

On Wisconsin Outdoors

with the

Dick Ellis Experts

- **Early Walleyes**
More drilling, more gold.
- **Wisconsin's Winter Gills**
Crystal Lake, looking deep
- **A Great Lake's Roadblock**
Cutting off tributary browns
- **Badger Basement Projects**
Specialized jig making,
redo the bamboo
- **Hardwater Danger**
Soft ice, hard lessons
- **Wintertime Small Game**
Rabbit, squirrel, grouse, fox
- **Rut Camp Recap**
Success, failure, and a
few good laughs
- **6000 Miles to
100 Percent Success**
Last chance bear fills 14 tags
- **From the OWO Gun Cabinet**
Air rifle past, sounds of silence,
martial arts lessons
- **Something to be Proud of**
Wisconsin youth and the
shooting sports



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PHOTO BY DICK ELLIS

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GARY ENGBERG

Gary Engberg Outdoors

Crystal Lake means bluegills

Serious bluegill anglers in southern Wisconsin usually go to the Madison Chain of Lakes for America's favorite eating panfish. Lake Mendota and Lake Waubesa are known to produce big bluegills. But there is other water in this part of the state that gives up good bluegills in the winter without the crowds that can be found in the Madison area.

I recommend Dane County's Crystal Lake for above average bluegills without the crowds. Crystal Lake is located just outside Roxbury, about five miles outside Sauk City, Wisconsin. Local anglers have always fished this lake for bluegills, crappies, perch, and bullheads. But few anglers have been able to get out on Crystal Lake during the last few summers because of flooding from underground springs, changing agricultural practices, and being a seepage lake. The lake has had flooding for much of the last decade, inhibiting fishermen from launching boats at the public landing. Crystal Lake Road, the main road to the lake, has also been flooded, preventing lake access.

Come wintertime there's usually a steady stream of traffic heading north from Madison if the bite is slow there. But the number of anglers on Crystal is nothing compared to the Madison Chain. The bluegills averaged 8 1/2 inches on Lake Mendota with many in the 9- to 10-inch range a couple of winters ago. However, this great action stopped and that brought more anglers to Crystal, Fish, and Lake Wisconsin. I'm positive that the large numbers of anglers and the easy bite on a big year-class of fish took



Wally Banfi with a nice bluegill.



A good day on Crystal Lake.

its toll on the big bluegills.

I try to tell anglers that they don't always have to catch a limit. Catch enough fish for a few meals and then go fishing again for a few more. The limit of 25 panfish could even be lowered to save some brood stock and fish for the other guy. Catching and cleaning 10 to 15 bluegills, crappies, and perch is plenty for a couple of great meals. It's possible to fish out any body of water no matter the size and the unlimited number of fish many believe there are.

With the slowdown on Madison's Lake Mendota, last winter more ice fishermen began driving the 25 miles to Crystal Lake, and the lake responded with some very good fishing for bluegills and crappies. The bluegills were not as large and thick as Mendota's, but they averaged around 8 inches. I've always been amazed at both the numbers and size of the bluegills and crappies that come out of this 500-acre lake. The Wisconsin DNR says that the lake is very fertile and can take the pressure and harvest numbers.

Crystal Lake gets pressure in the spring because of its shallow depth (11 feet), which allows the lake to warm up quickly and produce thousands of bluegills and crappies to both shore and boat anglers. In the spring a shore angler can do as well as someone in a boat. But the high water has flooded the boat landing and prevented most boat activity. There is no parking around the lake unless you want a \$200.00 fine.

What the high water and lack of access has done is tremendously reduce the number of fishermen. The number of boats this summer could be counted on one hand, but that will soon change with the beginning of ice fishing. I highly recommend fishing Crystal Lake this winter since there was little or no fishing pressure this past summer. There should be more and larger fish this winter for the ice angler.

Driving vehicles on the lake is allowed and not just ATVs or snowmobiles with

floatation devices like the other lakes in Dane County mandate. So as soon as there is safe ice there should be some of the better bluegill fishing in southern Wisconsin.

Try to fish the low-light periods of the day for the best action on Crystal Lake. I suggest a wide assortment of ice jigs like the Bait Rigs Cobra and Slo-Poke, Dots, Teardrops, Rat Finkies, Fatsos, and Shrimpos in different sizes and assorted colors. Berkley's Ice line works wonders along with many of the new plastics and Power Baits. Wax worms and spikes will catch fish and I recommend you bring both with you. As far as the rod and reel goes, there are many good ice combos (H.T., Berkley, and Frabill all make good ones) for under \$30.00 that work well, but always make sure that you have a spring bobber for detecting light biters.



Another nice bluegill.

The southwest corner of the lake has been rip-rapped and is a good place to start fishing, as is the east end with its numerous stumps and wood, which provide good cover and habitat year-round. Drill most of your holes when you first get on the ice and then hole-hop until you find the hot one! Crystal Lake should provide some great bluegill angling this winter, but don't be a fish hog. Save some for others.

Guides: Wally Banfi - 608.644.9823, Ron Barefield - 608.838.8756. Wilderness Fish and Game, Sauk City, Wisconsin - 608.643.5229. They carry live bait and anything that you may need for your fishing trip. Plus, they are a good source of information.



Visit Gary at garyengbergoutdoors.com.



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JOEL DEBOER

Ice Safety Learned The Hard Way

Lessons every hard water angler ought to know

The day began like so many early winter mornings of seasons past. Following quiet conversation over a good breakfast, we had traveled to the early ice lake promising great fishing and the start of another great ice fishing season.

If the rumors were true, we had indeed stumbled onto the true mother lode of relatively unknown and untouched monster first-ice pike. Grabbing nothing but a spud, I scurried out onto the lightly powdered surface. My gait was an awkward combination of speed walking and “skating” with my Iceman boots, a spectacle indeed. I’m not sure of the exact moment I realized I was in a bit of trouble, but it was just a tad before my icy dance floor disintegrated beneath me and I found myself plunging feet first into the frigid water.

Falling through the ice is a terrifying ordeal. At the initial realization of what is happening, the mind seems to fast forward to every horrific way the tribulation might possibly end. This process promptly ceases as the physical shock of being immersed in ice cold water expels just about every

thought, along with your breath, out into the brisk winter air. I was lucky. As waves of new sensations (all unpleasant, to say the least) washed over me, I came to realize that I was standing—albeit in chest-deep water.

Like the proverbial bull in a china shop, I panicked and thrashed, groping and grasping for anything to help clear me from my frosty predicament. After what seemed like an eternity, I was able to find ice with thickness and in water shallow enough to make my way out, my muscles seemingly losing strength and coordination by the millisecond. Needless to say, my trip was cut short as my soaked clothes were peeled from my skin and I was rushed back home wrapped in a blanket, the heater set on high and doing its best to belch out much needed warmth.

My approach to ice fishing safety, regardless of time of year, has changed drastically over the years fueled in large part by one of too many close calls as illustrated above. While I yet embrace the early and late ice seasons, if I have any doubt as to the safety of the ice, I merely will not venture forth.




The author's colleague and fellow fishing guide, Captain Brett Jolly, with a Frabill-caught first ice walleye.

Simply put, it is always better to live and fish another day.

Aside from steering clear of the ice altogether, there is no completely fool-proof method of determining ice safety. Springs, cracks, heaves, currents, and abnormalities all play an integral part in ice formation and safety and are not always evident to the naked eye. The risk factor becomes compounded with the added weight of multiple anglers, especially when vehicles are involved. Am I suggesting avoiding hard

water angling? Absolutely not. Rather, I'm stressing the importance of heading out prepared.

In addition to your bait and tackle, precautions such as wearing safety studs on boots and having ice picks and a whistle readily accessible should be routine. These items are available as part of Frabill's safety kit or you can assemble your own. A good length of rope attached to a throwable flotation device takes up minimal room in a sled or shack but can be a life saver in an emergency. Clothing can also act as a safety device, such as in the case of Clam's new IA Lift Suit, which includes an internal “lift” lining that provides added buoyancy for anglers finding themselves in the water instead of on top of the ice. The greatest safety tool of all, however, is your brain. If it doesn't look right or feel right, don't take the chance.

Have yourself a safe and warm ice fishing season. I'll see you on the water. 

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

DAVE DUWE

Ice Fishing Deep Water Bluegills

Benefits of locators

For many years my father and I spent countless hours ice fishing shallow weed flats. We were plagued with catching only 5- to 6-inch bluegills. Things have changed a lot, and with Vexilar and other fish locators, fishing success has become more common and consistent. The ability to use a fish locator to see underneath the ice opened up the deep water structure on lakes. Not only can the fish locators be used to see the structure such as weed growth and drop-offs, but also it can show the mood and depth range the panfish are using in the water column. With fish locators, ice fishermen can now work the deep water haunts where the bull bluegills reside.

When I say deep water locations, I'm

referring to anywhere between 18 - 30 feet. The deep water bluegill bite relies on clear water, enabling weeds to grow to depths of 20 - 27 feet. Due to the water clarity, the best times to fish are first light and dusk. The bluegills seem to be more active and less spooky. Some of the best deep water bluegill lakes in southeast Wisconsin are Little Cedar Lake in Washington County, Pleasant Lake in Walworth County, and Beaver Lake in Waukesha County. All three have clear water and roaming schools of bull bluegills.

Equipment needed for deep water bluegills includes a good fish locator. I prefer the Vexilar FL-12. Also required is a pole with a good spring bobber spooled with

continued on page 7

DICK ELLIS

On Wisconsin Outdoors

Blocking the Great Lakes' Express

Ten minutes into our roadblock carefully set to bring in and personally question any brown trout or Great Lakes rainbows that might be traveling on the Root River, Dave Sura's rod doubled over in a kind of silent scream; the first battle of the morning was on. Early indications said that the heavyweight fight could go the distance.

Over just six feet of water on ice in the heart of Racine, tributary angling expert Sura was able to catch a glimpse of the fish through his augured window. Something resembling a delighted man-scream with a dash of early-spring, Uecker-esque style play-by-play spilled from the angler as black graphite bent and bounced.



Just ten minutes into a brown trout hunt on the Root River, Dave Sura sets the hooks and begins to play a 13-pound seeforellen brown that hammered a power grub in six feet of water.

"Oh man, that's a real toad," he said, in a patented voice reserved only for the elite Lake Michigan tributary slob. "It's a very big brown trout."

Big, small, or somewhere in between, there wouldn't be many fish moving downstream or upstream on the Root without passing close by Sura's spawn sacs or rubbing his jigging presentation of Berkley power grubs.

"I like to set the tip-ups in a diagonal line or zigzag depending on how many people are fishing and how many lines we can le-

gally set," Sura said. "That way, when the fish run up and down, they hopefully will run into one bait or the next."

Before he sets his arsenal targeting Great Lakes fish, Sura decides between two distinct water types: harbors or rivers. Harbors in this neck of Wisconsin's southeast most often mean Milwaukee, Kenosha, or Racine. Any harbor on Lake Michigan or Lake Superior will be effective near structure like docks and rock jetties, which predator fish use to ambush prey.

"Don't be afraid to fish next to piers," Sura said. "I've seen fish caught off of them before the ice was thick enough to walk on." Sura explained this by saying that he drills holes right next to the pier while standing on the pier.

"Bring a locator along if you own one and search for the deeper channels connecting the inner harbor to the main harbor. Fish will use these channels as runways through the harbor. The last area to set in a harbor is around aerators. Some harbors use these to keep the docks from freezing in solid. These areas generate current, which attracts fish."

When fishing rivers through the ice, Sura looks for the same characteristics that would attract him to open-water areas for trout. Downriver sections of a river, he said, are the best for icing trout.

"More fish will over-winter here than in any other section of a river," he said. "When searching downriver locations, look for key areas such as bends or marinas, because these areas will likely have deeper water. I generally look for water five feet deep or deeper when searching for winter trout."

We arrived in the center of Racine and, with Larry Calvi of New Berlin and local postal carrier Bob Merriman, staked claim to a stretch of the Root with not another angler in sight. Most, Sura said, would be downstream fishing the harbor.

We set our tip-ups in a pattern to intercept moving trout. Sura likes to set tip-ups light. Trout drop the meal at the first feel of tension. Sura set fresh spawn and recommends varying the depth from right off the

bottom to just below the ice, again to cover as much of the water column as possible.

"I do this by fishing the bait under a slip float on a jig rod or under a tip-up," Sura said. "They're easy to adjust and allow the angler to detect the slightest of hits. If you're not getting bit, change depths. When using spawn or minnows, set the line and wait. Check them periodically. Moving them can initiate strikes."

When jigging, Sura uses medium to medium-heavy action rods more than 32 inches in length. Longer rods provide more power to hook and fight fish that can easily exceed 20 pounds. He uses a "quality reel" spooled with 8-pound fire line and 3-foot, 8-pound monofilament leaders.

Sura recommends Berkley Power Tubes and Gulp Grubs, Swedish Pimples, Kastmasters, and Buck Shot Rattle Spoons. When jigging artificial baits, he varies the aggressiveness of the bait because fish will want different presentations at different times.

"Change colors as well," he said. Use spoons in silver or gold and plastics in white, orange, or pink. Have a variety of colors, size, and styles with you, because fish can be selective feeders."

The first big brown didn't make us wait long. After we used a power augur with a 10-inch drill to make about a dozen holes large enough to handle the largest of fish, Sura expected a 30-minute wait as any overwintering fish reestablished their residence after the commotion. But the fast-growing seeforellen, known for its tremendous fight, whacked Sura's power grub in the first 10 minutes.

On his portable scale a few minutes later, the brown weighed in at 13 pounds. I followed that performance with a 4-pound brown an hour later, and several fish on jigging rods and tip-ups were lost over our two-hour stay.


