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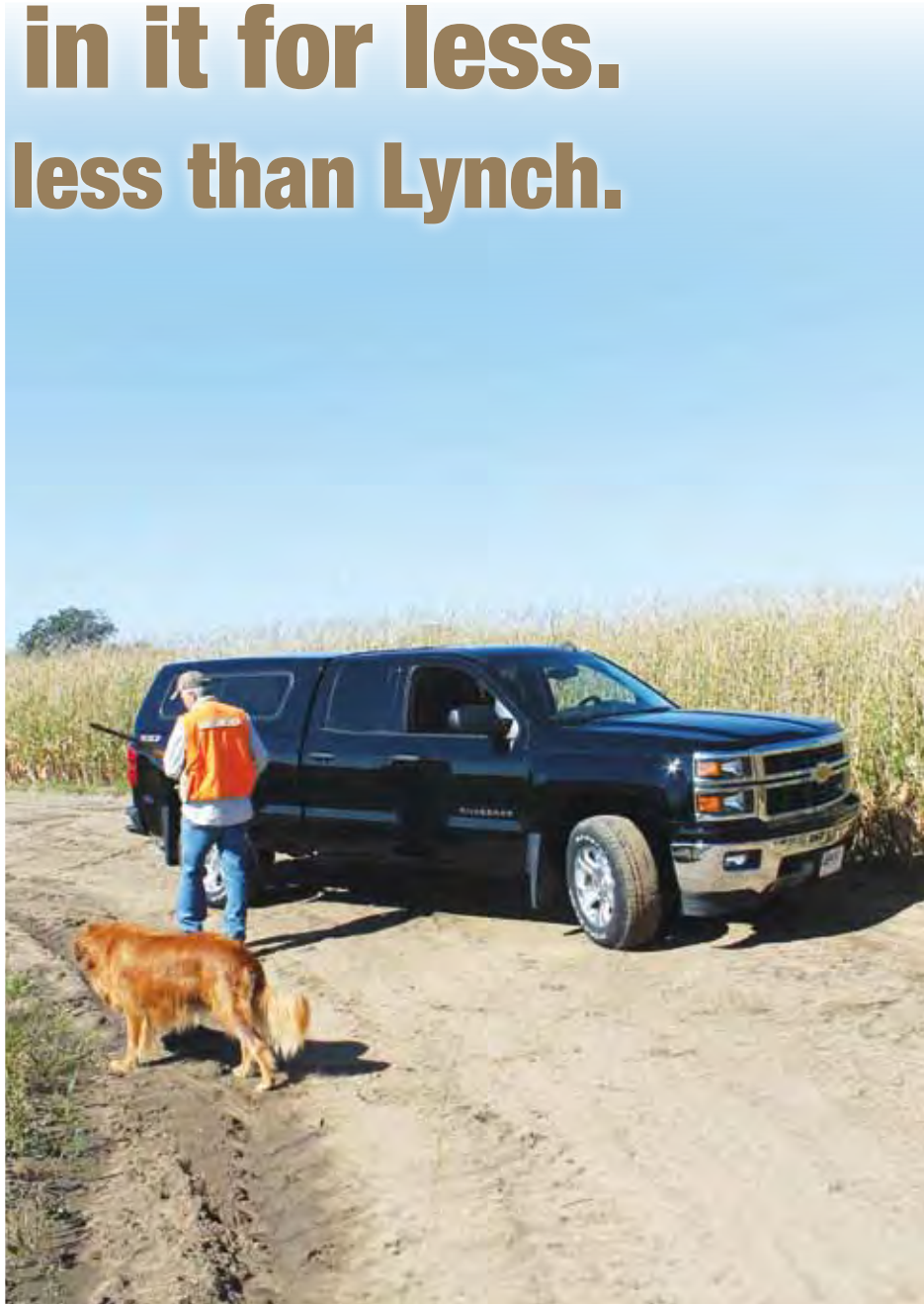
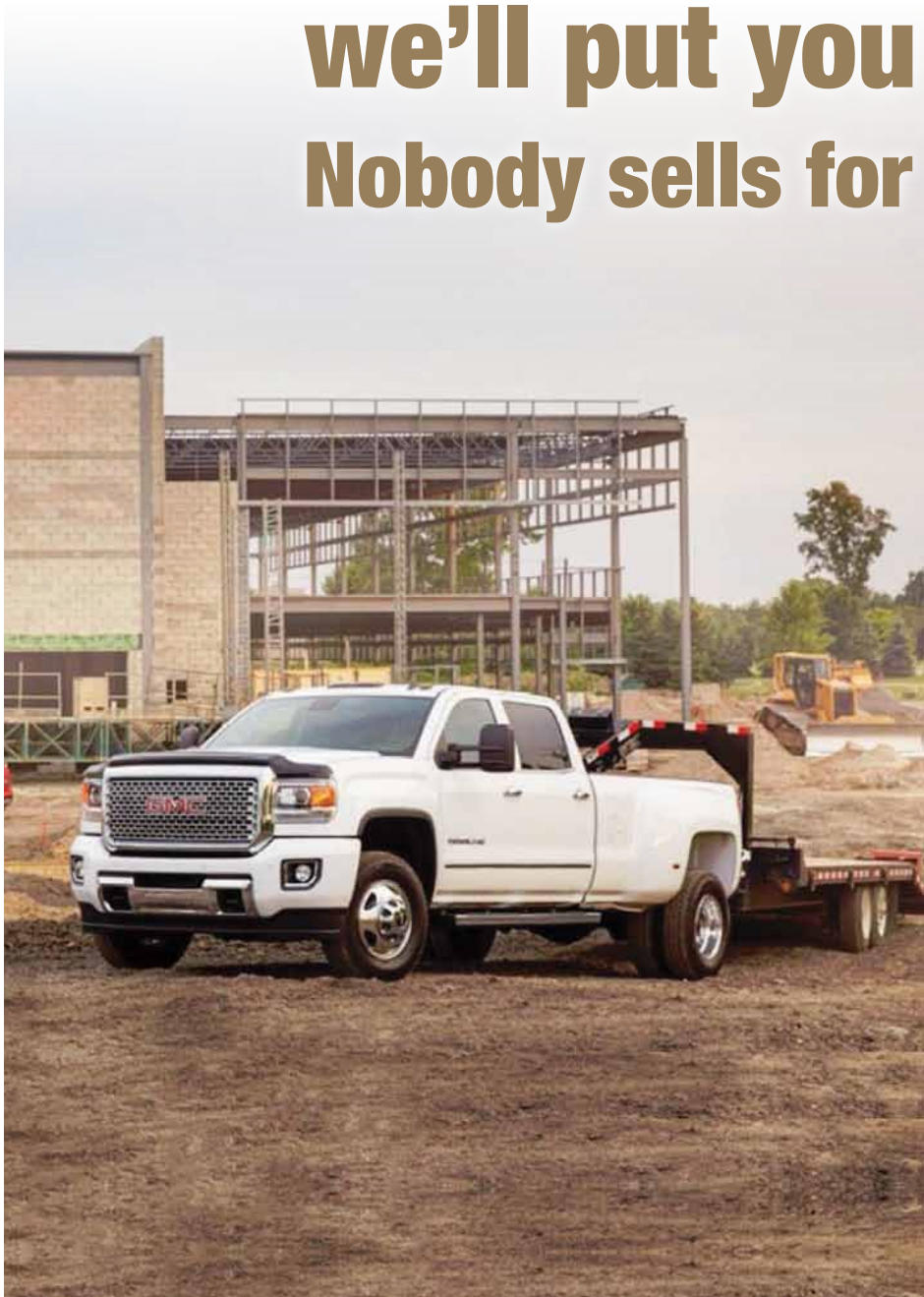
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DENNY MURAWSKA

Toughing Out The Cold

A deer's tactical approach

We have all been there this winter—temperatures outside cold enough to freeze human skin in a short time. As I look out the window now, ghostly forms of icy shape shifters scatter across the barren cornfield, obliterating from sight most forms of life activity. Warm in my human den, I cannot help but contemplate the plight of the deer I hunted just a short time ago. They are out there, yarded up somewhere, toughing it out.

I try to envision my survival in that deep freeze, with no warm bedding to crawl into at night, and I cannot fathom the depth of what I feel must be their misery. Or is it? After all, deer do not think like we do. They must accept and adapt to whatever Mother Nature throws their way. They have gotten good at this over the last million or so years. I too often picture myself in their situation. Would I approach some tree stand with a hunter in it and beg to be shot, knowing the misery that would soon blanket my forest home?


Thankfully, although I am certain deer can feel miserable, they carry on, without thought of tomorrow or yesterday ... just today. Adaptations they have for their stoic stance on life are incredible. I have often viewed their short coats and wondered how that skimpy covering could withstand the deep freezes of the north country. As it turns out, they can.

Deer hair in winter is composed of guard hairs that are hollow, trapping insulating air. Beneath is a finer, tangled undercoat. This combination is so effective, a deer can have snow on its back that will not melt from the body heat beneath. Kind of like a house with a well-insulated roof. Muscles at the base of each guard hair control their angle, fluffing up when necessary. Oily secretions keep all this very water repellant.

Beneath this efficient coat is a layer of

fat that is burned for fuel through the harsh months. The whitetail can turn down its metabolism by half in order to conserve this precious life sustaining stuff. The woody shreds of saplings they chew on are very low in nutrients, so the fat layer is critical. A deer can burn more calories seeking out woody browse than it gets from the food itself. Even here, there is a strategy nature provides. Yarded deer seek sheltered areas, often under tall pines and other conifers, where the snow is less deep. Plowing through snow burns a tremendous amount of valuable energy. When it is necessary to move, the deer forge trails they use over and over. There is no need to barge through several feet of snow after the trails are initially laid down and followed rigorously. The non-nutritious bits of food that can be had are helped through digestion as microbes in the deer's gut change from their summer composition to a population that can better break down woody matter.

As one travels from south to north the average size of deer becomes larger. This is true with many mammals. (No disrespect to my fellow Wisconsinites.) The larger size gives less surface area to body mass ratios for these winter-ready creatures. The result is less heat loss.

So while I dress in my layers of thermal underwear, alpaca socks, hat and insulated jacket, my sleek fellow woodland inhabitants are no doubt much warmer and less jangled by the weather than I. They will lose their extra weight, while I struggle to maintain. They will have more camaraderie, less anxiety and fret less about tomorrow than I will. Still, I will not be trading places any time in the near future. 

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



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LEE GATZKE

Confused About Feeding Deer? *Understanding Wisconsin's regulations*

As the State of Wisconsin has moved toward simplifying deer hunting rules and regulations to make it easier for hunters to comply, one area is continuously misunderstood. Deer baiting and feeding is an issue many in the hunting public are confused about. Approximately half of Wisconsin does not allow baiting or feeding of deer ... period. No confusion here. Check out the deer hunting regulations. If the county or counties you hunt are listed under the baiting and feeding ban, you can't do either. Case closed.

The counties that allow baiting and feeding are where the confusion exists. According to regulations regarding the baiting of deer in the counties where it is

allowed, you may begin baiting the day before the opening of the archery season (mid-September). Baiting is allowed continually through all the various deer seasons until the end of archery season (first week in January). The regulations clearly lay out the amount of bait that can be used at each bait site and the number of bait sites allowed according to area. The regulations for hunting over bait are pretty straightforward. Based on my interaction with the hunting public, the feeding of deer is where the confusion lies.

