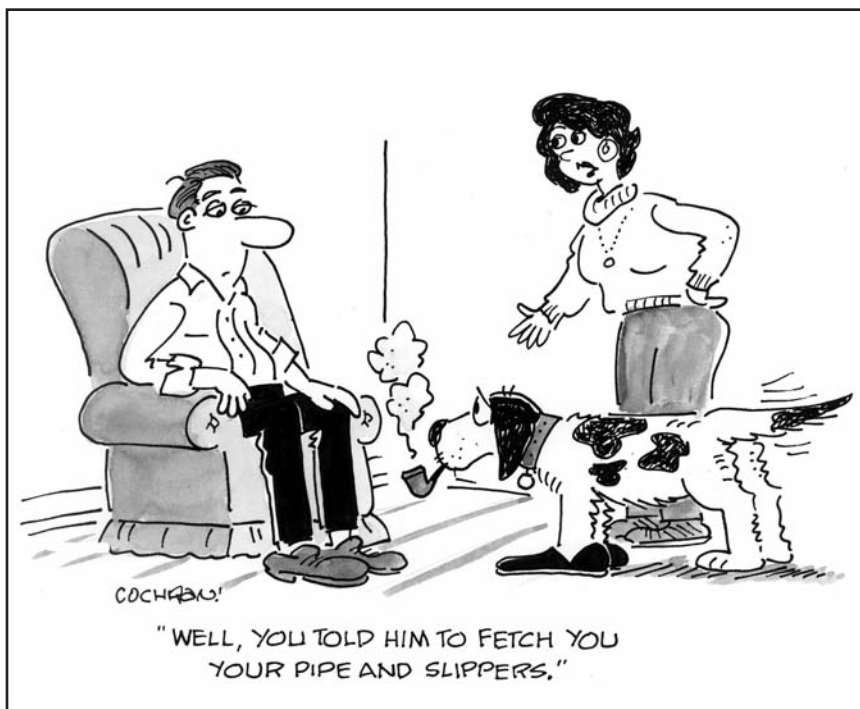
Twitch baits for muskies are minnow-style crankbaits with good buoyancy, usually in the 6-inch size. Again, I like the Slammer brand twitch baits because they are very durable when put to the test of a big early season muskie. They also perform great over new weed growth when twitched and paused.

Another good option is the Rapala Husky Jerk. If you're going to use a Husky Jerk, I recommend using the larger styles, No. 12 or No. 14, removing the three smaller hooks and

replacing them with better muskie split rings and hooks. Even though there were three hooks originally, I only put two back on—the front and tail hook—leaving the middle empty. Doing this keeps the hooks from fouling while ripping and twitching the lure.

Give some of these smaller lures a try this spring and see what a difference small and slow can make while the muskies are still sluggish in the colder water. Good luck and enjoy your 2011 muskie season. I'll see you on the water! *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 sterlingmusky.com or at 262.443.9993.



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GARY ENGBERG

Gary Engberg Outdoors

A Wisconsin tradition: making maple syrup



Being in the outdoors daily, I look forward to spring and another new season to be in the outdoors enjoying the many bounties that it has to offer. A short time ago, I was at my favorite coffee and breakfast location, Leystra's Venture Restaurant in Sauk City, where I ran into the owner and friend, Jim Leystra.

Jim's a real outdoorsman who manages to spend much of his time hunting, trapping and doing about anything that the outdoor world has to offer, while still being at his restaurant at 4 a.m. to begin the baking and cooking for his 6 a.m. opening.

Our conversation topics went from how the walleye fishing is going to Jim's current outdoor project of tapping his maple trees and making maple syrup. Leystra owns a piece of property in rural Sauk County that has numerous maple trees that he has tapped for decades. Jim has made maple syrup since the 1980s, and with some "gentle" prodding, he explained this spring tradition and ritual to me over coffee.

I'd been to a "sugar bush" in Vilas County as a child with my grandfather. I remember him dropping ladles of hot syrup into the snow for "instant" maple syrup candy. But, I never learned the whole syrup making process till meeting

Jim at his rural property and observing the process firsthand.

No one really knows who first discovered that you can make maple syrup from the sap of a maple tree. But, we know that maple syrup was an important commodity in the economy of Native Americans. Native Americans living along the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes used maple sugar and sugar for bartering with the white fur traders.

All maple trees—such as the sugar, red, black and silver maples—produce a sugary sap that, when "cooked down," will produce sweet syrup. Some maple trees produce more sap and a sap with higher sugar content. Leystra told me that he watches the buds appear on the maple trees for when it's time to begin the tapping process. Ideally, what one wants are warm days with temperatures in the mid- to upper 30s during the day and cool temperatures in the 20s at night.

Down To The Details

Jim told me that he likes to have a maple tree be at least 20 inches in diameter for tapping, though some productive tap trees are only 10 inches in diameter. Next, you have to drill a hole to put your tap into. Most syrup makers use a 7/16-inch drill bit to make a 2- to 3-inch-deep hole, if you're using standard taps.

Look for an area on the trunk that's clean and unblemished to tap. One also doesn't want to drill a new hole within a couple of feet of an old hole. Drill the tap hole with a slight upward angle so that the sap can flow freely. Tap the spout gently so that it fits tight into the hole, but not so tight that that the wood splits.

Drill tap holes about 3–4 feet above the ground so that it's convenient for working once the sap starts flowing. Five-gallon pails make good syrup containers and will hang on any commercially bought tap. Be sure to cover the pails so that you don't get any water, snow or foreign matter into the sap. Maple trees with a diameter of 20 inches or less should not have more than one tap, trees with a diameter of 20–25 inches may have two taps, and trees more

than 30 inches may have three taps. Never have more than three taps on any one tree.

How much sap you get out of a tree depends on the method of tapping, the size of the tree and seasonal differences in weather. The average tap hole can produce from 5–15 gallons of sap per year. However, under the right conditions, a maple tree can produce from 40–80 gallons a year.

Remember that it takes 10 gallons of sap to produce 1 quart of maple syrup. Jim told me that it takes him 30–40 gallons of sap to make 1 gallon of maple syrup. The average maple tree produces a sap with a sugar content of 2–3 percent. The sugar content can vary from the time of day it was taken with higher sugar content in the morning than afternoon. A normal day will produce about 5 gallons of sap.

From Collecting To Cooking

Now that you've got the maple's sap flowing and collected, it's time to start the cooking and syrup-making process. Leystra does his "cooking" outside at his deer camp. He's made a cooking surface and stove out of firebricks, which won't split under the hot fire.

Jim has a large supply of dry oak and elm to keep the hot fire continuously burning. A hot fire is a necessity when cooking the sap into syrup. During the syrup making process, the fire is always going to cook down the sap. As the sap cooks down, more fresh sap is constantly being added to the boiling syrup. The sap is cooked in a pan measuring about 30-by-30 inches and kept about one-half to three-quarters full while on the fire. The boiling syrup gives off a sugary steam as it evaporates, and the sugary substance can get on everything if cooked indoors.

Keep the sap cool if you've accumulated more than you are cooking because the sap, like milk, can sour and collect bacteria. Boil and cook the sap as soon as possible after your tapping. When the sap changes color—amber—it becomes



Tapping maple trees is as much a part of Wisconsin tradition as is deer hunting. The work is great, but the rewards are sweet.

"All maple trees—such as the sugar, red, black and silver maples—produce a sugary sap that, when 'cooked down,' will produce sweet syrup."

sweeter. Now is the time to strain and filter your maple syrup and let it settle for a few days to have the maple sand settle before finishing the syrup process.

Jim told me that he then brings the syrup back to a rolling boil and filters it again before bringing it back to a low simmer or about 200 degrees. Ideally, sap becomes maple syrup when it reaches 66–67 percent sugar content at 7.1 degrees above the temperature of boiling water. This can vary with one's elevation and barometric pressure. You can find the boiling point of water by using a candy thermometer to test the sap as it begins a rolling boil.

The final process is canning the syrup, which should be done at 180 degrees. Pour the hot syrup into sterilized canning jars and seal. Fill them full so that there is little air in the jar. Lay them on their sides for a better seal. Store the syrup in a cool and dry place and, if opened, be sure to refrigerate the opened jar or it will become contaminated.