You're targeting German Browns, Seeforellen Browns, and steelhead. The average

A big brown is invited on the ice.



fish will be between four and seven pounds. But no fish, Sura reminds anglers, is worth endangering your life. Ice conditions change rapidly, especially on a river impacted by current, warm weather, and run-off.

He recommends checking conditions with local bait shops or on websites like lake-link.com before venturing out. Particularly if you do not know a piece of water, use an ice spud and check conditions as you walk. Wear life jackets and carry ice picks in the event you do fall through. When you approach the water with caution, the payoff can be great.

"Get out often," Sura said. "Weather changes don't affect these fish like they do inland lake fish. When the doldrums set in this winter, get out there and put some trout on ice. With this world class fishery, you'd be crazy not to." 



Dave Sura claims victory on the Root.

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With the Dick Ellis Experts

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PUBLISHER/EDITOR:

Dick Ellis
ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com

COPY EDITOR:

Heidi Rich
submissions@onwisconsinoutdoors.com

DESIGN/PRODUCTION:

ali garrigan DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY
ali@aligarrigandesign.com

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PHIL SCHWEIK

First Ice Walleyes

More drilling, more gold

Tip-up! Upon hearing this sound, which is very familiar to most ice fishermen out there, you frantically scan the ice in search of that telltale flag. Or if you're out at night, that beam of light indicating a strike!

Depending on temperatures and ice conditions, ice fishing usually begins in late November or early December in Wisconsin. Most anglers are targeting the number one species available, the panfish: bluegills, perch, and crappies. Panfish can be easy to catch, and they can keep you busy while you're on the ice.

But for the hardier angler looking for something a little bigger and a bit more challenging, walleyes are the ticket. The best time of year for walleyes is first ice, not only for numbers but for the chance at a true trophy of a lifetime.

To focus on early ice walleyes I prefer to target shallow water; most of the time I will be in less than eight feet of water. Sometimes I even go as shallow as one foot of water under the ice. When it comes to catching walleyes under the ice, early and late in the day are good times to pursue them, but nighttime is the best time for the chance at a real trophy in addition to decent numbers. I like to get out on the ice around 2:00 to 3:00 PM. By getting out early I have plenty of daylight to scout my area, drill holes, set up, and make critical adjustments before it gets dark.

While ice fishing for walleyes I generally start out with a line of pre-drilled tip-up holes that run out from shore and into deeper water. Depending on the drop-off or the depth of the water that I am fishing, I may have tip-up holes drilled as close as five feet from the bank and as far out as 200 yards. These pre-drilled holes will be approximately 20 feet apart and will be used as the fish move throughout the evening.


Once my holes are drilled I start setting up at the holes farthest from shore and run a series of tip-ups (three per person in Wisconsin) toward the shore, staggering them at different depths. As the fish move in (and you will see this) I make my adjustments. Most of the time, the walleyes target the outside tip-ups first. When it gets darker and later in the evening, the strikes will occur more toward the inside tip-ups. This is where the deeper water fish are making their move to shallower feeding grounds.

As the fish move closer and closer to shore, begin to move your tip-ups closer to shore. This is where your pre-drilled holes come into play. Drilling holes at this time of day is not wise and will spook walleyes as they move toward shallow feeding grounds. Continue with this scenario throughout the evening until you have eventually moved your tip-ups as close to shore as you can so that they still have enough water to sustain feeding walleyes.

First ice walleyes



Ice fishing in and around weed beds is a little different but the same techniques work. Just remember to follow the depth rules and search out the deeper water first. Once the fish start their migrations toward shallower water, make sure that you move with them.

Believe me, when using this technique, one of two things is going to happen. You will find yourself with your tip-ups very close to shore along with a nice pile of walleyes on the ice, or you won't make it to shore with your tip-ups because you will have limited out and are headed home! 

Contact Phil Schweik at Hooksetters Guide Service by e-mailing him at pschweik@dwave.net or through his website at hooksetters.biz.

MIKE YURK

Bassology

Spoonin' on bass

It was a spoon that caught my first bass. I remember the day well. A bunch of us kids were fishing from shore on Lake Winnebago. I had already caught a couple of crappie on a bait called Al's Goldfish, which is also a spoon. But I lost my one and only Al's Goldfish to a rock somewhere out in the lake, so I tied on a Johnson Silver Minnow. That red and white spoon (everybody seemed to have one) and a couple of spinners were the extent of my meager selection of artificial baits as a young beginner fisherman.

I tied on the Johnson Silver Minnow and prayed I would not hang up with this spoon, since losing the Al's Goldfish represented a major loss to my tackle box. I was fishing a rocky point and kept casting out into the lake when suddenly my bait jolted to a stop. At first I panicked, thinking I had again snagged something on the bottom and was about to lose another bait. I then felt movement and knew I had a fish. The fish put up a heck of a fight on my

spincasting rod and once even flipped out of the water. I never had a fish do that before, but up until that time I mainly fished for bullheads and they weren't known for any spectacular antics. I didn't know what I had when I finally landed the fish. Eventually a man walked by me and identified it as a smallmouth bass.

Hooked On Spoons

From that moment I was hooked on the Johnson Silver Minnow and bass fishing. I have been chasing bass ever since, and for years the Johnson Silver Minnow was my favorite bait. But one day I started to use crankbaits for bass and sort of lost track of my favorite spoon. That changed when I was fishing in Canada. I was using a couple of different weedless spoons, including larger versions of the Johnson Silver Minnow, fishing weed beds for northern pike.

That prompted me to recall my youthful enthusiasm for the Johnson Silver Spoons and got me wondering if they would work for bass fishing back home in

Wisconsin. Once home, I dug out those old spoons, started using them again, and found them to be an ideal bait for catching bass in weeds.

The Johnson Silver Minnow

The Johnson Silver Spoon has been around for almost a century and is still as effective today as it was years ago. Originally it came in silver and then later in gold and black. Now the Johnson Silver Minnow and several of its imitators are available in many more colors. I have tried other colors but am partial to the three basic colors: gold, black, and especially silver. I fish them in either the ¼- or ½- ounce sizes.

For additional action I add an Uncle Josh pork bass strip. I know this is old school fishing and remember in the 1950s and '60s when everybody used a pork strip with their Johnson Silver Minnow. Today that combination is still effective. Although the bass strips come in six different colors, I generally use white, yellow,

Weedless spoons will help catch bass, like this one that Mike Yurk is holding, in the toughest places.



or the frog green spot colors.

More Spoons

There are other weedless spoons that also are productive. Another one of my favorites is the uniquely designed Fish Trap by the Weedless Bait Company. Two of the treble hooks insert into the top of the spoon and the third hooks into a wire spring. When a fish hits, the spring pops loose and the hooks slide back so you can set the hook. Although it sounds complicated, it works and I have been catching

continued on page 10

JOHN LUTHENS

The Ones That Got Away

A reflection

Another year of stalking the wildest waters of Wisconsin is in the books—wading in the farthest rivers and floating on the remotest sloughs that my lean wallet could afford to wash me into.

The New Year is coming—a time for remembering and a time to take personal stock. What do I have to show for it? I'm nearly broke, my equipment is on its last legs, and I'm left with only memories of the ones that got away.

There were bluegill in pine-ringed places of silence; lakes where the clouds and the trees reflect off the water until you're not certain where the horizon ends and the water begins; lakes so small that they only show up as a blue stain on most maps, and on some maps they're not even there at all.

Small bluegills they were, not even worthy of a poor man's fish sandwich. But the slip bobber dove under the lily pads one humid morning, thunderheads in the sky and the first drops of rain spattering through the pines. The snap of the line and tackle hauled off to a muck-bottomed grave—a glimpse of a sulking shadow deep in the weeds. That one got away. That was one of the biggest I've ever seen.

*And until I reach the Pearly Gates,
I'll swear up and down it was the
biggest perch in Winnebago.*

There was bigger water. A Lake Winnebago perch bent my rod in half, pulling line and diving beneath the boat before the fight finally ended wrapped around the anchor cord. My fishing partner laughed and declared it a sheephead. But I'd sensed the ever-so-light tap tap on the end of my line before I set the hook, before the line wrapped around the anchor cord—before fish got away, that is.

It was the bite of a perch, I tell you. I won't name names, but my fishing partner knows who he is. And until I reach the Pearly Gates, I'll swear up and down it was the biggest perch in Winnebago. Even St. Peter won't convince me otherwise.

I slogged through the wash of another year in leaky waders. I patched them the best I could with what I had to work with, mostly discount glue. I couldn't afford to do any better after I bought the things in the first place. They did get me in and out of some tight trout spots before the sprouting rips finally got away from me.

It's not really the waders' fault that their owner couldn't stay out of those hidden mazes of barbed wire, those rusted strands that are resilient enough that even oak trees grow around them. In retrospect, I probably shouldn't have dried the boots so

close to the campfire either.

My favorite fly rod lost a tip joint somewhere along the year's journey. I believe it was on the Brule River, around a leisurely bend with sunlight streaming in my eyes through the branches of overhanging willow, a wet fly laid out before me in the current.

The trout came from deep beneath the roots, nailing the fly as I daydreamed. It was a monster. Line sang out for a piercing instant, and then all was still along the storied river. The fly was gone and the trout with it.

I didn't lose the rod tip to the fish. I broke it when I tripped over barbed wire while walking out in the dark. The flash of northern lights and a million stars above were the only witnesses, but they weren't bright enough to stop the carnage from happening.

Crankbaits and spoons escaped my grasp, lodging hook-set deep into the floor carpeting. Catch-and-release is out of the question, and I can't afford to replace the carpeting. When you've broken the budget accumulating enough tackle to spill into the rug fibers in the first place, there just isn't enough disposable income left. If the banks foreclose on the mortgage, they can deal with it.

I'd tell you how I lost my truck, but it wouldn't be the truth. It's still slumped in the driveway in all of its beat-up glory. Somewhere in the back woods of Wisconsin it lost one tire and a major portion of the rust that was holding the exhaust system together. I patched the muffler like I patched my waders. You can come to your own conclusions how that worked out.

The truck's yearly cleaning was one of the only moments I found something instead of letting it get away. I discovered a spilled container of black and hardened wax worms, along with the tail from a gray squirrel. I vaguely remember stowing the worms, but as for the tail, I can't remember where it came from or why I had it. The rest of the squirrel's body didn't show up. I think that's a good sign.

Yes sir, another year gone. I'm glad of it. I'll admit that memories of the ones that got away aren't so bad, but this outdoor lifestyle just isn't for me. By the way, does anyone know when the tax returns come in the mail? I'm browsing this sporting catalog and was just wondering. *W*

John Luthens travels Wisconsin, visiting favorite trout waters and exploring back road country often from the family cabin, near the Bois Brule River in Douglas County. Fishing the Winnebago system is a favorite pastime. He chronicles his outdoor journeys from his home in Grafton, where he resides with his wife and two children. Contact him at Luthens@hotmail.com.

DUWE, from page 4

2-pound test. If I were fishing shallower water, I would use 1-pound test, but due to the depth, I like a little heavier line. Fishing so deep, there are many items that can fray your line, including ice chunks. You need the heavier line to withstand the debris that can break your line, but because the water is so clear, you will not get many bites if you go over 2-pound test.

With the depth of water, you need to use a small ice jig with a micro split shot, just to help the bait go down faster. When it comes to ice jigs, I like the Lindy Fat Boy or the Genz worm. Orange and chartreuse work the best for me. I prefer using spikes or wax worms and use one or two, depending on the size of the jig. When fish show up on your locator, it is important to check the mood of the fish. Some fish will come up and hammer the bait, while others will come to the bait and smell it then swim away.

Adjust your jigging style to the mood of the fish. A lot of times the bluegills don't want any movement at all. With an active school of fish under you it is important to fish for them on the top side of the water column first. This will prevent you from spooking the rest of the school. When jigging, you need to occasionally hit the bait off the lake bed. This makes the bait more interesting to the fish by stirring up the bottom.

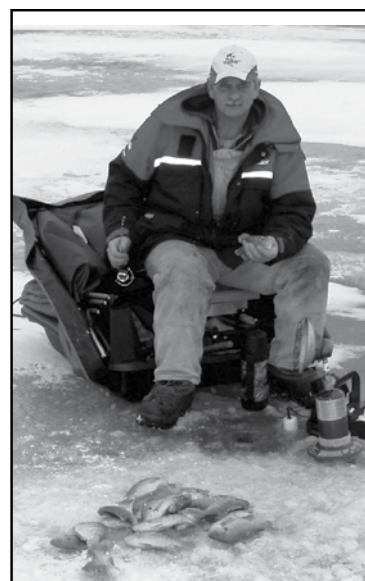
The deep water fish are roaming. They aren't concentrated in one spot for long because of the lack of structure. One needs to keep moving around, hole hopping if you will, to find the aggressive fish. Most often the fish are tight to the bottom and you won't see them on your locator until the jig gets near them.

Another benefit of deep water fishing is the multiple species that you can catch. Not only do the bluegills use the main lake basin, but you can also find perch, white bass, and an occasional largemouth bass. To get started, I begin on a weedline in 15 feet of water and gradually drill holes and go deeper, finding the larger active fish. Most of the time, the fish are off any kind of weed in 20 - 25 feet of water.

We reflect on the good old days of ice fishing with Dad and have fond memories. I only wish we had the fish locators of today. Hopefully, our children will look back on ice fishing and not only remember the time we spent together but also remember that the fish caught were impressive. *W*

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

Jeff Wolters with a nice deep water bluegill



Jeff Wolters with a bunch of bull bluegills

DIANE SCHAUER

Why Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers?

