

FREE

March/April 2014

Vol. 7, Issue 4

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GARY ENGBERG

# Gary Engberg Outdoors

## Lake Mendota Perch—a trip worth taking

By the time you read this article the ice fishing season will be slowly winding down on the Madison Chain of Lakes. But the perch fishing should be great well into March. For those who are unfamiliar with the Chain, it consists of Lakes Mendota, Monona, Waubesa, Kegonsa and Wingra, which all surround the state capitol of Madison, Wisconsin. Each one of these waters is unique in its size, depth and respective fisheries.

In this article, I concentrate on Lake Mendota, because it has a very good fishery with quality lake perch and can provide consistent action throughout the winter. Most years, Lake Mendota is the last lake in the Chain to freeze, usually around the first of the New Year. But with this year's frigid Arctic weather, there have been no problems with good ice and accessibility. One still has to be careful and watch for pressure cracks and remember that safety is always a major concern.

At almost 90 feet deep, Lake Mendota is the largest lake of the Chain and is usually the last lake to freeze because of its depth and size (9,842 acres). Mendota has always been known for its perch fishing, with many fish in the 7- to 10-inch range and some jumbos that measure 12 inches and larger. The perch fishing peaked in the '50s, '60s and '70s but seems to be coming back. During the winter, perch scatter and suspend throughout the water column from near the bottom to just under the ice. The perch schools vary in size and travel at different depths, so a quality and color electronic unit (Lowrance, Aqua-Vu or



The author with some nice perch.

Vexilar) is a must to mark and locate perch schools. Often these schools are in water anywhere from 50 to 70 feet deep in Lake Mendota.

Some of the better locations to perch fish this year include the Governors Island area; the "Four Doors" near Governor Nelson State Park on the lake's north shore, straight out from Mendota County Park on the northwest side; the Second Point area on the south shore; and Picnic Point, again on the southern end. All of these hot spots are anywhere from a quarter of a mile to a mile out from shore. They all are within walking distance, but many anglers use snowmobiles and four-wheelers for easy lake access. If fishing these lakes, which are in Wisconsin's Dane County, you're required to have a floatation device on your snowmobile or ATV, so check this regulation before fishing. You should also look into a new product, the Nebulus Floatation Device, which is a small, cushion-like apparatus that inflates and can save you and your machine if trouble should arise. Nebulus pro Duffy Kopf has shown me the device, and I recommend it to any ice fisherman.

To find perch, it is necessary to fish the deep water. Locals use pencil weights, inline sinkers and copper tubes, which all allow the angler to get back to the deep water quickly when a school of fish passes through the fishing area. Being mobile is very important because the perch schools

are constantly moving, and if you plan to stay on the roving perch schools, you need to have numerous holes drilled in advance and keep "popping" from hole to hole. The local Mendota pros use ATVs equipped with their auger, good electronics, a floatation device and rigged rods, plus jigs and bait. Then, the angler drops the transducer into a hole and looks for fish, jigging a little for active fish on the color screen before moving on to another hole and repeating the process.

Wax worms and spikes are the best baits for Lake Mendota perch. Waxies seem to stay on the hook better, last longer and are my bait of choice for yellow perch. Also, try using plastics and the Berkley Gulp products as bait, because some days artificial baits will out-fish live bait. If the fish want something different, the Gulp and plastic tails fill the bill. Most ice jigs will work, but the ones that I suggest are Rat Finkies, Rockers, Fatsos, Teardrops, Maramushkas, Slo-Pokes and the small Bait Rigs Cobra jig. Experiment with different colors, but orange, pink, green, glow and chartreuse seem to be the mainstays on Lake Mendota. The daily limit is 25 perch, and on a good day you should be able to catch this many fish.

When fishing deep water, the perch you catch will have their air bladder pulled out their mouths and will not survive if they are too small to keep. So if you are catching all small fish, move to another hole and try to find the larger sized perch that you want to keep. There's no sense keeping and killing small fish! The perch are in schools and most of the fish will be the same size, so try to find schools of keeper fish.

Contacts: Guide Ron Barefield, 608.235.7685. Wilderness Fish and Game, Sauk City, Wisconsin, 608.643.5229, for bait and ice fishing needs. D & S Bait and Tackle, Madison, Wisconsin, 608.241.4225....



Guide Ron Barefield with a couple of jumbos.



Above: A good-sized perch.  
Below: Tony Roach with a jumbo perch.



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JOEL DEBOER

# Tip-down Panfish

## The zero-resistance approach

The waning weeks of the winter season can be one of the most prolific times for panfish anglers. As schools of hungry bluegills, perch and crappies congregate in predictable late-season lo-

cales, the longer days, warmer temperatures and increased fish activity provide a much welcomed respite from the doldrums of mid-winter.

One of the most effective and efficient

manners of catching late-ice panfish is using tip-downs. Tip-downs consist of a rod and line-holding mechanism (reel, spool, etc.) that balances on a brace or frame. The rig uses the principle of weight balance-

ing to initially hold the rod at a 45-degree upward angle. When a fish strikes, the rod simply swivels at its balance point and tips downward toward the hole. With this visual cue, an angler knows the bait is in the fish's mouth and merely needs to set the hook before retrieving the line, typically hand-over-hand. The beauty of the system is that it provides zero resistance to a striking fish resulting in fewer drops and more hook-ups, especially when dealing with finicky or pressured fish.



Guide Todd Bohm displays a pair of tip-down caught crappies.

The fact that the rod is balanced means that it only stays tipped down as long as the fish has the bait in its mouth. If the fish spits the lure out, the rod merely returns to its standard 45-degree upward angle, thus putting the bait right back into the strike zone. This is a huge advantage to ice anglers dealing with finicky fish that may strike and subsequently drop the bait multiple times before finally committing to eating.

While constructed on the same basic premise, tip-downs are available in a variety of styles both hand-made and commercially produced. Featuring a 24-inch lightweight self-contained hard plastic carrying tube only two inches in diameter, extendable rod holder and a reel complete with a folding handle, the Ice Fishing Tip Down from Innovative Manufacturing is my personal choice for panfish all winter long. The Ice Fishing Tip Down excels in both shallow and deep water situations, as its hollow end allows you to custom balance the unit for use with larger baits or heavier sinkers such as when fishing areas of strong current or in deeper water.

Tackle for rigging tip-downs is relatively simple: line for the spool, fluorocarbon leader material and an assortment of hooks and sinkers is enough to get started. Fellow

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TOM CARPENTER

# Springtime is Bullhead Time

## Downhome fun with Whiskerfish

I remember those first warm spring days like they were yesterday. Dad would come home from work and out of the blue, say, "Get the fishin' poles ready. We'll head out right after dinner."

What an adventure. As dusk descended on the lake, we would hike around to the red sand shoreline or rocky dike on one of our local lakes and light lanterns, prop forked sticks on the bank, bait up with nightcrawlers and toss out our rigs.

The quarry? Springtime bullheads!

### In Praise Of Bullheads

No fish gets less respect than a bullhead. But these bantam-sized members of the catfish clan have a loyal following—and for good reason. You don't need thousands of dollars' worth of equipment to chase bullheads, a boat is optional, the fishing strategies are simple, and the action is fast. Plus, when caught from spring's cool, post-ice-out waters, bullhead filets taste absolutely delicious out of the frying pan.

There's more. You can find bullheads in every corner of Wisconsin and in almost every kind of water—from most warm water lakes and streams to our largest reservoirs and major rivers, and from tiny farm ponds and fertile lakes to the bays of our famous walleye lakes. It's hard to find a fish that, for its size, puts up a better fight than a broad-shouldered bullhead.

He tugs, runs, shakes his head, never gives up and generally boars down while trying to stay near bottom. Bullheads fight!

### Where To Fish

In Wisconsin, our ice usually goes out anywhere from mid-March to late-April as you travel north. The best bullhead fishing generally happens from two to four weeks after ice-out, while the water is still cool but starting to warm up with spring's ample sunlight.

Now bullheads move from their deep winter haunts into the shallow areas of a lake or river. Good spring bullhead locations include boat channels, canals, backwater lakes, sloughs, coves and bays off a big lake (especially dark- or sandy-bottomed areas), and sluggish feeder creeks. In short, look for places that connect to, but warm up faster than, the main lake or river.

If shallow "connecting" types of habitat don't exist on your favorite lake, study a lake map. Find the shallowest bay, preferably one that is exposed to the full daytime sun. In rivers and creeks, look for lowhead dams that block upstream fish movement as well as slow pools.

The red sand area I loved so much as a boy was not a swimming beach, but we would also fish those kinds of areas. On beaches, shallow water warms quickly, drawing baitfish and invertebrates, which attract hungry bullheads.

*Whiskerfish may not be beautiful, but early spring is a great time to catch them ... and eat them!*



And a clean bottom means no snags. Bullheads will also scavenge on winter's dead fish and baitfish in these types of places.

### How To Catch Bullheads

Here's a rundown of basic gear, baits and methods for catching a mess of springtime whiskerfish.

Any medium-power spinning or spincasting outfit will do the job. Use 10- to 12-pound test line. Tie on a long-shank hook in size 2 to 1/0. Bullheads often swallow the bait and a long shank helps you extract the hook.

In shallow water use a couple split-shot for weight to get your rig down to the bottom. An old-fashioned rubber-core sinker also works well. Use a slip-sinker rig (with an egg or bullet sinker for weight) if you're feeling fancy.

Spring's best bait has to be nightcrawlers or good old

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DAVE DUWE

# Wisconsin River Walleyes

## The reliable spring jig

Let's get jiggy with it! Spring is finally here. Now is the time to get the boat out and catch the spawning river walleyes. Jig fishing has always been my favorite and most productive spring walleye presentation. The end of March through April is the best time to pursue the pre-spawn and spawning walleyes as they will be concentrated in the river systems, making them easy targets for anglers.

In Wisconsin, my go-to walleye hot spots are the Fox River near Oshkosh, Mississippi River in Alma and the Wisconsin River in Wisconsin Dells. There are many other river systems in Wisconsin that contain good populations of walleyes, but these are my favorites.

I prefer to work the channels of the rivers I fish. I find that the deepest part of the river systems contain most of the active fish. A bed of clams and locating bottom transition areas, soft turning hard, can be the keys to success. I use my Humminbird graph to find these transition areas. The harder the bottom the wider the red echo will appear on the graph.

The best method of catching river walleyes is the tried and true jig/minnow combo. I prefer the Arkie ¼-ounce sickle jig in pink or chartreuse or the Bait Rigs Odd'ball jig. The weight and size of the jig head is dependent on the current of the river. I always try to have a vertical presentation off the bottom. Letting too much line out will cause you to get snags more often. I never cast a jig as that means an almost instant snag. Drift slowly with the current, keeping the bow of the boat pointed into the current. By employing the Bow Mount Minn-Kota trolling motor I can eliminate much of the speed of the current. This allows you the ability to use a much smaller jig. Anchoring the boat would be easier, but it tends spook the fish. I use a 6-foot medium action Fenwick fishing rod and an Abu Garcia bait casting reel, spooled with 6-pound crystal Fireline. The shorter rod allows the angler to more easily handle two rods at the same time, preventing an old guy like me from getting arm weary. The bait caster reel allows you to adjust to changing depths much faster and simpler than a spinning reel.

When fishing non-aggressively feeding walleyes, it is imperative to use a stringer hook. A stringer hook is a small treble hook on monofilament line attached to the jig. As a rule, the length is about two to three inches and is determined by the size of your bait. I prefer not hooking the minnow. Letting the stringer hook swing freely allows the minnow to swim more naturally. The bottom can't have many snags or the free-swinging treble hook will have you hooked on bottom more than you are fishing.

The jigs are tipped with either a fathead minnow or a Milwaukee shiner. Depending on the day either one can be more effective than the other. Most often, I hop the jig three to four inches off bottom. In spring almost all the fish are relating to the bottom. Be diligent; a lot of times the walleye will strike as the jig falls. A tip I learned from a walleye pro to prevent line twist is to attach a small snap swivel to the line. Changing colors and sizes of the jig quickly also aids the angler.

The walleye bite can be so good that the fishing pressure may be tremendous. To



Dave and Nate Duwe with a river walleye

avoid the crowds I try going during the week or when the weather isn't the best. Some rivers have a specific bag or size limit on the walleyes. Make sure you know the rules before you hit the water. The bite can be so good that it is not unheard of to catch a hundred fish. Always keep only the smaller males to preserve the resource. *WD*

Dave Duwe is owner of Dave Duwe's Guide service and has been guiding the lakes of south-eastern Wisconsin for 15 years, specializing in Delevan Lake and Lake Geneva. Find him at [fishlakegeneva.com](http://fishlakegeneva.com) or [fishdelavanlake.com](http://fishdelavanlake.com).

MIKE YURK

# Bassology

## Texas rig still going strong

So many innovations in fishing gear first began in someone's garage—or basement or kitchen. An individual with an idea began tinkering. Such is the case of the plastic worm.

Many of us cannot remember a time when there was not a mind-numbing variety of choices in plastic baits. Walk into any sport shop today and there usually is more space set aside for plastic baits than for any other lures.