Continued on page 14

JOHN LUTHENS

Tackling Trout

First trout of the season

I've often wondered if the old cow pasture is still there—where the farmer let us lift the gate and drive to the back of the field under the oak trees; the spot where we made a small camp, always on the eve of the first Saturday in May. It was the opening of fishing for everyone in the state, but for us it was trout. I've been lucky to fish many waters over the years. None has quite lived up to the memory of my first trout stream.

I grew up in Barron County where the Yellow River flows from swamp-tangled headwaters, down through valleys of oak and maple, before finally wandering into fields and pastures. Most locals in the area didn't bother with the Yellow. With so many lakes in the area, a weekend fisherman could get a limit of pan-fish or walleye without the bother of

price to pay. The early morning mist was on the water, and the first good hole was at the bottom of the trail.

It was a log jam where the current cut deep beneath the snags. The first hole was a ritual. My dad sized up the water level, commenting on how it looked high or low. Then he would ask, "Do you want to fish up or down?" It was never decided in advance, but always then and there on the banks of that first hole. "Well, good luck then," he would say before crashing off in the opposite direction.

I hoped to catch my first fish of the season in that hole. More often than not the log pile would yield a bite. My dad knew this and he always gave me first chance to fish it. My heart still races every time I strike a trout, but back then I

"It was there that my father showed me the art of the carefully placed cast and helped me land my first trout."

belly crawling through weeds to avoid spooking trout.

My dad and I camped out in advance. We stuck an iron mesh grill in the pasture ground and ate beef stew and corned beef hash out of open cans set to cook on the fire. Dad sat in front of the fire late into the night. I lay in my sleeping bag watching. Opening day anticipation danced about like the flames. I eventually drifted off but I don't know if Dad ever slept before a trout opener.

Morning brought a rush of fishing frenzy. The sun was still down but the old man was already by the coals, stirring them into life. We munched powdered doughnuts. In hurried silence we pulled on waders and hip boots and organized tackle by the light of the newly kindled flames. Then we went fishing for trout.

We slid into the river valley, over logs and through brush piles holding ground against our advance. Punctured waders were common casualties, but they were a small

conducted myself with youthful abandon when I hooked one—especially the first one of the season.

I had no intention of playing that first fish. I just wanted it in my creel as fast as possible. Sometimes I managed to catch that first trout of the season without wrapping my line around brush tangles or falling into the water. Maybe Dad was hiding behind a tree and watching the fun. He knew that a little faith in the fact that the trout were biting would go a long way in sustaining a boy's spirit.

I'd cross the stream on the log and race off in search of other likely spots. Bright violets and trilliums blanketed the valley. Lining the steeper banks were patches of scouring rush horsetail. It's a good sign when these green reeds grow along a trout stream because their root systems prevent streamside erosion. They make good homemade snorkels, too.

The Yellow River valley witnessed my first trout fishing triumphs and defeats. Trout won and lost from its dark banks, flowing



The author poses with his son and that magical first trout of the season.

runs and quiet pools will always haunt my memories

Best Of The Best

But the place I remember most was always reserved for the end of the day. From an open stretch of water shadowed by maple trees, fast water flowed from an alder thicket above.

It was brook trout water.

Beneath the maples the ground was covered in ferns, and it was a good area to sit and fish the open water without too much effort and a good spot to meet after a day's fishing. The magic of that spot transformed me into a lifelong trout fisherman. It was there that my father showed me the art of the

carefully placed cast and helped me land my first trout. It was only a small brookie, but I've yet to catch a finer fish. I made him promise not to tell Mom that he helped me. As far as I know, he kept that promise.

I haven't been back in many years, but soon I hope to repay that promise. My own son is about the same age as I was when that first trout danced on my line. On the eve of the first Saturday in May, I'll find my way again to the Yellow River valley. We'll have a little tent set up and a cooking fire kindled. We'll be there waiting. I wonder if it will be the same. I can't wait to find out. *W*

John Luthens is a proud father and avid outdoorsman from central Wisconsin.

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"Having video footage of a child's first hunt, or capturing a kill shot of a buck or gobbler on film, is priceless."

A heavy frost on the carpet of newly fallen leaves below my tree stand allows me to detect active deer in the pre-dawn darkness. A half-hour later the sunrise arrives, and my eyes are drawn to the horizon where a red ball of flame inches upward. To avoid the feeling of missing something

special, I continuously stare as the entire burning sphere slowly exposes itself above the distant hill.

My eyes weren't the only ones watching that sunrise. Songbirds, squirrels and chipmunks all witnessed it as well and were busy going about the business of gathering

LEE GATZKE

Blood Brothers Outdoors

Film your own hunts

up some breakfast. Once again, I was thankful for experiencing the gift of another beautiful sunrise in the deer woods.

Scenes like these commonly greet those of us who call ourselves hunters. Most of us commit these treasured moments to memory so we can replay them again in our minds whenever the need arises.

However, an increasing number of us are capturing times like these on video. Having video footage of a child's first hunt, or capturing a kill shot of a buck or gobbler on film, is priceless. Filming a hunt allows us to share an important part of our lives with others, or just relive it again as it really happened. As video technology improves, the equipment becomes more affordable, and the popularity of filming our hunts is on the rise.

Just Another Tool

Getting started filming your own hunts requires having access to a video camera. You don't have to spend a month's pay on one—there are many out there that will do a good job for less than \$350.

Filming with a partner is a lot of fun, but sometimes the situation calls for going solo. Practicing with a partner and without one allows you



Outfitting yourself with the essential gear to film your own hunt doesn't have to cost mega bucks. A tripod, a tree-mounted swing arm and a gun-mounted camera saddle are three common tools.

to record your hunts, whichever situation arises.

Whether you film from a tree stand or the ground, it is possible to capture all kinds of hunting on film. I'm so accustomed to self-filming that I feel naked if I don't have my camera set up beside me as I hunt. Sharing my hunting experiences through my videos with family and friends is the best way I know to explain my outdoor adventures. *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.

ENGBERG, from page 12

Now's the best part of the operation: cook some pancakes or waffles and enjoy another of spring's bounties! The maple syrup season lasts from the end of February into April depending on the weather in Wisconsin. Northern Wisconsin will be making syrup for weeks, if not longer, and the southern part of the state is coming to an end. But, the weather has turned colder, allowing me to start making my own maple syrup from the maple trees on my own land. Wish me good luck on my first maple syrup venture! *W*

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GO FISH! Time for open water fishing in Wisconsin's Northwoods! Bring the whole family to Manitowish Waters to enjoy May's spring opener and Musky season opener on our **10-lake chain!** Check out our event calendar chock full of summer fun! Travel U.S. Hwy. 51 or fly in to D25. For complete area info, [click on Vilas County](#).

Looking for your spring getaway, visit the Cable Area! **Off season rates, less crowded lakes and trails** and NO bugs makes spring the perfect time to escape to the north. Jump in on one of the local fishing boards for the fishing

opener on May 7! [Click on Bayfield County](#).

School is almost out; summer is around the corner. Walleyes are hitting on the Bay and Brown & Rainbow Trout are still close to shorelines. Wolf Packs' boats will be **hitting hot action off Sheboygan's scenic shores** so grab the kids and start the summer with a Memory, [click on Sheboygan County](#).

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Wisconsin's Largest Weekly Outdoor Flea Market opens April 23 in Princeton with vendors offering everything from antiques to honey, and jewelry to spices. Shop Saturdays through October 15 in the tree-shaded City Park on Highway 23 starting at 6:00 a.m. Parking and admission are free. [Click on Green Lake County](#).

May and June bring thoughts of lakefront festivals, outdoor dining, biking, fishing **on the big lake**, boating with motor, sail or paddle and all things outdoors are within reach! Port Washington offers you a chance to take advantage of all of these great opportunities for fun. [Click on Ozaukee County](#).

Mix it up in Richland County! Need for speed? Motorsports Mayhem offers thrills and chills on May 14, or step on the brake, slip to the stream, or quiet through the countryside. Trout are biting, turkeys aren't hiding, and morels are inviting! **Extreme to serene we have it all!** [Click on Richland County](#).

Spring fishing, spring turkey hunting, spring bird watching, spring morel

mushroom hunting, spring saying goodbye to the winter blahs. Spring has indeed sprung and it's beautiful here in the Ferryville area on the **Mississippi River!** [Click on Crawford County](#)

Relax, fish, canoe, kayak, launch your boat, or just listen to the birds and read a good book on a **6,000 acre flowage of the Wisconsin River** while staying in a modern log cabin. Nightly and weekly affordable rates and pets are always welcome. Reserve your get away to Lakeview Log Cabin Resort. [Click on Marathon County](#).