How you are affected

By now most of us have seen the billboards, commercials, advertisements, and articles telling us to “stop aquatic hitchhikers.” What does that mean and why should we care? What difference does it make to you?

New Zealand Mudsnails have arrived in Wisconsin. They have been found in Black Earth Creek, just outside Middleton in Dane County. The adult animal is only about ¼ inch in length. It didn't crawl to Wisconsin. It was brought here on someone's equipment. The New Zealand Mudsnail is an aquatic hitchhiker.

This mudsnail was first found in Idaho and has spread throughout the western United States. The nearest population clone of this animal is in Colorado. Based on what we've seen out west, it is anticipated that this new invasion may result in a decrease in the number and size of trout in invaded streams. In our agriculturally-dominated watersheds of southern Wisconsin our fish's diets depend highly on the very bugs that these mudsnails are going to replace. The mudsnails themselves provide little to no nutrition for fish.

Many other aquatic hitchhikers threaten our lakes and rivers. Aquatic hitchhikers are any plants, animals, diseases, parasites, and anything else that's moved from one place to another by people. Some of these hitchhikers, such as Eurasian Water milfoil and curly-leaf pondweed, are invasive species. Hitchhiking native plants may have invasive species like zebra mussels and mystery snails attached to them. Water can easily transport diseases like viral hemorrhagic septicemia that can kill fish and parasites that kill ducks. Infants of a variety of invasive species like zebra and quagga mussels, fish hook, and spiny water fleas are too small to see and can be in water and on plants.

Do you know about Yellow Floating Heart? It's a lovely water garden plant. According to the State of Oregon's website, a state where this plant is spreading, “Yellow floating heart grows in dense patches, excluding light for native species and creating stagnant areas with low oxygen levels underneath the floating mats. These mats make it difficult to fish, water ski, swim or paddle. It displaces native plants and animals and decrease biological diversity. This troublesome aquatic changes how natural ecosystems work.”

Maybe it's not such a lovely plant after all. In fact, it's illegal to possess this plant in Wisconsin because of the devastation it's caused in areas where it is flourishing. Yet it's here. Patches

of Yellow Floating Heart came to Marinette County as a hitchhiking plant fragment mixed in with other legal plants ordered from an out-of-state nursery. This plant showed up in Walworth County a few years ago and this past year was found in both Forest and Dane Counties.


How the plant ended up in the new locations is unclear, but it's likely it was brought by humans. Now the State is spending lots of resources, man-hours, and money to try to eradicate this stubborn and potentially devastating plant.

You wonder how this impacts you. These hitchhikers damage the habitat of fish and other critters that need lakes. These hitchhikers negatively impact your ability to fish and to enjoy the outdoors. These hitchhikers cost us all a lot of money!

Take the Red Swamp Crayfish, for example. They are native down south but not in Wisconsin. They are the most invasive crayfish in the world and aggressively compete with native crayfish for food. Red Swamp Crayfish feed on plants, tadpoles, snails, and insect larvae. Burrowing activities cause bank destabilization. Yikes!

A few years ago Red Swamp Crayfish were found in ponds in Kenosha and Germantown. The Kenosha pond was drained, dredged, and filled in with road grindings. Work continues in Germantown. Nearly three-quarters of a million dollars have been spent by the State of Wisconsin and the federal government to try to eradicate these critters. That's a lot of money. Why spend so much money to get these out of a couple of ponds? Read on.

Homeowners have these aggressive large crawfish crawling through their yards frightening their children. Additionally and more frighteningly, when overcrowding or a high water spring occurs, they are capable of overland travel to other water sources. The pond in Germantown is near the Menomonee River, which drains into the Milwaukee River. If the Red Swamp Crayfish gets to the Menomonee, look out Milwaukee River and all those tributaries.

What do New Zealand Mudsnails, Yellow Floating Heart, and Red Swamp Crayfish all have in common? Human introduction. So please, for the sake of the resource, for the sake of the critters that live in and depend on the resource, and for the sake of your checkbooks, STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS. 

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

TOM LUBA

Breaking Good

Experimental jig making

When I used to vacation in Wisconsin before living here full-time, I fished Hula Poppers, Injured Minnows, and South Bend Spin-Orenos until I was blue in the face. I fished a jig sparingly, so by the time I relocated, I was ready for a change. The fact that I moved to a stone's throw from the banks of Lake Winnebago and its huge walleye population gave me all the reasons I needed to take up jig fishing.

From walleye, I followed the progression of jiggging to crappie, bass, pike, and anything else that might whack a piece of lead and a hook. That was about the same time I discovered—the hard way—what a sheephead was. They all feel like good fish when you've got one attached to your jig.

Instead of buying commercial jig heads, I figured that as I made my own, I'd be a lot less concerned with leaving some hung up on the bottom. But after buying a mold, I also found out that by rigging plastics like twister tails and reaper worms on the heads, it was harder to get a good hook set because the plastic took up a good part of the available gap on the hooks. I fish primarily with artificial, and, unfortunately, a number of years back, I could not find heads molded on oversized hooks. These days you can, but it's a bit pricey to leave a bunch on the bottom of your favorite waters.

One winter night, dark and dreary, as I pondered weak and weary, a light bulb went on. The next thing that went on was a Dremel tool armed with a high speed cutting head. I figured since I wasn't happy about the quality of the jigs I could make following the official rules, i.e., what the mold manufacturer specified to use for hook sizes, I'd break those rules.


The moment I touched the cutting head to the metal of the mold, I felt the cold fear of panic well up. Was I breaking it bad, or good?

It was nowhere near as bad as I feared, as I used a light touch and watched the fine metal mist fan off. It wasn't brain surgery, or rocket science. All I had to do was akin to taking a little off the back and sides.

The mold was a six-cavity, 1/8-ounce round head production model. I enlarged the hook eye area to accommodate the slightly larger eye on a bigger jig hook and made the straight line where the hook shank rested just a little wider to handle the larger shank on the bigger hook.

End result was switching from the smaller hook the mold specified to one a few sizes larger. So the 1/8-ounce head was now molded on a 4/0 Eagle Claw thin wire Aberdeen jig hook. And the wider gap more than handled the area needed for the plastic grub body, while still allowing for the space needed to set the hook without interference from the plastic bait. Mission successful.

At this point, I have probably a dozen molds of various types. I've modified a lot of them, some for completely different applications than for which they were intended. I've turned an almost completely unused Arky bass-type jig mold into an extremely effective eye-out-the-front weedless silicone skirted bass jig mold. And a larva jig mold into one that a friend (who discovered this application) swears is absolutely great for wacky rigging Senkos.

I've also got a few molds sitting around that I haven't done anything with other than what they were made for ... yet. 

Tom Luba is a free-lance outdoor writer and bass fishing fan from New London, WI. Tom fishes as much as he can and never gets tired of setting the hook.

JERRY KIESOW

Fly Fishing In Wisconsin

Redo an old bamboo

It began two and a half years ago. A member of our board of directors of the Friends Of Governor Thompson State Park came into the meeting and handed me an old three-piece bamboo rod. "Here," he said, "see if it is any good. If you can fix it, it's yours."

I took the rod and looked it over. It was definitely dirty, there was one guide missing, the windings were frayed, but the pieces were almost straight. It appeared to be worth redoing. (Notice I said redoing, not restoring.)

"Where did you get this?" I asked. "I found it in the garage," the board member replied. "I think it was my dad's. I'll never use it."

And so the challenge began ... but not immediately. It took me a year and a half to start the project and another three months before I could show this gentleman how it turned out.

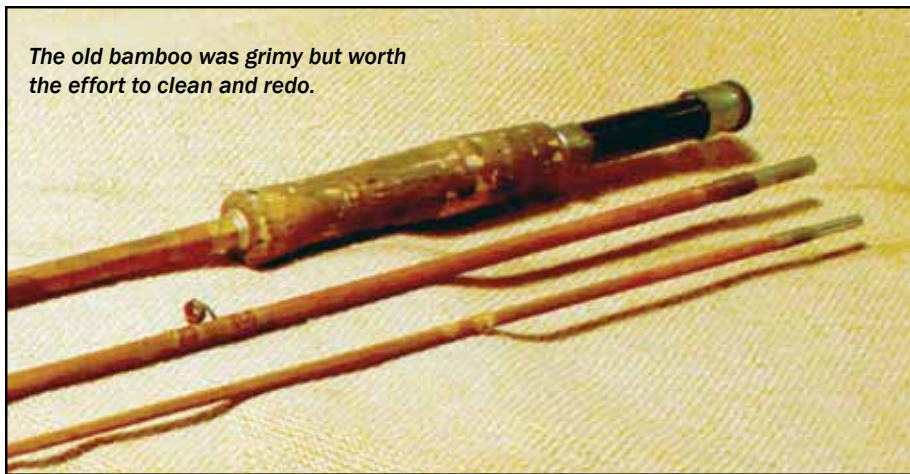
If you have an old bamboo rod that needs fixing, or should run across one in similar shape, follow the steps I took. I think you

will find that as long as you do not have to do any serious straightening the project is really not difficult, and is lots of fun.

The first thing I did was remove the reel holder, which was not difficult. It almost fell off the handle. The pin that held the seat was missing. After removing the grit and grime, I found some brass wire that replaced the pin perfectly.

Next, I tackled the cork handle. It looked terrible, but the cleaning was pretty simple. I used Bar Keepers Friend, a fine cleansing powder my wife uses to clean our kitchen sink and countertop. It worked like a charm.

Before I attacked the rod itself, I took the measurements of the positions of the guides. I marked them on a drawing I made so when the time came to rewind them, I could put them back where they belonged. This is important, because the action of a rod can change if the guides are not placed correctly. I also photographed the rod so I had some reference of which guides went where. Just in case.



The old bamboo was grimy but worth the effort to clean and redo.

Now I could remove the guides. As I removed each, I carefully cleaned it before placing it in a box so I would not lose any.

After the guides were off, I stripped the old varnish from the bamboo, using a water-based remover and synthetic steel wool. I found the bamboo in good shape, "antiquely stained" here and there. The places where the guides had been were prominent. I had not needed the measurements, but I always measure and diagram anyway.

After the bamboo was clean, there remained some varnish on the metal ferrules. I found it easy to scrape them, using my thumb nail and/or a fine knife. The varnish was brittle, probably the original coating. When all the varnish was off, I polished the metal.

When everything was washed clean and allowed to dry completely, I began the re-building process. First I re-varnished the bamboo. Instead of using a brush, I put the varnish on a dust-free rag, a piece of old bed sheet, then applied it by hand. I applied four coats, all hand rubbed, leaving ample time to dry in between each coat. I was careful not to varnish the newly polished metal.

When the final coat was dry, I rewound the guides. Some rod makers apply a dab of Super Glue on the bottom of one of the guide's feet to hold the guide in place. However, it can be problematic if the guide is not placed properly or moves. I simply tape the guide in place with masking tape on

continued on page 15

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CLAYTON HELLER

That's A Wrap

Studying for next muskie season

The boat is in storage and my gear is stacked in the basement. I guess it's official; another muskie season has come and gone. It's always a little sad to admit it's over. I hope that you were blessed with some great memories from this past season. We had a pretty good season at HP Outdoors, including some first muskies, a couple personal bests, a first and fourth place finish on the World Muskie Tournament Series, and winning the Muskie Country Tournament Circuit. The question now is, what do we do for the next four months until we can get after those toothy critters again? For me the answer is studying for next season.

I try to keep an accurate log book throughout the season of days on the water, conditions, and results for the day. I look back at all the data that I've collected over the year to help identify patterns from the past season. I compare these patterns with patterns from past seasons. This helps me decide where and how to fish based on the conditions I might be faced with during the upcoming season. While every year is different, this information gives me a good point of reference when hitting the water, allowing me to

only have to make minor on-the-water adjustments to get on fish.


I also use this time to read anything that I can find muskie related. Whether it's one of the numerous books that are out there like "The Complete Guide To Muskie Hunting," by Jim Saric and Steve Heiting, or "Muskie Strategy," by Tom Gelb, or back issues of your favorite outdoor publication like *On Wisconsin Outdoors*, there is a lot of good information to be had that can help you put more fish in the boat. I've read several of these items multiple times and take something different away each time. You can have the fanciest rig and all the gear, but it's the knowledge that will get you on the fish and keep you on them throughout the year.

Of course, you can't forget about show season. Going to the various sports shows, especially the muskie-specific show, will give a great opportunity to gather even more information. You can meet and talk with local guides and ask them specific questions on the bodies of water that they fish. You can also talk with various lure manufactures and

Brady Lanser with his first muskie.



their pro staffers and get tips on colors, presentations, and anything else you can think of. You can also sit in on any of the numerous seminars that are offered by some of the best anglers in the sport. Take the information and apply it to the waters that you fish. Plus, while you are at the shows you can check out all the new products and custom show colors. Most manufactures will have show specials, so you can fill any holes in your arsenal at a discount.

Spend some time this off season studying and make next muskie season one of your best. 

Clay Heller is a WMT tournament angler with HP Outdoors and Sterling Guide Service Pro Staffer. Contact Clay at Hellerclj@gmail.com or 920.256.0648.



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YURK, from page 6

bass with them for years.

The Fish Trap comes in over 30 colors. My favorites are the chartreuse colors and a new three-color spoon that is orange, black, and gold which the Weedless Bait Company has named The Striker. I normally use the 3-inch, 5/8-ounce size. To see the entire variety of colors and to order the Fish Trap, check out their website at weedlesslure.com.