There are many well-intentioned hunters and wildlife observers concerned about the health of deer and other critters. Every harsh winter seems to

swell their ranks. They put in their time, effort and dollars to supplementary feed these animals. Most of the feeding takes place outside of the hunting season in hopes of helping wildlife through a tough winter or assisting them to recover in early spring. It all seems pretty innocent and good-hearted until you discover that most of it is being done in violation of the regulations. Concern for things like disease transmission and car-deer collisions has created rules to try to prevent the negative issues to which this feeding is suspected of attributing. Good intentions, it seems, need to be regulated. It's a complicated issue, this baiting and feeding.


How many times have we seen trail



Feeding deer. Are you doing it legally?

camera pictures of deer on a feeding or mineral site someone has set up to see what is visiting? Everyone enjoys looking at images of deer feeding or other behavior captured on trail cameras placed at a feeding site. Minerals are commonly used to feed deer, especially in the off-season, and large bucks commonly visit them to gain the nutrition

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DICK ELLIS

On Wisconsin Outdoors

Priorities change with empty freezer

One hundred yards from Scott Heitman's stand high in the oak I slowly hung the bow back on the tree limb and reached for the camera. Five does moving cautiously downwind from a sloping spruce grove and into the woodlot where we waited had turned away from the beaten trail that would have led past my own stand. They headed instead directly toward Heitman and the classic confrontation between hunter and prey.

On this second last day of the Wisconsin bow deer season a January north wind was relentless and rocked the trees. Temperatures in the teens and pure blue skies seemed a reprieve after having unsuccessfully waited for deer in single digits and driving snow the day before. The sun was slipping over the marsh to the west. Time was slipping, too, on these Wisconsin bowhunters and our quest to put venison in the freezer.

Hunting has always been extreme outdoor recreation first and a means of placing great food on the table second. Those priorities changed in direct cor-



Less than 50 yards from the stand, the doe wobbled, fell and never moved again after Scott Heitman's heart shot on the second last day of the Wisconsin bow season.



Scott Heitman beats frigid January temperatures to tag a Winnebago County doe.

relation with dwindling deer numbers in northern Wisconsin where we had successfully bow and gun hunted for two decades. Fifty percent success rates had been the norm. But not one deer has hung from our meat pole in seven years. Seeing deer on stand became an event. I missed watching deer. I missed waiting out big bucks. I missed the venison, too.

I raised the camera and turned the telephoto lens to bring Heitman into focus. I found two small does directly beneath his stand and took the shot sometimes as gratifying to an outdoor writer as a tag filled. Three larger trailing deer made their way past the archer and toward a large field bordering the marsh to the south. We had been busted an hour before when one wary doe moving upwind had scattered four fawns while still 60 yards from our stands. The does that moved in now were not moving into the wind, forfeiting their sense of smell that has cost hunters success since the dawn of time. This time, Heitman survived without being detected despite five sets of eyes searching for danger. He stood, turned and brought the arrow to full draw on the trailing doe at 20 yards.

This quest to fill the tag was playing out in extreme conditions that we were getting used to. Would our no-deer

losing streak continue? We had failed with the bows in deep snow in northern Wisconsin and on Heitman's property in Adams County. Now in Winnebago County, our first attempt had not led to a shot despite each of us seeing deer. With temperatures at five degrees, we were happy for simple pleasures like the truck heater kicking in at day's end. Several times each week prior to these late season hunts, Heitman and I would shoot our bows to increase the odds that we would kill a deer quickly if given the opportunity.

"The one thing I have control over when hunting is how well I shoot," said Heitman, one of the top shooters in Wisconsin competition with the recurve. "I do not want to wound a deer. I'm confident I will kill a deer quickly if I decide to take the shot."

Knowing that we were hunting hoping to fill the freezer, but also knowing that the hope would not let us take a low percentage shot that might cripple a deer was a good place to be mentally. Nothing ironic about that, actually—just a nice dose of fair chase and hunters' responsibility.

Heitman held his draw on the doe while I held my breath and watched. I could not tell from the distance if the ar-

row had found its mark as five deer scattered. But after 50 yards, one of the adult does faltered, wobbled and fell without ever moving again. Ten minutes later we stood over the doe with some remorse at a life ended but a much stronger sense of satisfaction at a not-so-easy goal achieved.

"I've got some venison from the gun hunt in Adams County," Scott said. "Do you want her?" "Absolutely," I said.

Back at home we hung the doe and skinned it in my garage. The next morning we tackled what I used to do with two or three deer a year: cutting, cleaning and packaging until virtually every piece of meat is used.

Is the effort worth it? I'm putting this story to bed now in my warm office. There is a container with venison steaks marinating in the refrigerator, slated for the winter grill tonight. If you're not sure how to answer the question, you're not a Wisconsin hunter. Especially now, anyway, I feel sorry for you. *W*



Scott Heitman can be seen in his stand just before he rises to take one of five does beneath his tree with a heart shot.

On Wisconsin
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PUBLISHER | EDITOR:

Dick Ellis
ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com

COPY EDITOR:

Heidi Rich
submissions@onwisconsinoutdoors.com

DESIGN | PRODUCTION:

Ali Garrigan Design
ali@aligarrigandesign.com

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HEIDI RICH

Move That Snow!

Advice for maintaining “up north” vacation homes

My family has a long history in the Townsend area. If you are not familiar with Townsend, it's in northwestern Oconto County and has a population of about 1,000. Highway 32 will get you through town. (Fun fact about Townsend: an X-Files episode, “Fallen Angel,” was set, though not filmed, in Townsend.)

In the 1960s my uncle built a cabin on the Townsend Flowage. I vividly remember helping my dad dodge partially submerged tree trunks in the manmade Flowage during fishing trips in our small boat. I got stuck with my first fish hook there and spent many summer days with my younger sister and cousins exploring the sandy shore and collecting shells.

A few years after my uncle sold his cabin, my dad was itching to get back up north, so he and my mom bought an early 1970s trailer sitting on a fairly wooded acre in Townsend. The trailer, with three bedrooms, one bath, spacious living room and kitchen, was not attractive in its outdated-ness, but served as a

convenient relaxation spot and hunting lodge.

Not a snowmobiler or winter recreationist, Dad does not use the trailer in winter. Having a vacation home myself, my family and I don't use the trailer, nor do my siblings on a regular basis, so the trailer sits empty all winter. Consequently, my dad hires a plumber to turn the water off in October of each year and turn it back on the following May.

Fortunately for my dad, his neighbor, Bill, acts as somewhat of a watchman over the Townsend property. One March morning in 2014 Bill phoned my dad, alerting him of some bad news: the several inches of snow that had accumulated on top of the trailer caused the relatively flattop roof to collapse. As you can see from the photo, the collapse occurred in the center of the trailer, affecting the living room and part of the kitchen.

At first Dad was hopeful the roof, and therefore the trailer itself, could be salvaged. The insurance adjustor disagreed.



The author standing in front of the living room window, which depicts the inside of the snow-filled trailer.



Note the depth of snow on the deck Brian Rich is standing on

The trailer was a total loss. Most of the contents were not damaged, but as you can imagine, anything under the weight of the roof and snow was a soggy disaster.

Though Neighbor Bill served as a watchman, my dad would have benefited more from having someone act as a caretaker of his trailer. My advice to anyone who owns a trailer or house that sits vacant for any extended amount of time is to try to find someone who will not only call you after a disaster to your property but who will be proactive in preventing one.

Perhaps my dad's plumber would have agreed to visit the trailer once a week to rake snow from the roof and give it a quick inspection for any kind of damage or impending issues. For a reasonable fee, maybe Bill would have done the same.

Adding a pitched roof could have prevented such a massive amount of snow from accumulating on the roof, but that's not something my dad was about to consider with such an old trailer.

Without someone to remove snow

from a roof for an absentee homeowner, there are still measures you can take to prevent a roof collapse due to heavy snow. The Web and your local hardware stores are full of roof melting systems ranging from Roofmelt tablets made with calcium chloride (which you can find at Menards) thrown on the roof to cables that melt snow.

Another option is to hire a property management company or real estate agent who doubles as a property manager. Do a quick Internet search and call around until you find someone qualified to look in on your vacant home and perform light maintenance when you will not be visiting it for extended periods of time.

The last thing you want to think about regarding your home away from home is its demise. Plan ahead and be proactive with its maintenance. Sure, my dad's “new” mid-90s trailer is nice, but it took a lot of time and expense to get it. *WR*

Heidi Rich is Copy Editor of On Wisconsin Outdoors. She enjoys ATV riding, snowmobiling and target shooting with her husband and daughter in Oconto County.

GATZKE, from page 5

necessary to grow big antlers. The images of these bucks commonly get a lot of attention on the Internet. People proudly show these pictures to friends and post them online for the world to see.

The next time you see trail camera pictures taken in the off-season where deer are coming in to a feeding or mineral site placed there by someone in Wisconsin, ask them a few questions. Ask them how far the site is from an inhabited business or home. Then ask them if there is a road within 100 yards and what the speed limit is on it. After they give you a puzzled look, they are likely to

inquire why you're asking such dumb questions. Here's why. Regulations for feeding deer in Wisconsin require the feeding site be placed within 50 yards and be visible from an inhabited business or home. The site must also be at least 100 yards away from a road that has a speed limit of 45 mph or higher. I know a large percentage of people who are surprised when I recite these rules. The regulations mean the majority of trail camera pictures I see from Wisconsin during the closed season are taken from illegal feeding and mineral sites.

The regulations must be confusing, because even though the rules are spelled out, they are the most vio-

lated rules I know of. It's not like the people showing the pictures are hardened criminals—far from it. They believe they are doing the right thing by providing deer and other critters with needed nutrition. In the interest of compliance, perhaps the rules should be printed in bold. *WR*

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....

MIKE FOSS

Bear Persistence

Dues paid and a special payoff

With the 2014 bear season in the books and 20 bears tagged, it is the memory of lifelong friend Tom Gaber's hunt that will stay with me forever. Although an avid whitetail hunter also from Washburn in Bayfield County, Tom had never before bear hunted. He knew that he would take a backseat to my clients before I could turn my attention to his hunt. But he also knew we would probably achieve 100 percent shot opportunity and still have many active bait stations available when our Northern Wisconsin Outfitters camp cleared.

I was comfortable that Tom's experience hunting and filling buck tags would carry him to a successful first bear hunt. I would not need to sit with him but could feel his slight disappointment when a few days of the season burned away before I could place him on stand. Honestly, camp was active with so many bears being tagged—with more big bears between 200 and 400 pounds than we had ever seen—that I almost forgot Tom. The highlight was Menomonie hunter Mark Hillman's 405-pound monster. I had donated a bear hunt to a charity auction to help a young child with cancer. Mark was the highest bidder, and his boar would be our largest bear of 2014.

When Tom did hit the field, he would invest 42 hours on stand with very little action. Only two small bears made an appearance, but I can't say I was surprised by his persistence and attitude in a situation that many hunters would have given up on. Tom's typical text message at night would read, "No bears. Had a great time just being out here. That's hunting."



Tom Gerber of Washburn reaps the reward of 42 hours on stand with a 180 pound-sow.

We changed tactics, placing Tom on a stand named the Beaver Pond Bait where a nice bear was taken on day two. Finally, I also had the time to sit with my old friend. But there was a catch. I felt Tom's hesitation. "We have to sit on the ground?" he asked. "Yes," I said. "This is a trapped-out mucky beaver pond. The hunter's head is the only thing visible from the ground blind that is 40 yards from the bait stations. It's the perfect ambush. When the wind is right, it's impossible for a bear to circle downwind without visually exposing itself to the hunter."