Don't forget **how fun pan fishing can be**, especially with the entire family. **Crappies and sunfish** fishing can make a great weekend getaway. Stop by a bait shop for the latest hot spots in Burnett County. [Click on Burnett County](#).

Experience a **wilderness fishing trip** on Iron County's 14,000 acre Turtle Flambeau Flowage and the 3,400 acre Gile Flowage. Both of these flowages have a reputation of **top producers of walleye, bass and muskies**. The flowages have also been a favorite of paddlers, campers and wildlife watchers. For more information, [click on Iron County](#).

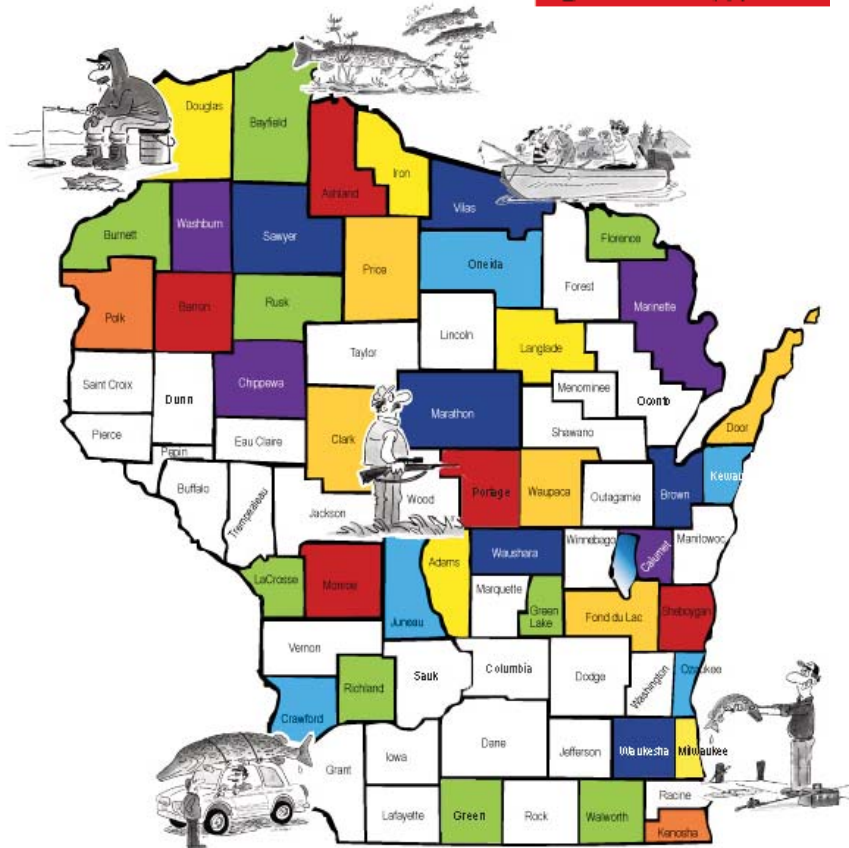
Close your eyes; just listen, **turkeys gobbling, geese honking, birds singing**; open your eyes... yes you're in Juneau County so spend some time on our beautiful lakes, canoe our many rivers, bike our many trails, enjoy a round of golf, or treat yourself at one of our great restaurants! [Click on Juneau County](#).

Dust off your bicycle and come ride **two State Bike Trails!** The Gandy Dancer Trail and the Stower 7-Lakes Trail meander near many small towns, lakes and countryside. Stay at a local B&B, Motel or Resort. **The Ice Age National Scenic Hiking Trail** begins in Polk County, so if biking is not for you, come for a beautiful walk! Free Visitors Guide 1.800.222.POLK (7655) and [click on Polk County](#).

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Come try out Lake Michigan for King Salmon out of the **number one port on the lake, Algoma Wisconsin** with two beautiful boats to choose from, 34 and 25 ft. Also try out the Bay of Green Bay for Walleye aboard the largest walleye boat. Call Zach at 920.559.7473 and [click on Kewaunee County](#).

Get ready for a "reel" good time! The **25th annual Jaws Fishing Derby** is right around the corner on June 3-5. Headquartered on Barker's Island, Marina Drive, Superior, the weekend fishing tournament is held on the waters of the west end of Lake Superior and the St Louis Bay. **Forty awards offered for lake trout, salmon, walleye and northern.** [Click on Douglas County](#).

The North and South Forks of the Flambeau River offer **excellent canoeing & kayaking and an amazing array of moods**, from whitewater to

slow, gentle curves and pool. There is a stretch for every paddler, young and old, beginner to expert. For a map and Price County rental/shuttle/guide service information, [click on Price County](#).

Get ready for some great spring and summer fishing and boating fun at the Big Chetac Resort near Birchwood. Enjoy the freshness of spring as the area comes back to life. **Relax and renew in the great accommodations** and watch the eagles and ospreys fish right out front. [Click on Sawyer County](#).

The Loon Capital, Mercer Wisconsin, is home to the famous Turtle Flambeau Flowage and an excellent choice for your next vacation! There are over 250 lakes for fishing and boating, waterfalls, hiking and biking trails, ATV trails, and plenty of forestland to explore! Join us in our little piece of paradise for one of your best Wisconsin experiences! [Click on Iron County](#). It's time! May and June is the start of **line-screaming Lake Michigan Salmon and Trout fishing** in Port Washington

Wisconsin. Come join C&D Charters in Port Washington to experience the exciting beginning to our 2011 season with friends, family or clients aboard one of our large **fully equipped fishing yachts**. [Click on Ozaukee County](#).

Join us in Hurley, WI area for the 20th Annual Saxon Harbor Spring Classic **Lake Superior Fishing Tournament** June 4 & 5, 2011. **Cash Prizes** will be awarded. For more information Contact the Hurley Area Chamber of Commerce 715.561.4334 and [click on Iron County](#).

Explore Wisconsin is a valuable resource for the outdoor enthusiast, listed county-by-county:

- ✓ Tourism Information
- ✓ Hunting & Fishing Guides
- ✓ Resorts & Lodging
- ✓ ATV Trail Maps

Ferryville
Wisconsin

RIVER BLUFF DAZE!

July 23, 2011
10 a.m. — Dusk
Antique Tractor Pull
Food Stands
Fireworks at Dusk
Location: Ferryville, WI
Community Center

[Facebook.com/ferryvillewi](https://www.facebook.com/ferryvillewi)

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FOND DU LAC COUNTY
• Green Lake Country Visitors

GREEN LAKE COUNTY
• Green Lake Country Visitors

IRON COUNTY
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JUNEAU COUNTY
• Juneau County

KENOSHA COUNTY
• Wildlife Visions

KEWAUNEE COUNTY
• Why Knot Charters & Guide Service

LACROSSE COUNTY
• LaCrosse Area Visitors Bureau

LANGLADE COUNTY
• Antigo/Langlade Chamber

MARATHON COUNTY
• Hooksetters Fishing Guide
• Lakeview Log Cabin Resort

MARINETTE COUNTY
• Marinette County Tourism
• A River Guide (Jason Guarke)

MILWAUKEE COUNTY
• Fish Chaser Guide Service

ONEIDA COUNTY
• Minocqua Area Chamber

OZAUKEE COUNTY
• Port Washington Tourism

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• Polk County Information Center

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• Stevens Point Area CVB

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• Park Falls Area Chamber
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• Wounded Warriors in Action

RICHLAND COUNTY
• Hybrid Redneck Events

RUSK COUNTY
• Rusk County

SAWYER COUNTY
• Hayward Lakes Visitors Bureau
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SHEBOYGAN COUNTY
• Sheboygan County Tourism
• Wolf Pack Adventures

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• Manitowish Waters Chamber

WALWORTH COUNTY
• Dave Duwe's Guide Service

WASHBURN COUNTY
• Washburn County Tourism

WAUKESHA COUNTY
• Waukesha Gun Club

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TOM CARPENTER

Cub's Corner Crappie time

in Lafayette County. This popular manmade reservoir—in a region of the state that has no natural lakes—fills a beautiful valley known as the Yellowstone. The lake has been drained and “reborn” several times over the years, and my childhood saw it at one of its better, “rebuilding” times.