Recently a fishing buddy turned me on to a third weedless spoon that I really like, the Jaw-Breaker Spoon by Northland. It comes with what Northland calls Limber-Legs Silicone Skirts that create additional action as the spoon is retrieved through the water. The Jawbreakers come in only the 1/2-ounce size and in a dozen different colors. My favorite colors are silver shiner, green frog, and parakeet.

How To Fish Them

You will always find bass around weeds, and these weedless spoons make it easy to pull bass out without tangling your bait in a mass of green stuff. I like to work the baits right over the top of the weeds. Bass have a

tendency to attack the spoons just because of the movement and flash they make. I think bass lying in the weeds do not have time to pick and choose their forage, so they attack anything that appeals to them.

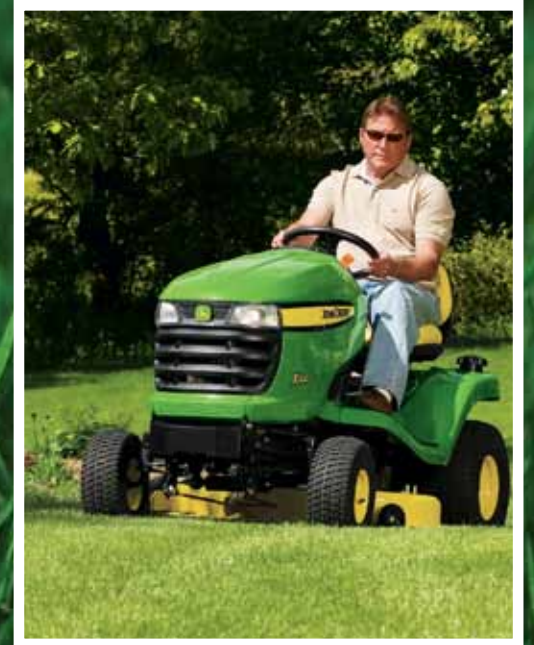
One of the other techniques I like to use when fishing weeds is, when retrieving the bait across the weeds, pause a moment and let the bait flutter down into breaks and holes in the weeds. As it falls, it triggers strikes with bass on the edges of the pockets.

Spoons have been around for a lot of years and are probably one of the very first artificial baits man ever used. They are still effective today. For those who have forgotten about them, or perhaps never used them, you are missing out on a great bass bait. Weedless spoons continue to catch bass in some of the toughest spots to find fish, and no bass fisherman should be without them.



Mike Yurk has published more than 600 articles in national and regional outdoor publications. He has published five books, on outdoor subjects. He is a retired Army officer and lives in Hudson, Wisconsin. Contact Mike at bassinmajor@yahoo.com.

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DICK HENSKE

Do you want to Fish Canada?

A Wisconsin travel veteran shows you how

We fish and hunt a lot, so we try to find places that are economical, close enough to drive, and have fishing as good as a fly-in. One destination is the Ignace area in Ontario, north of Duluth. We enter Canada via Hwy 61 to Pidgeon Forge, then take Hwy 17 to the Ignace area. It is a 500-mile, eight-hour drive from my home in northern Wisconsin. It is not a fast drive because Canada has lower speed limits that are enforced, just like the fish and game regulations.

We visited four resorts in 2012 and we recommend all, depending on your needs. Before I tell you a little about these spots, here is some general information you need to know.

Fill your gas tanks in the U.S. to save on fuel costs. Once in Canada, use a credit card; you will get poor exchange rates using U.S. dollars in Canadian

stores. Buy your fishing licenses and the three-year \$10.00 hunting and \$10.00 fishing cards online. If you drink, you may take 40 ounces of liquor or one (24 cans) case of beer or 1.7 liter of wine. The best deal, if you travel in the daytime, is to buy your liquor and beer at the duty free shop at the border.

Live leaches and minnows are not allowed. Nightcrawlers must be packed in paper—no soil. We buy our minnows in bulk before we leave Wisconsin and drain, salt, and cool them before we leave. They work as well as live minnows, but remember to keep them cool.

You can transport hunting guns for a \$25.00 fee. No handguns or pepper spray! Canada treats crossbows and bows the same, and there are no restrictions upon entering.

Dogs need current rabies vaccination records. If you have any questions, contact the Canadian Border at 800.461.9999.

All prices quoted by the resorts will have a 15% goods and services tax (GST) tacked onto the bill. Remember to bring a good fish locator and wear an inflatable life vest whenever you are on the water.

Here are a few places we went to last year:

Raleigh Lake Resort on Raleigh Lake has an abundance of small lake trout that makes the trip worthwhile. Mark, the owner, has boats on remote lakes for you to use; he will put you on abundant walleyes and northerns. Fishing was great in May and early June but slower during our fall moose hunt. We bow-hunted, with Mark's help, and saw four bulls. The two we called in hung up out of bow range. The cow we got was huge and we have over 100 packages of meat. Look up Raleigh Lake Resort online or call 807.934.0116. Reasonable prices!

Cozy Camp is on Hwy 499, 32 miles north of Ignace on the famous English River. It has basic, comfortable cabins at affordable prices. You can rent boats and

motors or bring your own. We fished in August and caught hundreds of walleyes; no big ones, but it was fun. Owner is a great bear guide. Near 100 percent shot opportunity. I harvested a 300 pound bear in 2013. 877.934.6901.


Wildwood on Savant Lake is a classy, top shelf, world class fishery. It is located north of the town of Savant Lake on Hwy 499. You ride in a Hagglund all-terrain vehicle for five miles to reach the camp. Everything is first class but pricey. The fishing can be hot or cold. I have been there three times and have experienced all types of fishing. The fish are big. Check it out online. The owners are from Wisconsin and have developed a great camp.

Selwyn, Raven, and Sowden Lakes are three separate resorts with one Wisconsin owner located on or near the English River east of Ignace, Canada. Excellent northern and walleye fishing with top notch cabins, boats and motors. I fished Selwyn twice in 2013 and enjoyed great fishing. Also specialize in bear hunting. Call 715-479-1559 to book any resort, but they do go fast!

Silver Dollar Inn & Campground is an off-water complex, also off Hwy 499. Marty, the owner, has a food store, a bait/tackle store, and a restaurant, which includes a motel, cabins, and an RV site. Bring your own boat and fish the numerous lakes Marty recommends. We caught lots of walleyes, but be cautioned that some of the back roads were rough. Remember, this is off-water, but the bear hunting, grouse hunting, and fishing are possible at the same time. Marty knows all the lakes! 807.934.6977.

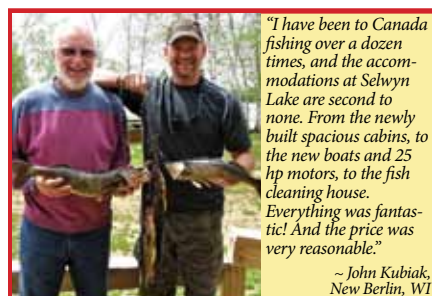
I hope this information helps you decide where to go. Or, go online and find your own place in the north. This year we plan to go to a new resort on the English River in the same area. We'll let you know how it is!

Remember, only fish on days ending in "y."

See you in the woods. 

For more information, call 800.487.9919 or www.sturgeonlakelodge@shaw.ca or visit www.sturgeonlakelodge.com.

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.



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The artwork is a detail from Near Journey's End Paul Calle is courtesy of the artist & art publisher Mill Pond Press.

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Once all the pieces of the rod were cleaned, the redoing began.

KIESOW, from page 9

one foot while wrapping the other. This allows for slight adjustments if required.

I double wrap (wind) each foot. I begin just off the edge of the foot on the rod and wind up the foot to near the bend. Then I wind back over the thread. When I get to where I started, I place a loop of thread on the bamboo and make eight to ten additional winds over the loop. I cut the winding thread, holding the wind secure with the thumb of one hand while placing the end of that thread through the loop. Then I pull the loop back through, under those last winds. This secures the thread without using a bulky knot.



Winding the guides can be tricky.

When all the guides, the hook holder, and ferrules are wrapped, I apply two thin coats of varnish to the thread using a brush. After a few days of drying, I do a final, thin, hand-rubbed finish coat over the entire rod.

Simple, yes? Why did it take me so long? That too is simple. I never made it a priority.

I did not get this project done in time to use in 2013. Comparing it to my other bamboo, a nine weight, I believe this to be a six, maybe seven. I will know for sure in a few months.

See you in the river.

Keep a good thought! ☺

Editor's note: Jerry enjoys all aspects of the outdoors. To keep track of what he is doing and where, see his photos, and read some of his other writings, including his book, "Tales of The Peshtigo Putzer," check out his website: www.jerrykiesowoc.com.



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MIKE FOSS

The 6,000 Mile Bear

It's not over 'til it's over

The 2013 Wisconsin bear season was winding down to the last few days. Fourteen hunters from throughout Wisconsin and beyond had waited years for a harvest tag, selected Northern Wisconsin Outfitters to help fill that tag, prepared for their hunt, traveled to Bayfield County, and spent the time necessary on stands spread throughout 35 square miles of rugged Lake Superior country to bring a successful end to the dream. Thirteen hunters had already gone home, each successful in filling the bear tag.

And then there was one.

Wisconsin native Rick Sanger had traveled all the way from Colorado for the 2013 bear hunt, packing his longbow and a few requests that would make filling the tag an exceptional challenge. He would hunt on the ground, with natural cover, self-film, and hunt a big bear. You may remember

Rick and his wife, Vicki, as the 2007 Team Wisconsin winners of the popular reality show "Dream Season" hosted by Drury Outdoors. I filmed Rick's trophy elk and muley hunt in the mountains of Utah several years ago where I got to know him well. He is one serious hunter, and the goals he set on this Wisconsin bear hunt reflected his standards.

As a guide with the September season approaching, the search for the perfect spot Rick would need to bring a big bear close and stay undetected became frustrating. I placed a phone call or two, hoping to change his mind.

"You sure you want to hunt off the ground?" I asked. "You've been watching too many YouTube videos of Canadian hunts where the bears don't interact with humans," I thought.

"Yes," Rick said, confirming what I already knew. "Stubborn" could be added to his serious nature.

Finally, the ambush spot was located and a crude blind constructed. Rick would add the finishing touches. The blind was set between two large oak trees on the edge of a washed out drainage ditch separating the bait station and hunter by just 13 yards. I took a few pictures to introduce Rick to his new ambush, dug a hole, and collected some logs to cover the bait station. As I finished, I stood at the bait pit looking back at the blind a mere few yards away and chuck-



Wisconsin native Rick Sanger completes a 6000 mile, two trip trek from Colorado to Bayfield County and fills his bear tag with 10 minutes left in the 2013 season. Sanger's bow kill made the success rate for 14 hunters joining the Mike Foss camp 100 percent.

led to myself.

"Those bears," I thought, "are going to tear that blind apart."

The one-month September season snuck in fast like a black ghost coming to the bait at twilight. Soon the camp was bustling. Some hunters showed two days early, unable to stay away after an eight-or nine-year wait. Tents and campers were set, the aroma from the campfire filled the air, and tall tales from past hunts floated with the smoke. The hunt was on. And then, faster than I ever like it, over the course of the week details of each new successful hunt from 2013 were told and retold around the campfire and satisfied hunters left for home with their bear, packed with memories.

Rick huddled in his bird-like nest for three days and had action every day—bears so close he could have touched them; one big bear he now knows from the awesome film footage that he should have taken the shot; and, yes, one naughty bear that did indeed tear the blind apart under the cover of darkness. We would capture big bears on camera from other bait stations that matched the class that Rick was hoping for, but after day seven, such an encounter from his own stand was not meant to be. Other obligations sent Rick home on the long, 1,500-mile drive back to Colorado.

No monster bears were shot this season

from our camp but they were all trophies. Some tags were fastened after long, hard hunts and some hunters required only a few hours on stand to score. The season was near its end when the phone rang in an empty camp. This country, these bears, and an empty tag can literally move a hunter.

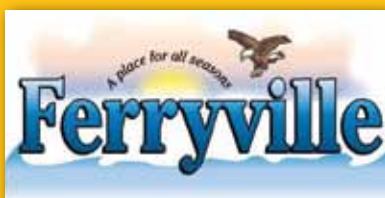
"I have the last three days off before the season closes," said Rick. "I could drive up in one day and hunt hard the last two."

"Get up here," I answered. "We have two baits that are still very active."

Rick arrived tired and worn out but eager to get in the stand. This time, his long bow remained at home; he would use his compound, but where? It was up to me now. I would help make or break this hunt by selecting the stand and bait station that would make the 6,000-mile total trek a success.

"Cooks Stand" was tried first, but only one small bear was seen that night. Rick had already seen more bears than any other hunter in camp and had passed on opportunities. I don't usually like moving bait stations, especially when a stand has been selected for a hunter targeting a large bear. Eventually that big bear will show up. But with one day remaining I moved Rick to the "Rock Bait." In the past it has been

continued on page 18



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KATHY STRONG

Introducing Dogs To Gunshots

Overcoming and avoiding gun shyness

Acclimating a pup to gunshots is a gradual process that must be approached carefully to avoid issues with gun shyness. Many pups, especially from strong hunting lines, are bold and easily associate the sound of a gunshot with the reward of a retrieve. For them, only a couple sessions may be needed to get them fired up to retrieve whenever they hear a gunshot. Those that are by nature more fearful need an especially slow and careful approach. The two key elements for successfully introducing a pup to gunfire are desensitizing and pairing the gunshot with something that is highly motivating or rewarding to the pup.