With light fading fast and the sun below the horizon, the swarms of mosquitoes were instantly forgotten when the bear Tom had been waiting for emerged from dense cover. Seated behind Tom, I whispered, "Nice bear. Take your time."

I watched with excitement as he lifted and shouldered his rifle, and I heard the quiet click of the safety being taken off. With the squeeze of the trigger, nothing happened. Again and again, I tuned in closely as each attempt to discharge the rifle failed. Tom disengaged his clip and I watched as the bear walked off with the sound.

Tom quietly but frantically figured out the problem. A small piece of plastic was lodged in his clip, preventing proper seating of the shell in the chamber. I could see the tops of the thick young poplar whips moving. The bear had not gone far and was now moving closer to check out the mysterious noises.

Everything went silent. Our eyes searched for any movement. When the bear showed, all we could see were ears, eyes and the top of the nose. The bear was looking right at us. What seemed an eternal standoff lasted only minutes before the black ghost disappeared. But, satisfied, the bear cautiously stepped out in the open near the bait. The rifle report signaled a perfect shot, and the 180-pound sow didn't go far.

With a slap on Tom's back, I congratulated him. I take personal and professional satisfaction in each client's success. But to experience it firsthand with a friend is difficult to describe. How about "priceless"?

Good hunting. 

Mike Foss was born and raised in Washburn, Wisconsin. As a guide and owner of Northern Wisconsin Outfitters, he has harvested bear and many deer, including several record book bucks. Off season, Mike is constantly scouting for new hunting areas and adventures. Go to northernwisconsinoutfitters.com or call them at 715.373.0344.



"I ALWAYS THOUGHT THEY JUST SLAPPED THEM OUT OF THE WATER WITH THEIR PAWS."

RON STRESING

Off-Season Wingshooting Fun

Go pigeon hunting!

“Four coming in from the left. Don't move!” I hunkered down just a little deeper in the fenceline as I saw the birds swing in from the next farm. My cousin Ken had spotted the birds first, and I decided to let him take the pair of pigeons that were closer to him. The birds were locked in on the new pigeon decoys surrounding the robo-dove spinner decoy. I picked out the bird I wanted to knock down, a brown-and-white leading the pair closest to me. Ken sprung the ambush by knocking down a common gray bird, and I smoked the brown and white bird on my side. The two surviving birds broke into aerobatics that any Top Gun pilot would envy.

Pigeons will surprise you. They are harder to hit than you might think, fun to decoy in, and much better eating than most folks realize. With no closed season or limits, they offer realistic duck or goose hunting practice year round. The same principles that help you decoy in waterfowl apply directly to feral pigeon hunting. They are also good retrieving practice for hunting dogs.

While fairly new to the American bird hunting scene, hunting wild wood pigeons and feral barn pigeons has been a big deal in the United Kingdom for decades. British hunters have a website called “pigeon watch” that tracks the movement of flocks of wild wood pigeons around the country. American hunters have caught on after an article on hunting feral pigeons out west appeared in a national magazine a few years back. A company called Soar-No-More offered guided pigeon hunts and full-body pigeon decoys. They now offer shell decoys and other accessories.

Where To Hunt

Dairy farms are prime places for feral pigeons. Silos and barns provide nesting and roosting cover, and cattle feeding provides a non-stop buffet for the birds. Gravel pits, cement factories and old abandoned buildings all hold pigeons. I have observed dozens of pigeons living under freeway overpasses. Pigeons can often be spotted feeding in cut down harvested corn or grain fields. Just like waterfowl, the easiest place to decoy birds into is a field they are already using. Get in that field before first light and set up your decoys. Most times the birds will arrive just after sun up. The last few hours

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TOM CARPENTER

Cubs Corner

The joys of winter cottontail hunting

It's too bad that small game hunting has all but disappeared from our youths' sporting scene. Whitetails and wild turkeys seem to get most of the hunting attention, including special youth-only seasons to encourage participation. Waterfowl also make the list.

Anything that gets us as parents, grandparents or mentors to take kids out in the field is just the encouragement we need. I suspect that part of the reason glamorous game gets more attention is because we as adults value it and we want our kids to be like us. Also, larger organizations can put their clout behind such hunts.

We adults like to shoot deer, so we love to take our kids to shoot deer. The National Wild Turkey Federation certainly encourages state game departments to hold youth hunts. And think of the influence Ducks Unlimited has for promoting youth waterfowling.

It didn't used to be that way. Young hunters around Wisconsin would learn their craft on small game, squirrels and rabbits primarily, but also the occasional bonus ring-necked pheasant or ruffed grouse.

With big game and waterfowl seasons closed, winter is the perfect time to get your young hunter out in the field after cottontail rabbits. Think your young sportsman or woman will be bored with such small quarry? Think again. Rabbits provide hunting excitement and shooting challenge, not to mention fine game meals.

Here's how to go after some winter cottontails.

The key to success is finding the right habitat. Choose a thick, brushy area with lots of undergrowth. Rabbits just don't live in the open forest. They love for-

gotten corners, brushy gullies, abandoned farms and barnyards, logged-over areas, thickets taking over from logging activities, brush piles, brushy fencerows, fallow and grassy fields ... anywhere they have cover low to the ground in which to hide.

Agricultural activities are good for rabbits too, as long as the hiding cover habitat is available nearby. Find the kinds of thick cover mentioned laced next to a corn stubble field and you have bunny heaven!

Carry a small-gauge shotgun. A 20-gauge with a modified or improved cylinder choke is about right, but a 12-gauge or even a .410 will do. Alternatively, the young hunter looking for extra challenge can carry a scoped .22 rifle when stalking rabbits and shoot them on the sit.

Here's how to hunt. Move slowly through cover, kicking here and there, trying to flush rabbits. One of my favorite spots was always a downed tree branch that had grown up with grass around it. Black raspberry thickets always seem to hold a lot of cottontails, as does old farm machinery grown up with brush and brambles.

One of my old-time favorite cottontail hideouts was a farmer friend's "graveyard" of ancient appliances, forgotten vehicles and broken farm implements dumped into a gully and allowed to grow up with brush, berry canes, thistles, goldenrod and grass. It was rabbit heaven!

Shooting is fast if you're carrying a shotgun and shooting at flushed bunnies. But rabbits will often pause in their escape, and that's where the hunter with



Nothing beats rabbit hunting on a sunny winter day. Get your young hunter out in cottontail country for some fresh air and excitement.

the .22 rifle can do well. Wait for the rabbit to stop, then take careful aim and shoot. Or, stalk the direction the rabbit went and try to spot it sitting still as a statue. Always go for a head shot.

Chances are you jumped some cottontails during deer season, saw some during pheasant hunts, or found a good bunny area on a grouse or woodcock hunt. Even if you don't have a good spot lined up, head out to a rural area and look for the right kind of habitat on local farms. Knock on a few doors. I challenge you to find a landowner who won't let a young, wide-eyed hunter chase a few rabbits on a brisk winter day!

Rabbit hunting is about as fun as it gets for simple outdoor joy. The pastime gets you both out in Wisconsin's fresh winter air for an afternoon of exercise and plenty of time away from iPhones and Xbox.

Keep your eye on the weather report and look for a sunny, calm day on the horizon. Then plan a little rabbit hunt with your young hunter. Remember, two or three hours is plenty of time to make memories that will last a lifetime. *WO*

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

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STRESING, from page 9

of light are also a prime time to hunt. Pigeons can also be "jump shot" by kicking them out of silos and barns. This is only with the consent of the farmer and with extreme caution, as you may be shooting right above cattle and around power lines.

Permission to hunt pigeons is much easier to obtain than permission to hunt waterfowl. Barn pigeons tend to wear their welcome out quickly by fouling silage. A dairy farmer's milk check is his livelihood, and cows sickened by contaminated silage don't provide milk. They also don't need expensive tractors and combines "painted" white with pigeon droppings.

Decoy Sets

Barn pigeons tend to be happy-go-lucky birds that drop into feed with the flock already on the ground. Make sure to leave an empty landing zone for incoming birds to drop into. Spinning wing motorized decoys are a big draw for birds. Set your spinner next to your landing zone to draw the birds to it. I place the plastic ears of field corn I use for waterfowl hunting among the decoys near the landing zone. I have had pigeons decoy into goose decoys set in cut corn and into dove decoys by a water-hole.

Guns And Loads

Just about any hunting shotgun will do for pigeons. I sug-

gest using the same one you hunt doves or waterfowl with. Unlike heavy waterfowl loads, pigeons are best hunted with lighter, cheaper loads, with light payloads of fine shot. If only hunting pigeons, standard trap loads loaded with 1-ounce or 1 1/8-ounce of lead #7 1/2 shot work wonders. Modified seems to be the best all-around choke tube or setting to use. Pigeon hunting is a good way to use up old odds and ends of shotgun ammunition.

Pigeon As Table Fare

Fillet the meat off the breast with a sharp knife, then rinse and soak the fillets in cold salted water. You will have cuts of lean red meat that taste a lot like wood duck. Pigeon meat is great for stews or stir-frying. One of my personal favorites is pigeon breast fillets done in a covered roaster served over brown rice and mushrooms.

I don't recommend eating birds that live on dirty city streets or near chemical plants, but those fat, well-fed, dairy farm birds are good eating! While they may be called "flying rats" in the city, I refer to my dairy farm birds as "stir-fry from the sky." *WO*

Ron Stresing has been an outdoor writer since 1996 and has had articles published in Midwest Outdoors, Fur-Fish-Game, and Badger Sportsman magazines. He lives in South Milwaukee with his wife, Donna.

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69030/69031

Item 69080
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60688/61253/61282

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For some anglers the pure excitement of catching fish is all they need. For others it's the time spent on the water with friends or family. There is nothing wrong with these motives, because anytime on the water is a great time!

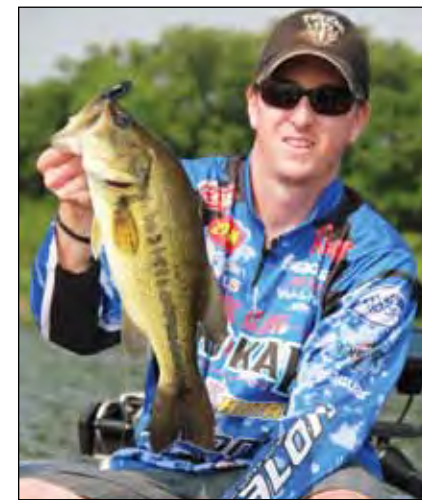
One thing that crosses the mind of some anglers as they drop their boat in the water is to locate and catch big bass. These anglers have the mindset that a day of fishing filled with a few bites from big bass is more exciting than catching a boatload of smaller bass.

You may be asking yourself how you can specifically target big bass. First, we must define the term "big." This depends on where you live and what body of water you are fishing. When fishing a lake or river in the Midwest, a big bass is any fish that is usually over that 4 ½-pound mark. Depending on the body of water and time of year, a 4-pound bass can be common, but in general Midwestern bass anglers seeking a big bass rush get excited when a 4 ½-pound fish crosses the gunwale of their boat.

The first thing that anglers pursuing big bass need to adjust is their gear and tackle. When it comes to lure selection, there are a few lures that just scream "big bass." A flipping jig has been a tried and true staple for bass anglers for many years, and because of its bigger profile and different presentation than the now-common Texas-rig plastic, it is a great choice for chasing down big bass.