Dad and I would fish the lake regularly in May and early June. The panfish would invade the shallows on their spawning runs, and most any evening you could catch a good mess of bluegills. I'd run the mile home from junior high and start getting gear ready. Soon Dad would show up, having knocked off work a little early. I think he knew the value of going fishing and spending time with an eager son, versus the smaller rewards of staying at work an extra hour.

Off we would go over hill and dale. From our house you could load up, drive to the lake, drop the boat in and be fishing in an hour. With a dinner of sandwiches, apples and cookies in a small cooler, a blue sky above and warming water down below, it was adventure of the highest variety.

Sunfish were the staple. But one day we stopped at the bait store near the lake. This was a strange new experience, for our usual bait consisted of nightcrawler pieces from the crawlers I had picked in the yard

on rainy nights or garden worms dug in nearby barnyards.

But today Dad had his old metal minnow bucket along. He ordered a couple dozen crappie minnows, and you would think we were carrying gold the way I took care of those baitfish for the rest of the car drive and then the boat ride on the lake.

expedition with your own kids this spring. May and early June is prime crappie time, as waters warm up to the 60 to 65 degree range where crappie spawning peaks. Find the fish in shallow back bays and around woody cover or emergent weeds. Tiny minnows make the best bait; hook them lightly through the

“Find the fish in shallow back bays and around woody cover or emergent weeds.”

Dad knew a thing or two about crappies, as well as boys. As opposed to the usual sandy shorelines where we found the bluegills, we headed back into a corner of the lake with stumps and snags. We'd toss out a wiggling minnow hooked through the lips, watch the bobber sink ever-so-slowly down, then gently set the hook and pull in crappie after crappie.

“Don't hoss 'em”, was Dad's instruction, “or you'll tear that paper mouth.” Another bit of his crappie wisdom was this: “Crappies are never in a hurry, but they like their food moving just a little bit.” A couple dozen flopping crappies made quite a sight in the old mesh fishing basket when we pulled it in at sunset and headed for shore.

It's easy to make a crappie

lips on a No. 6 hook, below a light and pencil-thin float. Be prepared for some young anglers to enjoy playing with the bait as much as watching their bobber and catching fish!

Crappies can teach some great springtime fishing lessons. But the most important one of all is this: Get out there and take your kids, grandkids or other young friends fishing while you can and while they are interested. Of all the places I've been and sporting adventures I've done, crappie fishing with Dad through the kiss of a warm May evening is still one of the best. *W*

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

Kids love fishing, and it's usually relatively easy to get into eager-biting, hard-fighting bluegills. Even if the fish are small, it's the action and entertainment that count. But kids like variety, too. After awhile, they want to know what else is swimming down there. That's where crappies come in.

There's just something fascinating about a crappie. Those flashy, silvery sides speckled with black. That longer, leaner form compared to the stocky sunfish you're used to. And the wide, papery mouth that was custom-made for slurping in minnows, bugs and plankton.

My boyhood crappie experiences happened down on Yellowstone Lake

TIM LENCKI

The Round-Up Is On! Get outside with your kids

Adventure Lodge Kids (ALK) and Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park of Fremont will host the second annual “White Bass Roundup,” scheduled for May 14, 2011, on the Wolf River in Fremont.

Adventure Lodge Kids is a non-profit organization in the Waupaca area. Its purpose is to encourage parents to participate in outdoor sporting activities with their kids. ALK is an outlet that provides equipment, locations, guides,

education and encouragement to kids 8-16 years old along with a parent/mentor so they can enjoy successful hunting and fishing adventures together.

Last year's roundup featured 22 kids, each paired with a professional or experienced volunteer guide along with a parent/mentor for an exciting day of fun and fishing. Prizes were given out for the heaviest stringers of white bass and the two heaviest white bass.



This year's roundup has openings for 50 teams of kids ages 8-16 each with one parent or mentor. Thanks to many area businesses, free participation gifts such as fishing poles, tackle boxes (loaded with lures, jigs and hooks) and gift certificates from Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park, will be given to each kid in the tournament.

Adventure Lodge Kids is seeking experienced volunteer sportsmen to help with the event and also to help

parents guide kids in the outdoors throughout the year. If you are an experienced fisherman or hunter, check out the website AdventureLodgeKids.org and consider one of the many volunteer opportunities.

You could help inspire parents in your community to spend more time with their kids outdoors. *W*

To get involved, contact Scott at AdventureLodgeKids@AdventureLodgeKids.org 715.412.1268 or volunteer@adventurelodgekids.org.

S. WILKERSON

Surplus Firearms

What it lacked in looks it made up for in performance

Only the Japanese have, arguably, made more hideous-looking military firearms than the English. Compare the svelte lines of the United States Model 1903 Springfield to the ungainly-looking British Enfield Mk III. The Springfield looks like it belongs next to 011Venus in the Pantheon. The Enfield, more like a mud fence in a pig pen.

The positively sensuous lines of the Luger have driven men crazy since its debut over 100 years ago. Military leaders from around the world were smitten, and eventually overcome, by the P08's sheer sexiness and claimed her as their own. Nations as diverse as the practical Swiss and the sexually repressed Persians positively swooned over the Luger and bought and/or built them in great numbers. While armament procurers were attracted to the Luger like magnets, they shunned the early British automatic pistol of the day, the Webley & Scott Pistol Self-Loading .455 Mark I N, like an ugly stepsister.

If British rifles and pistols were homely—and they were—their revolvers were positively unsightly, unfit for polite society. The Colt Single Action Army is still in production by its originator (as are countless clones) more than a century after it was introduced, not because it remains a practical weapon, but because it is so good-looking. Who remembers the Beaumont-Adams, a British revolver from the same era? Practically no one. How many companies make replicas of that homely weapon? Not a one, even though the Beaumont may have been a better weapon than the Colt.

British guns look like British beer tastes: awful. They're also like castor oil; they're good for you. Warm beer may not be appealing to the palate, but it will get you drunk just the same. British guns won't win any beauty contests, but they will outshoot most of their competitors.

Nearly the first million Model 1903 Springfields made over a 15-year period are potentially unsafe to shoot. Their receivers were heat-treated improperly and could fragment like a grenade when fired.

Look at a Luger cross-eyed or fire it even with the smallest amount of grit in its action, and chances are it will jilt you. As for the semiautomatic Webley and Scott Self-Loading .455 pistol, who knows what it would do? The chances of coming across one are about as likely as finding ammunition for it, which is to say, next to nil.

With a little time invested in the search, however, you can find the most common of all Webley revolvers: the supremely reliable Mark IV and Mark IV No. 2. With all of the certainty of next month's Lindsay Lohan scandal, you can bet your Mark IV will shoot. You can also count on having a hard time finding the .38 S & W round

that it fires. This cartridge is not the same as the .38 Special, which is a much higher powered round and unsafe to fire in the Mark IVs. The .38 S & W round is available if you look real hard and go for about \$50 for a box of 50 when it can be found. That is the reason why I didn't purchase the one featured in this article, a primo specimen from 1943 and an uncommon model at that, because it was made to shoot in single- and double-action.

Webleys may have been ugly, but commercial examples were beautifully finished. Not so the wartime models. Smoothly polished, glossy blued finishes gave way to deep machining marks over the entire surface of the gun, and rust bluing was replaced by something known as "oil blackening," which, while more attractive than paint, does nothing for the gun's aesthetics. Lest anyone think that the quality of their guns was, unbeknownst to them, deteriorating, Webley stamped their World War II era revolvers with the phrase "Wartime Finish."

Many Mark IVs were converted to double-action only and were made that way beginning early in the war. This was supposedly because tank crew members complained that the hammer was getting stuck on their gear. I suspect the truth is that this was an early appearance of the Nanny State in England. Some British predecessor of Ralph Nader probably thought the 6-pound single-action trigger was too prone to go off unexpectedly in the hands of excitable soldiers. Eliminate the single-action function and leave the 20 plus-pound double-action intact and . . . voila! A safer gun.

Shooting double-action only Colts or Smith & Wesson revolvers with their smooth 12-pound trigger pulls accurately is difficult enough without a lot of practice, which is why no one shoots them that way except in an emergency. Imagine trying to accomplish the same feat with the Mark IV's double-action trigger of over 20 pounds. Since the revolver tested in this edition provided us with a choice, we exercised it, because, really, isn't that what capitalism is all about?