The history of plastic worms began in the late 1940s when Nick Crème and his wife, Cosma, began experimenting in their home by hand-pouring plastic worms. They melted mixtures of vinyl, oils and coloring in their kitchen and in their basement poured them into molds made from real night crawlers. It took time, but by 1949 they found the right mixture of ingredients that produced a soft worm with a scent that

would not harden while being fished.

In 1951 Nick called his bait the "Crème Wiggle Worm" and first sold them for a dollar for a pack of five worms. That year a distributor at a sportsman show in Cleveland sold almost ten thousand packs of Crème worms in just a few days. Bass fishing hasn't been the same since.

It didn't take long for the Crème worm to become a legend in bass fishing, and soon fishing plastic worms exploded into what it is today. Plastics come in all shapes, sizes and colors, appealing to millions of bass fishermen throughout the world.

### The Texas Rig

The Texas rig was one of the first methods of fishing plastic worms and remains popular because it is as simple as it is effective. Slip a bullet-shaped sinker on the line before tying on the hook. Thread the head

or the first half an inch of the worm on the hook, bringing the hook back out. Twist the worm and run it up to the top of the hook and then imbed the tip of the worm in the next third of the worm.

Fishing plastic worms is easy. Just cast it out, let the worm sink, and then bring it back by raising the rod tip a foot or two. Drop the rod tip, reel up the slack and repeat. Fishing plastic worms is much slower than using a crankbait or spinnerbait. By fishing it slowly it stays in the target area longer.

There are a number of ways a bass will hit a plastic worm. Sometimes you will feel a tap, tap, tap. Other times you will merely feel weight on the end of your line. Or you may see your line beginning to move away in another direction.

Generally you have more than enough

Shawn Arneson of Hammond, Wisconsin, holds two keeper bass caught with Texas rigged plastic worms showing that the Texas rig is still going strong.



time to set the hook. There is no need for the instant hook set you would use on other fish. Just drop your rod tip, reel up the slack, and if you still feel the fish, pull back to set the hook. By reeling in your line you have eliminated slack in your line and get a solid hook set. Bass have hard mouths, so

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JERRY KIESOW

# Fly Fishing In Wisconsin

## Another original tie: the pheasant tail nymph

Two issues ago I wrote about the original crappie fly. Unfortunately, there was not enough room to publish a photo of the fly. You can see a photo of the fly on my website, [jerrykiesowoc.com](http://jerrykiesowoc.com), under the "What's New?" tab.

Before I get into today's topic, I have received questions about the story in our last issue about redoing an old bamboo fly rod. I failed to mention that the varnish required is a special rod varnish available at most fly shops. The varnish is to retain flexibility to prevent cracks. If you want to maintain the color of the thread you are using, apply color preservative on the windings before varnishing so the color doesn't darken. Using the right varnish will save you trouble in the end.

After many decades of tying my own flies, I have found that the most fun I get from these "chores" is creating new patterns and researching and recreating old original recipes, then seeing if they will still catch fish—like that crappie fly.

Today we will look into the original pheasant tail nymph. Frank Sawyer, MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) described his original tie in his book, "Nymphs and the Trout" in 1958. Sawyer's original tie used only two materials: dark enameled copper wire and pheasant tail fibers. The wire was the thread, the

rib and the weight. Since then there have been (are) many variations to this popular pattern, but they all include pheasant tail fibers and copper wire.

For years I have tied this fly the modern way, using thread, pheasant tail fibers, wire ribbing, herl for the thorax and a few hackles for legs. They caught fish. Early last year I came across the history of the fly, so I tied that recipe. Now it is the only way I tie this nymph. The reason Sawyer designed it the way he did is it sinks faster and gets deeper without adding weight. The wire does it all.

Here is the tie: start with a nymph hook of your choice. I use #10 and #12. Wrap the hook with fine, dark enameled copper wire as you would thread, beginning near the eye and winding to the bend of the hook. Tie on four pheasant tail fibers for the tail, but do not trim them. Wrap the tail fibers and the wire together. Then wrap that combination around the hook toward the eye forming the body. If you still have fiber ends left, do not trim them. Next, form the thorax using only the wire, overwrapping the fibers. If you still have enough fibers left, create the wingcase, tying it down with the wire and trim any excess. Form a small head, snip the wire, add a drop of head cement and you are done.

Provided the fibers are long enough and/or the hook size is small enough—and this is the fun challenge—with some practice

you should be able to tie this fly with only one set of fibers and one strand of wire. However, if you use larger hooks, you will need to add fibers as you go, but you will still use only two materials. (Personally, even though I do tie the smaller sizes with one set of fibers, I prefer to tie with separate pieces of pheasant for each section of the fly: tail, body and wingcase. I still use only wire but get a better looking fly when I use separate fibers for each section.)

### Questions:

Must the copper wire be dark? I have flies tied in both dark and shiny. The shiny works, but the dark is better. Where do you get the dark copper? Old transformer coils work for me, both dark and shiny. I am told that both can be purchased.


Does this old recipe catch fish? I would not be telling you about it if it didn't. Now that I have found out how nice the use of fine wire substitutes for thread, I have tied a few other patterns with wire. Remember, using wire eliminates the need to add weight to either the fly or the tippet to get the fly deep.

Finished nymphs: one with the original dark enameled copper wire and one with shiny.

How and when do I fish this fly? Obviously, when I want to go deep—slow and crawling it near the bottom in calm water—and drifting through the runs in fast. Just like any other nymph but without those dreaded split shot.

An original tie, over 50 years old, that still catches fish.

See you in or on the river.

Keep a good thought! 

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

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garden worms. Gob a whole crawler or a couple worms on your hook. Channel catfish baits are effective too: namely, stinkbaits, doughbaits, cheese concoctions and blood baits. Crappie minnows work wonders (put two or three on the hook).


Toss out your bait, let it sink to the bottom, and prop up your rod. Wait for a rat-tat-tat or tug-tug-tug at your rod tip as a bullhead mouths and then runs with your bait. Give the fish a couple seconds and then set the hook.

If you're at a spot that has produced in the past, you can wait the fish out, but don't

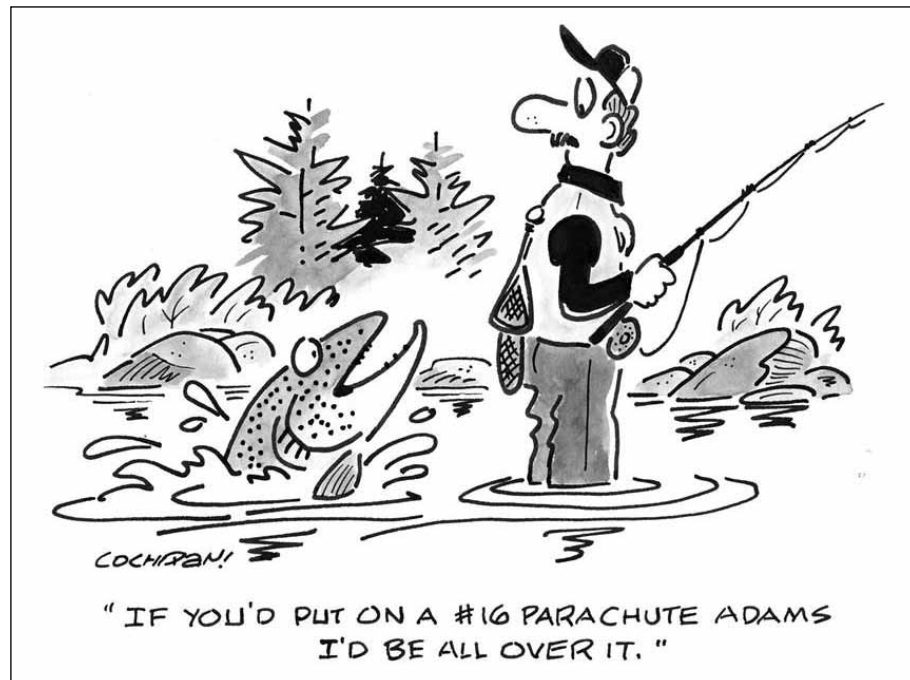
hesitate to explore some different locations to find pods of active fish.

### Conclusion

After a long winter, any fishing action is good. I love the hiss of a lantern and the kiss of a warm breeze in the gathering dusk while waiting for a rod-tip to bounce—and later on, the sizzle of delicious bullhead filets in the frying pan.

Give our Wisconsin bullheads a try this spring. Revisit your own childhood ... and maybe even feel like a kid again. 

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



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tip-up aficionado and ice-fishing guide Todd Bohm has a few distinct preferences when it comes to rigging his tip-downs. "A lot of guys prefer to run straight monofilament line on their tip-downs, but I actually like using a heavier braided line, say 20-pound test, and then run a six-foot long fluorocarbon leader. The braided line is easier to see against the snow and thus allows me to get reset quicker after unhooking a fish, especially in low-light or adverse conditions," Bohm continues, "I'm not sure as to the science of it, but over the years I have gone to red hooks almost exclusively; they just seem to produce more fish for me, especially in clear water. I also add a glow bead just above each hook as that too seems to make a positive difference."



**Jumbo perch, like these dandies held by Bryce Rheinschmidt, are suckers for a well-placed tip-down.**

As with tip-up fishing for walleye and northern pike, tip-downs allow an angler to cast a veritable search net, especially when fishing new water or on large pieces of structure. I prefer to set-up my Frabill hub in a central location to my spread of Ice Fishing Tip Downs and ensure that each one is in view at all times. Prior to setting up camp I drill multiple holes and drop my MarCum down each to check the depth and ensure that fish are present. Once my Ice Fishing Tip Downs are set in a likely locale, I often drill a second hole a few feet away from one of the baited lines and drop the camera of my LX-9 down the hole to watch and record video. It is truly amazing how long fish will often sit and look at a bait before actually striking it ... a reason that tip-downs are so deadly regardless of whether fish are in an active, neutral or negative mood.

Simple yet effective, tip-downs demand a place in any ardent ice angler's arsenal. Cheers to the call of "tip down!" ringing through the air. 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. He specializes in muskie, walleye and smallmouth bass. You can reach him at 715.297.7573 or through [www.wisconsinanglingadventures.com](http://www.wisconsinanglingadventures.com).

JOHN LUTHENS

## Willow Tree Blues

### Bluegill fever ignites the search

Willow trees fill me with halfhearted optimism. Above the distant horizon of summer, they drape the shoreline waters in green splendor and hide likely spots in warm shadows. But in early spring, willow branches tend to hang down like dead fingers.

It's not the willows' fault. They get along with what the first weeks of the fishing season offer up. I blame myself and my love of early-season bluegill fishing. But mostly I blame my friend Tommy for my springtime willow blues.

Tommy is one of those guys who always find the first bluegill of spring. He ranges the shores of the Lake Winnebago system. He hones in on every small channel and bay, especially the cattail-lined ones that warm up first and beckon the fish into the shallows. I think he has a magic slip bobber.

Tommy works with me—literally, in the sense of a place of employment, and more figuratively as an emotional mentor, feeding my bluegill fever. He ambles through the door telling tales of slabs, cheerfully waving me in the direction of his hot spots. Invariably, every spring, the directions to those spots involve willow trees.

There was Van Dyne Creek, cutting the county line border between Fond du Lac and Winnebago before sledging under U.S. Highway 45 into the lake. The population of Van Dyne itself resembles a remote Alaskan town in the dead of winter. But when the early bluegills move in and word gets out, the township booms like a gold

rush and there isn't any room to park.

Tommy was there first and said he'd done well. The big bluegills had arrived, but they were all above the bridge and underneath the overhanging willow. I'd get the jump on the locals and stake my claim. Those were my marching orders.

I warily tried to outflank the bridge fishermen by moving through the squishing marsh mud to hit Tommy's secret willow. It was like doing scratch-off lottery tickets; I waded through a lot of mud to find a prize. It also turned out there were dozens of willows lining the creek, and I never hit the winner. I didn't run out of trees or mud but ran out of daylight instead.

When I tell Tommy my willow issues, he rubs his stomach, gets jolly red in the face, and laughs, "Kee kee kee." I don't know if he is crazy, but that laugh sets me to dance the willow tree blues every time.

Perhaps the ultimate chord of the willow tree blues was struck last April on Asylum Bay, a sheltered inlet on the west shore of Lake Winnebago, which happens to be only a long cast from where Tommy and I work in Oshkosh.

Asylum Bay turns into a fish bucket full of anglers in the warm months, while early spring can be like climbing a high mountain before the snow has worked off the pass. The trail eventually becomes full of hikers, but there's something haunting about being the first one up there.

Tommy strolled in to work telling of a nice mess of bluegills and a bonus walleye. He'd already been up the mountain. He still

smelled like fish.

"Where'd you get 'em, Tommy?" I asked.

"Right off that dead tree, right down in the mess of branches," he said.


"Is it a willow tree?" I asked, although I already knew the answer.

"Kee kee kee," he replied, rubbing his stomach and laughing.

I don't know if it was the laugh or my obsession that did it. Somewhere in the mix, I ended up sleeping in the back seat of my truck on the shoreline of Winnebago to get an early start. It's a sad state of affairs when the lowly bluegill takes over rational thinking.

"Kee kee kee." I wiped sleep from my eyes, rubbed my stomach and headed in search of the Asylum Bay willow.