For me a ½-ounce black/blue or green pumpkin jig is a standby lure that works around a variety of cover. From flipping boat docks and laydowns to vegetation, the jig works. Many anglers lose confidence in the jig if they don't get bit right away or miss a few fish. This is when it is important to not get discouraged and keep fishing that jig. Sticking with a jig and learning to fish it will pay off down the road as your rod will be loading up with a big bass in no time.

Having the correct gear makes fishing a jig that much easier, which is why using fluorocarbon line is important, as it is abrasion resistant and super sensitive, meaning I'm able to feel light bites with the correct line and rod. Selecting a rod to fish a jig on depends on the angler's preferences, but when chasing big bass, you'll need a stout rod to drive that hook




*A topwater frog yielded this big bass.
(Photo: Josh Dahlke)*

home and get them out of the heavy cover they live in. A common choice is a 7-foot 6-inch flipping stick. To change things up even more with a jig, an angler can swap out the type of trailer they use.

Much like the jig, the topwater frog is a lure that some anglers tie on and throw in some situations, such as when fishing around lily pads or matted vegetation. But if you are looking to chase down big bass, tie that frog on and fish it for long periods of time and you'll catch some big bass. Areas that this technique will shine are around boat docks, over hanging trees and grass lines.

A frog with a nice flat belly will skip easily under boat docks and overhanging trees and is also very snag resistant, so it will get hung up less on the cover and hook up on more bass. Don't just think of your frog as a lure to use over cover. Use it in open water, as this bait walks the dog easily out of the package and will call big bass up to the surface. Being that the cover you are throwing your frog into is quite dense, using a braided line is a must and gets you a rock solid hook set and won't break when wrapped around heavy cover.

As highlighted above, cover where you'll find big bass hiding is very dense and tough. Do not be afraid to make multiple casts to the same piece of cover and from different angles as many times as it takes. These fish have gotten big for a reason; they are opportunistic feeders and aren't fooled lightly, so it will take patience and commitment from you the angler.

As you start to gear up and plan your fishing trips for 2015, count on having some days where big bass will be all that is on your mind. 

Glenn has been fishing tournaments for over ten years, spreading his passion and knowledge of the sport via articles and videos. For more information check out glennwalkerfishing.com or on Facebook at facebook.com/glennwalkerfishing.

DAVE DUWE

A Commitment To Teach *Building fishing rods*

One man's hobby has turned into a passion to teach children. Al Hutchison has been teaching kids the art of rod building for the past nine years. He has literally taught hundreds of children—and some of their parents—how to construct their own custom-made fishing rod.

As a young boy, Al lived on Rice Lake in Whitewater, Wisconsin, where his love of fishing evolved. His summers were spent fishing by the Rice Lake dam, day and night. He had no money for bait and tackle and found everything he needed to fish from items left behind by those who had fished there previously. Even growing up, Al was resourceful in making his own equipment.

Al's pursuit for the betterment of children started 25 years ago when he joined the Whitewater Optimist Club. The mission of the Optimists is to provide hope and positive vision. Optimists work to bring out the best in kids. Al's love for fishing and children founded his rod building project. With the complex

electronic age enticing today's youth, his goal is to teach a skill that will last a lifetime.

On the first day of the two-day class, participants begin making the fishing rod from several pieces. It is completed on the second day. When visiting with Al, he showed me a hundred different ways you can make a fishing rod. Imagination is your only limitation.

The hardest part of building a rod is the wrapping of the eyes. The epoxy that coats the rod takes six to eight hours to cure with constant turning accomplished via an electric motor. This is what makes it a two-day process.

Many of Al's rod blanks come from the Wisconsin-based company St. Croix. The first step in building a rod is to glue the handle on the blank. Next is the reel seat, followed by the forearm. To help line up the eyes of the pole, Al glues the tip top on the blank. This helps to line the eyes from the tip top to the rod seat.

The final step is the epoxy on the entire rod. Only one rod in the nine years



Al building a custom fishing rod.

he has been conducting these classes had to be reworked by Al so the child would have a rod to take home.

It hasn't always been easy for Al to build rods. He explained that the best way to learn is by making mistakes, of which he has made many over the years. There is an organization that he joined that took a lot of mistakes out of the equation: the Custom Rod Builders Guild. The Custom Rod Builders Guild

offers a great deal of information on the nuances of building a better custom fishing pole.

No child ever has to worry about the cost of building a fishing pole. If their family cannot afford a kit, Al covers the cost out of his own pocket or from the donations he occasionally receives. The old saying "Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish and he eats

continued on page 14

 The advertisement features a large background image of a field with tall, dry grass. In the foreground, a white and brown speckled dog stands alert. To the left, a colorful pheasant is shown in profile. In the upper left corner, there is a logo of a green bird with a red beak and a red body. The text "WERN VALLEY" is prominently displayed in large, white, serif capital letters, with "Hunting Preserve & Sporting Clays" in a smaller font below it. At the bottom, a dark grey banner contains white text providing contact information.

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For more information on how to Join the Hunt, please visit www.wernvalley.com or give us a call at (262) 968-2400.

DAN MOERICKE

An 'Up Nort' Report

A north woods wish list for 2015

Happy New Year! Another year of time spent in the woods and on the water is behind us, and, in the depths of winter, anticipation runs high as to what opportunities 2015 might bring. Although it's a little late for a letter to Santa, I've put together the following wish list:

For the north woods deer herd, I wish for a mild winter and an early spring. After the 2013/2014 winter, the last thing we needed was to kick this one off with 1 - 2 feet of snow in early November. While I was encouraged to see a few fawns in the woods this past fall, it would sure be nice to see more next fall.

For my hunting/fishing buddies, I put in a wish for good health. This past hunting season saw me in rut camp with one friend who had gone through a hip replacement, another who had a heart attack/surgery, and a third who was set to go under the knife to scrub out a blockage in his carotid artery. Man, I know we're all getting older, but this is getting ridiculous! I'd sure like to think we've all got a few good decades left to knock around in the great outdoors.

For the people using the Nicolet National Forest as their personal garbage dump, may they be afflicted with a painful and recurring rash on their nether regions. It never ceases to amaze me to find a T.V., refrigerator, load of shingles/insulation, etc. dumped off on a logging road. That's what recycling and landfills are for.

To the north woods businesses relying on tourism for their livelihood, my hope is for plenty of seasonally appropriate weather and a good snowmobile/fishing/hunting/biking crowd to support them. When Mother Nature doesn't cooperate, making a living in the small communities up here can be tough.

For my wife, please God, provide her



The author is looking forward to once again seeing the sparkling waters of Clark Lake and the Sylvania wilderness area in 2015.

with another boatload of patience and understanding that I may again spend lots of time fishing and hunting.

For all of the people who back into the boat landing with the covers still on their boats while others are ready and waiting to launch/load theirs, I pray for a double dose of common courtesy and common sense. The boat landing is like an airport runway ... only when you are actually *ready* to take off or land should you be there. Everything else should be done in the parking lot.

For the DNR person or persons who dreamed up a trial panfish limit of "25 with no more than five fish over 7 inches," well, I hope they get the opportunity to clean a 50 gallon drum of smelt to gain an appreciation for cleaning 6-inch fish. If you want the bag limit to be five fish, then say so. Don't create the illusion of a 25 fish bag limit by allowing anglers

to keep 20 fish under 7 inches. *Nobody* does that.

For the Sylvania wilderness area, my wish is to have the road to Clark Lake finished and ready to go for the 2015 season. I'm not sure why it took the entire summer of 2014 to blacktop a 2 mile stretch of road, but I sure missed seeing the crystal clear waters of Clark Lake last year.

And finally, for the miserable punks who stole my son-in-law's tree stand and another friend's trail cam, I hope they sleep well, awakened only by the occasional case of explosive diarrhea. Just sayin'. *W*

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

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BDAP

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DUWE, from page 13

for a lifetime" is appropriate when considering Al's classes. Al encourages the parents to join their children in the class. Some of his previous students now help him teach.

Almost every weekend throughout the winter is spent teaching a class. The classes are run through different civic organizations such as the Optimists, Lions Clubs and area Boy Scouts. The age of the students is 11 and up. After the first Saturday in May (opening day of fishing), Al puts the rod building classes

on hold and picks them up again after the fishing season.

What good is a fishing rod if it's not being used? If you'd like to donate to Al's cause or are interested in learning more about the classes, please contact him via email at hutch@idcnet.com. *W*

Dave Duwe is owner of Dave Duwe's Guide Service and guides the lakes of southeastern Wisconsin, specializing in Delevan Lake and Lake Geneva. Find him at fishlakegeneva.com or fishdelavanlake.com.

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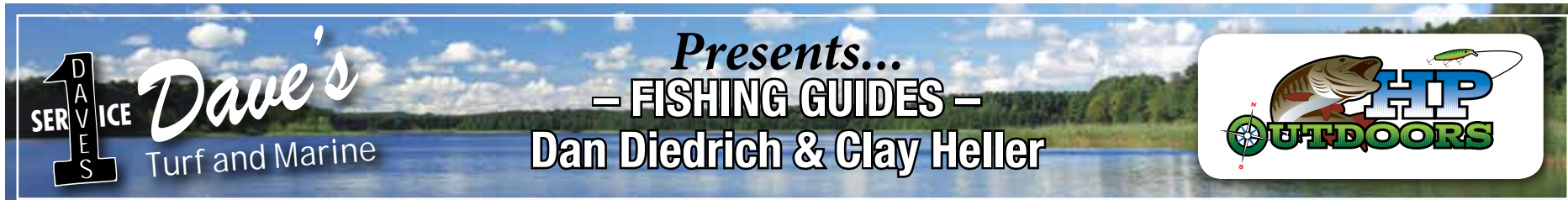
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CLAY HELLER

Wisconsin Veterans Fishing Camp

A chance to give back

This past October I was able to take part in one of the coolest things that I have done in my musky fishing career. I was invited to be one of the guides at the first annual Wisconsin Veterans Fishing Camp outing in Phillips, Wisconsin. As a musky guide, I was honored to be chosen to be part of this outing. As a United States Marine Corps veteran, it meant even more.

John Carlson from Ross's Sports Shop and Joel Walczak of Dave's Legacy Guide Service did an amazing job of organizing this event. We had five fishing guides and nine veterans from across the state. Camp was based out of Hidden Cove Resort on Long Lake of the Phillips Chain of Lakes. The activities kicked off Monday morning with registration followed by a camp lunch and

culminated Wednesday afternoon with a wonderfully prepared fish fry.

The daylight hours were spent on the water while the evenings found us around the campfire enjoying lots of great food. John and I devoted the days chasing muskies with the veterans in our boats. We boated 14 muskies including some first muskies along with a couple personal bests. The rest of the guides did some multi species angling with the veterans catching walleye, crappies and northern pike. *WO*

Clay Heller operates HP-Outdoors. He guides on the waters of southeastern Wisconsin from April through November. Contact Clay through his website at hp-outdoors.com or at 920.256.0648.

Jeff Strebel with his first musky.



Kreg White with his first musky



Wisconsin veterans fish camp group photo



Larry Hartung with his new personal best musky



John Strebel with his personal best musky and largest veteran caught musky at camp

Weekend Freedom Machines



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PRINCECRAFT

DICK ELLIS

Pike's Peek

A look at Wisconsin's big northern waters

With the power auger quiet again and the tip-ups set over the hardwater of Moose Lake, Scott Heitman, his son, Ty Kinzinger, and I settled in to shoot the angler's bull and wait for our first pike strike. Less than a minute later the orange bulletin ripping with the winds said the game was on.