Whether the original Mark IV or the double-action only No. 2 version, both feature break-open actions for loading and unloading. Unlike typical Colt and Smith & Wessons, which have swing-out cylinders, the Mark IV barrel and cylinder break open together. This is a two-hand operation and certainly not as quick as swing-open designs, but it is rugged and reliable.

In addition to choosing whether to shoot in single- or double-action, other choices abounded at my gun range. Given the option of shooting at 15, 25 or 50 yards, I chose 15. Why? Because no one has a chance in heck of hitting anything with this gun at 50 yards in single-action, let alone



"The Webley is actually a pleasant revolver to shoot. Recoil is mild, and the sights, although fixed, worked well for my aged eyes."

double-action.

Even if you did, 620 fps at 260 foot pounds of energy at the muzzle is not exactly the round you would hunt water buffalo or engage someone bent on doing you bodily harm. If you shoot at someone 25 yards away from you, the prosecuting attorney will suggest you had other non-lethal options available, like running away or fishing your cell phone out of your pocket to call 911. In an emergency situation, 15 yards is about the farthest you will want to shoot at something and expect to hit it. In fact, there is a lot of research that most gun fights occur at seven yards or less. That range is too easy, even for me, so I selected 15.

The Webley is actually a pleasant revolver to shoot. Recoil is mild, and the sights, although fixed, worked well for my aged eyes. Actually, quite a bit better than just about any handgun I currently own. Loading and shell extraction are easy with the break-open design, and the grip fit my hands well. The trigger pull was smooth, albeit rather heavy.

No one should judge the accuracy of a revolver based on my shooting it, so we won't even go there. Others, more skillful than I, have reported groups in the three-inch range, which is pretty darn good for a weapon made at the height of World War II.

Webley stopped making its last variant of the Mark IV in the early 1980s. As usual, I did not have the money to purchase one, even though they were fairly inexpensive. The gun's heyday was long overdue by World War II, but it remains an interesting weapon and a reminder of the British firearm industry, which is now all but extinct; the victim of repressive gun laws and archaic designs.

The British continue to make beer, however, and now actually drink it cold. Still tastes like swill.

Some things never change. 

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

ANDREA ELVERMAN

The Turtle Whisperer

Ol' Grand Daddy lives on

With this year's turtle trapping well behind me, it's time to share another turtle adventure. In addition to trapping, butchering and finally dining on my snappers, I also am called upon to rescue them. Most people refer to me as "The Turtle Lady." But when I'm doing a "rescue", I will refer to myself jokingly as the "Turtle Whisperer."

My sister-in-law had called and left several messages on my landline, cell phone and at work. I'd left work early for the day to get some shopping done. When I got to my truck, the phone was beeping away. I quickly called her back and learned of a turtle emergency. In her neighbor's driveway was a large snapping turtle, and it needed to be saved before it traveled onto the busy road.

I asked her how big it was, and she stated the top shell was probably 18-20 inches from top to bottom. Having heard about giant snappers numerous times in the past, only to find dinner-plate sized turtles, I reminded her that the largest one I had ever caught was about 14 inches. She then admitted she may have exaggerated a bit, but it was big. I raced to catch and save the giant snapper of legends.

Upon arriving, they were all standing around a large green recycle bin that had been placed over the top in order to keep the critter from racing away at a turtle's pace. I lifted the bin, and to my extreme surprise, this turtle was big; and I mean big. This was the largest snapper I had ever seen! This old man measured 21 inches and weighed about 40 pounds. He was completely blind in one eye and had obviously been through a fair share of battles. Several inches of his tail were missing at the end. In order to lift him, I needed to use both my hands around the base of him.

I dragged the turtle over to my Ford Explorer, trying to figure out where to put him. I usually put the snappers in old pillowcases, thus minimizing stress. He couldn't go in the back because he would be able to crawl everywhere, and I hadn't

brought any pillowcases.

The front passenger side on the floor was the best choice, and I could put the recycle bin over top. The three ladies were both excited and concerned, repeatedly telling me to be careful. Repeatedly. My tongue was tickled with sarcasm, but I bit it. Did anyone think for a moment I wouldn't be careful? I've always been very clear about the damage one snapper's bite could inflict. You always save the beer drinking for after the trapping is done and the turtles are put away.

Operation: Turtle Relocation

After much wrangling, sweating and tongue biting, the old Grand Daddy was in and the bin on top. Now, where was I to relocate him? He needed a really good home to live out his days. Where would the food be plentiful with no chance of being caught on someone's hook? Remember, he was blind in one eye. "Let's make this easy for him," I said to myself.

I have permission at so many private properties with ponds and sloughs, I had to get my list of them to determine his new address. The ponds to which I have permission to access are so many, that I've taken to naming them.

After deciding on my handsome old turtle's new address, I called "Fearless Husband" to let him know which pond I might end up "floating" in, in the event I didn't get home. I was on the way to the "No Fishin' Pond."

Several years back I'd scored this very special permission. It was a gravel pit turned horse farm. The owners go out each night at 5 p.m. and feed the fish two or three loaves of bread. The pond is stocked with bass, bluegills and catfish. The bluegills are near trophy in size due to the intense pressure from the bass and cats.

There are also painted turtles that come to feast in the crystal-clear waters. The geese and ducks join the banquet, too. You only need to step on the pier and the vibrations ring



"I gave Grand Daddy a nudge, and he slowly crept into the pristine waters; the fish were watching and inspecting him."

the dinner bell. The fish come from every direction and wait like piranhas for flesh. No one is allowed to fish or trap the property ... except me.

I'm permitted to trap snappers at their pond, but I never asked about stocking them. No one was home when I arrived so this old man was going to be snuck in. Snappers need to be carried by the tail and away from one's body in order to avoid being bitten on the leg, the most common place to be attacked.

Due to his weight, he had to be dragged down the hill by his tail and backward. I just couldn't lift him and hold him away from my leg. At the pond's edge I spun him around, bracing myself with one foot on the pier. This rang the dinner bell. Fish everywhere! I gave Grand Daddy a nudge, and he slowly crept into the pristine waters; the fish were watching and inspecting him.

He must have thought he died and went to Heaven, with hundreds of bluegills, some bass and a handful of 10- to 15-pound catfish swimming about watching the new resident. At some point, when he was 3-4 feet down, he turned to me and I heard him say, "I'm not worthy, I'm not worthy!"

I stopped by a few weeks later to re-secure my permission at this very pond as I do each year. They told me a tale of a giant snapper, the biggest they'd ever seen, sitting on the grass near the pond. They said if I wanted to trap him, it was no problem; they

didn't want that big turtle eating their baby geese. I put a trap out there in the reeds for several days, checking it morning and night. They asked if I had any luck. I explained that despite my best efforts, he was just a smart turtle, but I was going to keep trying. I didn't have the heart to tell them the truth and the whole truth—there was never any bait in that trap! *W*

Andrea Elverman is an outdoorswoman who enjoys bass fishing, cat fishing, pheasant hunting, turtle trapping, skull collecting, hiking, morel mushroom hunting and securing permission with private landowners to do these things. She takes young children on these adventures and teaches them about wildlife and nature.

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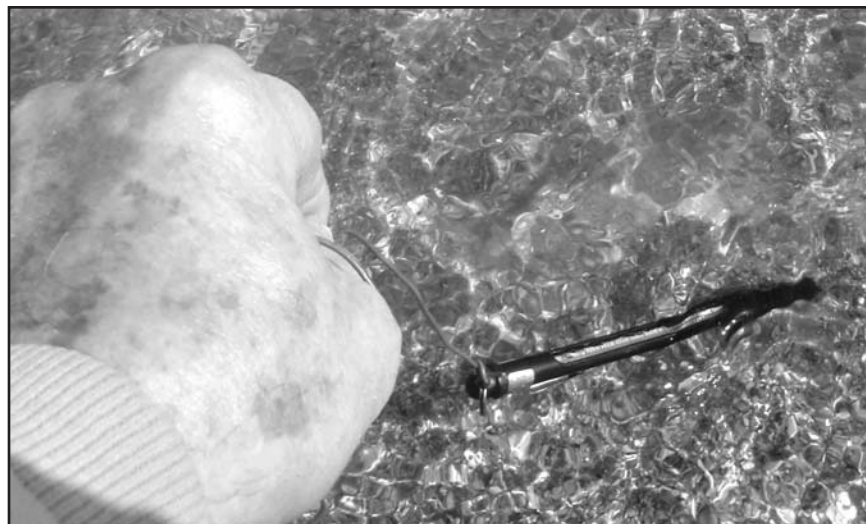
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JERRY KIESOW

Fly Fishing Wisconsin

A thermometer in your tackle box



According to the author, a thermometer is one of the most important tools an angler can carry in his or her tackle box. Know the water temp and you'll know what the fish are doing.