The water was cold and fish weren't yet surfacing. I drowned worms and lost flies in the submerged branches of the dead tree. There was no sign of Tommy. He had mysteriously moved on to a new mountain, or, more likely, warmer water. I lost count of the casts it took to haul in my first bluegill of the season.

It will only get better. Once the willow trees start putting on leaves, the fish will rise up right alongside of them. They'll hit surface poppers like crazy. And if I catch up with Tommy, I'm going to tie him up with one of those draping branches and make him watch. 

John Luthens is a freelance writer, traveling the back roads of Wisconsin and scribbling his adventures. His column, "Fencerows," appears frequently on the On Wisconsin Outdoors website.



YURK, from page 6

hit them hard when setting the hook.

#### Choosing The Worm

Selecting the right worm can be a mind boggling task with all the options, colors and varieties to pick from. I prefer to use a six- to seven-inch curly tail worm. With so many manufactures of plastic baits, I suggest sticking with one or two brands.

Recently I noticed in a catalog that one brand of plastic worms came in over forty different colors. I believe color really doesn't matter and normally limit my choice of colors to about half a dozen. The issue is to just get the worm in front of the fish.

You cannot go wrong with a selection of the basic colors: black, blue and purple or

grape. I like to have some flecks in the plastic and a contrasting color such as bright red on the curly tail. I recommend another neutral color or two of motor oil like watermelon or June bug. Add a mixed color like red shad or tequila sunrise and you should have everything you need.

#### Hooks And Sinks

Hook selection is easy. Any plastic worm hook works well. When fishing on the bottom, it is possible to lose a few hooks and worms every time you go out, so I normally use the least expensive types such as Eagle Claw. Hook sizes in 2/0 or 3/0 are effective.

Most plastic worms float, so it is necessary to use a sinker to get the worm to the bottom. Most fishermen use the bullet type worm sinker. Always use the smallest sink-

er possible to get the bait down. I generally use a 1/4-ounce or less. Using too heavy a sinker sounds like you dropped an anchor on top of the fish when you cast the worm. With a lighter sinker you will have a slower drop as the worm is sinking, which sometimes entices a strike if the bass are suspended or when they are more aggressive.

The Texas rig is a simple but very effective presentation that has survived the test of time. It has been going strong for over sixty years and no doubt is here to stay.



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](mailto:bassinmajor@yahoo.com).



GLENN WALKER

# Bass Fishing Success

## Five proven techniques for 2014

As we slowly inch closer to spring, bass anglers all across the state are dealing with cabin fever and are counting down the days to their first fishing trip of 2014. As you prepare your gear and look ahead to your fishing trips, keep these six bass fishing techniques in mind. They are great ways to put more bass in your boat this season!

### Flipping Texas Rig Plastics

This technique allows an angler to slow down and catch sluggish bass. The bonus is the rush you get when you feel the tug of a big bass on your line. From spring to fall, flipping a Texas rigged soft plastic bait is a great way to dissect fish holding cover.

My go-to setup is a tungsten weight ranging from ¼- to ½-ounce, depending on the density of the cover and depth of water I'm fishing. If I'm flipping close to the boat into heavy cover, I'll use a straight shank flipping hook. When casting my Texas rig to cover, I use an extra wide gap hook.

There is a large array of plastic bait options on the market, so when it comes to selecting a bait, an angler's personal choice and confidence come into play. The main thing I consider is the size and action of the bait. If the fish or density of the cover dictates the need for a bait that is compact, I'll use a bait with fewer appendages.

### Topwater Plugs

As soon as the water temperatures get above that 60 degree mark and bass are feeding, I always have a topwater plug, such as a walk-the-dog style, tied. This topwater lure tempts bass with its subtle side-to-side action. As the year progresses and bass feed more actively, I use a popper style plug.

Since you are using a bait here with treble hooks, using the proper line will aid

in your ability to hook and land that bass. For topwaters I like to use monofilament, as that line floats and aids in the action of your bait. Mono also has stretch to it, so when a bass makes a surge to deep water, those hooks won't pull out from the fish's mouth.

### Topwater Frogs

Once the vegetation of the year has grown up to the water's surface and has created a canopy for bass to hide under, you'll find me throwing a floating hollowed bodied topwater frog. Areas to utilize this technique include over and around lily pads or matted vegetation. Looking for basic features in the vegetation is one way to help eliminate water and locate key stretches of frogging vegetation. Fishing in these conditions requires the use of a braided line, typically 60-pound test, that has no stretch and will cut through the vegetation, along with a heavy action rod that has a good backbone so you can haul those bass out of the heavy cover and into the boat.

### Swim Jigs

A swimming jig, a lure that was crafted by anglers fishing the Mississippi River, has generated interest by anglers across the United States. What makes swimming a jig so effective is that it is such a versatile lure and can be fished in so many ways. I use a ¼-ounce swim jig when fishing inside weedlines and around boat docks.

What makes a jig a swimming jig? The line tie needs to be at an angle that allows it to make its way through the vegetation without getting hung up. This coupled with a sharp hook and soft weed guard allows for easy hooks ups. To learn more about the swim jig, check out this video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=vD59U\\_MnWG8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vD59U_MnWG8).




Nothing like having a big ole largemouth hit your frog!

### Crankbaits

Crankbaits give an angler the ability to target bass from under a foot of water to twenty plus feet of water. The first step to effective crankbaiting is to figure out what you want that crankbait to emulate: a bluegill, crawdad or a shad. Then determine the water depth you'll be fishing and what cover is present. If you are fishing shallow cover, you'll want a bait that will bump into the cover and not get hung up, such as square billed crankbait.

Come the summer months, many bass will be locked in on their deep water structure. Using your electronics will help you locate the key structure spots that you want to fish with your deep diving crankbait. Doing this will save time and put you in the position to catch more bass.

As you search through and organize your tackle this next month, be sure you have these lures in your box. They are key lures to rely on this year. 

Glenn has been fishing tournaments for over ten years, spreading his passion and knowledge of the sport via articles and videos. He keeps busy fishing events across the Midwest, but the Mississippi River in southwest Wisconsin will always be home. Glenn's sponsors include: Buck Knives, Humminbird, LakeMaster, Mercury Marine, Minn Kota, ORCA Coolers, Plano, Rayjus, RC Tackle, Seaguar, Snag Proof, The Rod Glove, TroKar, Wright & McGill and Zoom Baits. For more information check out [glennwalkerfishing.com](http://glennwalkerfishing.com) or on Facebook at [facebook.com/glennwalkerfishing](https://facebook.com/glennwalkerfishing).



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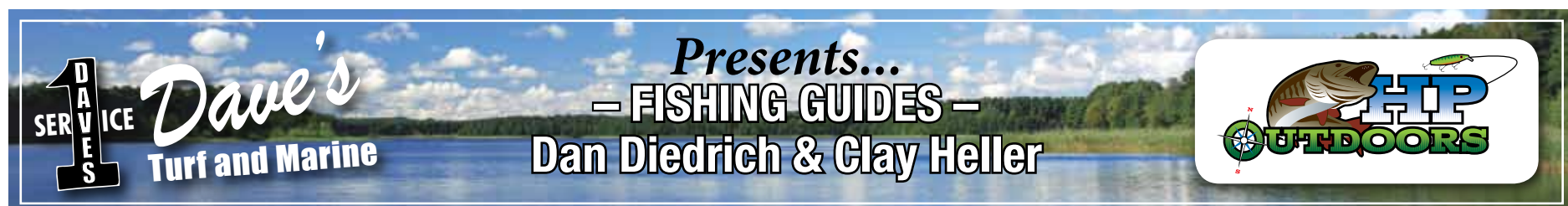
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Photos by Greg Walker





CLAYTON HELLER

## Spring Ahead *Is your musky gear ready?*

**T**his has been one of the harshest winters that I can remember. January had 21 days where the high temperature was below freezing. It may seem like it will never warm up, but trust me, it will and musky season will be here before you know it.

Now is a great time to make sure all your equipment is up to par. We all work very hard for every musky that makes it into the net. Losing a fish always stings, but losing one to equipment failure can be heart-breaking. Any piece of equipment that isn't 100 percent can become a breaking point,

causing you to miss out on your next photo opportunity.

I recommend taking some time and inspecting all of your musky rods. One common problem that I've seen is cracked or chipped eyelets. Sometimes these are very noticeable but other times they are not. Run a cotton swab around the inside of the eyelets. If there are any chips or cracks, they will pull cotton off of the swab. If you find an issue, get the eyelet replaced. This will cost a fairly inexpensive \$10 - \$15.

It's also a good idea to clean and lube your reels. The reels we use today have lots

of small parts, and disabling and reassembling them can be tricky. It's always a good idea to read over the manual that came with your reel before you tear it down. If you are not comfortable taking apart your own reels, there are several places that will clean and lube them for you. They will also replace any worn or damaged parts that they might find.

Don't overlook your landing net either. Make sure the handle slides freely and all the hardware is in place and tight. Inspect the net bag for rips or tears. Muskies have been known to escape the net after being

unhooked due to a hole in the bag that you never knew was there. I've witnessed this firsthand and it's no fun.

Take a little time on one of these cold weekends to inspect your gear. Having all your stuff in top working order will give you a leg up in the battle the next time you get bit. And remember to smile big when that next photo opportunity arises. *W*

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

JIM WEIX

## Florida's Hot Fishing *Badger native extends warm invite*

**H**unting season is over and the endless gray cold days just keep dragging on. Looking for a change of scenery?

Maybe it is time for a fishing trip; and I'm not talking about standing on the ice. Instead of insulated boots and your deer

hunting outfit, I'm thinking sunshine, flip flops, shorts and a T-shirt.

The "Treasure Coast of Florida" might be just the destination for you. The name comes from the large number of wrecked treasure ships that once sunk here. Located on the east coast of Florida between West Palm Beach and Vero Beach, gold and silver can still be found on the Treasure Coast's sandy beaches.

The Treasure Coast is also known as the "Sailfish Capital of the World." If this claim to fame sounds like just another advertising agency promotion, consider the fact that in just three days 16 boats recently caught and released almost 300 sailfish. The sailfish, along with plenty of wahoo and dolphin, were caught during the Stuart Sailfish Club's recent Light Tackle Tournament.

Unlike the west coast, or gulf side, the east coast of Florida offers spectacular deep sea fishing just minutes from shore. What would be a 40-mile fishing trip on the west coast is only a six-mile trip on the east coast. That is due to the fact that the ocean drops off much more quickly on the east coast. Additionally, the Gulf Stream, which is the major migration route for many Atlantic fish species, travels north along the coast. During the day, offshore anglers target sailfish, dolphin, wahoo, tuna, and huge

marlin. At night you will find them catching swordfish, often as big as 400 pounds.

This short travel time is important when you are chartering a fishing boat, and often a half day of fishing is all you need. Not only do you save money, but if you want your significant other to go with you, he or she may be more likely to tolerate a half day. If you choose this option, I suggest a morning trip. This has nothing to do with the fish biting, as they bite all day, but more to do with calmer seas.

Closer to shore anglers fish the reefs for grouper, snapper, cobia, and sea bass. For about \$50 you can go out on a charter boat for a half day and fill a cooler. Leave at 8:00 AM and have fresh fish for lunch.

You could forget the boat and just fish from the beach and jetties, where you will see anglers with coolers full of pompano and whiting. For entertainment you can watch an occasional angler frantically run up and down the beach hooked up to a 100-pound tarpon or nurse shark.

Unlike Wisconsin, where almost all shoreline is privately owned, the sand beaches of the Treasure Coast are open to the public. There are numerous access points all along the coast.

One of my favorites is the Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge, located on the

south side of Stuart. It was established September 30, 1969, and is a coastal refuge bisected by the Indian River Lagoon into two separate tracts of land totaling over 1,000 acres. It provides some of the most productive sea turtle nesting habitat in the United States. Best of all, you will have about seven miles of totally undeveloped beach to fish

Inshore you can fish for tarpon, snook, pompano, redfish, flounder, and sea trout in the St. Lucie River and famous Indian River Lagoon. This is one of the most biodiverse estuaries in the United States.

If your fishing trip is really a family vacation, then you are in luck. The Disney World Resort, in Orlando, is only an hour or two away. Lion Country Safari, Florida's only drive-through safari, has over 900 animals. Visiting the safari, my first thought after noticing I was parked next to a full grown rhinoceros was that I was glad I was driving a rental car.