Desensitizing for this purpose is simply introducing sounds at a distance and a very low level at first and gradually working up to louder and closer sounds. One of the easiest ways to introduce pups to a low level popping noise that progressively increases to the sound of gunfire up close is to use bubble wrap. In order to pair the sound with pleasurable experiences, pop the bubble wrap at feeding time with pups, when

throwing a toy for playing fetch, while you are giving the pup a lot of attention, and when the pup is engrossed in any kind of play. The association comes quickly. If you notice the pup is uncomfortable with the sound of bubble wrap popping, pop it at a greater distance away while the pup is eating and make sure the pup is very hungry when you do it. If the pup is tolerant of the bubble wrap sound, as you are adding birds to the mix, move up to a cap gun and gradually to a training pistol, shotgun, and .22. Each time you go up a level in the intensity of the sound, move farther away from the pup at first and gradually bring the sound closer as the pup is able to tolerate it. At the same time as the pup is learning to accept and even welcome loud noises, it should be learning how wonderful live birds are. Pigeons are easier to access than game birds and are cheaper, so they work very well for this purpose, but if you can get game birds, use them sometimes too.

Shackle the bird (clip or pull out the
continued on page 19



Candy's tail is going full speed. She doesn't even notice the popping sounds in the background.

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FOSS, from page 16

nearly a 100 percent success stand and is located on private property. I also knew that I was more worried about Rick successfully putting his tag on a bruin than he was.

As the hours ticked away on the season, I was looking at the clock every minute, fingers tapping on my kitchen table. The season was winding down. I remembered each bear recovered and tagged over the previous weeks, the handshakes and back slaps, the simple camaraderie of this season flashing through my mind. The familiar sad feeling that always comes with another season on the books fell over me. Most sportsmen experience the feeling more often as we get older; the hunt is less about harvesting the animal and more about the family, friends, and camaraderie.

But I always take these hunts to heart ... a guide's quest for 100 percent shot opportunity probably inspired by the length of time each hunter must wait to receive that coveted tag. I appreciate especially, I guess, a long distance effort like I was watching from Rick Sanger: 6,000 miles on the road and every legal hour on stand, waiting.


Ten minutes remained. Rick would be going home with an unused tag.

The sound of the ringing phone pushed away the thought and allowed beautiful hope to escort me as I flew out of the chair. Please let it be Rick. "Hello."

"Bear down, buddy."

I heard myself promise that I would be there soon and hung up the phone. I'm not sure if a guide can confess to a prayer and a dance in the kitchen.

A 6,000-mile bear. Fourteen bears for 14 hunters. This guide danced and said a prayer in the kitchen.

And then there were none. 

As a guide and owner of Northern Wisconsin Outfitters, Mike Foss has harvested bear and many deer, including several record book bucks. Contact Mike at www.northernwisconsinoutfitters.com.



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STRONG, from page 17

flight feathers/tie the feet if necessary) and release the bird in front of the dog. Let the dog chase it and play with it, tease it with the bird. If you have to use dead birds, tie a cord to the feet and jerk the bird around, swing it, and tease the pup with it. Do whatever you can to get the dog crazy about the bird.

If you are lucky enough to be near someone who has a game bird pen and can get permission, bring the pup into the bird pen and let it chase the birds there while an assistant fires random rounds at a distance and then at closer range. An alternative to letting a dog chase birds in a bird pen is to release a larger number of shackled birds at once to try to get the pup into a frenzy over the birds. After the dog accepts lower intensity popping sounds without hesitation or fear and when the dog is highly motivated to chase and catch birds, combine the sound of the gunshot with retrieving the bird in a training situation. Have your gunner watch the shackled bird when it is thrown so that he/she can time the shot to the peak of the arc of the thrown bird so it looks like the shot caused the bird to fall.

Slowly move the gunner closer as your dog's reaction permits until the dog accepts the gun discharging at close range. The dog owner/trainer needs to be prepared to move backwards in the process any time the dog shows fear and then move forward again in very small increments. After exposure to birds being "shot" in the training session, and after you have taught tracking and quartering to the young dog, drag a shackled bird, then plant a different bird that can fly at the end of the drag. When the pup locates the bird, the bird flushes and you have opportunity to shoot the bird in a controlled setting.

Most young dogs that have been introduced properly to gunshots never even notice the gun go off. Gun shyness usually is avoidable and most often is the result of human error. If you don't have time or don't feel you have the skill to introduce your dog properly to gunshots, go to a professional trainer experienced in working with gun dogs. As with pretty much everything, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Happy hunting. 

Kathy Strong is owner of Yellow River Game Farm and Piddle Creek Kennels in Barronett, Wisconsin, and is a dog trainer, breeder, guide, and hunting dog competitor. For more information on pheasant hunting, dog training, pups, and/or started dogs, contact Kathy at 715.822.8071.

DAN MOERICKE

An "Up Nort" Report Rut camp recap

For the past half dozen years or so, several of the Leinie's Guys and I have made it a point to rendezvous in the north woods during the first week of November for what we affectionately refer to as "Rut Camp." Rut Camp is the culmination of weeks and months of preparation and anticipation ... lots of hours spent scouting, both on the ground and on Google Earth.

This year's rut camp attendees included Jackson, Deano, and the Lard-dog, with L-dog playing host and allowing us the use of his cabin. Most of our hunting is done in the Nicolet National Forest, so we are hunting the big woods. Food plots and agricultural fields are not part of the picture. For the most part, we are sitting trails and scrapes, while relying on bleats and grunts to hopefully bring in a rutting buck. We had an exceptional acorn crop in our area of the Nicolet, so oak ridges were popular with the deer.

The weather during Rut Camp was, in a word, poor. Being a glass half full kind of guy, I'll just say that the fire danger was very low. That was the case every day, even in spite of the relentless wind. Deer sightings, aside from those on our trail cameras, were few and far apart. Nonetheless, any deer camp is more than just a meat pole. The camaraderie, great food and drink, and unending stories make it a great time...one that will be savored during the cold winter months that lie ahead.

We had planned to start camp on Tuesday, but the weather postponed that to Wednesday. That afternoon found three quarters of our group in camp and on stand in the national forest. I had a small spike buck pass by, but otherwise had an uneventful sit. At the close of shooting hours, I was just getting ready to lower my bow when I got a text from Jackson. "Buck down - bring a sled" was the message. What a welcomed message and a great start to Rut Camp!

I met up with the Lard-dog and we grabbed a sled and headed for the bowels of the Nicolet where Jackson was waiting for us. He had made a perfect shot on the 6-pointer sneaking along a swamp edge and the blood trail stretched for maybe 50 yards at the most. The half-mile drag was a welcomed workout and was followed by a trip to the registration station, then burgers and libations at the Nutty Squirrel. And the Rut Camp rejoiced.



Dan Moericke and his buck taken with a perfect shot from 10 yards.


The Thursday morning hunt was uneventful and the weather continued to be less than ideal. The afternoon hunt found me sitting on an oak ridge between a cedar swamp and a lake. As the afternoon waned, I heard footsteps and saw a deer in some thick brush to my right. Then I heard more footsteps and turned to see a spike buck walking directly behind me. The deer in the brush suddenly bolted away as a third deer walked up the trail directly below my stand. This was a dark antlered buck that I'd seen on my trail camera in mid-October. I made up my mind that if given the opportunity, I'd take the shot. Once the deer passed my stand, I knew that scent would not be an issue. The spike buck turned to confront the bigger one, but then thought better of it and walked away down the trail I had come in on. The bigger buck turned and headed toward a scent stick that I had hung in a balsam. At 10 yards and quartering away, this was my chance.

The shot was perfect and the string tracker on my bow confirmed the hit as string flew out of it. The line slowed and I heard the buck crash and roll down the hillside. I quickly got down, followed the string right to my buck, tagged him and sent out a text to the boys. A short drag later and it was a repeat of the previous

night with a trip to the registration station, followed by burgers and beer.

The remainder of Rut Camp was uneventful from a deer killing standpoint, so we finished batting .500....two for four. But, no movie is complete without a blooper reel and Rut Camp had a few classics:

Settling into my climbing tree stand, I had my glove blow away into a balsam and then had my quiver fall off as I pulled my bow up. Lard arrived back at his vehicle after one hunt to find the string on his String Tracker had caught in some brush....about 400 yards earlier. Deano missed a 15 yard shot at a buck. Jackson had nearly completed the gut job on his buck when he cut his thumb deep across the knuckle so he couldn't help drag (an accident?).

As I write this, we are preparing to head back into the Nicolet for the gun season. While I'm looking forward to it, I love bowhunting and the Rut Camp more. Already looking forward to next year. Just sayin'. 

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.

TOM CARPENTER

Wintertime Small Game

Rabbit, squirrel, grouse, and fox adventures in the New Year

Full gets awfully busy for a Wisconsin sportsman. Between packing in some autumn fishing in the cool waters, chasing ducks and geese as they push through the state ahead of winter, hitting pheasants for a couple days, maybe chasing a fall turkey, and pursuing all the deer hunting options available, the New Year may seem like a good time to sit in an ice fishing shanty and recover, or maybe just take an all-in breather.

But I've got a better idea for you. Once New Year's celebrations are over and you're looking at that scary, wintry gap in the year's sporting calendar, why not head out and pursue some of our great small game hunting options? Cottontail rabbit season remains open until February 28, squirrel and the Zone A grouse season (most of the state except for the southeast quadrant) until January 31, and the fox season until February 15.

It's a great time to get back to the basics of hunting, create some low pressure fun in the field, and put together the makings for some memorable game meals or maybe even a pelt for the wall.

Rabbits

The season for cottontails runs through February 28 statewide, and early winter is primetime to head out after a brace of bunnies.

Even if you don't have a beagle to do the heavy lifting, you can still bring home bunnies. One way is to look for second growth, brushy areas and go

for a walk, kicking brush piles and other hideouts as you go, working to flush a rabbit and take a snap shot. Carry a light shotgun (ideally a 20-gauge but any gauge will do) and load up with size 6 or 7 1/2 shot.

It's also fun to carry a little .22 rifle and go stalking for bunnies. Sneak slowly along, looking for stock-still rabbits trying to hide. If you flush a rabbit, get ready to shoot when it pauses during its escape.

Squirrels

The season for gray and fox squirrels runs right through January, and it's amazing how few hunters ever sneak into the woods for a winter squirrel hunt. A sunny January day is perfect for such an adventure.

I love winter squirrel hunting for a couple reasons. One, the game is most active on bright, calm days that are a joy to hunt in. And two, you don't have to get up at the crack of dawn. A midday hunt is best, especially when the sun's shining.

Look for sunny, wooded sidehills and mature oak timber. Work slowly along, leaning against every tree for a few moments as you listen and watch for squirrels. A .22 makes for the most challenge and effectiveness when hunting squirrels (shoot for the head), but a shotgun choked modified to full, and loaded with size 4 to 6 shot, also works.

Grouse

Grouse season runs through January in most of the state. When most folks think of ruffed grouse hunting, they picture crisp days and colorful autumn woods. But wintertime grouse hunting can be productive too. You just have to know where to look for birds and how to hunt them.

With leaf cover gone, places that held birds in October will be void of ruffs now because grouse are afraid of hawks and owls overhead. Look for areas with plenty of protection from above: shrubs, brush, thick-

ets, even grassy or cattail seams between cover types. Also hunt near evergreens, which the birds like as escape cover as well as for roosting if the snow isn't deep enough for snow roosting.

In winter, still keep a very open choke in your shotgun but opt for larger shot size (#6 is about right) than you might use in autumn, because shots can be longer.

Fox

I can't think of many winter pastimes that are more fun than a fox hunt on a bright and sunny January or February day. All you need is a light, flat-shooting centerfire rifle (here's the perfect excuse to get that little .17 Remington, .22 Hornet, .220, .222, or .223 you've had your eyes on), good optics in the form of both spotting scope and binoculars, comfortable boots, and the will to track down your quarry.

Wide open farmland and the red foxes that live there are your best bet. Glass fence lines, ditch lines, rocky outcroppings, grassy sidehills, brushy knolls, and other open-country hideouts for foxes. Or look for tracks in the snow as you walk. Put on a



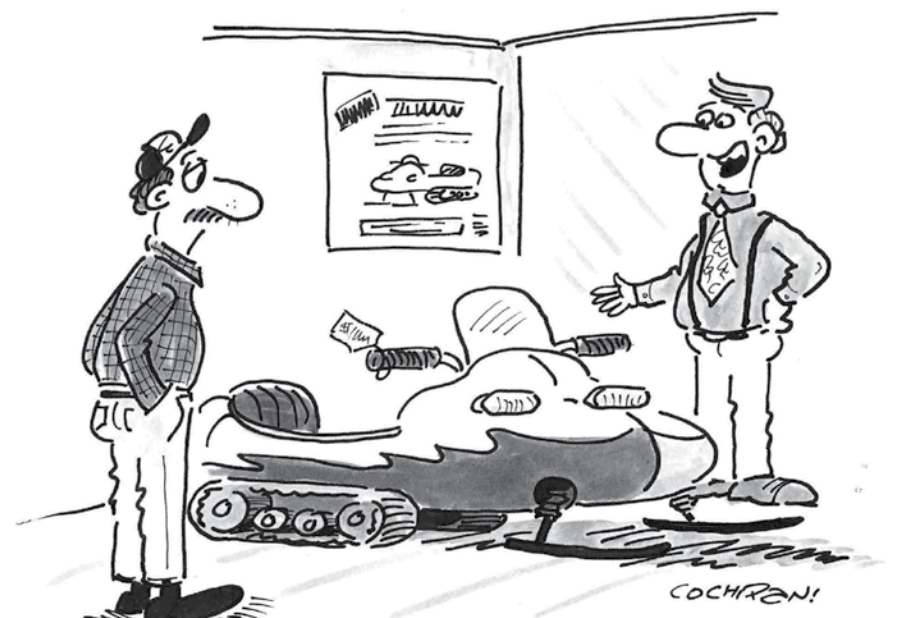
stalk or follow a track. Remember, you're hunting a hunter. Be ready for that fox to circle you and go out the back door.