Weather dictates much of our outdoor activities, and that same weather has a lot to do with what the fish are doing, too. Specifically, in our streams and rivers, water depth, current/force, plus temperature are the main influencing factors to what fish do—and when.

Depth and current are obvious. Let's concentrate on how water temperatures affect those finned critters we pursue.

Fish are cold-blooded creatures. This means their metabolism is controlled by whatever temperatures their environment imposes. Generally, but not always, warm and moderate means a good active life; too hot or too cold means a temporary, sluggish existence.

There are, of course, differences of temperature preferences within all species of fish. These differences are what we fishermen and women need to know, because they can be a decisive factor to our success.

I won't go into fish activity under the ice for two reasons: First, that season is over, and second, I don't ice fish, so I really don't have any experience.

Fishing for Temperature

What we will look at is which species is doing what, beginning with right after, or as, the ice goes out.

An active coldwater fish is the

northern pike. It is a frequent target for those who walk on firm water. Come early spring, as soon as that water becomes liquid, or sometimes just a bit before, the pike move into shallow and/or flooded marshes or bays to spawn—sometimes as shallow as a foot. They are not there long, maybe three days to a week.

What water temperature sets them off to spew their eggs and sperm? Thirty-four to 40 degrees. From then until the water rises into the low 70s, northerns will remain active. They will leave the flooded areas and bays, but not go far. New weeds and woody structures will serve them well until the water gets too warm. Then they retreat to deeper, cooler temperatures. If that isn't available, they sulk and feed less.

Another member of the *Esox* family, the muskellunge, is not as active in cold water, and does not spawn until the water reaches 50–60 degrees. They prefer deeper water, 4–6 feet, with muck bottoms and dead vegetation into which to drop their eggs. Muskies, like their cousins, will stick around structure as long as the temperatures don't get too high—above 75 degrees—and the forage base remains. If either the water temp rises or the forage moves, the fish move, too.

Walleyes also spawn early in a

variety of habitat—rocks to marsh. Some travel as far as 100 miles to find the ideal place. Often they spawn in one night. When the water is between 40–50 degrees, they simply “dance” and leave. However, the water temperature does have a bearing on how fast their eggs hatch. According to data from the DNR, “The eggs hatch in 26 days at 40 degrees, in 21 days at 50–55 degrees, and in 7 days at 57 degrees.”

Neither northerns, muskies or walleyes guard their eggs. (No wonder they have a low survival rate.)

Other coldwater fish that spawn and become active early are trout and salmon.

Spring “steelheaders” know that once the river reaches 40 degrees, the chances of catching active fish in the tributaries of Lake Michigan increase. These fish can be found in

water? Not really. The fish I attempt to put on the end of my tippet most often are the crappie, bluegill and bass.

Warm Water Lovers

Interestingly, bass spawn when the water is in the low to mid 60s, as opposed to panfish, which prefer the upper 60s. Maybe that's why I have so much fun with the fly rod during the catch-and-release bass season, catching smallmouths along with ‘gills and crappies.

Crappies get together when water reaches the mid 60s, while the bluegills “nest” after the water reaches 67 degrees. Bluegills, however, might continue to propagate until the water temperature reaches 80 degrees (which is why we find eggs in those lovely, cooperative, good-tasting fish almost all summer).

“... as few as 2 degrees can make the difference between drowning bait or washing a lure, or taking fish from our hooks.”

the in-flowing waters until the water warms into the mid 50s. Then the run is over, and the fish return to the cooler waters of the big pond.

Brown and brook trout fall into the same temperature ranges, but spawn in fall with the fall run steelhead.

Salmon also spawn in fall, but water temperature is not the main trigger for spawning. Age and water flow set them off and running. Salmon do not return to the lake. They die and add nutrients to the rivers in which they try to give new life. (Unfortunately, Wisconsin has no natural reproducing streams.)

Water temperature for salmon is, however, important in the big lake. Trollers look for them in the 50- to 57-degree temperature range.

So, do all fish spawn in cold/cool

What does this all mean to those of us who are looking for a “fight,” and/or a meal of fresh filets? It means that from the time the seasons begin, the use of a thermometer can make life a whole lot more fun and productive.

It's well documented, by myself and fellow anglers who consult our thermometers on a regular basis, that as few as 2 degrees can make the difference between drowning bait or washing a lure, or taking fish from our hooks.

So remember, to find fish, submerge a thermometer. 

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 e-mail at mmrmsprg8@wi.rr.com.

KEVIN MICHALOWSKI

Dog Talk

Sit: Simple yet important training



According to the author, training puppies to sit is easy. It gets tougher when the dog has been allowed to ignore the “sit” command for a while.

I have said it before, and, if my dogs are any indication, the command I need to work on this spring is “sit.” I have countless excuses, but right now, as I type this, I have two dogs that are challenging my authority when I command “sit.” If you want complete control of your dog, the one command you must teach to perfection is “sit.” Suddenly, I don’t have it anymore. It’s time I get it back.

A dog that sits on command, without hesitation, will not bolt into traffic, cause problems in the hunting field or get out of control when children or other animals are nearby. “Sit” also serves as the foundation for teaching several other commands.

Let’s get back to the basics. All you’ll need to teach your dog to sit is a whistle and a leash. If the yard is muddy, I’ll start in the garage or the sidewalk in front of the house. What matters is I have control of the dog and its attention.

Start with the leash securely clipped to the dog’s collar. Now start walking. This will get the dog on its feet and provide a bit of an initial distraction that the dog must overcome. After a few steps, stop, give one blast on your whistle and say, “Sit.” Then, while holding the leash tightly, gently but firmly push down on the dog’s

butt, directing the animal to the sitting position. As soon as the dog’s hindquarters hit the ground, pet him on the head and offer lots of praise.

This type of training actually teaches two things at once. By using the leash and taking a few steps before giving the command, the dog is also learning to sit at your side each time you stop walking, which is very nice when you’re out for a stroll. But let’s get back to the original lesson.

You’ve commanded, “sit” and guided the dog to the sitting position. Now you praise it. With young dogs, or untrained older dogs, this praise will be enough to cause the dog to break from the sitting position. That’s fine. Don’t get upset. This is all part of the training.

As soon as the dog breaks, give a short tug on the leash (this is your correction), and, if you need to, push down on the dog’s butt to return the animal to the sitting position.

Now, stand still and count silently to five or 10 before praising the dog. If the dog moves before you are done counting, do not repeat the command, but do repeat the correction. By doing this, you’re teaching the dog to sit until you say it’s time to move again.

After you’ve counted to five or 10, praise the dog lavishly and repeat the process. Your goal is to slowly increase the amount of time you require your dog to sit in one place before you offer praise.

During the first day of training, you might issue the command a dozen times, each time counting to 10. The next day, go through the same sequence but count to 20. In most cases, you’ll be able to quit pushing down on the dog’s butt after about the third day. By that time, the dog understands what “sit” means and is now just waiting for the praise and your permission to once again move about.

Patience And Practice

At this point, both you and your pet are learning about patience. It’s difficult to imagine anything more boring than standing beside a dog that’s trained well enough to sit still for several minutes. But you have to do it to keep the dog from moving until you say it’s time to move.

Practice daily until it is mastered (you’ll be surprised how quickly a dog will catch on), but also include some playtime. At the end of each session, wrestle around on the ground with the dog or toss a retrieval dummy or a Frisbee a few feet away and let the dog get used to picking it up. The dog needs this kind of fun and affection after a training session; it helps build the bond between you and the dog. It also gives you the opportunity to sneak in some very important

training while you play.
It’s called training with (or through) distractions. After you’ve finished the bread and butter of your “real” training session and you’ve decided to spend a little bit of playtime with the dog, go ahead and get rough. Keep the dog on the leash, but play around. Chase the dog. Let it chase you. Wrestle a bit. Roll toys around. Do whatever it is you and your dog do for fun. Then, just as the dog’s really getting into it—really having a great time—spring a good firm “sit” command.