"Flag up! Ty, you've got a flag," Heitman's words sent Tyler running and white powder flying. In the distance, Ty's twirling finger pointed to the skies told us that the reel was turning and the fish was still taking line. Seconds later, a 20-inch northern lay iced. Tyler took his shiner back and returned the pike to the frigid Waukesha County water.

A north wind cut into us over the 81-acre lake, and wind chills dipped toward zero. After 10 inches of snow the night before, sunshine arriving with a new front offered at least some reprieve from the cold. What really warmed us, though, was consistent "flag-up" action from the start. Most of the fish were "hammer handles," although, knowing that Ty had caught and released a 39-inch pike on a recent trip kept hopes high.

Consistent action is great. But it is the big fish that brings the adrenalin. Guide Jim Tostrud of Kenosha shared some of his big pike waters statewide and how he went about finding them before concen-

trating on local waters of Geneva and Delavan in southern Wisconsin. Tostrud's biggest pike caught and released is a 48 1/2-inch Lake Geneva "gator" taken in 2004. In 2014, a 42-inch pike topped his list.

You can't target big pike, Tostrud said, without first knowing where they're at. Ice anglers in search of big fish should start by looking at the fishing regulations for lakes that have high size limits, lower bag limits and slot regulations.

"Lakes with a 32-inch minimum and one fish limit have the potential for producing big pike," Tostrud said. "Look at the regs for size, bags and slots."

"Wisconsin has great pike fishing from Superior country south, but on a lot of the lakes you'll just catch hammer handles or Jacks ... smaller fish. When Wisconsin lakes have slot limits or larger minimums, you know they are trying to manage for big pike. It's why Delavan is coming on in the south as a big pike lake, the same as Geneva. It's why we're seeing more big pike."

Tostrud's definition of "big pike" means fish 36 to 48 inches that require use of a 10-inch augured hole to land the fish. "We have thousands of lakes with pike," he said. "But we're talking gators. We had to chisel the hole on that 42-inch fish to get her out last winter."

Big pike waters are not restricted to



Tyler Kinzinger and Scott Heitman with a fat Moose Lake pike caught and released in the bitter cold of January on a shiner set near the bottom in eight feet of water.

lakes. Tostrud's favorite water included the Mississippi River from the Lacrosse area south to Genoa and the Black River north to Alma. He mentioned Goose Island river backwaters for a real chance to catch a 20-pound fish in three feet of water; French Island backwater bordered by the Mississippi River to the west and the Black to the east; Lake Onalaska; and the bay at Dresbach Dam on the Minnesota side of the Mississippi River, which, as boundary water, is fishable with a Wisconsin license.

Tostrud also targeted shipping channels on Lake Michigan at Sturgeon Bay, Madeline and a number of "sleeper lakes" near Woodruff, Big Green, Beulah and the Madison Chain. But just knowing the names and locations of the lakes isn't good enough. You also have to know the lakes, period.

"You have to know where those big fish winter," he said. "If you really want to target big fish, you have to spend time getting to know the fishery."

Often, knowing where the big fish are in winter meant Tostrud would be setting up on a weedbed with deep water close by. Prior to DNR restrictions to prevent the spread of VHS (Viral Hem-


orrhagic Septicemia) disease, Tostrud traveled to Michigan to purchase a season's worth of frozen dead smelt for use as bait. Dead smelt remain legal, but know your regulations before fishing.


"Now we often use a large roach: a broad-bodied shiner minnow. We also really like jigging for big pike with a spoon with a lot of flash dressed with the pieces of fathead or sucker for smell or a jigging rapala."

Tostrud also stressed that late season ice, meaning February and sometimes early March depending on season closure, is his favorite time to fish for trophy pike. That means paying special attention to safety concerns because of the potential for deteriorating ice.

In the dead of winter, we stood safely on Moose Lake ice when Heitman answered the last call of the day.

"Ty, help me get this one on the ice," he said. "It's a nice one." And, at 34 inches, it surely was. Not a Tostrud gator, but maybe in a few years....

Connect with Jim Tostrud's guide service at wildlifevisions.net or jim@wildlifevisions.net. 


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DICK HENSKE

Fishing Lake Of The Woods

Canadian destination has much to offer

We have fished and hunted the areas west of Thunder Bay for over 30 years. The lake area lies between the towns of Ignace and Dryden and is full of walleyes, which is what we target. Canada is a walleye factory where there are few fishermen. It is uninhabited and rugged with remote lakes. We enjoy seeing loons, eagles, moose, bear, deer and other wildlife.

If you have followed any of my Canadian articles lately, you know we have found great lakes to fish and resorts to stay at. Lakes like Barrel, Press, Indian, Vista, Basket, Sandbar, Kukukus, Empire, Selwyn and areas near Silver Dollar work for us. We usually fish three years at the most if we like the lake and then we scout to find "new" water.

This time we broke the mold and explored western Ontario to fish and hunt Lake of the Woods during the last week of October. We felt this new water

was too big to fish on our own, so we planned a trip using a native guide out of Nester Falls. The First Nation Guides is owned by Gerald Arch. He has two modern cabins on an island about a 15- to 20-minute boat ride from his landing where you can park your vehicle. The cabin had a flush compost toilet and solar electricity backed up by generators.

Lake of the Woods is huge: about 60 miles long and wide. Using a guide was a smart move. Gerald is familiar with every inch of the area's thousands of islands and knows where to hunt and fish.

Deer hunting was a bust. October was too warm and what bucks were moving did so at night. We gave it our best shot but ended up fishing most of the time. Gerald let us use a 17-foot, 40 hp Yamaha four-stroke. The boat had an upscale fish locator. He put us on spots where the fish were thick. The locator showed clouds of bait fish. We fished 23

to 30 feet with a jig and minnows and were constantly on fish. Walleyes ran from 14 to 21 inches. Northern ran 26 to 36 inches. The bonus fish were beautiful perch up to 14 inches (no worms)!

It was a fun trip! We saw a 45-inch bull moose up close and enjoyed a new area. You need a big motor and boat plus a topnotch locator with a GPS. You can bring your own rig or rent one. I recommend hiring Gerald for a half day or a whole day of guiding to find the fishing spots in the large body of water.

Nester Falls is 65 miles north of the border crossing at International Falls. It was a six and a half hour trip from northern Wisconsin.

The fishing is great all summer long. Musky fishing is the main draw for most fishermen. We had a few walleyes grabbed by muskies and saw a huge one trailing near the boat.

If you're interested in fishing big water, try Lake of the Woods. Gerald Arch will take you on an adventure for duck hunting, deer hunting, (go the first week



First Nation Guide Service put Wisconsin anglers on lots of fish.

of November) or guided or unguided fishing. Check the First Nation Guide-Ontario website at firstnationguides.com.

To summarize your hunting and fishing costs: deer and bear licenses are \$235 each; fishing is \$38 or \$58 depending if you want a two or four walleye limit for seven days; ducks and grouse are \$100+; wolf permit is \$235; moose permit is \$472. All residents and non-residents must have a \$10 outdoor card to apply for a license, which needs to be renewed every three years.

Our trip was not cheap but well worth the money. It will cost you \$1500 to duck hunt, deer hunt and fish. This includes lodging, guiding and a boat and

continued on page 30



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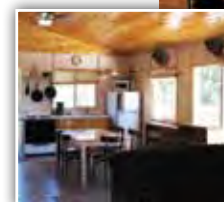
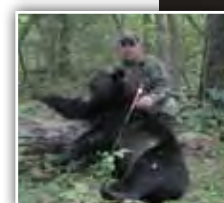
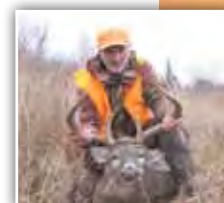
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Ice anglers are invited to visit Price County this winter to enter a hard water fishing rumble, contest, tournament, or jamboree. Whichever way you say it, these ice fishing events promise to provide **fun** times for participants along with the chance to catch big fish and win great prizes. Contact us for event dates and details: 800.269.4505. **Click on Price County.**

Wear warm clothes and bring your camera! Lake sturgeon spearing starts on the Lake Winnebago system on February 14 and may go until March 1. See these monster prehistoric fish up close at the registration stations: Waverly Beach, Menasha; Harrison Village/Town Hall, Harrison; Harbor Bar, Stockbridge; Quinney Quencher, Stockbridge. **Click on Calumet County.**

Don't pack those fishing rods away! In January and February, fishing continues from the shore at our Coal Dock Park. Even on the coldest days the fishermen are pulling sizeable brown trout and lake trout from the water. And there is a fish market nearby that can smoke your catch! **Click on Ozaukee County.**

Ice Fishing is a big time draw in Ferryville on the Mississippi River. Pan fish are a favorite. Use the **Ferryville** Boat Launch to access the best fishing on the river. March 7, 2015 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. is Bald Eagle & Raptor Day, co-sponsored by the Friends of Pool 9 and featuring live Eagle programs, Lois the owl who flies around the room. You will hear about eagles in the Upper Mississippi River Refuge and Choris Lowe will provide a Native American program all at Village Hall, Ferryville, WI. FREE. **Click on Crawford County**

Nearly 1,000 lakes in Washburn County make the area a top ice fishing destination, and the many lakefront cabins are a great way to enjoy your fishing experience. For the snowmobilers, enjoy our well-groomed trails with easy access to lodging, dining and gas. The trail system connects to the surrounding counties, creating a one-of-a-kind snowmobile experience. **Click on Washburn County.**

Don't suffer at home all winter long. Come visit us in Ferryville on the Mississippi River! Bald Eagle Day is March 7th. You can see amazing raptors up close. We have plenty of ice fishing opportunities too. Check in with us at the Grandview Motel and we'll steer you in the right direction. **Click on Crawford County.**

Discover the winter charm of Wisconsin's north woods in Ashland, Lake Superior's Hometown! **January 10** - Northwoods Harness Club Sleigh & Cutter Rally. **February: 7** - King of the Bay Snowmobile Drag Races. **14** - Book Across the Bay. We also offer 200 miles of scenic snowmobile trails, fabulous ice fishing, and excellent shopping, dining and lodging. **Click on Ashland County.**

Cross-country skiing, snow-tubing, downhill skiing, snowboarding, ice skating, ice fishing, snowmobiling, hockey. Warm and welcoming lodging, quaint shops, quiet dining and a wide variety of winter activities. You will love this not-so-far getaway. We have it all waiting for you. See about making Sparta your 2015 winter destination. **Click on Monroe County.**

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TOM CARPENTER

Badger Birds

Rufous-sided towhee




This handsome native sparrow hunts in the forest duff with a distinctive hop-forward, jump-back sequence that exposes the bare ground below, revealing insect prey to be nabbed. Towhees will also eat wild berries and seeds in season—blackberries, grapes, raspberries, mulberries, ragweed, weed seeds, small acorns and other small nuts—once that bounty of forage hits the ground.

Look for towhees this spring before the forest fully leafs out. It's a striking bird with black head and back, white belly, vibrant red eyes and distinctive, bright, rufous-colored sides. The wings and tail feature white patches that flash in flight. Females look similar, but brown replaces the black.

Listen for the towhee's namesake call: *to-whoee*. As with all native sparrows, the song is lovely: a wavering *drink-yer-teeeeeee* tune.

Create a brushpile in an odd corner of your yard instead of throwing the material or burning it. Towhees and other cover-loving birds will appreciate the hiding place.

Attract towhees by scattering shelled corn, crushed crackers, peanut meats, sunflower hearts or watermelon seeds on the ground next to a thicket.