Carry shooting sticks or use a bipod for long shots. If you don't own a sweet but small centerfire, don't hesitate to hunt with a .22 rimfire, but do limit your shots to 40 yards or so. If you are in the mood for some fresh air and a winter hunting challenge, a farm-country fox hunt is just the ticket.

Conclusion

There's plenty of time to relax some other time of year ... maybe March! You only live once. Why stay inside on those glorious, sunny, blue-skied winter days we always get? Get out of the house and take advantage of a Wisconsin winter's great small game hunting opportunities this year. *W*

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



"IT WAS OWNED BY A LITTLE OLD LADY WHO ONLY DROVE IT BACK AND FORTH TO HER ICE FISHING SHACK."



ROBB MANNING

Every Day Carry

The sound of silence, part 1: why own a silencer?

Silencers are misunderstood, and it's time to clear up those misconceptions. Why? Because they are a very useful tool in your shooting and hunting pastimes and are just a heck of a lot of fun to shoot with.

I want to establish a few things about silencers before getting into the nuts and bolts of this article.

First, it is legal for you to own a silencer (more accurately called a suppressor, but the BATFE refers to it as a silencer). Most Wisconsinites do not realize it is legal to hunt for all types of game, including Whitetail, in Wisconsin with a silencer.

Second, silencers are not the sinister, mystical device portrayed in Hollywood as only being used by assassins. It is ironic that with American gun culture being as big as it is most people view the silencer in a negative light. In Europe, with its tighter regulation of guns, countries often encourage silencer use by shooters and

hunters. France, Norway, Poland, and Sweden allow anyone to purchase a suppressor without a permit. The UK requires approval only from local police, and they are usually approved of because of the risk of personal injury litigation due to hearing loss. Switzerland allows ownership with a permit and special storage.

Third, silencers do not completely silence a firearm, which is why the term "suppressor" is more accurate. The "pew" sound accepted in Hollywood movie making as the sound of a suppressor is not an accurate portrayal of the sound a suppressor actually makes.

Benefits To Hunting With A Suppressor

The biggest benefit to suppressor use is hearing protection. While hunting, many hunters forgo the use of hearing protection and are at severe risk of hearing damage. This is especially true when hunting with a partner, such as a spouse or child, and the rifle is fired without warning. A suppressor brings the decibels down to safe levels.

It also allows for a well-placed follow-up shot if needed. Deer are often confused with the direction a suppressed shot came from, allowing a clean second shot.

A suppressor reduces recoil by about 20 - 30 percent in rifles primarily by trapping and/or diverting propellant gas

but also because of the additional weight at the end of the barrel. The pressure against the face of each baffle tends to push outward from the shooter, which provides a measure of counter recoil force.

In general a suppressor provides for a more pleasant shooting experience—a huge bonus for new shooters, young shooters, elderly shooters, or for anyone. I mentioned the reduced recoil and the reduced noise that can startle a new shooter, but there is also less muzzle blast that can alarm shooters.

In Closing

When anything new or different is introduced in Wisconsin, the knee-jerk reaction is that it is going to decimate the herd. This is a ridiculous notion. Many said this about hunters using AR rifles for hunting. "What are you going to do with that machine gun," I was asked. I've been hunting with an AR for four years now. I took two deer the first two seasons (one each year) and have not seen a deer that I want to shoot in the last two. Two deer in four years; that is definitely not decimating the herd.

Despite the wild-eyed rhetoric, there are still game laws and bag limits in place that would prevent someone from

continued on page 22

SUZETTE CURTIS

Recipes By Suzette

Tasty venison

With a new supply of venison coming into our household, I am once again looking for interesting ways to use liver, heart, and kidneys. While visiting family in North Carolina this last year, I was introduced to Livermush. It was served as kind of a breakfast sausage with eggs and it was delicious. Even though the traditional recipe calls for pork liver, I thought I'd give it a try with venison liver. My husband is a wonderful guinea pig, and he says it's great. If you like the taste of liver, give it a try.

Almost Livermush

- 2 pounds venison liver
- 4 T. shortening
- 1 cup white cornmeal
- 3 cups water
- 4 eggs
- Sage
- Red pepper
- Salt & pepper

Slice liver into small pieces and fry in shortening until cooked through. Remove pan from heat and let cool. Once cool, either push liver through a meat grinder or finely grind in a food processor. Set aside.

Meanwhile, bring water to a boil. Slowly whisk in cornmeal, stirring until smooth and thickened.

Combine cooked cornmeal, ground liver, eggs, and seasoning and mix well. Seasoning is all to taste, so experiment until desired result. We like a "bite," so I was a little heavy with the red pepper.

Turn mixture into loaf pan and bake at 350° for 60 minutes. Once it has cooled, remove loaf from pan and refrigerate until time of use. Slice and fry like you would a breakfast sausage.

Venison Heart Philly Sandwiches

- 1 venison heart
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Sliced onion
- Sliced green pepper
- Provolone cheese
- Hoagie rolls

Heat oil on high in skillet. Slice heart very thinly; salt and pepper to taste. Sear meat quickly and remove from pan. In same skillet, cook onions and green peppers until slightly softened, adding oil as needed.


Layer meat on bottom half of hoagie roll, top with on-

ions, green peppers, and provolone cheese. Place sandwich bottom and top separately under broiler or in toaster oven until lightly toasted and cheese has melted. Put together and serve immediately.

Venison Kidneys In Wine Sauce

- 2 venison kidneys
- 2 T. butter
- 8 oz. fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 4 green onions, sliced
- ½ cup dry red wine
- French bread, sliced and toasted

Trim kidneys and slice thinly. Melt butter in skillet over med-high heat. Saute kidney slices until browned on both sides and remove to separate dish. In same skillet, sauté onions and mushrooms until mushrooms are just softened. Turn heat up to high and add wine, stirring occasionally until mixture has reduced to about half. Return kidney slices to pan and continue cooking for 2 to 3 more minutes.

Serve spooned over slices of toasted French bread. 

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



STUART WILKE

A Blast From Air Rifle Past

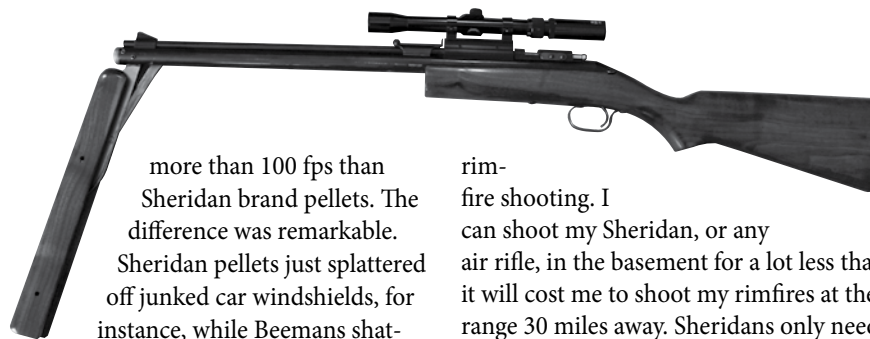
A 40 year-old Sheridan Blue Streak may be the anecdote to expensive rimfire ammunition

Whether it is due to hoarding or materials being diverted to the manufacture of more profitable larger caliber ammunition, .22 rimfire is still difficult to find. Unless you happen to be online at the right moment or in a store when it is being stocked, the chances of finding once common and cheap .22 ammunition is almost impossible. Those who like to shoot on a regular basis need an inexpensive alternative. I was lucky enough to find one in my basement, where it has spent literally decades resting in a cheap gun case.

My economical substitute for overpriced and illusive .22 rimfire is a 40 year-old .20 caliber Sheridan Blue Streak air rifle that I bought from a friend on February 14, 1974. I know this because I still have the owner's manual it came with along with the accessory catalog. I paid \$35 for it in slightly used condition. Back in the day, Sheridans were considered the Cadillac of air rifles. They were very accurate and were, for many years, the most powerful air gun that could be bought at most department and gun stores. Sheridans came with oil-finished walnut stocks and nicely blued metal parts in the case of the Blue Streak or chrome on the aptly named Silver Streak models.

Depending on the source, Sheridans fired their .20 caliber propriety pellet somewhere between 675 and 900 feet per second with eight pumps. The rifles could easily harvest small game quickly and humanely at 25 yards and more. Sheridan .20 caliber pellets were more expensive than more common .22 and .177 caliber, but at \$5 for 500, it would be hard to go broke with a Sheridan. During the '60s and '70s, the beauty of the .20 caliber round was that it was the perfect compromise. Pellets in .177 size, while fast and accurate, didn't always put down a rabbit or squirrel with one well-placed shot. The larger .22 caliber pellets were slow and lumbering and not as accurate. Sheridan aficionados, like me, scoffed at those lesser beings with their .177 and .22 caliber air rifles.

Despite the fact that only Sheridan and a handful of exotic foreign-made brands fired the .20 caliber round when I was actively using mine in the 1970s, there was quite a wide variety of quality pellets available. My favorites were Beeman Silver Jets, which, if memory serves, blasted pellets out at



more than 100 fps than Sheridan brand pellets. The difference was remarkable. Sheridan pellets just splattered off junked car windshields, for instance, while Beemans shattered them.

Sheridans were extremely rugged air rifles made in Racine, Wisconsin. They were (and are) supposed to be stored with one pump in the air chamber, whether the gun is being put away for one day or one year, to ensure that the seals don't shrink. Sheridans were not made to be stored with eight pumps and not used for a month. One of my high school friends lent (always a mistake) his Sheridan to another friend who left it in that state. Sure enough, the gun wouldn't hold air after that.

So off they went to the Sheridan factory in Racine to have the seals replaced. According to them, the employee behind the counter could have kissed them. Sheridans rarely came in for repairs, she told them, and her job was pretty uneventful. She had the gun working in less than 30 minutes, and, for all I know, it's still working.

My Sheridan is still working and it is going to be at least supplementing my .22

rimfire shooting. I can shoot my Sheridan, or any air rifle, in the basement for a lot less than it will cost me to shoot my rimfires at the range 30 miles away. Sheridans only need about three pumps to accurately hit a target at 15 meters and, depending on the ammunition and shooter, will do so all day in a half-inch group or maybe less.


If Sheridan air rifles have any faults, they are not insurmountable. Pumping them does become progressively harder as the number of pumps increases, with eight being the maximum. The sights are rather rudimentary, but Williams peep sights can be found and are far superior. Sheridans don't really lend themselves well to being scoped because you then have to hold them by the pistol grip, rather than the receiver, to pump them. This can be a little awkward, but it is by no means an unbeatable problem. Sheridans are also kind of loud, but not .458 Weatherby Magnum or even .22 rimfire loud. Your neighbors will never even know you're target shooting in the cellar.

When I was about 10 years old, I remember a party at our house that featured family friend Erv, his wife, two cute daughters, and his Sheridan pellet gun. We all had a

lot of fun with the Sheridan in the backyard shooting beer and soda cans. It truly was great family fun. We could not have done that with a .22 caliber rifle, considering the subdivision across the street.

Unfortunately, I now live in the city and times have changed. You can't shoot an air rifle, let alone a BB gun, in the backyard, without someone's hair starting on fire and the police being called. But I can shoot it in the basement once I get a decent pellet trap, and I'm also going to pull my old Webley Tempest out of mothballs for some pistol shooting.

If you don't live in a rural area, you can't beat an air rifle or pistol for inexpensive shooting. I think I'm going to be doing a lot more of it in the future and will also check out what else is available. From what I gather, air guns have come a long way since I bought my Blue Streak in 1974. Even so, I will always consider Sheridans the best. If *On Wisconsin Outdoors* columns did not have a limited word count, I would relate some Sheridan tales from my teenage years.

Several decades and dozens of guns later, I have yet to experience the enjoyment with any of them as much as I did with my Blue Streak. I think many readers can say the same of their own air rifles, whether they were Sheridans, Benjamins, Crossmans, or Daisys. 

Stuart Wilke is a long-time outdoor writer and has received a number of awards for his work.

MANNING, from page 21

wiping out the herd. If someone were inclined to use the suppressor to hunt illegally, then they would do it whether they have a suppressor or not; they're immoral and you can't regulate that.

What bothers me most about the "it will decimate the herd" crowd—much like the concealed carry debate with the "it will be like the shoot-out at the OK Coral" crowd—is that it implies Wisconsinites are dumber or have less moral character than the people in all the other places that do allow for these things. We are somehow less able to manage ourselves. This is an alarmist attitude and we must defeat it with education.

Silencers have become very popular with hunters elsewhere in places like Texas, where feral hog populations have decimated the ecosystem. They also make great hunting tools for deer, coyotes, and small game. Let's hope this becomes a trend in Wisconsin as well.

Look in the next issue of *On Wisconsin Outdoors* for Part 2: Purchasing Your First Suppressor.

Silencer Manufacturers:

- Advanced Armament Corporation (AAC) (www.advanced-armament.com)
- Bowers Group, LLC (www.subguns.org/products/cans/)
- Gemtech (www.gem-tech.com)
- Griffin Armament (www.griffinarmament.com)
- Huntertown (www.huntertownarms.com)
- Liberty (www.libertycans.net)
- Silencerco (www.silencerco.com)
- Surefire (www.surefire.com)
- Thunder Beast (www.thunderbeastarms.com)
- Wilson Combat (www.wilsoncombat.com)
- Yankee Hill Machine Co (YHM) (www.yhm.net)

Robb Manning served in the U.S. Marine Corps for nearly 11 years where he developed a passion and knowledge for firearms of all types. Since 2010 Robb has been a gun/hunting writer, and also films gun and gear videos for his Youtube channel 762x51n8o.