Give Florida's east coast a try for its fishing and attractions. *W*

*Jim Weix, formerly of Wisconsin, is perhaps best known for being a founding member of the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association and his successful effort in establishing a mourning dove season in Wisconsin. He lives in Stuart, Florida, and owns The Real Estate Company-Treasure Coast: [www.realestate-treasurecoast.com](http://www.realestate-treasurecoast.com).*

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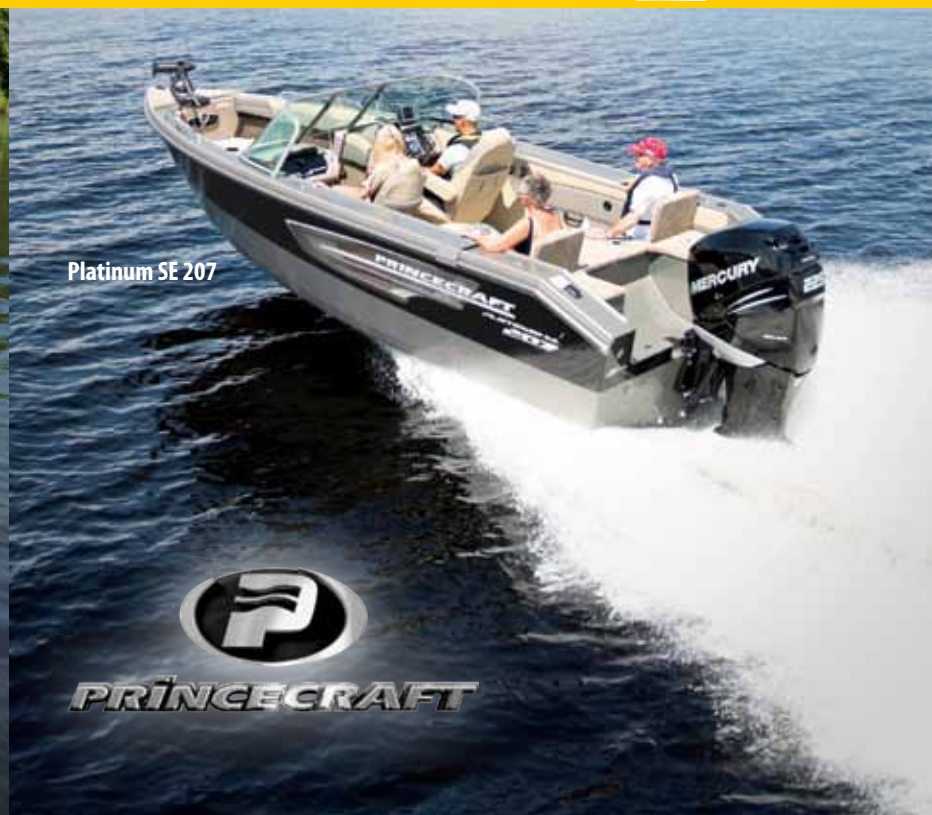
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DICK ELLIS

# On Wisconsin Outdoors

## To stay in the field

It's true that youth is wasted on young people. We don't understand that until strength and health and the certainty that we will live forever become aches and pains, and then limps and grimaces and something worse than death ... the idea that our Wisconsin field time is threatened.

For decades I have carried a portable treestand on my back to get to the deer of northern Wisconsin in the black of pre-dawn; the farther back, the better. You know those migrating September brown trout that rise from the dark pools on Superior tributaries after the long journey through no-man's land? I know them too. But these places have been harder and harder to reach.

I don't know when this Baby Boomer's hip started to ache, but I'll bet it's been a decade. I don't know if this arthritic-like pain is ultimately a hereditary thing or simply a result of some injury. But I do know that hunting and fishing partners had asked me more and more if I knew that I was limping. And I do know that pain threatens time in the cold current and time on the stands in the places back where we really want to be. Pain is an enemy of getting there—and staying there.

Orthopaedic Surgeon Dr. Nicolas Webber walked into the St. Luke's Hospital appointment room after the 2013 deer season holding my x-ray and introduced himself to Lori and me. "Tell me about your hip," he said, and I took that minute. "Your hip," he said then, "is horrendous."

I liked this young surgeon immediately, despite the fleeting thought that he was really just impersonating a surgeon and was in reality skipping out of high school; that happens when the 55 year-old patient scrutinizes the 35-year old expert. After a

detailed explanation of why the pain was chronic and why a full hip replacement was necessary, Dr. Webber said two things that fell over me like a comforting affirmation that just maybe the far-back journeys were also far from over. "I will approach this surgery as if you were my older brother," he said. (I could be his father.) And this: "We get excited about this surgery for a young man like you who is so active; we're about to open the door on a whole new world."

The doctor said I could climb trees with this hip, and, in fact, I could virtually do everything in the field again in six weeks. With the 2013 deer season a recent, and painful, memory, and intent on walking the steep ridges of southwest Wisconsin by the 2014 spring turkey season, I was on the surgeon's table the day after Christmas. A sign of the times, Lori was given updates from the surgical team via iPad and shown photos of the operation on Webber's cell phone post-surgery. I was on my feet with the help of a physical therapist and a walker within hours and out of St. Luke's Hospital two days after surgery.

The home care nurse from Aurora began her visits, and exercises to strengthen the hip were undertaken twice daily. Walking became a manageable task. The basement flight of stairs became a tool that was soon negotiated with little trouble. The walker was discarded at two weeks. No cane, and decreasing pain, followed at three weeks. I was on the walking trail in my hometown, carefully, at four weeks, logging a mile. And, don't tell the good Doctor this, but I chased the cabin fever Micah wore like his collar by chasing ... carefully... pheasants in the snow at Wern Valley at five weeks. As I write this, tomorrow is my six week follow-up visit with Dr. Webber. I'm think-

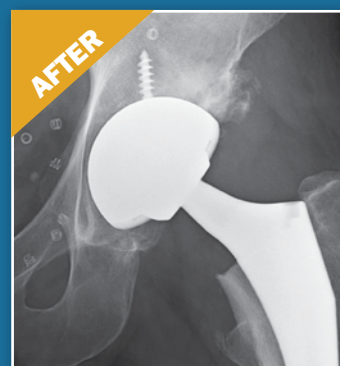
*continued on page 14*



**No cane, no pain.** Five weeks after total hip replacement surgery on December 26, Dick Ellis and Micah hunt Wern Valley in Waukesha.



*The x-ray of the hip-joint should resemble a smooth, porcelain-like ball and socket, Surgeon Webber said. "Ellis' appeared like a worn, oblong pinecone sitting within a scarred misshapen rut. His hip was as bad as they come." The new hip provided pain-free field work in less than six weeks.*



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ELLIS, from page 12

ing of bringing a valentine, maybe the red and oblong discarded socket bone of my left hip. Lori gets the flowers.

There is no pain in my hip and ebbing pain in the muscles cut to complete the hip replacement. But I know thousands of Wisconsin hunters and anglers do hurt today. We're rusty; we've logged miles on the odometer. In the year before my own surgery, I have watched friends, brothers

and my father-in-law—aged 40 to 78—find new knees, new shoulders and new hips. They're hunting without pain again. I highly recommend it and you deserve it, but only after you do your homework to find the right surgeon.

Anyway, it's true. Youth is just too valuable to waste only on young people. The door is indeed waiting to open again on the world of Wisconsin's outdoors.

Should you be knocking? *OW*

## Well, Yes

### ... My doctor is an Aurora doctor

There can be advantages to knowing the right people. Maybe you land occasionally on the 50-yard line at Lambeau or backstage on the main stage at Summerfest. Maybe that waitress gives you the double scoop treatment on a single scoop ice cream order.

Me? I didn't fall over dead.

Nick Turkal, MD has been my Aurora family physician at St. Luke's-Milwaukee for more than 25 years, with a lot of help from Nurse Practitioner Becky Schultz. Under their guidance, I'm still standing after thyroidism, an aortic aneurysm that would have killed me without referral, diagnosis and emergency surgery, and everything in between when life happens.

When Turkal was named CEO and President of Aurora Healthcare, I remained one of his patients, with more periodic office visits around his administrative schedule designed to keep him on the edge of family practice. Not only do I reap his medical expertise, his office has been a great place to talk bird dogs and turkey hunting. In addition to her expertise, the Becky bonus has meant that arising personal healthcare needs like total hip replacements will be referred to the right experts.

There are advantages to knowing the right people, and real people. Did I mention it's another good day to be alive, and an outdoorsman in the fields of Wisconsin?

*OW*

**Aurora Healthcare  
President and CEO  
Nick Turkal leads  
the organization  
but also enjoys  
working his bird dog  
for pheasants and  
Wisconsin turkey  
hunting.**



NICHOLAS WEBBER, MD, ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON

## Putting The Sportsman Back In The Field

### New hip means new energy for OWO publisher

I've never shot a trophy buck. I've never even caught a very big fish. I can virtually guarantee, though, that the ultimate satisfaction that a sportsman seeks outdoors is equal to the feeling that a surgeon finds when he helps an outdoorsman get back in the field.

As a Wisconsin native, there is not a season that goes by that I don't enjoy the thrill and jubilation of being in nature doing what I love.

Running in the spring and summer, hiking in the fall, and skiing in the winter are why Wisconsin and I have gotten along so well for such a long time.

When I'm not outside, I am fortunate to have a job that I enjoy just as much as nature: orthopaedic surgery, specifically, joint reconstruction and the treatment of bone and muscle cancer. The goal of most orthopaedic surgeons is to help people return to the things they enjoy. Each of us had different reasons for pursuing our profession. Whether it's an injury we had as a child, an ailment that we saw a family member suffer through, or a deadly condition we are now able to potentially cure, orthopaedic surgery gives each of us the thrill that parallels the bliss a hunter or angler finds outdoors.

I had the fortunate experience to have Dick Ellis come into my office in December 2013. As surgeons, part of our job is to connect with the patient. We are taught to find something in common with the patient and show them that we are human. This was unnecessary with Dick; we had an immediate connection. I knew his goals before he said a word. As I walked in, he smiled, his wife sitting next to him, and it felt more like we were all sitting down to a casual lunch than a doctor's appointment.

I saw him hobble in earlier, and I saw the x-rays. The x-ray of his hip joint was supposed to resemble a smooth porcelain-like ball and socket joint. Rather, Dick's appeared like a worn, oblong pinecone, sitting within a scarred, misshapen rut. His hip was as bad as they come. I tried to hide



**Nicholas Webber, MD,  
Orthopaedic Surgeon**

my excitement when he told me his goals were to resume the life of an avid hunter and fisherman.

I found it humorous when Dick asked his wife if he walked with a limp. He did, but like so many tough outdoorsmen in their fifties, these signs of significant arthritis are commonly ignored. I think he felt as though a hip replacement was a surgery for an old man. In actuality, patients who have such significant arthritis

that prohibits them from doing the things that they enjoy are, in fact, ideal candidates for this type of surgery. We discussed this further, and by the end of the appointment Dick was ready to proceed.

Very rarely do I recommend surgery the first time that I meet someone. Often I recommend therapy or an injection, or just time for the patient to comprehend what they are signing up for and to understand the lifelong partnership that they are entering with the person who is making this life-altering recommendation. For Dick, and someone with his goals, I could immediately envision him walking into the field, climbing his treestand and doing so without pain.

We went ahead with surgery on December 26. Dick was walking the same day of the surgery and recently walked in my office without a cane or crutch only five weeks post operatively. Doing the surgery is great and helping people is even better, but seeing the change that we can make in a young person's life by doing what is often thought of as an old man surgery is pure reward and satisfaction.

I probably won't ever know what it feels like to shoot to 12-point buck or catch a trophy musky. However, knowing that Dick can do that now from a treestand (or a boat) with a pain-free hip when he thought those days were dwindling away is thrill enough for this orthopaedic surgeon.

The victory of the hunt can remain the hunters', knowing that modern medical technology can keep them in the field for many, many years. *OW*





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KATHY STRONG

# Myths of the Alpha Dog

## Keys to good behavior

Who amongst us, dog owner or not, has not heard of the concepts of Alpha dog, dominance and pack structure in relation to dogs and their training? For years trainers have advised that the dog owner/trainer must be the "Alpha Dog" and that any behavior by the dog that shows dominance must immediately be quashed and the dog put back in its place, using such techniques as the "alpha roll" (forcefully putting the dog down on its back) or shaking it by the scruff of the neck. These concepts and training techniques are based on a study done more than 70 years ago on unrelated wolves in a captive environment.

More recent studies of wolves in their natural environment have revealed that wolf packs are family groups consisting of two parents and their offspring, with a social structure much like human families. As the young mature at one to two years of age, they leave their pack of origin, find a mate and start their own family group or pack. There is no attempt by the young to

usurp their parents or to take over leadership of the pack. There is no Alpha wolf, male or female ... simply the parents who nurture, lead and teach their offspring. The pack survives through mutual cooperation. Any submission is voluntary deference to another in the interest of avoiding conflict, not forcibly obtained through aggression by another dog. There is little to no aggression amongst the pack members and no hierarchy beyond that of parent/child relationships.

Additionally, just as we know dogs have evolved from wolves, we know now that their social structure has also changed from that of the wolf pack. Even wild dogs don't form packs with the social structure of a wolf pack, which further supports the notion that the social structure of wolves and domestic dogs is not comparable. By extension, basing dog training methods on the structure of a wolf pack as perceived based on an outdated and flawed study is not valid. Such training methods are now known to harm rather than facilitate the relationship between dogs and their handlers



*Looch, an Italian Spinoni, bloomed with the use of positive training strategies. This breed cannot tolerate dominance-based training.*

as they result in increased aggressiveness, fear and anxiety.


If anything, we should look at the structure of the human family and what works and what doesn't in teaching our children when generalizing to what will work with our dogs. There is no question that aggressive treatment and constant, fear-inducing conflict produce both aggressive children and children with psychological issues. How can we expect that such treatment of dogs is going to have any different result?