Did you know that eastern (red-eyed) and western (spotted) towhees used to be considered two species? They are now considered one, the rufous-sided towhee, as they freely interbreed in the plains states. In Wisconsin we mostly see the eastern version of the towhee, though spotted towhees have been recorded. 

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

TOM LUBA

Make Your Own Bassing Punch Weights

A great off season project

Heavy mats of weed are a bass angler's biggest problem. And it doesn't help when aquatic grass of one sort or another is the main habitat we Wisconsin bass fishermen face. It's easier to fish the deeper weeds, since they thin out as sunlight penetration wanes. But the thick stuff is another story.

The fish are there; you just have to get at them. To go in after 'em you need a heavy weight that will "punch" through the weeds and take your bait, be it a plastic crawfish, tube or creature lure down to fish level.

They are not easy to find in stores, but the good news is you can make your own. And they will work! If you're a bass fisherman, this could be a rather worthwhile project for the off season.

Making The Weight

Start with a large paper clip. Get two ½-ounce Water Gremlin worm weights (cone shaped). If you want a smaller profile, consider a single 1-ounce worm



Bottom view of rigged craw. Hook point goes through the loop inside the craw body.

weight. Bend the paper clip straight, leaving the long bend in the clip as is. Twist the long bend into a loop. Use pliers to twist the short wire around the long wire.

Slide weight on the straight end of the wire to form the penetrating punch weight. First one goes narrow end up toward the loop, and the second one goes narrow end pointed down to form a missile shape. The missile shape is what makes the weight penetrate easily, avoiding weeds getting hooked on the weight. Bend the end of the clip up so weights won't fall off. Clip off the excess wire.

Put a dab of marine silicone on the wire bend at the bottom. Also apply one

to the area where the wire is twisted to form the loop. This will avoid weed growth catching on a rough edge where the wire is bent. Paint them to match bait color, or leave plain.

Rigging The Bait

To actually make the rig use a 4-inch or larger plastic craw. (I like craws for this type of fishing.) Insert the hook through the front end (head) of the craw, rather than the tail area, as you would do for a regular Texas (weedless) rig. Insert weight loop into the plastic at bottom of the bait. Run the hook through the craw like you normally would for a Texas rig, bringing the point back to bury in the plastic.

Use a hook big enough to go through the loop that is buried in the plastic. Both hook point and loop should be in the plastic now. Setting the hook on a bite will hook the fish, and the loop will still be on the bait since the hook is holding it on. Once the hook is through the loop inside the plastic bait, you can use pliers to compress the opening in the loop. It will help keep the weight attached to the hook.

By using punch weights you will be able to successfully fish the last horizon of bassin': the thick weed clumps. Just use heavy tackle like a 7-foot 6-inch Flippin' stick and a baitcaster armed with 50-pound braid line. Even if you are fishing rather shallow, don't be surprised if you hook into some seriously respectable fish this way. *W*

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

MIKE YURK

Bassology

Wacky worming on windy days

The wind can really foul things up. It can blow the boat around and sometimes is so strong that it's difficult to get my 55-pound thrust trolling motor to push against it. In times like these it's tough to fish any bait, but especially plastic worms.

When fishing sinking worms wacky style with the hook through the middle of the worm, the density of the plastic is heavy enough that the worm sinks on its own. That is all fine until the wind picks up and bows the line, lifting the worm. If the wind is strong enough, it can pull the worm almost up to surface. It's hard to catch fish that way. There is nothing we can do about the wind, so we need to learn how to use it to our advantage.

Using The Right Line

I have found two ways to deal with the wind while using wacky worms. First, it helps to have the right line. Although I am basically a monofilament man for most of my fishing, I find the best line for fishing plastics is ultra-thin but strong braided line. There are many of them on the market and they all work well. The one I use is Power Pro in 15-pound strength with a diameter

of 4-pound monofilament. It casts well on a spinning reel and is very sensitive, picking up the lightest strikes.

In the wind the diameter of the line can make it either more difficult or easier to fish plastic baits. The wind will pick up and blow around the thicker lines. Therefore, a normal 15-pound monofilament line is going to get blown all over by the wind. But if the line is as thick as 4-pound monofilament, it will cut through the wind better since the wind affects it considerably less.

Many fishermen cast a plastic bait and raise their rod to work the worm, positioning themselves to quickly set once they feel a strike. Again, because they are lifting the line off the water, it gets exposed to the wind, which batters it around.

As the worm is sinking, I drop the rod tip to keep the line close to the surface of the water. The wind will always balloon out a bit of the line but not nearly as bad as it would if my rod tip were higher. Most people lift the rod tip to move the worm, but if you are trying to keep the line closer to the surface, you can't do that. To move a wacky worm I either just move the rod tip to the side and then reel up the slack, keeping the line close to the



Learning to use the wind with sinking worms will help you catch fish like the one Mike Yurk is holding.

surface, or just slowly reel in the line with a stop-and-go technique.

The Wacky Worm Jig

Even with keeping the line close to the surface there will still be some bow in the line, but it's still a lot less than lifting your spinning rod up. Because of the bow in the line, it will be tough to feel a fish pick up a wacky worm. Carefully watch the line. Anytime the line seems to stop moving or if you see a slight jump in the line, it is time to set the hook.

continued on page 25

JERRY KIESOW

Fly Fishing In Wisconsin

First brookie

“Oh! I have a fish,” our oldest daughter shrieked excitedly.

It is always a great feeling when as a father I can witness an event that shows I have had a little influence in teaching our kids how to appreciate the outdoors. We have two girls, and I am proud that both of them know a variety of ways to enjoy God's outdoor world.

One of those ways is fishing. I am pleased to say that relatively recently fly fishing has become a part of that enjoyment. A few years ago I introduced the girls to the snake-guided rod, heavy line with attached light leaders, and frauds made of fur and feathers. They embraced it. The oldest, Chris, even assists my wife and me with our beginner fly fishing classes at Riveredge Nature Center in Newburg.

Two years ago Chris tried wading and loved it. She started by wading a semi-quiet sandy-bottomed section of the Peshtigo River. She advanced to portions of the bigger Milwaukee and Sheboygan rivers where gravel and rocks presented a different wading experience.

Last spring I introduced Chris to smaller creeks in Sheboygan County where we went looking for steelheads. (We did not find any.) This past summer it was time to show her what the alder-banked, freestone trout streams of Marinette County are like.

We started at 18 Foot Falls on the North Branch of the Pike River. One must negotiate a narrow, poison ivy-

lined trail to get to the falls, but once there the wading is relatively easy—sections of sand interrupted with rocks distributed by glaciers, forming small riffles and rapids. I have had several good days with brook trout there, and Chris dearly wanted to catch a brook trout. She had seen my photos and heard my descriptions and really wanted to see, feel and hold the real thing.

As we fished downstream, Chris refreshed her skills in short roll casting, realizing that without that knowledge, alders are easier to catch than trout. She discovered that fishing downstream can alert fish to your presence if you wade carelessly, sending clouds of silt and rubble ahead of you. We fished a couple of hundred yards with nothing to reward us but a chub or two, but she was learning and enjoying the lessons.

We turned and fished back. Fishing upstream, Chris learned a couple more things: wading upstream is different—noisier. You must move slower and more deliberately. When you do, you can often get very close to fish because most of them will be facing into the current. We saw a few trout but never could coax one to hit a fly.

From 18 Foot we went to Carney Rapids—same river, but several miles above. This is different water. Yes, there are alder, but there are also places where only tall grass grows right up to the bank. There are some places that open up for good casting and some that do not. The



Chris admires her first brook trout caught on a fly before releasing it.

bottom has fewer rocks. Here, it is more of an open, deeper, flatter stream as opposed to the wooded portion we had just fished.

I gave Chris a fly with which I have had success in this portion of river, the First Crappie fly. (See the November/December 2013 issue of OWO for a complete description of the fly and how to tie it.)

We followed “the path” upstream. Eventually, I found where I wanted to enter the water. Once in, I told Chris not to fish right away. This water was slower than where we had been. It would take time for things to calm down. “Sit on that rock awhile,” I told her. “Enjoy the world around us.”

“Can we talk?” she asked with a smile. “Quietly,” I replied, smiling back.

After a time, Chris began drifting that Crappie Fly downstream into pockets around and behind a large rock and into the undercut banks inside a tunnel of alder. That's when the opening words of this treatise were spoken.

Shortly thereafter, she lifted her first brook trout carefully out of the water, admired it and slipped it back.

“That's one,” she said.

“And I was here to see it,” said I, silently to myself, smiling proudly.

See you in the river.

Keep a good thought! *OWO*

Jerry enjoys all aspects of the outdoors. To keep track of what he is doing, like his 2015 fly tying/fishing schedule, see his photos, and read some of his other writings, including his book, “Tales of The Peshtigo Putzer,” check out his website: jerrykiesowoc.com.

YURK, from page 24

Using a wacky worm jig in windy weather will also help combat the wind, especially if you are fishing deeper water. The jig is small and round and looks much like a split shot sinker on a short shank hook. For a long time I resisted using any kind of jig with wacky worms because I thought it would hinder the side to side movement as it drops in the water. This action is part of the secret of wacky worms.

Instead I found these jigs light enough to help sink wacky worms in both windy conditions and/or when fishing deeper water without affecting the action of the bait. To rig a wacky worm with a jig either insert the hook through the middle of the worm or slip it under the O-ring

placed in the middle of the jig with an O-ring tool.

I keep two sizes of wacky worm jigs in my tackle box: 1/16- and 1/8-ounce. They worked in all conditions I encountered this last season. Wacky worm jigs can be found in sport shops and fishing catalogs.

Windy days—of which we seem to have a lot throughout the fishing season—can make for tough fishing while using plastic baits. Learning how to fish the wind will help you catch more bass.

OWO

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.



JOHN LUTHENS

The Open Waters Of Winter

Warm anticipation

Snow blanketed my truck in uneven piles. It looked like a restless sleeper with head and feet sticking out of the covers and the majority of the bedding mounded in the middle. It started like it looked: sluggish and sleepy.

At least the minnows were lively, sloshing happily in the bucket with only skim ice on top as I drove to the Lake Michigan harbor town of Port Washington, Wisconsin. The bait was about to get a rude awakening.

Clouds broke heavy over the light-house, pushing in fast with the howling wind, promising more snow. My slip bobber rolled in the open water currents of the power plant discharge. It was bitter cold, but warm anticipation rose inside me.

There are days when the wintery walls of the Port Washington Harbor draw a crowd. Word spreads like wildfire when the brown trout are hitting. But today, no more than a handful of eyes peeked out of parka hoods above the icy rim of open water.

The steady crack of casting line broke the frigid air, my slip bobber keeping an icy death grip on the line. I froze my minnow solid to an ice-covered boulder. It peeled off the hook and shone silver, waves splashing up and layering my lost bait in more ice. I suppose this is how fossils are formed in Antarctica.

Diver ducks upended beneath the floating ice sheets, surfacing as billed heads. The ducks preened themselves in the snow, seemingly warm and content as they went about the business of breakfast. Snow squalls flew as I moved along the wall to warm my toes, hopping up and down and flapping my arms like one of the birds.

I was cold and fishless when I ran into my fishing guide. Jeff was bundled up and camouflaged as an Eskimo. If we hadn't talked on the phone the night before and planned to meet, we may have walked past each other without a hint of recognition.

Jeff works at the Port Washington power plant. His office window faces the harbor, where he watches the ebbs and flows of the harbor ice. He knows when the plant is slated to run, discharging its warm water and calling in forage fish for the hungry browns. He is as invaluable as a bait shop guide owner when it comes to the winter brown trout.