To encourage compliance with this sort of snap command, make sure that you stop moving

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“If you want complete control of your dog, the one command you must teach to perfection is ‘sit.’”

.....

around as soon as you issue the command. It’s not really fair to expect a dog in the early stages of training to sit still while you’re still running around playing games. That’s just too much distraction at this stage of the training. The goal of this type of snap command is to remind the dog that “sit” is an absolute command that must be obeyed without hesitation each time it is given.

By giving the command during playtime, you’re reinforcing on the dog the idea that you set the schedule, you make the decisions and you give the orders. This is done with the leash still attached to the dog’s collar so you can get control quickly if you need to and administer a correction if the dog fails to respond.

The sequence for praising the dog following a “snap” command is just the same as before. At first you can praise right away if you want to, but by this time, your dog will likely understand that “sit” means he is not to move until you say so. If that’s the case and you can spring a snap sit command and your dog remains rock steady for five minutes or more, you are done.

Sounds easy, but it takes some work. Still, it’s worth it when everything works just right. 

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

DICK HENSKKE

Out and About

Old guys rule

It's time to give you an update on the "not so over-the-hill gang," and what we encountered on our outdoor travels, so you can plan your own great adventures.

Let's start with hunting in Canada. Ontario is cutting huge amounts of timber, and in its place the "bush," as they call it, is providing great forage for deer, grouse and bear. Moose also benefit, but the area we drive to north of Ignase is flooded with local hunters who get first time choices to hunt.

North of the Border

Fish, Birds and Bears

Our first trip was a bear/grouse/fishing outing north of Ignase. Grouse hunting opens mid-September, and although there's a lot of hunting pressure the opening week, you'll still find a lot of birds along the gravel roads. Ruffed grouse make up 40 percent of the population and spruce grouse the rest.

Spruce grouse are not the brightest candles on a cake and often refuse to flush from the ground or trees. Lots of locals use a .22 rifle, which is legal. Licenses are \$106 plus a \$25 gun permit you'll buy at the border. We also fished, which was a \$37 license. You would be smart to bring a boat and motor.

We stayed at the Silver Dollar Inn for \$55 per night. The owners, Marty and Theresa Brindley, will steer you to great hunting spots and hot fishing lakes in the area. They have a very nice store/restaurant. They also have bear hunting services. Marty provides bait and bait sites. You provide stands and

transportation. Licenses are \$212, and the bow hunters all shot beautiful bears last year.

Whitetails

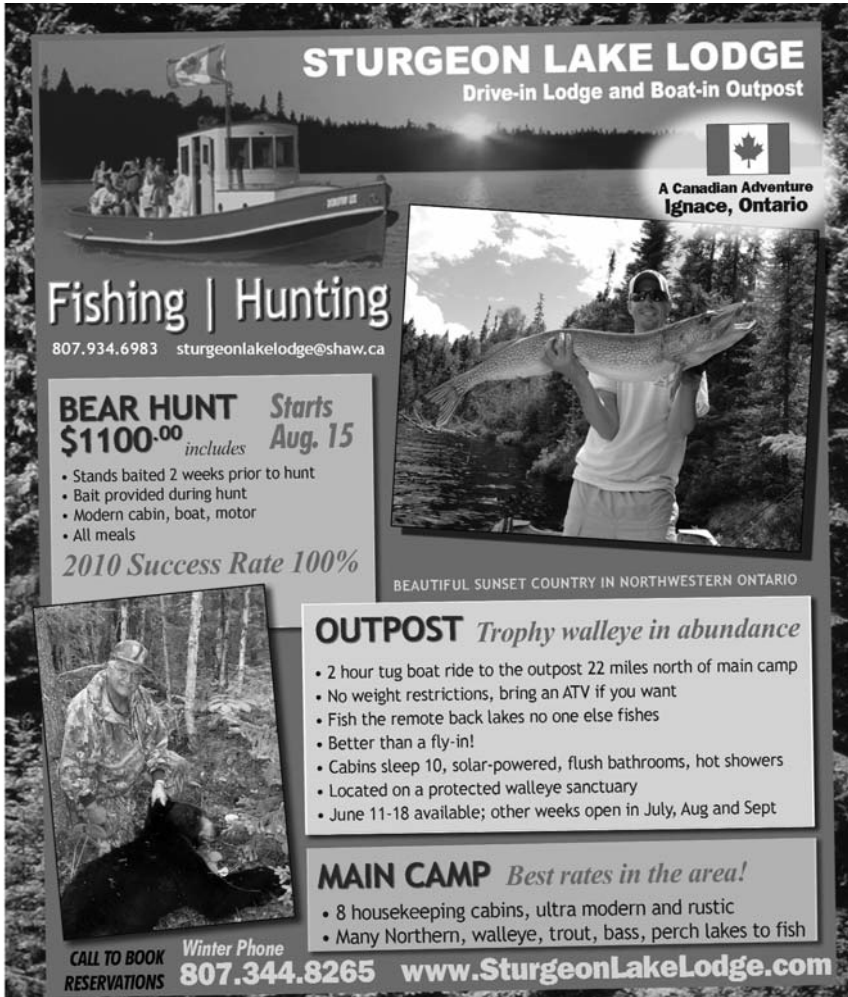
Ontario has also developed a great whitetail deer herd because of the clear-cutting. Areas near Dryden and west are yielding huge bucks. We drove to Eagle Lake and stayed at Birch Dale Lodge. It was \$500 per man per week, and they showed us areas to hunt. We called and shot one good buck north of the area. It was pre-rut and very little action. If we go again, it would be late in the rut. We saw lots of grouse, little bear sign and lots of locals hunting and claiming the best public areas. The word is out!

More Fish, More Bears

This fall we are going to Sturgeon Lake Lodge to fish and bear hunt. Sturgeon has a great lake trout fishery. The owners direct you to other lakes for walleyes and northerns where they have boats, but you can also bring your own rig. They charge \$1,200 per week, including meals, plus your own licenses. They provide stands and active bait sites. And you can view bears on the Internet via trail cameras ahead of time to help build excitement.

Fishing, Again!

Canadian fishing? We fished at a "boat in cabin" on Vista Lake in June. It's a long, narrow drainage lake loaded with walleyes and an average amount of northerns. We took up salted minnows, but it was jigs and nightcrawlers that did the job. They have quality boats with boat seats. We rented their 4-stroke motors, and



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the trip cost about \$700 a man for the week. If you bring your own boat, you would save \$275.

In August we fished at Wildwood Lodge on Savant Lake for trophy trout, northerns and walleyes. They provide a great trip with bait, big boats and Honda motors. Cisco-sized minnows caught the huge walleyes. It's big water and windy. Bring about \$800, warm clothes and a great fish locator. You get there on all-terrain vehicles, which saves the plane costs.

On Home Ground

Western Muleys

Hunting in the United States was great! We went to Meeker, Colorado and shot three mule deer bucks. The cost is \$1,500 for a gun tag or \$1,200 with a bow, plus a \$300 license. We saw hundreds of deer. Use the Internet to find an outfitter; you may need preference points in some areas. This fall we are planning a mule deer/antelope hunt in southeastern Montana.

Waterfowl

Duck hunting in North Dakota was a treat. We got sick of eating

duck stew, duck spaghetti, poppers and skewered duck. We hunt west of Jamestown. Use the Internet to find a place to stay. Allow some time to scout the hundreds of public areas, ponds and lakes available.

Upland Delight

South Dakota pheasant hunting was cold in December. We found that the dogs, two English Setters, work well in the snow. Farmers would give access, lodging was easy to find and most hunters have given up by then. We hunted the northwest area.

That's it for the year; however, I'm still thinking about the wolf that took a piece of the buck I shot during the black powder season in Vilas County.

Remember, all these adventures were found on the Internet or from previous fishing and hunting trips. I'll leave you with a few names: some cheap, some not so cheap.

See you in the woods! *GH*

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

CANADA

Silver Dollar (bear, grouse, fishing): 807.934.6977

Wildwood on Savant Lake (fishing): 715.385.3754 summer; 480.980.8553 winter.