What is perceived as misbehavior by dogs is a disparity between what we expect and have communicated to our dogs and what the dog is actually doing. The solution lies in communication and teaching, primarily through positive reinforcement. If a dog is reinforced for behavior its humans don't want it to do, it will continue that behavior. If instead it is reinforced for

a desired behavior, it will continue that behavior. Repetitions are needed to establish the desired behavior, but the solution to the problem is not to roll the dog on its back or otherwise punish it. For example, a dog that jumps on its owner needs to be taught to sit when it wants something or when it is greeting its owner. The dog isn't jumping to show dominance over the owner. It is enthusiastically greeting the owner with a behavior that is a common greeting behavior in the dog world. Consistently rewarding the dog for sitting when greeting or asking for something is the solution to the problem.

That is not to say permissiveness is acceptable or that training must be all positive with no negative. Not by any means. Dogs, just like children, need consistent expectations and a predictable environment. It's hard for either party to find satisfaction in a relationship that is based on fear and conflict compared to when the relationship is based on trust, consistency and positive learning experiences.

Dog owners and trainers who want to have a strong positive relationship with their dogs need to let go of outdated and harmful concepts such as that of the alpha dog and endorse humane, positive and effective interactions with their canine companions. The outcome is that the owner and dog will be happier, better adjusted and more able to function as a team, whether hunting or at home.

Happy hunting. 

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

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DICK ELLIS

# On Wisconsin Outdoors

## On the Wolf

The Wolf River is plodding steady this overcast, April 7th afternoon near Fremont. Occasionally, a gust of wind kicks waves up on the long stretches of straight river, but hundreds of anglers are hunkered in and comfortable. They're working wood on protected bends or moving to anchor on the shallower sand flats to target fish moving in to feed as the sun begins to drop.

Cooperative fish make happy fishermen and these men and women are on the prowl too. Warming water temperatures on the Wolf, like the Mississippi, Rock, Fox, and Wisconsin, have triggered walleye spawning migrations and also triggered a migration of anglers chasing the fish. They come from all over Wisconsin and other states. But the locals, like Todd Guenther of the Town of Wolf River, have had their fingers on the pulse of the beautiful river since the ice went off. This is prime time. He knows it. The fat fish in the live well, all males, show it.

"There are tons of fish in the river right now," Guenther says. "It's been good since ice out 2-1/2 weeks ago. The fish moving up now to spawn are from Winnebago and a few are from Poygan. They'll travel up to spawning marshes in New London or Shiocton or as far as the Shawano dam. I'm going to say that is a 100-mile journey by river."

It's a journey spurred by natural reproduction that has repeated itself across the ages: walleyes answering the call of nature, inspired to travel instinctively by the rising water temperatures of spring. On this Thursday, water temperatures have risen from 39 degrees in the morning to 43.7 by mid-afternoon. Fish, specifically mature walleyes feeling an urgency to find the spawning grounds upstream, are on the move and temporarily abandoning the aggressive feeding attitude that has meant limits of fish to many of these river anglers in waiting. Big females mix with the earlier arriving males, and anglers are given the luxury of fast action and big fish which are time and again released. With a five-fish limit, there still will be plenty of fillets for the skillet.

"They were on a very aggressive bite this morning," Guenther said. "Now with the rising water temperatures they may be trying to scoot up and spawn when the water temperature hits 46 degrees. The mature fish want to get up there. Fifteen fish might move by us before we catch one."

The afternoon drains away, and Guenther catches his fish. He uses jigs and minnows, but fishing has been so reliable that he often foregoes the live bait for plastics. Night approaches and with it a different tactic and tutoring with another local expert is put into play. Gary Chikowski, who owns and operates Chico's boat landing with his wife, Julie, including the rental of three cabins on the Wolf, is anchored on a sand bar and ready for the human hand-off. The boat-to-boat reporter transfer is made without incident, and I settle in to learn how to target walleyes by pumping jigs on top of a sand bar hugging a bend in the Wolf.

"Chico," a friendly man who takes providing his many customers from all over Wisconsin with accurate angling information, has cut his teeth learning how to fish the local rivers. He calls himself a hunter first. "I don't know if I'm a fanatic fisherman," he says. "I usually fished when I needed something to eat."

He has secured the boat over the sand with a double anchor that will allow both anglers to work jigs and minnows far downstream with a pumping motion that keeps the bait moving in the current. My host, in his twelfth spring of operating his business, works two rods while I work one and the camera. The key, he stresses, is to keep the bait moving and to keep contact with the bottom.

"I don't have a chance to fish during the day," he said. "Julie is a big part of the business. She runs the shop at night and I can sneak out and fish. Hopefully the walleyes will come out of the depths and feed on the sand bars as they're headed up to spawn. You do have to move the jig. They're not going to hit a jig that's not moving. And you have to stay in contact with the bottom."

Downstream a good cast, Tom Stuebs of Weyauwega and Brian Troedel of Iola, are anchored too, hoping for the same results of the last three nights when limits of walleyes were the reward. Down from them a few more boats are scattered across the sand and waiting for the walleye window to open on a brief period of feeding. Friends Gordy Pagel of Appleton, Tom McPeak of Waupaca, and Roger Inderdahl of Weyauwega, regulars on the Wolf, slide by and report good fishing on the Wolf. Others do too. Chico and I settle in to talk and to wait for the fish to snap on the feedbag.


*Gary Chikowski, owner of Chico's Landing on the Wolf River near Fremont, with another walleye caught while pumping jigs on a sandbar near sunset.*




"I really meet a lot of nice people at the shop and this is a very busy time," Chikowski says, anticipating a renewed frenzy with the May white bass run to follow the April walleye ritual. "We get a lot of people here from Chicago and throughout Wisconsin. My job is to tell them where to fish and when to come to catch fish. People trust me. The phone rings pretty steady. If nothing is going on, I'll tell them to stay home. I'll try to tell a new fisherman how to put the minnows on and show them the same techniques that we use up here to catch fish."

Although we only work the sandbar for an hour, Chico lands four walleyes. He releases a big female that will help sustain the population. I have seen many fish caught on this afternoon. Every one of the big egg-bearing females has been returned carefully again to the Wolf. Another chapter of the ageless ritual of the river ends. As we pull our anchors and prepare to leave the Wolf for another night, I remember again the words of Todd Guenther.


"A very big fish here would be a 28-inch, 8-1/2 pound walleye," he said. "I've never caught one that big. I've caught a lot of big females. I always let them go. I want my grandkids to have this same great fishing on the Wolf long after I'm gone."

For information on the Wolf River walleye run near Fremont, the upcoming white bass run, cabin rental on the Wolf, boat and motor rental, or bait, call Chico's at 920.446.3345. For more information on the run, lodging, and entertainment connect with the Fremont Area Chamber of Commerce. (See ad on this page.) 



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DAN MOERICKE

# An Up Nort Report

## Oh, shoot; off-season practice right on target

If you've been a bowhunter for any length of time, you've found yourself sitting in your stand saying, "Oh, shoot!" (or something very similar) after missing a shot at your quarry. If you're also a golfer, at least a golfer like me, those words get uttered with far greater frequency since we get more shot opportunities on the golf course.

In the 2013 archery season, I spent upwards of 60 hours in treestands. During that time, I had exactly one good opportunity at a buck that was older than a yearling. I'm proud to say that my shot was as close to perfect as possible. The kill was quick, humane and the blood trail was short.

I'd like to think that the hundreds of arrows that I shot during the off season had something to do with that. Even in the depths of winter I know right where my bow is. There isn't any dust on it, unlike my golf clubs. The string on my bow gets snapped on a regular basis. I don't pretend to be a great shot, but I know that I'm a lot better than I would be if I didn't practice.



I am fortunate to live within 10 minutes of the Rib Mountain Bowmen bow club, where I've been a member for a number of years. It's a great facility where a guy (or gal) can sling some arrows, have a few beers and trade lies with other bow hunters year round. Having a place to shoot indoors during a winter like this one is a blessing.

The club sits on 40 acres of beautiful rolling hardwoods, and the outdoor range is a blast to shoot once the snow leaves. I

especially like the 3-D shoots when a stroll through the course lets me fling arrows at elk, bear, cougar, antelope, mule deer and a variety of other critters in a real woodland setting.

I know that I shoot my best golf when I've been practicing and, as a result, am confident in my swing. When that happens, I have no more than one swing thought in my head during the backswing. Same thing goes for shooting my bow. If I've been practicing and am confident, my only thoughts

There are over  
80 archery clubs located  
throughout Wisconsin.

are when to draw and where I want the arrow to hit.

Yogi Berra once said, "Baseball is 90 percent mental; the other half is physical." Despite the flawed math, I tend to agree with Yogi. Once bow season starts, I like to shoot a few broadheads into a block target before each hunt. I always end with a shot that hits exactly where I aimed. It boosts my confidence and helps with the 90 percent mental aspect. If I've done my off season shooting, the 50 percent physical part becomes automatic.

To help avoid the scenario where you're sitting in your stand going, "Oh, shoot!" this fall, I highly recommend that you find an archery club near you and go shoot during the off season. Just sayin'. *GW*

*Rib Mountain Bowmen was founded in 1953, so we just celebrated our 60th year. We've got a 16-lane, 20-yard indoor range that is open to members 24/7, twelve months a year. To find a club near you, go to [onwisconsinindoors.com](http://onwisconsinindoors.com) and click on WI Club Directory under the Archery & Bowhunting tab.*

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LEE GATZKE

## NextBuk Outdoors

### Predator, prey and a winter to Intervene

**A**nother tough winter is winding down. Even my chainsaw refused to brave some of the coldest weather recently. It's as though it felt I shouldn't expose myself to the bitter cold either, so it did us both a favor and refused to operate on the coldest days. When the temperatures moderated, I'd cut a few trees, take what I wanted for firewood, and leave the tops and trimmings for the deer. I could have waited until later when warmer temperatures would make it easier to do the job, but the deer really appreciated the meals those tops provided and cabin fever was getting to me.

Late winter's deep snows make traveling difficult for deer. Cutting trees close to areas where the deer were wintering afforded them meals of tree tops and trimmings that were easy to come by and became their preferred food source. Browse is a deer's most important winter food source, even in farmland areas. In the north woods, browse is typically the only food source available in winter.

On the private property I have access to the deer numbers are on the downturn. I feel extra satisfaction cutting trees in areas the deer winter knowing it helps the deer at a time when they need it most: the waning days of winter. At this time, deer have endured the worst winter has to offer and are close to making it through. Exposure to deep snow, bitter cold, predators and starvation are threats to survival that tough winters deal them. Late winter is a good time to drop a few trees that will provide deer with food and me with firewood.

In years when winters are on the mild side I prefer to leave the deer alone, not wanting to bother them when they are coping with normal winter survival conditions. In northern Wisconsin's deer woods, many

loggers tell stories of having deer feeding on the tops of freshly downed trees as they work nearby. The sound of chainsaws in harsh winters has become dinner bells to the local deer herds.

While bow hunting the late season this past year I arrowed a doe. She ran off to a point where she was out of sight. I settled back into my stand and nocked another arrow, waiting for a buck to show. I figured she went down shortly after I lost sight of her and would recover her when I was done hunting for the evening. By the time I followed the blood trail to her, I would be the second predator to find her. A coyote was the first. He ate his fill of the hindquarters and was gone by the time I showed up.

The next day I headed out to take an afternoon stand, and while walking along a logging road I happened upon a bedded deer. The deer was all of ten feet from me when I spotted it, but it remained bedded as I approached.

Closer examination of the buck fawn revealed its hindquarters were shredded and half gone. Coyote tracks in the area told the story of who was responsible for the attack on the fawn. The coyote numbers in this area are on the increase while the deer numbers are declining. It is time to make killing coyotes a priority. During years when tough winters and deep snow handicap deer, coyotes and other predators find them to be easy prey, especially in late winter.

The rifle and chainsaw have cured my cabin fever. 

Lee Gatzke is co-owner of NextBuk Outdoors, producers of tactical hunting videos. In grade school he chased rabbits with his homemade bow and arrows, which lead to a passion for hunting bigger game all over the Midwest and western states. In between hunting seasons Lee is usually scouting for his next buck.



*These tools were the author's remedy for cabin fever this winter.*




*Coyotes mauled this buck fawn, shredding his hindquarters so badly he could no longer walk.*

TERRY RUSS

## Coyote tips

### Keep it simple & quiet

1. When getting out of the truck, no banging of doors, no noises or talking. Whisper if you have to talk. Walking to stand, try to use available cover to eliminate human silhouette. Aim for a calling spot with good visibility for you and cover for coyotes to come into the call.
2. Playing wind properly is crucial. Try to call with crosswind or wind in your face. Attempt to keep downwind side in the open for circling coyotes.
3. It is now mating season, so try to use more howls and coyote vocals for 20 to 30 minutes before moving. Examples include whines, yips and distress calls. 

Terry Russ has been hunting coyotes for 18 years. He has called and killed approximately 498 coyotes in seven states. He took 13th place in the world coyote calling contest in 2010 and in 2012 took 1st place in the Burlington Conservation Club.



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TOM CARPENTER

## Cubs Corner

### Comfort, fun, success on the youth turkey hunt

Wisconsin's youth turkey season, running the weekend of April 12-13 this year, offers a prime opportunity for a young hunter to get a crack at a big old hook-spurred gobbler, a fat and sassy two-year-old tom or a rowdy jake bird.