Jeff Guysky rides out the snow on the harbor walls.



Lake Michigan brown trout caught from the open winter waters in Port Washington.

"I was nailing them with Shad Raps in a snowstorm last week," Jeff said. "It was coming down a lot harder than this. I even landed a bonus northern pike that went 35 inches. It's quieted down in the last few days, but you never know. Let's give it another hour."

"Brown trout go best this time of year baked on the grill in lemon juice and garlic," I said. "My hands stay nice and warm over a grill."

Jeff simply tucked deeper into his hood and tied on another spinner.

Another hour passed. There was not much small talk after that. Just the groaning of the shifting ice and the splash of baits hitting the water. I think even the hands of time moved slower in the weather, but after all, the open-water world of winter is best taken in slowly, with all the sights and sounds that one hour at a time brings with it. *OW*

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.

SUZETTE CURTIS

Recipes by Suzette

Tried and true venison recipes

Winter in Wisconsin is a wonderfully beautiful season and always brings me a feeling of comfort. Even my cooking choices lean more toward what we think of as "comfort foods" in the winter. Here are two of my favorites. Enjoy!

Meatloaf

I love meatloaf, and traditionally it is perfect served with mashed potatoes. This recipe, given to me years ago, has a bit of a twist.

- 2 slices bread, cut into cubes
- ½ tsp. dried mint leaves
- 4 cups chicken broth
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- 2 pounds ground venison
- ¾ tsp. ground cumin
- 3 eggs
- ¼ tsp. salt and pepper
- 1 large onion, diced
- Dash of hot sauce
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup white rice, uncooked
- 1 T. dried parsley
- Juice of one lemon

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Soak bread in ½ cup of the broth until all liquid is absorbed. In large bowl, mix bread, ground venison, one egg, onion, garlic, parsley, mint, oregano, salt, pepper and hot sauce. (It's best to do this with your hands to really get everything mixed well). Shape into loaf and place in a shallow baking pan, leaving about an inch of space along each side.

Bake loaf for one hour, remove from oven and pour drippings into a saucepan on the stove. Set meatloaf aside and cover with foil to keep warm.

Add remaining chicken broth (3 ½ cups) to sauce pan; bring to boil and add rice. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook, covered, about 20 minutes until rice is cooked. About halfway through, remove ¼ cup of rice broth.

While rice is cooking, whisk two eggs in a small bowl until light and fluffy; add juice of lemon. Gradually add the ¼ cup of rice broth while continually whisking. Once rice has finished cooking, remove from heat and stir in egg mixture. Cover pan and let rice sit 5 to 10 minutes until liquid has absorbed but leaving rice quite moist.

Return meatloaf to oven for these 5 to 10 minutes to warm. Serve meatloaf on platter surrounded by rice mixture.

Chili

We love chili almost any time of year at our house but especially in the winter. The unexpected ingredient is cocoa.

- 1 T. olive oil
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 ½ pounds ground venison
- ¼ tsp. unsweetened baking cocoa
- 1 large onion, chopped
- ¼ tsp. cinnamon
- 6 banana peppers, seeded and chopped
- 1 tsp. fennel seed
- 3 T. chili powder
- 2 - 28 oz. cans crushed tomatoes
- 2 tsp. ground cumin
- 2 - 15 oz. cans pinto beans

In Dutch oven, heat oil over medium high heat. Add onions and peppers and sauté 2 - 3 minutes. Add ground venison and cook, breaking up meat until just browned. Add spices and stir to blend. Add tomatoes and cans of undrained beans to chili; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 1 to 2 hours to really let the flavors blend.

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

STUART WILKERSON

The Never Ending Project

The Midwest Industries' AR15 project is as changeable as the author's ever-evolving firearm needs

No firearm platform is as versatile as the AR15 or so easily and economically adaptable to meet the needs and preferences of its owner. If those needs evolve, so too can your AR15.

I enjoy working on gun projects, but once they're completed, the guns are rarely shot. This time I decided that rather than search for another rusty rifle to restore, my next project would be an ongoing one that I could actually shoot.

Nothing can scratch a gun project itch like an AR15 platform with parts and accessories available from Midwest Industries and other vendors. The possibilities are infinite. The great thing about working with Midwest Industries, however, is that their experts can provide you with good advice and assistance.

When I began my AR15 project, I thought I needed a target barrel and trigger to go along with the Midwest Industries billet lower and upper receiver. I figured since I was starting with one of the

best receivers in the industry, it only followed that the barrel and trigger should be among the best. After asking me how I was going to use the rifle, Midwest Industries owner Troy Storch steered me down a different, and more economical, path.

"You don't need a \$200 trigger or an expensive barrel to punch paper targets at 100 yards or shoot coyotes at 200," he told me. I suspect he is right. I have yet to go coyote hunting, but my rifle easily shoots less than 2-inch groups at 100 yards with mediocre ammunition. Troy also assured me that my old 3 – 9 power scope is all I need for my present purposes.

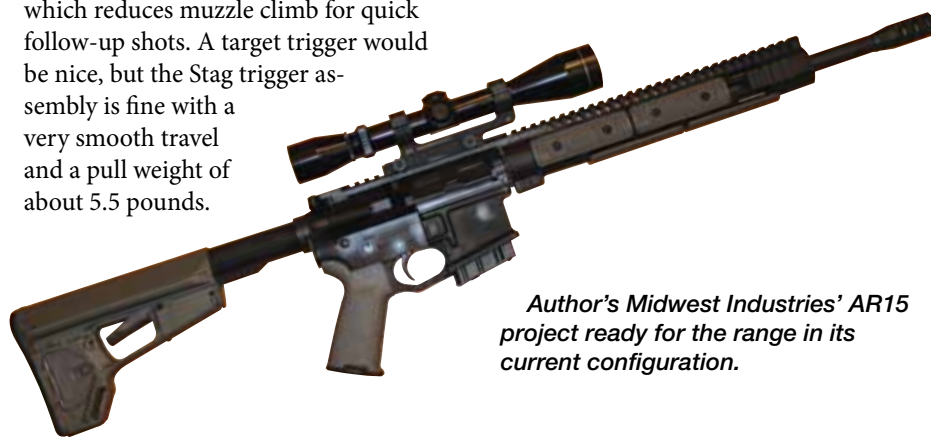
Some of the best predictors of AR15 accuracy are a free-floated barrel, stable stock, comfortable pistol grip, solid scope mount, and a decent trigger, all assembled on to a quality receiver. My Midwest Industries billet lower and upper receivers fit together like a hand in a glove. The

company's low profile gas block made it possible to mount their lightweight Gen 2 SS-Series One Piece Free Float aluminum handguards. These handguards weigh less than 9 ounces, and, unlike typical plastic handguards, they don't move. Anything attached to the handguard's MIL-STD 1913 top rail isn't going anywhere.

The barrel of my AR15 is topped off with a Midwest Industries muzzle brake, which reduces muzzle climb for quick follow-up shots. A target trigger would be nice, but the Stag trigger assembly is fine with a very smooth travel and a pull weight of about 5.5 pounds.

What wasn't so fine with the rifle as originally assembled was the awful standard AR15 pistol grip, which comfortably fits no one on Planet Earth. The collapsible stock was typical of most M4-type AR15s, which is to say adequate but kind of loosey-goosey and not the sort of thing you want for accuracy. Function is

continued on page 29



Author's Midwest Industries' AR15 project ready for the range in its current configuration.



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STUART WILKERSON

Airsoft Road Trip

Discover a new world of shooting sports

You don't need a club membership, costly firearm, expensive ammunition, or gas to travel to the range to enjoy the shooting sports. In fact, you, your family and friends may have even more fun for a lot less money in your basement, backyard or a "tactical environment" with an airsoft replica. What's an airsoft replica? Generally speaking, it's an air gun that fires inexpensive, non-lethal plastic BBs. Most are extremely accurate replicas of actual firearms and operate by a spring- or electrically-driven piston or compressed gas.

If you're not familiar with airsoft replicas and want to learn more, you're in luck. Waukesha is the home of Airsoft Headquarters/TacticalToyStoreUSA.com, the largest airsoft replica and accessory vendor in the Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin area. Their retail "Superstore" is located at 300 Travis Lane #19 in Waukesha. Their Internet sales site can be accessed at TacticalToyStoreUSA.com.

Airsoft Headquarters/TacticalToyStoreUSA.com originally began as an Internet vendor in 2011 that expanded to add 350 square feet of retail showroom. In October of 2011, owners/partners Scott Boyd and Jeremy Mattson held a one-day "Open to the Public" clearance sale from what was essentially a corner of the warehouse. That sale proved to be wildly successful.

"I thought we might be on to something," Scott said. And he was. Within nine months he and Jeremy ex-

panded their business from 2000 to 5000 total square feet and launched a retail Superstore that is now open seven days a week.

The first thing that struck me when I visited the Airsoft Headquarters Superstore with my daughter was that most of the clientele were family members. The staff was enthusiastic about airsoft replicas and the sport of airsoft and truly took an interest in their customers. I came into the store knowing virtually nothing about airsoft replicas, but with help from Scott, Jeremy and staff, my daughter and I left with a very good understanding of airsoft sports.

We discovered that good quality airsoft replicas are reliable and durable, a great way to teach firearm safety and marksmanship, accurate up to at least 60 feet, safe, versatile, and legal to shoot just about anywhere. By "anywhere," I mean your basement or backyard, or, better yet, in a tactical environment with friends and/or family.

Airsoft Headquarters/TacticalToyStoreUSA.com is partnered with the Airsoft Arena, located in the Mitchell Street Mall, 1020 W. Historic Mitchell Street in Milwaukee. The Airsoft Arena is a virtual underground city featuring 40,000 feet of tactical game environments, i.e., urban combat and rescue situations and scenarios. Among the many structures built to enhance authen-

ticity are apartments, restaurants, warehouses, and an open market.

Airsoft teams are usually comprised of families or friends, often equipped with authentic-looking gear, including uniforms, airsoft replicas and optics, all of which are available at TacticalToyStoreUSA.com. Games include close quarter "combat" (CQB), military simulations (MilSlim) and historical battle reenactments not unlike those performed by Civil War reenactors. Games are structured and closely monitored by referees to ensure fair play and safety.

If you want to experience airsoft gaming at its best, Airsoft Headquarters will be offering "Road Trip"

continued on page 29

SAFETY REMINDER

Never remove, disguise, or cover the orange muzzle tip!
Always transport Airsoft Replicas in a case!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Midwest Airsoft Expo - Feb 22nd
Clocktower Resort - Rockford, IL

CONTACT US FOR DETAILS!



LOAD UP THE CAR — DRIVER PLAYS FOR FREE! WE BUY YOUR GAS! SEE ARTICLE ABOVE FOR DETAILS.

ROBB MANNING

Everyday Carry

SilencerCo Sparrow 22

I wrote two articles last year about suppressors: one about the benefits of a suppressor, the other one about how simple it is to purchase one if you go through the right dealer. I am pleased to announce that nine and a half months later my NFA stamp has come in and I am now the happy owner of a suppressor from SilencerCo, the Sparrow .22 SS (Stainless Steel).

It was a long wait, but it went faster than I thought it would, up until the last month. At that point I knew it would be coming at any time, and that made it more difficult. Finally, my cell rang, and the caller I.D. read "The Shooter's Shop." I knew why they were calling, and I was as giddy as a school girl when I answered. I nearly set Highway 45 on fire getting there. I signed the paperwork, they gave me my Sparrow, and I was on my way.