TOM CARPENTER

Cubs Corner

Take a winter bird walk

Now that winter has settled its cloak of white snow and crisp air over the land, you may be looking for extra ways to get those badger cubs outside for some fresh air and exercise.

Sledding and tubing is great but gets old and can even be a little dangerous, based on my children's stitch counts from their younger days. Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are both fun but tough on little bodies. And ice fishing only entertains active kids for so long. (Hint: bring along a football, beanbag toss, or other games to conduct when the bite is slow.)

But here's one of my all-time favorite winter activities to pursue with kids: go on a winter bird walk. The pastime combines equal parts hiking, hunting, avian identification, and biology lesson.

In Wisconsin's winter countryside, the name of the winter birding game is the "mixed flock." Here's how to hike in and hunt down one of these loose but entertaining little bird groupings, spot and identify its members, and help a young ornithologist understand the behaviors you're both witnessing.

Pick out a nice sunny day, preferably one with little or no wind. Temperature doesn't matter too much, as long as it's not frigid-cold out, like below 10 degrees Fahrenheit. In temperatures above that, if it's calm and blue-skied outside, most well-bundled little bodies can easily endure the conditions for a few hours. And the birds are most likely to be out working the countryside too; windy days keep them holed up out of the breeze and in thick cover.

There's no need to get out at the crack of dawn or even early in the morning. In fact, the midday hours between 10:00 AM and 2:00 or 3:00 PM are probably best for bird activity anyway. That's when temperatures are at their peak for the day and birds burn the least net energy while foraging.

Conduct your bird hike in most any winter woodland. Mature hardwoods are great (especially brushy oak, aspen, or other hardwoods), but really, most any mixed forest will do. Maybe hike in some hunting grounds you know or a state or county park. My favorite winter birding spots include Governor Dodge State Park, Kinnikinnic State Park, and several



county parks near my home.

Walk slowly and somewhat silently along, binoculars in hand. Stop and look often. Use the glass and your ears too. You'll often hear a winter mixed flock approaching before you see it. Listen for the buzzing *chickadee-dee-dee* calls of black-capped chickadees, the nasal *yank-yank* calls of white-breasted nuthatches, and the excited *pik-pik-pik* calls and spirited tree-drumming of downy woodpeckers.

If you spot a flock, approach slowly. Better yet, get a line on their path of travel and slowly work in front of their route. Admire the birds close up from behind binoculars. There's nothing like a mixed winter flock of songbirds to brighten a winter day! Feel free to talk softly and whisper loudly as you spot birds, point them out to each other, and talk about the behaviors you're witnessing.

Here are the kinds of birds you can expect to see in a mixed winter flock in the Wisconsin woods:

Black-Capped Chickadees. These cute, energetic, black-capped and black-bibbed little fellows are familiar to most folks. Watch chickadees work tree branches for bug eggs, larvae, seeds, buds, and other forage.

White-Breasted Nuthatches. These handsome blue-capped, white-bellied birds cling to tree trunks and probe bark crevices for forage while circling tree trunks from the top down.

Brown Creepers. These nondescript, brown-and-buff little birds with curved bills complement nuthatches perfectly. How? Creepers work a tree trunk from the bottom up, covering territory and

angles the nuthatches miss on their trip down!

Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers. You will see more downies than the larger hairy woodpeckers, but the birds look similar: Black-and-white checkered backs, white bellies, long-and-stout beaks, with handsome red patches on the back of the males' heads. Woodpeckers drum and pound into bark to dig for forage that other flock members can't access.

Tufted Titmice. Bonus bird! You might occasionally see these silver-gray, crested cousins of chickadee in winter flocks, especially in eastern Wisconsin. Watch for the big, beady black eye, listen for a buzzy whistle-call.

American Goldfinches. Listen for the sprightly *per-chick-o-ree* and *chew-chew-chew* calls of elegant-looking, olive-gray, black-winged winter goldfinches. Goldfinches work the very tips of branches, as well as shorter plants, and dried flower heads, seed pods and tall grasses, for seeds.

Can you see how a mixed flock of songbirds works so perfectly together to make sure no foodsource goes untapped in the winter forest? It's a wonderful biology lesson for young and mature birdwatchers alike. And the color, sound and activity you witness is surely a day-brightener in the middle of a long winter.

Next sunny and nice day we get, venture out with any young badger cub in your life and experience the joys – and lessons – that a winter bird hike offers.



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

TOM CARPENTER

Badger Birds

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Hold a dime in your hand. That dime weighs more than a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. This tiny songbird, not much bigger than a hummingbird, is an energetic little package—always busy and constantly flicking its wings as it hunts for tiny insects, spiders, bug eggs, and larvae in Wisconsin woodlands during spring and summer. Kinglet habitat also includes well-treed neighborhoods, brushy thickets, and wooded river ways.

Look for a tiny, olive-gray bird with dark wings, prominent white wing bars, broken white eye rings, stubby tail, and slender beak. A male's bright ruby crown is visible when the bird is excited or aggressive.

Listen for Ruby-crown sounds, a rough jit-jit call and a prolonged song sounding like *chee-chee-chee chew-chew-chew-chew chidee-chidee-chidee*.

Watch Ruby-crowned Kinglets hunt on the wing. Most food is plucked from bark crevices and tree leaves. These tiny hunters also hover in the air and snatch insects or sit on twigs and flutter out to snag flying meals.



Use binoculars to pick out Ruby-crowned Kinglets within mixed flocks of small songbirds. Chickadees, creepers, woodpeckers, and titmice are common Kinglet companions.

Wonder how the Kinglet got its name? It may come from the male bird's bold red crown. More likely it's because of this brave little bird's aggressive behavior as it hunts and protects its nesting territory.

Did you know that Ruby-crowned Kinglets lay an astounding number of eggs? The nest is a moss-lined cup placed high in a tree and contains up to a dozen tiny eggs, the total weight of which may exceed the mother.

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

PERRY A. HINTZ

Wisconsin Youth Trap Shooting Experiences Rapid Growth

Developing life skills through competition

Youth shooting sports is not a new concept in the state of Wisconsin. For over 40 years the Horicon Marsh Sportsmen's Club in Mayville has hosted the Wisconsin State High School Shoot. In just the last five years the annual event has more than doubled in size to include over 1,100 young athletes. Much of that growth has come from high school-based teams in southeastern Wisconsin, which formed a six-school conference in 2010 that has grown to 13 teams in 2013. That same type of growth is now rapidly spreading across the state.

The recent expansion in youth shooting sports has come from national youth programs, primarily the Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP). With the mission to form as many teams of shotgun shooters from among the nation's school-aged population as possible, in 2001 the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) based in Newtown, Connecticut, formed the SCTP.

The Scholastic Clay Target Program is successful precisely because it is different from some of the other athletic programs that our kids may participate in. While competing in local, state, regional, and national championship competitions, the emphasis of the SCTP is about winning within the rules, teaching the fundamentals of safe and effective clay target shooting, continual improvement, sportsmanship, and teamwork. In reality, the SCTP is about

learning the rules of the game of life that will have consequences far beyond breaking a clay target. The coaches are certified and trained, and each participant is covered by the Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation's liability policy. Coaches and athletes must sign a sportsmanship contract, and all athletes' parents or guardians are asked to participate and support their athlete's activities, including various fundraising events, to offset the cost of the program.

There were just a handful of SCTP teams in Wisconsin when, in 2005, Tom Wondrash, of the Burlington Conservation Club, approached the Burlington school board about creating a letter-earning club shooting team. After careful consideration, the board agreed and the BHS Demons Trap Team was formed with 27 athletes in its first year. The team was successful from the start, tying for first place in the Senior-Novice division at the 2005 SCTP Na-

tionals, ultimately finishing runner-up in a shoot-off.

Trap shooting quickly spread to other southeastern Wisconsin high schools and clubs, and within a couple years, Wilmot, Westosha Central, Union Grove, and others branched out. In 2010 a six-team SEWI SCTP high school conference was formed complete with weekly dual matches and a year-ending conference shoot. In just three years the conference has grown to 13 high schools and over 600 athletes. Additional growth and a possible split into multiple conferences are in the near future. There are other high school conferences sprouting up across Wisconsin including the North and South Kettle Moraine Trapshooting Conferences, the Northern Wisconsin Clay Target Conference, and the non-SCTP Sheboygan County High School League.

The Demons have had plenty of success over the last eight years, including six straight victories at the Wisconsin High School Shoot in Mayville and various state and regional championships. The biggest prize of all came in July 2011 when the high school-based team defeated 75 other varsity teams from across the United States by breaking 979 of 1,000 targets and winning the overall SCTP National Championship at the World Recreation and Sports Complex in Sparta, Illinois.

In 2012 the BHS Demons shooting team came up three

continued on page 25



DENNY MURAWSKA

The Art Of Concealed Carry

Lessons learned from martial arts

I read with interest Robb Manning's November/December 2013 *On Wisconsin Outdoors* article on concealed carry and could not agree more with him. In fact, I began my own brand of concealed carry in Illinois long before it had the blessing of lawmakers. Luckily, I am now a Wisconsin resident and do not live close to the border as I used to. Funny how many governors of that fine state ended up behind bars after denying citizens' basic rights. Looks like some got their just desserts.

In my many years of being a concealed carry proponent, some of the most important lessons in the fine art of being a pistolero came not from any courses I took or "how to" books. They came from my years as a student of martial arts and 15 years as a black belt instructor in two very traditional Japanese styles of karate.

In karate, which has been described as a "tree of slow growth," students who want to learn everything at once, and very quickly, get bored and weeded out in no time. It is only those who persevere the endless, repetitious training that joins mind and body into a formidable weapon who continue. In traditional styles, there is no mention of weapons training early on. Mental and bodily control are hallmarks of traditional styles, which is very different than the mixed martial arts hodgepodge of today. Each session of Shotokan karate began with students kneeling and reciting "Dojo Kun," rules which govern the school and training.

- 1) Seek perfection of character
- 2) Be faithful
- 3) Endeavor
- 4) Respect others
- 5) Refrain from violent behavior

Not much is said here about kicking butt and there is no other violence-laced verbiage. In time, you learn that your mind is the source of your defense, and, by extension, your body. Weapons training begins only when a certain mastery of this precept is evident to a competent, caring instructor. Whether the weapon is a wooden staff, sword, nuchaku, or the body itself, an extension of a will cultivated to react in a refined manner is necessary.

I feel good about carrying a gun because I know it is an extension of my will. I do not hang out in places that brood trouble and avoid the types of people who look for it when I can. However, there have been a number of times in life when I would have had every legal right to unleash the full force of my training on a would-be attacker, and several times a gun would have been appropriate as well. Thankfully, my training

allowed a cool head to prevail and nobody was harmed.

The most important lesson anyone can and should have embedded in their mind when it comes to guns is intent. Have you practiced over and over and over with that weapon until it feels like an extension of your own body? Can you draw it and manipulate it in total darkness? Are you as familiar with it as your own hand?

Long ago I learned to manipulate weapons by handling them constantly. This is not idle play but a necessity. I do the same with my guns. As with physical fighting, confrontations are not sought out. But if the time comes to use a gun, do you have the intent necessary to do so? Brandishing a weapon in hopes of scaring an attacker is dangerous and foolish. Have you developed the mindset of knowing that if you

continued on page 27



HINTZ, from page 24

birds short of repeating as SCTP National Champions, bringing home the gold medal in the high school division. Proving the depth of the program, the Demons' No. 2 squad brought home the high school bronze award.

Fast forward to the 2013 SCTP Nationals: the Demons' varsity once again flexed their muscle, this time breaking 986 targets in route to their second overall and third SCTP National Championship in three years. Based not only on their success on the field, but also the way they represent Burlington High School and the community, the Demons have become a role model for teams not only in Wisconsin but also across the entire country.

As dominant as the Burlington team has been at the high profile SCTP National shoots, other Wisconsin teams have used the Demons' example to model and improve their programs. Wilmot and Jefferson have both taken turns at the top of the SEWI SCTP Conference standings. Last year Waterford High School brought home the WI SCTP State Trap Championship, besting the team they share the Burlington Conservation Club with by two targets.

Athletes are grouped by school grade (Intermediate: grades 5 to 8 and Senior: grades 9 to 12). SCTP teams are allowed any number of members, but it takes at least five athletes in the same age group




to make up a competitive shooting squad for trap and three for the other clay target sports that include American skeet, sporting clays, and the Olympic disciplines of bunker trap, double trap, and International skeet. The SCTP is the official feeder program to USA Shooting, the United States Olympic shooting program.

The SCTP is expanding into the collegiate ranks where a growing number of schools are forming competitive teams. Last year the SCTP awarded 35 \$1,000 scholarships for deserving SCTP athletes who were moving on to college. The University of Wisconsin-Platteville is now entering its third season competing in both the SCTP and ACUI programs.

If you seek a sport for your children that the whole family can participate in, the SCTP and the newly formed Scholastic Pistol Program (SPP) are definitely activities you will be proud to take part in. Both girls and boys compete on equal footing in SCTP, and every member of every team participates; not many youth sports can stake that claim.

The Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation (SSSF) is responsible for all aspects of the Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) and Scholastic Pistol Program (SPP) across the United States, including participant registration, coaches, state coordinators, state and national championships, promotion, communications, websites, public relations, and growth strategies. The Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation exists to raise funding and other resources for Youth Development Programs in the shooting sports industry.