But the path from "Let's try turkey hunting" to "Great shot!" requires knowledge and navigation in terms of understanding the special season's rules, and then putting together a sound hunting strategy that assures a fun adventure with a chance to shoot a bird.

#### Knowledge: Season Rules

The youth season, open the Saturday and Sunday before Wisconsin's regular first hunting period, is reserved for kids 10 to 15 years old. Young hunters must have completed Wisconsin's Hunter Education Program or hunt under the Hunting Mentorship Program. The limit is one male or bearded turkey during this two-day hunt.

Young hunters must possess a current valid spring turkey license, stamp and car-

cass tag for spring 2014. That tag can be for any season, but you must hunt in the specified zone. An unfilled tag may be used later on, during the time period and in the zone for which it was issued.

Youth hunters must be accompanied by an adult 18 or older. The adult does not have to be licensed if the youth has a hunter education certificate. Although one adult can accompany two youths if both kids have hunter education certification, it's better to go one-on-one for focus, safety and learning.

For 10- and 11-year olds, and 12- to 15-year-olds without hunter education, it's a requirement to hunt one-on-one. In these cases, the hunting mentor must hold a hunting license of some kind.

#### Navigation: Hunting Strategies

Hunting turkeys in early season, and hunting with kids, requires special approaches. Use these secrets for success.

**Practice shooting.** Kids must be confident they can make good on any shot opportunity. That requires a pre-season

shooting session. Don't practice with turkey loads! Use light trap loads and shoot at a turkey target from 25 yards. Switch to real turkey loads for hunting; nobody will notice the "kick" in the excitement of the real moment.

**Scout it out.** This early in spring, turkeys are invariably bunched up in big groups and not spread evenly across the landscape. Glass and scout hard in the week leading up to the season. Try to get a pattern on the birds, and where they roost and feed.

**Blind it up.** Kids are fidgety. They want to ask questions and they deserve answers. Hunting is also a time to be together and talk about anything. Plus, the woods are pretty barren of cover now. It all combines to make hunting from a blind essential during the youth hunt. Set up at a good feeding area where birds come or along a travel route from or to the roost area.

**Assure comfort.** The way to get a few hours out of your young hunter is through comfort. Try to hunt through mid-morning and again from mid-afternoon to dusk.



The author's son poses with landowner Scott Dilley and a youth season gobbler from Green County.

Bring comfortable stools to sit on and set up a portable heater if it's cold out (and it likely will be). Bring along a thermos of hot chocolate, some bottled water and good snacks. I don't allow electronics in the blind, but that's your call.

**Take breaks.** Don't push for an all-day marathon or you'll burn out a young hunter. Take a stroll and run-and-gun a little bit for fun. Get out and go to town for lunch. Break up the monotony of a long waiting session.

*continued on page 26*

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SUZETTE CURTIS

# Recipes by Suzette

## Turkey dishes

We love wild turkey at our house. While we have some tried-and-true recipes that are old favorites, I am always on the lookout for some new and fresh ideas to use with the leftovers from a roasted bird. Here are a few new ideas, one of which is a frittata. This one especially interested me as frittatas have become somewhat of a trend in restaurants. Give one (or all) a try this spring.

### Spicy Turkey Frittata

6 oz spaghetti  
1 T. butter  
½ cup chopped onion  
8 eggs  
½ cup milk  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce  
4 drops Tabasco  
1 4-oz can chopped green chilies  
1 tomato, chopped  
2 cups cooked turkey, chopped  
½ cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese  
(or Mexican blend)

Cook spaghetti al dente (about 6 minutes); drain, rinse with cold water; set aside.

Melt butter over medium heat in large skillet. Add onion and cook until translucent.

Meanwhile, in large bowl, beat eggs until light and fluffy. Stir in milk and all remaining ingredients except cheese. Pour milk mixture into skillet; cover and cook over medium-low heat about 15 minutes until set. Sprinkle cheese over top; cover and remove from heat. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

If desired, serve with side of sour cream and salsa.

### Turkey Gumbo

2 T. butter  
1 T. flour  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
½ cup celery, chopped  
½ cup green pepper, chopped  
2 qts chicken broth  
1/3 cup tomato paste  
3 bay leaves  
1 T. salt  
5 lbs cooked turkey, finely chopped


In large saucepan, melt butter. Stir in flour, forming a paste. Add garlic, celery and green pepper. Cook and stir for just a minute or two.

Add remaining ingredients except turkey. Bring to a boil; cover; reduce heat and simmer for about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add turkey to saucepan and continue to simmer, uncovered, for another 30 to 40 minutes.

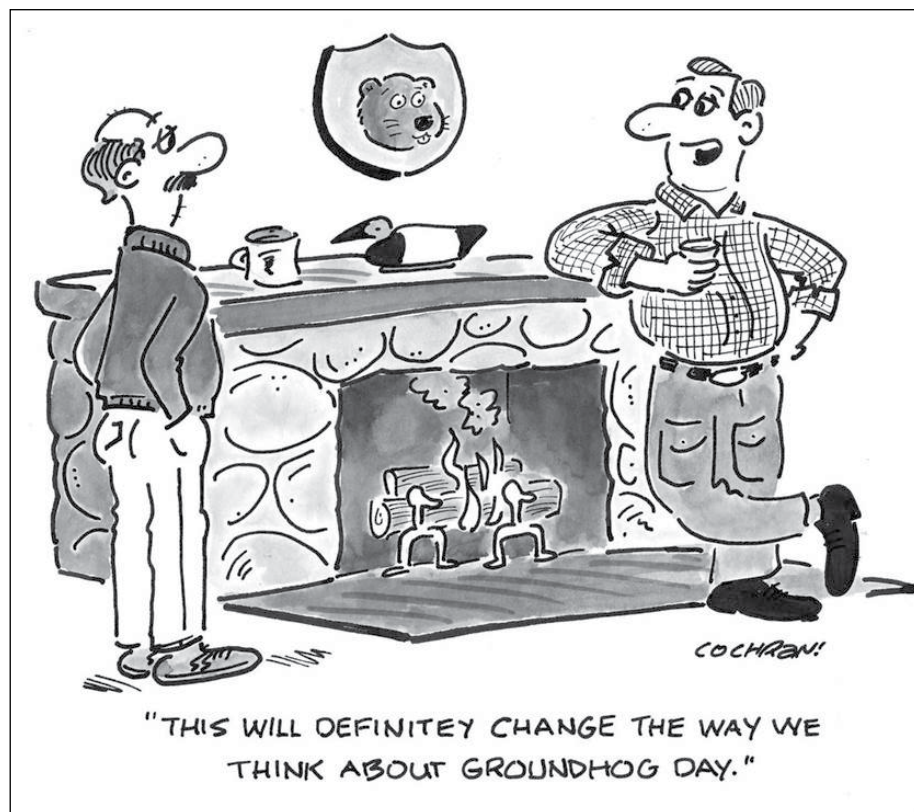
If desired, place a scoop of cooked rice in bottom of each bowl before ladling gumbo over the top.

### Turkey and Wild Rice Casserole

2 cans cream of chicken soup  
2 cans cream of celery soup  
2 ¾ cup water  
1 envelope onion soup mix  
2 cups wild rice  
8 oz fresh mushrooms, thinly sliced  
¾ cup slivered almonds  
4 cups uncooked turkey, cut into bite sized pieces

Spray 9 x 13 baking dish with cooking spray. In large bowl, combine all ingredients except turkey. Mix well and spread evenly into baking dish. Top with turkey pieces. Lightly salt entire casserole. Cover and bake at 350° for one hour. Remove cover and continue baking for 20 to 30 minutes until rice is fully cooked. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving. 

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](mailto:recipesbysuzette@onwisconsinoutdoors.com).



TOM CARPENTER

## Badger Birds Blue-winged Teal


This handsome little duck (weighing a pound or less) returns to shallow wetlands, marshes and ponds across Wisconsin after ice-out. As hunters know, blue-winged teal fly fast, darting erratically as they travel, in probable defense against avian predators. These diminutive “puddle ducks,” so named because they tip their rear ends up and dabble for plants and seeds in shallow water, are fair-weather visitors, and in springtime we have the opportunity to observe the drakes’ (males’) elegant plumage in all its breeding finery.

Look for the drake’s slate-blue head with a very distinctive, pure white crescent on each cheek. The rest of his feathers are an intricate scrollwork of tans, grays and black. The hen is mottled brown and gray. Both sexes feature pretty, powder-blue wing patches (which are easily seen in flight) and black bills.



**Listen** for the Blue-winged Teal’s miniature quack. It sounds like a mini mallard with a cold! Blue-wings also make low peeps and whistles.

**Observe** Blue-winged Teal on shallow, grassy marshes and wetlands in spring and summer as they paddle and dabble along next to the safety of shoreline vegetation.

**Did you know** that there are records of Blue-wings traveling from Alberta’s northern border to Venezuela in less than a month? Most Teal winter in Mexico, the Caribbean and South America. Teal leave us in late summer and early fall; they are true snowbirds! 

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



## Ready for a hunting break?

Yvonne Halfmann shot this 13-point buck last year near Beaver Dam. Read Yvonne’s whole story at [www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com](http://www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com) under “Deer Hunting.” While you’re online, check out our “Firearms,” “Explore Wisconsin,” “Inland Fishing,” “Outdoor News” and so much more.

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PERRY A. HINTZ

# Buying A Gun For A Youth Trap Shooter

## *Trial, error and patience*

After years of coaching on a Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) trap team, we have all heard the question, "What gun should we buy for our son or daughter?" My answer is, "NONE!"

Many parents have the misconception that they have to show up for the first practice with a shiny new gun for their latest sport. I am a firm believer that you should not buy a gun until you actually shoot a few different ones under a coach's eye to see how they feel and fit.

Why do I take such a hardline stand? We've seen numerous instances of kids showing up for the first practice with a brand new gun that was the furthest thing from what they needed to make clay target shooting enjoyable and fun. The kids get discouraged, the parents dig deeper into their pockets, or they abandon the sport.

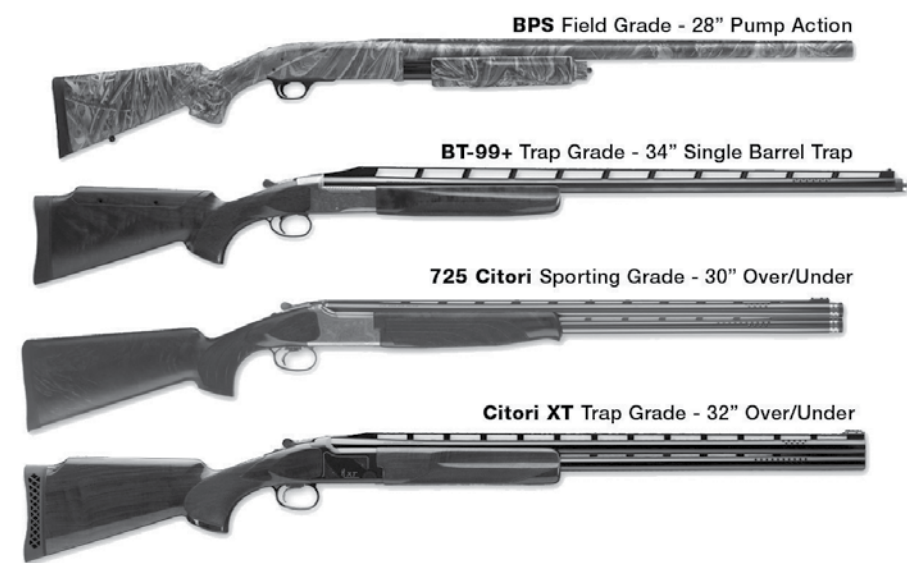


**Small shooters with small guns will break many targets with a gun that fits and proper instruction.**

For the first practice it's OK to bring Grandpa's old Winchester Model 12 to see if the child even enjoys pulling the trigger. Our team has been building an inventory of "club guns" that we make available to our new shooters to try to find what gun they feel most comfortable with. Our coaches also bring various personal guns for young athletes to try during early season practices.

There are many types of shotguns and each is designed with a specific purpose in mind: field guns; sporting guns; trap guns; combos—all of which can be manufactured as pumps; semi-automatics; or break actions, usually over and under barrels, but they can be single barrel or side-by-side configurations. The differences are length of the barrels, the length and height of the comb (stock) and the point of impact

### Comparison of Four Different Browning Shotguns



**Field shotguns have shorter stocks, more drop on the comb and flatter ribs than trap shotguns.**

(POI), which is the height of the shot pattern measured at the typical distance at which a target is broken. Target guns (trap, skeet or sporting) are usually heavier than field models.

Once you've made it through the first couple practices and tried some different guns, get back together with the coach and discuss the guns and budget. A coach might recommend starting with a gun that the family already owns and use it as-is or make modifications such as a moleskin pad on the comb to get a proper sight picture, or putting an adjustable butt-plate mounted on the stock to prevent canting. Having a gun that is comfortable for the athlete, can be adjusted to fit properly and create a good sight picture will have less recoil and the scores will improve quickly.