Birchdale Lodge, Eagle Lake (deer and muskies): 866.227.5262

Sturgeon Lake Lodge (fishing, bear, grouse): 807.344.8265

L&M Fly In Outposts (fishing): .888.867-3335

MONTANA

Powder River Outfitters (antelope, mule and white-tailed deer): 406.436.2538

TOM CARPENTER

Badger Birds

Eastern Bluebird



Sky-blue above and rusty-red below with a creamy white belly, the sight of an Eastern Bluebird makes your heart fly. Because a bluebird is a member of the thrush family, the bluebird sings beautifully—a lovely and happy lilt that fills your heart. Bluebirds hunt insects and grubs with a vengeance, making them gardeners’ friends and farmers’ allies. Across Wisconsin, bluebirds inhabit open areas such as meadows, pastures, golf courses, parks and big yards.


Listen for the beautiful song: a lovely, harmonious and musical melody you might describe as churlee-churlee-churlee.

Look for bluebirds perched on fences, trees or old snags, where they wait to flutter out and snatch flying insect prey. Bluebirds also hover low over the ground to hunt for caterpillars and grubs.

Feed bluebirds grubs or mealworms in

spring and early summer, in a rimmed tray or platform feeder.

Attract cavity-nesting bluebirds with a good quality wood nesting box with an opening size of 1½ inches, placed 4–6 feet above the ground. Face the opening north or east to avoid the hot sun. Evict unwanted sparrows and other nesters; they can find another spot. Leave old trees and dead limbs up as long as safe, for they provide natural nesting cavities.

Did you know that the far West has the Western Bluebird (deep-colored chestnut breast) and the Rocky Mountains feature the Mountain Bluebird (pale blue chest)? All three species behave similarly. 

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

SURA, from page 2

Locations

The biggest challenge facing the shore angler is finding areas that are accessible to the public. Most lakes have public boat launches and many others have public parks. These areas are good starting places. Walking these areas can produce fish, especially if they have structure. Look for weeds, rocks, docks or downed timber.

Fish these areas thoroughly because these fish might be on beds and are unwilling to move far to strike your bait. When you’re fishing, make sure to fish ahead of you so you don’t spook fish before you have the opportunity to catch them.

Other areas that
hold spring bass are
creek channels,
marinas and canals.
These areas warm early
and will attract bait.
Bass will follow the
food and might even
spawn in these areas. Windswept shorelines and points are good areas, too. Wind stirs up microorganisms, which attract bait and bass. Lake maps are a good resource for finding these areas.

If the lakes in your area have limited shore access, get a pair of waders and walk the shores away from the public land. You can fish the entire lake legally as long as you’re in the water; however, check with your local warden or police department about crossing manmade obstructions on private land.

Equipment and Tactics

When fishing from shore, it can be difficult to carry multiple rods and tackle bags. So, bring one rod that can be used with several baits. A medium-action spinning rod spooled with 10-pound mono will work well. This combo can be used for a

variety of tactics. My favorite tactic is casting stickbaits. These are excellent early season baits that can be worked a number of ways to get fish to bite.

My favorite is the Rapala X-Rap because of its “castability.” I like the No. 8 size; it doesn’t dive deep and has the small profile I prefer in the spring. My favorite colors are perch, clown and ghost. Use natural colors in clean water and bright colors in dirty water.

A bait I began using last year that works well is a 3- to 4-inch swim shad. Rig these soft plastics on a 1/8- or 1/4-ounce jig head. Brands like Berkley and Trigger X both make these baits. Pearl is my favorite color, although other colors work as well.

Fish both stickbaits and swim shads with a steady retrieve, or jerk them in for a more erratic retrieve — both work well. If one doesn’t work, try the other.

Fish are moody this time of year and might want a specific action. Other baits that work well are “rattle” baits such as the Rat-L-Traps, “wacky worms” like Senkos, Texas-Rigged worms and spinnerbaits.

Because these bass are in different stages of the spawn cycle, fishing the same areas with different baits can often yield more bass. Start with search baits like the stickbait or rattle baits. Later, come back through these areas with finesse baits like the wacky worm. Mobility is the key; pick a few of these baits in your favorite colors, put them in a small shoulder bag or backpack and get fishing.

Conclusion

No matter where you live in Wisconsin, there are places you can find to access bass from shore.



There’s no need for big, fancy boats when searching for early summer bass. A good pair of shoes and the willingness to walk have proven highly effective for the author.

Even though you only have a few weeks each year to enjoy this fishing, get out there and try it. Do a little walking for bass and I’ll bet you’ll have the bass eating out of your hands.

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

OWO STAFF

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.

WHEELYBIRD AUTO-FEED TRAP

For \$425, the WheelyBird takes mobility to the next level with lightweight construction and a two-wheeled frame with pull handle. The trap is designed for easy loading in and out of a vehicle, but features similar speed, capacity and other safety features as its big cousins.



"If you're looking to buy an electric trap thrower, this one is a good choice. It's compact, lightweight and ultra-mobile. What the WheelyBird lacks in size and weight, it makes up for with power — targets can be launched upwards of 55 yards!" — J.J.R.

ChampionTarget.com

COTTON CORDELL WALLY STINGER

For \$6, walleye fishermen will love the new Wally Stinger. It comes in two sizes and 18 color patterns. The smaller one measures 3½ inches and dives to about 10 feet when cast and down to 20 feet when trolling. The larger Wally Stinger measures 5 inches in length and dives to 15 feet on the cast and as deep as 25 feet when trolled.



"A close cousin of the classic Wally Diver, this new lure has a stretched-out, beefed-up design to become a deeper-running lure with a bigger, longer profile. Great color patterns and high-quality components ensure that the new Wally Stinger will not disappoint." — D.E.

CottonCordellLures.com

IRISH SETTER RUTMASTER RUBBER PAC BOOTS

For \$150, The Irish Setter Rutmaster 17-inch Pac Hunting Boots are great for turkey hunting or early-season deer hunting. Features include scent-free technology, waterproof rubber construction and Mud Claw self-cleaning outsoles. They are non-insulated and available in Realtree APG camouflage.



"What I like most about these boots is the ExoFlex Fit System. They fit great, are easy to put on and take off. ExoFlex technology on the back of the boot (near the ankle) expands to accommodate plenty of ankle movement. I wore them every day for 3 full days of turkey hunting, and I loved every minute of it." — J.J.R.

IrishSetterBoots.com

UNCLE HENRY'S LOCKBACK CUB

For \$14, The Uncle Henry's LB1 Cub from Schrade features a handsome Rosewood handle, key-ring carry system and clip-style, locking blade—in a super small size. The blade is just 1.5 inches long with an overall length of just 3.8 inches.



"I love this little knife. I have one hanging off the keychain of my car keys. When airport security confiscated it because I forgot to take it off and leave it at home, I immediately went out and got a new one. It's so small, yet very useful. I carry it everywhere I go." — J.J.R.

TaylorBrandsLLC.com

CARBON EXPRESS MAXIMA HUNTER

For \$80 a 6-pack, The Maxima Hunter maintains its heritage of quality and adds the benefits of "Dual Spine Weight Forward" technology from Carbon Express. This premium-grade, 100-percent carbon arrow is proven and reliable in the field. And, they are available in Mossy Oak Treestand camouflage.

"Carbon Express is a leader in arrow technology and innovation. High-quality materials and super tight manufacturing tolerances in straightness weight and spine selection is what make this arrow perform so well." — L.H.

CarbonExpressArrows.com



NORTHLAND VEGAS GLITTER JIGS

For \$3.70 a 4-pack, Vegas Glitter Jigs from Northland Tackle feature sparkling metallic FishFlakesT that flash, shimmer and shine like the scales from a baitfish minnow. A barbed "bait collar" securely holds soft plastics and live

bait securely on the hook. These molded jigs are equipped with premium Matzuo Needle-Point hooks.

"Vegas Glitter Jigs are all I use when I fish for walleyes in Ontario, Canada. They definitely look different. Maybe the fish bite because they've never seen them before. Whatever it is ... they work. The jigs are available in three sizes and seven colors. I had the most luck with blue and purple." — J.J.R.

NorthlandTackle.com



Product 6-Pack contributors include Dick Ellis (D.E.), Luke Hartle (L.H.) and JJ Reich (J.J.R.). If you have recommendations for good gear that works for you, tell us about it: e-mail ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.



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- Draw string for better fit
- Reinforced belt loops



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