SCTP and SPP are youth development programs where adult coaches and volunteers model sportsmanship, responsibility, honesty, ethics, integrity, and teamwork while using shooting sports programs to teach these and other positive life skills to the athletes.

To learn more about SCTP or SPP, call 419.794.9924 or visit their website at sssfonline.com. 

Wisconsin Sets the Standard for High School and Youth Shooting Programs



Burlington High School

Demons Shooting Team

2013 Scholastic Clay Target Program National Trap Champions breaking 986 of 1000 clay targets. Alexia McCarthy 197, Head Coach Chet Tuinstra, Christian Jensen 197, Jordan Hintz 198, Cody Schilz 199, Myles Walker 195.

If You Have a Son or Daughter Interested, Contact One of These WI Scholastic Clay Target Program Teams:

- B.H.S. Demons Shooting Team - Burlington Conservation Club
- Badger High School Trap Team - Powers Lake Sportsman's Club
- Beaver Dam Golden Beavers - Beaver Dam Conservationists
- Berlin Target Terminators - Berlin Conservation Club
- Blair Taylor Wildcats -
- Brooklyn Sportsman Club - Brooklyn Sportsmans Club
- Burlington Demons Pistol Shooting Team - Schultz Gun Club
- Central Falcons - Bristol Ranges
- Cudahy Packers Trap Team - Cudahy Sportsmen's Club
- CWC Trap Team - Wescot Sportsmans Club
- Daniel Boone - Daniel Boon Conservation League
- Eagles Trap Club - Boulder Junction Shooting Range
- Fond Du Lac H.S. Trap Team - Wescot Sportsmans Club
- Green Lake Youth Shooting Team - Berlin Conservation Club
- Hamilton Chargers Trap Team -
- Hartford Conservation & Gun Club Youth Trap Team - Hartford Conservation & Gun Club, Inc.
- Hartford Conservation and Gun Club Trap and Pistol team -
- Hudson Raider Shooting Club - Hudson Rod, Gun and Archery Club
- Jefferson Sportsmans Club (JSC Youth Trap) - Jefferson Sportsman's Club
- KMHS Shooting Sports Team - Sauville Rifle and Pistol Club
- Langlade County Falcons - Langlade County Trap Club
- Lomira Youth Trap Team - Lomira Sportsman's Club
- Manitowoc Gun Club Bird Busters - Manitowoc Gun Club
- Marquette Hilltoppers Trap Team - Waukesha Gun Club
- Milwaukee Lutheran - Waukesha Gun Club
- Muskego Warriors Trap Club - Boxhorn Gun Club
- NLSC Junior Busters - New Libson Sportsman's Club
- OHS Trap Shooting Club - Stone Bank Sportsman's Club
- Osceola Rod & Gun Club - Osceola Rod & Gun Club
- Oshkosh Wildcats - Springbrook Sportsmans Club
- Ozaukee Scholastic Shooting Sports - Ozaukee Fish & Game
- Ozaukee Scholastic Shooting Sports Pistol Team - Ozaukee Fish & Game Association
- Platteville Pioneers - Cassville Conservation Club
- Racine Lutheran Trap Team - Winchester Gun Club
- Rice Lake Warrbirds - Brill Area Sportsmans Club
- Sauk County Youth Shooting Team - Sauk Prairie Trap & Skeet Club, Inc.
- Shooting Tigers - Woods and Meadows Sporting Clay
- Spartan Clay Target Team - Hope Rod and Gun Club
- SPASH Shooting Club - Ashley Shooting Club
- TWSA - Tomah Warrens Sportsmans Club
- Union Grove Bronco's Shooting Club - North Shore Winchester Gun Club
- University Of WI - Platteville Sportsmans Club - Southwestern Wisconsin Club
- University of Wisconsin Platteville Pistol Team -
- UW Stout Pistol Team -
- Waterford High School Trap Team - Burlington Conservation Club
- Waukesha Gun Club Indians - Waukesha Gun Club
- Wausau Skeet & Trap - Wausau Skeet & Trap Club
- West Bend High School Trap Shooting Team - West Bend Sportsmans Club
- Wilmot Panthers Shooting Team - Powers Lake Sportsman's Club
- Wilmot Union High School Shooting Club -
- Winneconne Wolves Trap Team - Berlin Conservation Club

Or if You Would Like to Start a New SCTP Team in Your Area, Contact One of Our SCTP State Advisors:

- Gary DeSmidt, East Central WI Trap - trapshooter@netwurx.net
- Rick Persinger, North West WI Trap - richard.persinger@donaldson.com
- Chet Tuinstra, South East WI Trap - ctuinstra59@gmail.com
- Al Chickerneo, Skeet & Sporting Clays - al@chickerneo.com

National Program Contact: Scott Moniot,
Director of Development - 641-660-8409 - smoniot@sssfonline.com

Learn more at: www.sssfonline.com

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County Teasers



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- 2 Click on the "Explore Wisconsin" page tab
- 3 Click on any county ... and explore!

January and February got you down? Central Wisconsin has a hot midwinter bite. Check out the many options we offer for not only crappies and bluegills but the great action for walleyes and pike. [Click on Marathon County.](#)

Home of the Bluegill and Walleye Capitals of Wisconsin, Washburn County is the perfect location for your winter fishing trip. Grab your ice fishing equipment and hit the ice this winter to make your fishing stories a reality! Great winter accommodations are available. For a complete list [click on Washburn County.](#)

January and February offer opportunities for cross-country skiing and winter hiking—and even swimming! January 1 is the Annual Polar Bear Dip for those hardy (or foolish) souls. Fishing continues from the shore at our newly opened Coal Dock Park—all winter long. For more details, please [click on Ozaukee County.](#)

Ice fishing tournaments are a popular winter past-time in **Price County.** Hard water anglers can choose from six tournaments, one almost every weekend from January to March. Cash prizes are awarded at many and bragging rights are guaranteed! For ice fishing, snowmobiling and winter ATVing information [click on Price County.](#)

Ashland and the outdoors!

Northwood's Harness Club Sleigh & Cutter Rally. Book Across the Bay XC Ski Race & Snowshoe Trek. King of the Bay Snow Drags. XC Skiing. Snowshoeing. Snowmobiling on scenic groomed trails throughout Ashland County. Ice fishing on Lake Superior and inland lakes...fish are plentiful! Murals. Shopping, dining and lodging. Visit Ashland, Lake Superior's hometown. [Click on Ashland County.](#)

The Waukesha Gun Club is **Wisconsin's largest shotgun only club.** It features 29 Trap houses, a Sporting Clays course, seven Skeet ranges, and three endorsed 5-Stand venues. The Waukesha Gun Club lies on 88-plus acres and has a spacious clubhouse. Banquet, shooting event, private party, or just a place to hold a meeting. [Click on Waukesha County.](#)

Sparta is a choice destination for Cross-Country Skiing, Sledding, Downhill Skiing, Snowboarding, Ice Stating, Ice Fishing, Snowmobiling, Hockey. We have it all waiting for you. Sparta is the place to visit this winter. Plan your winter travel now. Enjoy all that Sparta has to offer this winter. [Click on Monroe County.](#)

Ice Fishing is a big time draw in Ferryville on the Mississippi River. Pan fish are a favorite. Use the Ferryville Boat Launch to access the best fishing on the river. March 1, 2014 from

10 a.m. – 3 p.m. is **Bald Eagle & Raptor Day**, co-sponsored by the Green Bay Packer Foundation and featuring live Eagle programs, Lois the owl who flies around the room. U.S. Fish and Wildlife will be there to tell us about eagles in the Upper Mississippi River Refuge and Choris Lowe will provide a Native American program all at Village Hall, Ferryville, WI. [Click on Crawford County](#)

You've seen it in the movies and you've heard the fish tales; now it's time to try it yourself. Load the lures and drill the holes in the ice. Fish the state's largest inland lake, Lake Winnebago, for perch and walleye, the shore area for lawyers (the fish!). Be a legend and dare to gamble against the sturgeon. Sturgeon spearing is a historical tradition, which brings thousands to Lake Winnebago every winter in hopes of tricking one of the prehistoric monsters to cross the path of your spear. [Click on Calumet County.](#)

Time for a winter getaway—the Mississippi River is frozen and ready for fantastic ice fishing. March 1st is the date for Ferryville's Bald Eagle Day, and you won't want to miss out on seeing fabulous raptors up close. Your friends at the Grandview Motel will be happy to accommodate your visit! [Click on Crawford County.](#)

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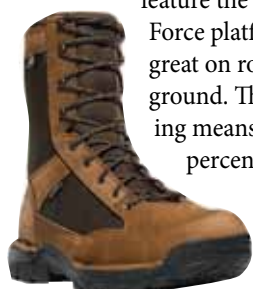
OGRE ENVIRONCLEAN FA GUN CLEANER

This stuff is great for multiple reasons. First and foremost, it works really well. Second, it's environmentally friendly. Third, it's made here in Wisconsin, and to me that's always a bonus. It's a great cleaner that will smash its way through fouling while not assaulting the olfactory organ. I found it to have almost no noticeable smell, and I've got superpowers when it comes to sniffing. Even deer and other game will have a hard time smelling it. It contains a biodegradable oil, which lubricates as well. The oil also prevents it from evaporating, leaving a coating that continues to dissolve and loosen fouling. Another big plus is that it has a higher flashpoint — 200 degrees Fahrenheit — than other cleaners, making it far less flammable. It's great for all firearms, including black powder. It's gentle if you get some on wood or plastic, yet is very effective in cleaning. Simply apply, let it work for 10 minutes, then wipe away; the fouling comes off with it. It comes in 1 (\$3), 4 (\$10), and 8 (\$15) ounces and 1 gallon (\$90). OWO recommended.

ogremfg.com

DANNER RIDGEMASTER BOOTS

I've been a big fan of Danner for years and was giddy to see that production of the new Ridgemaster boots was brought back to the shores of the U.S. and crafted here, as it should be. Handcrafted in Oregon of nubuck leather and a 1000 Denier Nylon upper, with a leather toe and heel wrap for abrasion resistance. Excellent grip is provided by Vibram soles, and the boots



feature the ultra-stable Terra Force platform, which is great on rocks and uneven ground. The Gore-Tex lining means they are 100 percent waterproof and breathable. They weigh 55 ounces per pair and

are 8 inches tall. Did I mention how great they look? They're very comfortable for all day wear. Mine ran a little small. Men's regular and wide sizes. \$290. OWO recommended.

danner.com

PRIMOS BOSS DOG

This electronic caller has a volume and clarity that are unmatched. Powered by three 50-watt amps for distortion-free sound. The remote has a 2.5-inch LCD display and can control the caller from 200 yards away. It comes with 100 sounds and eight expert hunts and can store up to 2,000 sounds on 4GB of internal memory. The expert hunts are outstanding. Primos Pros like Randy Anderson call a complete hunt for you, start to finish. It's great for beginners and experienced hunters alike. It comes with a motion decoy that can be placed up to 30 yards from the speaker and is controlled by the remote. An auxiliary input allows you to hook up other external devices, such as music players. \$717.95.

primos.com



VEXILAR FP100 FISHPHONE MOBILE APP & CAMERA SYSTEM

Turns your smart phone or tablet into an underwater camera monitor. It uses Wi-Fi to set up a hotspot that reaches 100 feet. No cell phone coverage needed — it works anywhere in the world. It also allows you to record video or still images and send them to friends. Comes with a holder and battery pack system that holds 50 feet of cable. The battery pack can power your FishPhone for up to six hours between charging. The camera is a Sony Color/B&W that automatically



changes from color to black and white to provide better contrast in poor light conditions. Works with a free app for iOS 4.3 or Android 2.0. \$190.

vexilar.com

NORTHLAND FORAGE MINNOW SPOON

The unique design flutters and flashes like a real crippled minnow, luring in gamefish looking for their favorite forage. It has a realistic action that they won't be able to resist. The lifelike holographic baitfish-image design is lethal on gamefish. Comes in six different colors/patterns. For crappie, perch, bass, trout, and other panfish. \$3.49.

northlandtackle.com



CLAM BOMB SPOON

The epoxy finish shimmies, drawing them in, and the compact design of the lure means they'll get it on the first strike. The original Genz design is made to fish fast and cover a lot of water. It also shows up well on flashers, so you know where it's at, even when you can't visually see it. It comes in six different colors and is intended for walleye, sauger, perch, and crappie. Bait it with Minnow Head, Euro-larvae, Wax Worm, or Spike. \$3.99.

clamoutdoors.com



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Product 6-Pack contributors include Tom Carpenter and Robb Manning. If you have recommendations for good gear that works for you, tell us about it at ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.

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MURAWSKA, from page 24

need to you can simply draw on training and experience to pull the gun and use it without any flourish or fanfare? That is what it takes!

In karate I learned that if I got within arm's length of an opponent and I initiated the first strike, I would most assuredly hit exactly what I wished to with devastating force. It is a matter of human reflexes and how fast one can react. One does not crouch into a Karate Kid crane stance and start flapping wings of death to scare a would-be attacker. Similarly, one does not brandish a weapon hoping to scare the bad guy. You train to act almost reflexively and very deliberately without hesitation

if a self-defense situation emerges. As one instructor put it, "Action almost precedes thought."

Practice repetitiously. Know you will hit your mark within a certain range. Be able to manipulate this tool in your hand as an extension of your body and will. Know you have the attitude ingrained in you to use it if the need arises and live with that confidence. Some of the most accomplished pistoleros in the Old West were not always the fastest. They were the most deliberate. *OW*

Denny Murawska has been a contributor to the wacky "UP Magazine," "Wishigan," "Verse Wisconsin," and "The Pulse." His church is the pine cathedral that surrounds him at his home near Black River Falls.



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