When looking to purchase a target shotgun, be patient and keep your options open. You can find some of the best deals by checking the bulletin boards at local gun clubs. Often there are shooters who have upgraded or are cleaning out the safe who have guns posted for sale. There are sporting goods retailers around the state that have many guns in stock.

Another place to search is the Internet. Gunbroker.com is the world's largest online gun auction site and has thousands of new and used guns. Trapshooters.com and several others have classified ads especially for target guns. There are hundreds of reputable gun shops that have extensive inventories to view and buy online. If you do buy

a gun online, it must be shipped to a local Federal Firearm Licensed (FFL) dealer for face-to-face pick up. You will need to pass a background check when purchasing firearms here in Wisconsin.

My son started at age 13 with a Remington 1100 LT-20, a gun his grandfather gave him for pheasant hunting. We quickly learned that it was too small and shot too flat to be effective for him on the trap field. One of our assistant coaches offered Jordan his personal Browning BT-99 to shoot. After two practices using that gun, we bought him a BT-99 that he used for two seasons, as trap shooting became a four- to five-day a week habit. We found him a used Browning XT combo with a 34" Unsingle and 32" O/U, which he shot for three years. Last year he moved into a Kolar Max combo that will last him the rest of his life. We were fortunate to buy both of the Brownings the right way, making the upgrade path less painful on my pocketbook.

The point of my son's story is when young shooters first take up the sport, none of us, even the shooters themselves, know if they will be a once a week shooter just there to hang with their friends, become a league shooter, a serious ATA shooter or have Olympic aspirations.

There are dozens of choices in target shotguns and any of them might be right for a particular athlete's situation. There are used Model 12 or Remington 870 Trap models that can be found for under \$500

*continued on page 23*

### What Is The Right Ammo For Youth Trap Shooting?


One of the most important things we stress to the parents of new shooters is to make shooting enjoyable for our young athletes. Just as there are huge differences in guns, there are huge differences in shotgun shells, and they all have different purposes.

I'll focus on 16-yard trap singles. There are three main things to look for: shotshells, payload (weight of lead shot), speed (measured in FPS) and the size of the shot. The rules of trap limit shot size to no larger than No. 7.5 and not more than 1-1/8 ounce of shot. There are also restrictions on the speed that vary with the amount of shot.

Just because the rules allow 1-1/8 ounce loads at up to 1290 FPS does not mean that you should shoot the maximum load. It's simple basic physics: heavier payload and faster speed equal more recoil. More recoil is harder on your body, wears you out quicker, and shooting heavy loads can also lead to bad habits such as flinching or lifting your head off of the stock, either of which will most certainly lead to a lost target. When I go out to shoot 100 rounds, I don't like to get a sore shoulder and a bruised cheek!

We always stress to the new shooters on our team to shoot 7/8 ounce or 1 ounce loads for 12 gauge and 3/4 ounce for 20 gauges. My personal favorite for 16-yard trap is a 1 ounce 8.5 at 1180 FPS. Another popular choice is a 1-1/8 ounce No. 8 load at a slower 1145 FPS, which is more than enough speed for 16-yard trap. Both of those loads have the same amount of pellets due to the smaller size of the No. 8.5 shot. I would use the 1 ounce for most days and save the 1-1/8 ounce load for windy or cold conditions.

On our SCTP team we purchase several hundred flats (10 boxes of 25 to a flat) early in the season. This reduces cost and gives us better control over the athletes. We have compared multiple times and it comes out at least \$1.00 to \$2.00 per box of 25 less by purchasing this way rather than buying 4-packs or single boxes at big-box stores. Depending on how much each young athlete shoots a week, this can lead to several hundred dollars' of savings over a season.

A proper fitting gun with a comfortable load will equal higher scores in the long run over a heavy load nearly every time. 

To learn more about SCTP, call 419.794.9924 or visit their website at [sss-fonline.com](http://sss-fonline.com).



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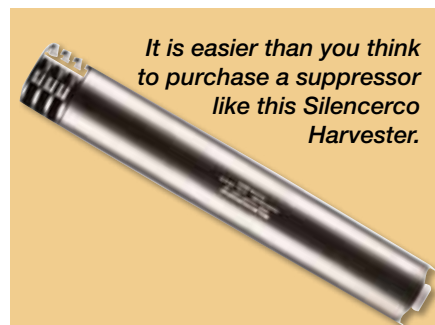
## The sound of silence, part 2: purchasing your first silencer

There is a lot of mystery that surrounds the purchase of suppressors. This makes it an intimidating prospect to buy one, and many ask if it's worth it. The answer is yes, it is worth it—and it's far easier to buy than you think.

Before you can possess a suppressor, you must register it one of three ways.

**1. To yourself.** This bypasses the paperwork required in the second two methods but has more requirements and restrictions. This method requires fingerprint cards and the signature of the chief law enforcement officer (LEO) from where you live for each suppressor you buy. Even though legal in Wisconsin, if you live under an anti-gun sheriff, this might not be feasible. It also means that you are the only one who can be in possession of the suppressor. Family or friends can't use it unless you are with them.

**2. A trust.** Create a revocable firearms trust and make the purchase under it. This is a very popular method, especially for people who purchase multiple suppressors or other NFA items. A trust only needs to be set up once and it doesn't require the signature of LEO or fingerprints. Also, anyone named in the trust can be in possession of the suppressor as long as they can legally possess the suppressor (legal age, not a felon, etc.). A gun trust lawyer is recommended to set it up, but there is software that can do it.



*It is easier than you think to purchase a suppressor like this Silencerco Harvester.*

**3. A corporation.** This method has all the benefits of the trust and is primarily used by people who already own a corporation. Anyone who is an officer of the corporation can be in possession of the suppressor. The one downside to this method compared to a trust is that it requires a measure of upkeep; you must maintain your corporation in good standing, whereas a trust is "make it and forget it." If you don't already own a corporation, the best method is a trust.

Once you know how you want to register the suppressor and have the required paperwork, it's time to make the purchase. This part can range from "fairly simple" to "piece of cake." Sources for purchasing suppressors include gun dealers who have a Class III dealers license and going online.

Online, you can find good deals at places like Silencershop.com. Some offer to walk you through the paperwork; others have you do it on your own. Once you make your online purchase, the suppressor will

have to be transferred to your local Class III dealer, which takes BATF two to three months. Once the dealer receives it, you will fill out the paperwork. Then the real wait begins. It used to take six to nine months for BATF approval, but now it takes about twelve.

It's better to purchase from a local Class III dealer. It saves the transfer time from the online retailer. It's simple

and most dealers will walk you through the process of filling out the paperwork. Call around locally and inquire which of your gun shops are Class III dealers. If you can't find any, Google it online. Many are small shops.

The best place to buy a silencer (like I did) is at The Shooter's Shop in West Allis, Wisconsin. They don't "walk you through it" but instead do everything for you. Here is the exact process: 1. Pick out the silencer that you want. 2. Give them copies of your paperwork. I used my LLC, so I gave them copies of my incorporation paperwork and a certificate of good standing. 3. Fill out your name and address on the BATFE Form, then sign it. 4. Write a \$200 check to BATFE. 5. Purchase the suppressor. That is all you have to do. The Shooter's Shop fills out the paperwork and mails it and the check to the BATFE.

An added benefit to purchasing at The Shooter's Shop ... they allow you to shoot the suppressor at their gun range. Since you've purchased the suppressor, it's yours.

You just can't take legal possession of it until you get the stamp. It eases the wait if you can at least shoot it.

Buying a suppressor is very simple, especially if you go somewhere that does all the paperwork for you like The Shooter's Shop. Plus, once you get everything set up for your first purchase, subsequent purchases are even easier. The most difficult part is the wait for BATF approval. But with a little patience, you'll soon be listening to the sound of silence ... and what a beautiful sound it is. *WM*

**The Shooter's Shop**  
2465 South 84th Street  
West Allis, WI 53227  
414.327.2171  
[www.shootersshop.com](http://www.shootersshop.com)

*Robb Manning served in the US 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.*

*With a little bit of patience, your rifle can be equipped with a suppressor like the Harvester from Silencerco.*



**HINTZ, from page 22**

(\$900 new) to Browning BT-99s for \$750 (\$1,200 new), Remington 3200 O/U for \$1,200 on up to Browning Citori and Beretta 682s for under \$2,000. CZ-USA Redhead Target, Beretta 391 semi-autos, a Winchester SX3 or several SKB models can be bought new for well under \$1,500.

A gun that fits properly and can be adapted as a child grows is important. You would be amazed how teens grow and how much we are adjusting gun fit from year to year and even halfway through a year. Get advice from your coaches to make the right decision for your family's situation. After all, trapshooting is a family sport!

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[www.weaveroptics.com](http://www.weaveroptics.com)



### LASERLYTE PLINKING CANS

This is simply the most fun you can have shooting your gun without live ammo. This is the modern version of shooting tin cans with a BB gun. With the cost of ammo these days, it pays for itself after a couple sessions. It's also a great way to introduce kids to marksmanship. With a laser training device inserted into your firearm barrel (not included with the Plinking Cans), just point, aim and shoot. The laser triggers the plunger which tips the can over. It's more gratifying than shooting other laser targets, or even shooting paper targets. You even have to go "down range" and set the cans back up — just like real cans. Each can runs off a 9-volt battery, which gives it over 8000 tip overs. Comes in a three-pack. \$115.95. OWO tested and recommended.

[www.laserlyte.com](http://www.laserlyte.com)



### HOT-CAN

How many times afield have you wanted a hot drink or soup but didn't want to mess with starting a burner? With the Hot-Can, getting that hot beverage just got easy. Simply press the button on the bottom, shake it for 30 seconds, and let it sit for three minutes. A heat indicator turns green when it's ready. Pop the top and you have a steaming hot can of soup or beverage. It's completely self-heating, with no flame. A plastic guard prevents lip burns while drinking, and insulation around the can protects your hands from burning and keeps the beverage warm up to 45 minutes. It comes in four flavors of soup: Tomato, Chicken, Mushroom, and Asparagus and five beverages: Cafe Latte, Cafe Mocha, Hot Cocoa, Hot Chocolate, and Hot Tea. The Hot-Can is sold in two-, four-, six-, eight-, and twelve-packs. \$5.99 for two cans. OWO tested and recommended.

[www.hot-can.us](http://www.hot-can.us)

### RAPALA BX JOINTED MINNOW

The BX Jointed Minnow has the life-like action that a balsa core delivers but is coated in a copolymer shell, which means you can fish the lure in the toughest of conditions. The shell also allows for an extremely life-like finish. It has a floating and kicking action, can be trolled or cast, and dives six to eight feet. It features two #6 VMC Black Nickel Round Bend Hooks. It's 3.5 inches long and weighs 5/16 ounce. Ten different patterns are available. \$3.99.

[www.rapala.com](http://www.rapala.com)



### MEPP'S COMET TRU-V

Some of my fondest memories as a child come from fishing Mepp's spinners off the banks of my backyard on the mighty Sugar River in the little Village of Albany. Many a fish were caught and many memories were made. Though it looks like a standard Mepp's spinner, the Comet TRU-V uses Ultraviolet (UV) reactive finishes to mimic the UV patterns that baitfish have. Many species of fish do not have UV filters in their eyes, so they're able to see UV light. Mepp's has been using UV reactive decals dating back to 1974 and paints dating back to 1989. But the Comet TRU-V is UV enhanced to a new level. On the Mepp's website, when you mouse over the picture of the Comet TRU-V, it shows you a picture of what the lure looks like under UV light. It comes in treble or single hook, has six different hook sizes and twelve pattern combinations. \$4.60.

[www.mepps.com](http://www.mepps.com)



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](mailto:ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com).

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### CCI SUPPRESSOR .22 LONG RIFLE

Specifically designed for suppressed 22-caliber firearms, this offering from CCI is perfect for small game hunting or plinking. If you have never gone plinking with a suppressed .22, you owe it to yourself to try it. The subsonic velocity of 970 feet per second minimizes sound signature, while the hollow point bullet expands consistently at low velocities. It's also accurate and clean-burning—very important because suppressors can get extremely dirty. Like all CCI offerings it provides reliable function in semi-automatic firearms, which are notoriously finicky. 45 grains. \$5.95 for box of 50.

[www.cci-ammunition.com](http://www.cci-ammunition.com)



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S. WILKERSON

## Filling The Void

*In an era when Garands and M1 Carbines were scarce, the Mini 14 stepped up to the plate*



Long lost in the limelight of the AR15, the Ruger Mini 14 remains a viable option for those looking for a military-style, semiautomatic rifle. Before ARs became as common as they are now, the Mini 14 was among a handful of military-style rifles available on the market when it debuted in 1974. With an action patterned after the Garand, the looks of a scaled down M14 and firing the same .223 round of the M16, the Mini was an instant hit.

One of the main reasons for the Mini 14's popularity was its lack of competition. The Garand and the M1 Carbine were considered competitors, but in reality, there was no real contest. Garands and "authentic" M1 carbines were nowhere near as ubiquitous as they are today. When found, they were very expensive (and still are). Reasonably priced M1 Carbine clones were available from several companies, but they were often produced from a mixture of surplus parts and built on new, commercially made investment cast receivers. Some were better than others. Limited numbers of literally pieced-together Garands were also marketed in the '70s. Buyers bought them at their peril. There was always the risk that any given specimen was welded together from a receiver that had been torched in half when the gun

was decommissioned in its country of origin and later exported to the United States.

Given the state of the competition, it is little wonder that the Mini 14 soon became a best seller. It was an honest-to-goodness, blued, polished steel, wood-stocked affordable rifle that looked like it came from a U.S. armory. Weighing all of 6.5 pounds, it sported a barrel of 18.5 inches and was less than 39 inches in overall length. The gun was available with a 20- or 30-round magazine, shot an affordable cartridge and was very reliable. So reliable and practical that it was adopted by many police agencies, penitentiaries and a smattering of foreign armies. The same is true to this day.

Like M1 Carbine clones of the day, the receiver of the Mini 14 was made from investment cast steel, along with many of its other parts. The difference was Sturm-Ruger, Inc. knew how to produce investment cast steel on a consistent basis and do it in spec.

What the Ruger didn't have was a reputation for accuracy. To this day, the Internet abounds with anecdotes about the inherent inaccuracy of the Mini 14. Some of these stories truly stretch credulity. I can't say that I have a lot of experience shooting Mini 14s, but people I knew that

did never complained about their accuracy. One of the best displays of marksmanship I ever witnessed was a friend shooting his iron-sighted Mini 14 freehand and standing at a target 100 yards away hitting it virtually every time.

Mini 14s are generally not accurate as AR15s when shot from a bench rest. Like Kalashnikovs, they have fairly thin barrels, which are not conducive to tack-driving accuracy. Unlike Kalashnikovs, there are various barrel stabilizing devices that can tighten up groups. Mini 14s have been steadily improved over the years, and newer models are said to be more accurate than older models, although there are those whom contend that the earliest models were the most accurate.

In the final analysis, Mini 14s are plenty accurate enough when bench-rested, and two- to four-inch groups can be expected at 100 yards. That's better than a typical Kalashnikov and comparable to the venerable 30/30 Winchester 94. Models 94 have probably taken more deer in Wisconsin than any other rifle, and it is the rare deer that has been shot by a hunter using a bench rest. I suspect that at 50 yards, freehand, most people would shoot a Mini 14 as well

*continued on page 26*



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In Price County, we've saved a place for you to have **fun!** Snowmobile trails remain open through March 31st. April 16th marks the opening of the Tuscobia State Trail to ATV & UTV riding, with another 100+ miles of motorized trail opening in May. Book your lakeside lodging today for the May 3rd Walleye fishing opener. Call 800.269.4505 to request a free county map. **Click on Price County.**



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# County Teasers

With this year's great snowfall and favorable temperatures, you still have a month to enjoy a late season snowmobile excursion in the Minocqua area (trails officially close March 31). Hundreds of miles of groomed and marked trails offer fun and excitement for all who enjoy the thrill of a sled! **Click on Oneida County.**

Fishing from the shore of Lake Michigan doesn't end with the cold temperatures in Port Washington. Stop on your way back from the Sport Show and try out that new fishing gear you got. Or check out the marina and its easy access to downtown for your next charter adventure. **Click on Ozaukee County.**

Who isn't fed up with cabin fever after this winter? If you've never seen America's bird, the bald eagle, it's time to head for the Mississippi River. It's not uncommon to see hundreds of them in one day! View them from the Grandview Motel in Ferryville and areas nearby. **Click on Crawford County.**

Visitors and locals alike love the short but sweet **smelt season in Chequamegon Bay.** The "smelt run" usually starts around the third week in April, shortly after ice-out on the bay and lasts only 12-14 days. There will be a smelt hotline during the month of April. Call 800.284.9484 or **click on Ashland County.**

The Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce is hosting a day of celebration on May 1 in anticipation of another great year of biking with a community ride starting at the Sparta Depot. A shuttle service will pick up riders at the Depot (111 Milwaukee St.) at 9:00 am. **Click on Monroe County.**

Experience the fun and adventure of the underground caves at Ledge View Nature Center in Chilton. Naturalist led tours start in May. Bring a flashlight and wear old, warm clothes and shoes. Ages 5 and up. Prices range from \$6-\$7/person. For tour dates and times, **click on Calumet County.**

Summer is around the corner! Really! And what better place to spend it than on a lake, river, or in the woods of **beautiful central Wisconsin!** Hundreds of **great properties for sale!** A chance to win dinner and a night at Silvercryst Resort on Big Silver Lake. Drawing Labor Day. **Click on Waushara County.**

Whether it's late ice fishing or April panfishing, Walworth County lakes are the go-to location in southern Wisconsin for March and April fishing. Dave Duwe's Guide Service will put you on the fish! Dave is extremely family friendly. For trips call 262.728.8063. **Click on Walworth County.**

Fun time in Ferryville on the Mississippi River. Use the Ferryville Boat Launch (Pool 9) to access the best fishing on the river. Open all year and the docks go in as soon as spring river stage allows. There is still ice fishing in the area with access at Ferryville and from the bank just north of the Village limits. Spring IS coming and hunting/fishing season with it. **Click on Crawford County**

Nearly 1,000 lakes are waiting for you in Washburn County, located in northwest Wisconsin! Stay at a lakeside resort or campground with all the amenities you'll need to make your trip a success. Visit our website for fishing reports, lake maps, lodging, bait shops, guides and more. **Click on Washburn County.**



WILKERSON, from page 25

as they would an AR with open sights.

What the Mini 14 may or may not lack in accuracy it makes up for in reliability, durability and ease of maintenance. Field stripping, assembly and disassembly are easily accomplished, and the gun can take a lot of abuse. A Mini 14 isn't especially scary looking, even when equipped with a flash hider, bayonet lug and high capacity magazine. With its blued steel metal and wood stock, the Mini 14 has the classic good looks of the US M14 and M1 carbine, along with their functionality.

For those looking for something a little outside the mainstream that they can rely on, the Mini 14 is plenty good enough.




S. Wilkerson is an award-winning Wisconsin journalist, firearms expert and student of the Second Amendment. Contact him by email at [cheapshots@onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:cheapshots@onwisconsinoutdoors.com).

### CARPENTER, from page 20

**Let them call.** Make sure young hunters have calls of their own and let them do some calling. Even if you're a master caller, what's the harm of letting the kid make some turkey sounds? The worst turkey sounds I've ever heard have come from real turkeys!

**Let them shoot.** Don't push your viewpoint of what is a "good" turkey on any young hunter. Let them shoot jakes! A jake is defined as a gobbler only one year old, identified by its short beard, uneven tail fan and slightly smaller size. Can you imagine being so excited about going hunting and then not being able to shoot a perfectly legal target? Heck, I still shoot jakes after all these years. Let the kid shoot a shortbeard as soon as the opportunity presents itself!

### Conclusion

Youth turkey weekend is all about having fun, hooking the youngster on hunting and creating success, if you can. I've found it the highlight of my spring hunting for a decade now. With my own youngest offspring at age 16 this spring, I need to find some other young apprentices to hook on turkey hunting. This kids-only season is the way to do it. 

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



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LIMIT 2 - Cannot be used with other discount, coupon, gift cards, Inside Track Club membership, extended service plans or on any of the following: compressors, generators, tool storage or carts, welders, floor jacks, towable Ride-On Trencher (Item 65162), open box items, in-store event or parking lot sale items. Not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/1/14. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

LIMIT 3 - Good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/1/14. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

### SUPER COUPON!

# FREE

PITTSBURGH

1" x 25 FT.

TAPE MEASURE

ITEM 47737/69080

69030/69031



Item 47737 shown

## \$5.99

VALUE

LIMIT 1 - Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or prior purchase. Coupon good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & Handling charges may apply if not picked up in-store. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/1/14. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

LIMIT 2 - Cannot be used with other discount, coupon, gift cards, Inside Track Club membership, extended service plans or on any of the following: compressors, generators, tool storage or carts, welders, floor jacks, towable Ride-On Trencher (Item 65162), open box items, in-store event or parking lot sale items. Not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/1/14. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

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## Experts Agree Harbor Freight WINS in QUALITY and PRICE

### SUPER COUPON!

#### 60" WORKBENCH WITH FOUR DRAWERS



LOT NO. 93454/69054

Item 93454 shown

## \$139.99

REG. PRICE \$249.99

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### SUPER COUPON!

#### PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

LOT NO. 68048/69227/62116

## RAPID PUMP® 3 TON HEAVY DUTY STEEL FLOOR JACK



Item 68048 shown

## \$69.99

REG. PRICE \$159.99

• Weighs 74 lbs.

LIMIT 5 - Good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/1/14. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

### SUPER COUPON!

#### PACIFIC HYDROSTAR

## 1500 PSI PRESSURE WASHER

LOT NO. 68333/69488

Item 68333 shown

## \$82.99

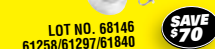
REG. PRICE \$129.99

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### SUPER COUPON!

#### BADLAND

## 2500 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH WIRELESS REMOTE CONTROL



Item 61258 shown

## \$49.99

REG. PRICE \$119.99

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### SUPER COUPON!

#### STORMWAT

## 900 PEAK/800 RUNNING WATTS 2 HP (63 CC) GAS GENERATOR

LOT NO. 66619/60338/69381

Item 66619 shown

## \$89.99

REG. PRICE \$179.99

LIMIT 5 - Good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/1/14. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

### SUPER COUPON!

#### FOLDABLE ALUMINUM SPORTS CHAIR

LOT NO. 66383

• 250 lb. Capacity



## \$20.99

REG. PRICE \$37.99

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### SUPER COUPON!

#### STORMWAT

## 20 OZ. GRAVITY FEED SPRAY GUN

LOT NO. 47016/67181

Item 47016 shown

## \$9.99

REG. PRICE \$29.99

LIMIT 5 - Good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/1/14. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

### SUPER COUPON!

#### 29 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED DRILL BIT SET

## drillmaster

LOT NO. 5889/61637

Item 5889 shown

## \$9.99

REG. PRICE \$24.99

LIMIT 7 - Good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/1/14. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

### SUPER COUPON!

#### CENTRALPNEUMATIC

## 20 OZ. GRAVITY FEED SPRAY GUN

LOT NO. 47016/67181

Item 47016 shown

## \$9.99

REG. PRICE \$29.99

LIMIT 5 - Good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/1/14. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

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4617 Verona Road

**MILWAUKEE (414) 440-0955**  
4698 South Whitnall Avenue Suite 1  
**OSHKOSH (920) 426-8849**  
1620 South Koeller Street

**RACINE (262) 554-5106**  
2380 South Green Bay Road  
**ROTHSCHILD (715) 355-0411**  
1029 East Grand Avenue #1031  
**WEST ALLIS (414) 257-9258**  
6808 West Greenfield Avenue

Order at HarborFreight.com or 800-423-2567  
We FedEx Most Orders in 24 Hours for \$6.99

If You Buy Tools Anywhere Else,  
You're Throwing Your Money Away

### SUPER COUPON!

#### 580 LB. CAPACITY FOUR DRAWER TOOL CART

LOT NO. 95659/61634/61952

Item 95659 shown

**\*WINNER\***  
Silver Medal  
Truckin' Magazine  
US + GENERAL

## \$99.99

REG. PRICE \$259.99

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### SUPER COUPON!

#### 27 LED PORTABLE WORKLIGHT/FLASHLIGHT

LOT NO. 67227/69567/60566

Item 67227 shown

**SAVE 55%**

## \$269

REG. PRICE \$5.99

Requires three AAA batteries (included).

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### SUPER COUPON!

#### 105 PIECE TOOL KIT

PITTSBURGH LOT NO. 4030/69323/69380/61591

• 4 Drawer Tool Chest Included!

Item 4030 shown

## \$35.99

REG. PRICE \$89.99

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### SUPER COUPON!

#### 2.5 HP, 21 GALLON 125 PSI VERTICAL AIR COMPRESSOR

LOT NO. 67847/61454/61693

Item 67847 shown

## \$149.99

REG. PRICE \$219.99

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### SUPER COUPON!

#### MIG-FLUX WELDING CART

Welder and accessories sold separately.

LOT NO. 69340/60790/90305/61316

Item 69340 shown

## \$299.99

REG. PRICE \$599.99

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### SUPER COUPON!

#### 45 WATT SOLAR PANEL KIT

LOT NO. 68751/90599

Item 68751 shown

## \$144.99

REG. PRICE \$299.99

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### SUPER COUPON!

#### 12" SLIDING COMPOUND DOUBLE-BEVEL MITER SAW WITH LASER GUIDE

CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS

**\*WINNER\***  
Best Value Award  
The Family Handyman

Item 69684 shown

## \$133.99

REG. PRICE \$299.99

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The advertisement features a large oval logo at the top center with the text "DUCK COMMANDER" and a stylized duck. Below the logo, four men with long beards and camouflage clothing stand in a forest. In the foreground, five children are shown wearing the Duck Commander boots, which are displayed in their packaging. The boots come in various designs, including camouflage, red with a flame, and blue with a duck. The text "Introducing Little Duck Commander Footwear!" is written in a large, red, stylized font across the middle of the image.

**Introducing  
Little Duck Commander Footwear!**

Duck Commander® proudly produced and distributed by Pro Line Mfg. Co. LLC.  
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