It didn't take long and I was fitting it on every threaded .22 I own. The Sparrow is made for any .22 LR pistol and rifle, as well as .17 HMR, .22 Mag, .22 WMR, .22 Hornet, and 5.7x28 FN. The Stainless Steel version is also rated for full auto firearms.

One of the problems with .22 suppressors is how dirty they get. One reason is that .22 ammo is notoriously dirty. Shoot a few dozen rounds through a .22 and it's filthy. With a suppressor, that goes into your can. Another reason is that .22 ammo's non-copper jacketed bullets will spew molten lead into your can, which greatly reduces effectiveness. Plus, a dirty suppressor is very hard to take apart, and the parts can even become fused together. The Sparrow uses a patented Multi-Part Containment system that prevents the parts from becoming fused, and is thus easy to disassemble for cleaning.

Most companies that make suppressors also sell adaptors to attach on your firearm to ensure proper fit. One great example is my Smith & Wesson M&P25-22. Screw off the compensator and it's already properly threaded for a suppressor. The problem is the shoulder is too long, which can cause damage to the suppressor. That can cost a lot of money to fix, with NFA transfers and all. A simple adaptor, usually around \$30, fixes that, and you can buy an adaptor for all of your firearms so that changes are fast and it saves the threading on your suppressor. Another option for .22 rifles that have a mil-spec compensator threaded on the end is a thread spacer, which only costs \$15 on the SilencerCo website.

SilencerCo is not only fast, but they have some of the most helpful customer service in the firearms industry. They know that they're dealing with a market that is relatively new to civilians and not many people understand suppressors.

The Sparrow weighs 6 1/2 ounces and is 5.08 inches long with a diameter of 1.062. Sound reduction is an amazing 41 decibels. It has a lifetime warranty and an MSRP of \$499, plus the \$200 check to BATFE. It's about what you would pay for a cheap AR Rifle, but cheaper than hearing aids for gun-damaged ears. If you're introducing your kids or grandkids into shooting or if you have a gun-shy wife you want to take shooting more, this right here is the ticket.


The Sparrow is so quiet, with subsonic ammo, all that can be heard is the action of the pistol. I could even hear the .22 bullet hit the wood target 50 yards away. Without the suppressor that would have been drowned out by the sound of the shot.

22 Sparrow on a Sig Mosquito



The decibel level of .22 LR ammo ranges from 120 to 140 for high velocity loads. Using the SPLnFFT Sound Meter app on my iPhone (which has been tested as being very accurate), CCI Suppressor Sub-Sonic .22 fired with the Sparrow registered at 77.9 decibels. Standard velocity .22 registered at 81. To give that perspective, my children at play registers at 64, clearing my throat is 79, and a light cough is 87.

There is one word of warning about suppressors: addictive. As soon as you shoot one, you will want one. And once you have one, you will want more.

I'd like to thank the professional, helpful and prompt staff at The Shooters Shop. They make sure you're happy, and they expedite the process as much as possible. If you want more information about suppressors, or are ready to buy, check them out. 

The Shooters Shop
2465 South 84th St
West Allis, WI 53227
414.327.7044 • 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.


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a great concept, but that doesn't mean form can't follow. Consequently, when I decided to replace the pistol grip and stock, it was going to be with something that not only worked but also looked good.

Midwest Industries retail store sales manager Peter Bratz knew exactly what I needed when I approached him with my request for a new stock and pistol grip. He suggested the Magpul ACS-L stock and Magpul MOE + pistol grip in foliage green, color matched to Midwest's Gen2 SS handguard panels. The Magpul stock features a storage compartment, a friction lock to further increase rigidity, and, when placed on the buffer tube, is darn near as solid as an A2-style fixed stock. The pistol grip and Midwest Industries handguard panels are textured to keep them from becoming slippery in wet and damp weather. My scope is clamped in a Midwest Industries aluminum mount. The mount is a solid piece of craftsmanship that provides not only proper eye relief but also a large recoil lug and one-piece clamp bar for rigidity and repeat

zeroes in the event that it is removed.

Not only does my Midwest Industries AR15 project function smoothly and reliably, it really looks good. The foliage green furniture in combination with the black anodized metal makes for one attractive color combination. Granted, in my eyes the scope still looks out of place, but that is the other advantage of this rifle. The options, accessories and configurations are virtually endless. If you are looking for a dependable, nice looking and adaptable AR15 project, you can't go wrong by starting with Midwest Industries.


For more information about Midwest Industries, visit their retail store at W292 S4498 Hillside Road in Waukesha, call them at 262.896.6780 or visit their website at midwestindustriesinc.com. 

Stuart Wilkerson is an award-winning Wisconsin journalist, firearms expert and student of the Second Amendment. Contact him by email at cheapshots@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.

WILKERSON, from page 28

specials on weekends in January and February. The trip begins at the Waukesha Superstore where you can check out the merchandise and your group's driver will be given a free pass to the Airsoft Arena. At the arena you can choose what tactical situation game your team wants to play. Veteran players will be on hand to introduce your team to the sport if you haven't played before. They can provide practical advice on equipment, accessories, safety and tactics.

When you're done, drive back to the Airsoft Headquarters and for every \$100 you spend, Scott and Jeremy will give you a \$10 gas card for your return trip home. You will be amazed how much fun you can have for not a lot of money. A good quality M4 airsoft replica runs about \$100 at the store and 5,000 BBs cost a mere \$16. Safety equipment, such as goggles and face protectors, are also reasonably priced.

For little cost, you can have a lot of fun with an airsoft replica from Airsoft Headquarters/ TacticalToyStoreUSA.com. Please keep in mind that airsoft replicas closely resemble their real firearm counterparts. For safety's sake, don't remove the orange muzzle cap and always keep your airsoft replica in a case when not in use! Please bring a copy of the Airsoft Headquarters/TacticalToyStoreUSA.com advertisement or mention *On Wisconsin Outdoors* to take advantage of this promotion. 

Stuart Wilkerson is an award-winning Wisconsin journalist, firearms expert and student of the Second Amendment. Contact him by email at cheapshots@onwisconsinoutdoors.com

ROBB MANNING

Product 6-Pack

Great gear for the woods, fields, and waterways



DANNER: PRONGHORN 800

When I find something I like, I usually keep it until it falls apart. My hunting boots are a great example of this. I bought my last pair of hunting boots when I moved back to Wisconsin from sunny Florida in 2001. They were good boots but probably should have been retired a few years ago. When I was offered an opportunity to try the new fourth generation Pronghorn from Danner, I jumped at it. The model tested is the 8-inch Mossy Oak Break-Up Infinity 800G. The boot is lighter (64 ounces) and less bulky, which you notice right out of the box. Danner took all the popular features of the previous three generations, added some new ones, and incorporated them all into one boot. The upper is made of waterproof CamoHide leather and 1000 Denier nylon. The toe and heel cap are full grain leather. Hardware is heavy duty and includes eyelet-hooks that grab the boot strings and hold them securely so they won't come out, even if loosely wrapped. It has a breathable, waterproof Gore-Tex lining and 800 grams of Thinsulate for warmth. Danner uses the Ortholite footbed, which is extremely comfortable, as is the entire boot in general. The outsole is Danner's Terra Force platform for excellent traction. I found it worked well even through slippery mud. Fortunately, the Wisconsin north woods is getting hit early with winter cold and snow, so I was able to give these boots a good test earlier than I anticipated. Sitting stationary for five hours in temperatures around 3 degrees with a foot of snow on the ground, my feet stayed warm. When I was up moving about, they didn't overheat. Size seemed to be accurate. This is an outstanding boot. (MSRP \$200). OWO tested and approved.

danner.com

TENZING: TC 1500 "THE CHOICE" DAY PACK

I've used this pack this entire bow season and love it. One of my favorite features is the foldout bow and gun carrying boot—great for keeping both hands free. It also works with a crossbow. It has

a foldout rain cover to keep the whole thing dry and is also H2O compatible with 2-liter hydration units. It has 12 total compartments/pockets including six that are specialized zippered pockets. The external zippers all have an enlarged rubberized grip, which is great for gloved hands. It's very comfortable to carry, with padded hip panels, padded shoulder straps with chest strap, and a comfort stretch waist-belt for taking some of the weight off your shoulders and distributing it to your hips. It features a breathable mesh back pad for those warm early season hunts. The lightweight frame is made of one internal aluminum bracket, which is rigid enough to do its job yet doesn't add noticeable weight. Six compression straps around the pack serve to cinch other gear to the pack, such as extra coat layers. As the model name implies, its 1500 cubic inches spread throughout one main compartment and one face compartment. It also has two mesh side compartments. Smaller pockets located inside the face compartment allow you to stash smaller items that you need quick access to, so they don't get lost in the main compartment. A TRICO outer panel is quiet and rugged. Makes for an excellent stand pack. Three pounds, four ounces. (MSRP \$189). OWO tested and recommended.

tenzingoutdoors.com

ESKIMO: (HC40) HIGH COMPRESSION 40CC PROPANE AUGER

A lot of ice fishermen are learning the benefits of a propane-powered auger; they are cleaner burning, require less maintenance, weigh less, and are a lot less messy than dealing with gasoline. Eskimo, out of Cumberland, Wisconsin, has developed an engine that's designed from the ground up as a propane-powered engine. The engine is a high compression four-cycle, and it will eat through ice like a Milwaukee Tool drill bit through a balsa wood Cub Scout car. It's a clean burning engine and requires very little maintenance—no gummed up carbure-



tors. The quick release bottle holder accepts one-pound propane bottles. It uses an auto-prime system, and there's no pressing the priming bulb, just turn on to start. Two models are available: an eight-inch auger diameter and a ten-inch. Both use Quantum auger blades. Comes with a two-year limited warranty. (MSRP \$449.99).

geteskimo.com

KNIGHT & HALE: EZ-HOWLER PLUS COYOTE CALL

Wisconsin has a really bad predator problem, predominantly coyotes, and it is affecting the whitetail herd, especially if you hunt up north where the exploding bear population is compounding the problem. While we can't do much in regard to bear, we can and should try to do what we can about the 'yotes. The most popular method is using an electronic call, but those can be pricey. The time tested and proven method is mouth calls. This one is advertised as being louder than an amplifier but in a much easier size to carry and is great as a locator. It allows you to check if there are any coyotes in the area before you set up your electronic calls, or you can use this call to call them in for a shot. Locate and call in. (MSRP \$15.99).

knightandhale.com



LINDY: TUNGSTEN TOAD

Tungsten is becoming really hot in ice fishing lures. Originally put into use due to environmental and health concerns with lead, a lot of people are seeing other benefits besides those two factors. It's denser and heavier than lead, so for the same weight the jig head can be much smaller and streamlined, causing it to drop faster. It's also better at breaking through slush and vegetation. More sensitive than lead, you'll get a better feel for what's going on with the jig. The Tungsten Toad is the same design as the original Lindy Toad, featuring a weight forward design, angled line-tie, and ten-degree offset hook. It allows the bait to hang horizontally with the hook point exposed



for faster hook-ups. Great for multi-species, it comes in three sizes and ten color patterns. (MSRP \$2.79).

lindyfishingtackle.com

EXPEDITION OUTDOORS: SLIM GRUB

Another tungsten jig, this one is for a more subtle approach, gliding through the water to entice shy fish to bite. It resembles water larvae, a favorite food. It comes in two hook sizes and four color patterns: Perch, Bluegill, Sunfish, and Crayfish. It's made of 97.8 percent pure Tungsten, so it's environmentally friendly and safe to handle. The increased density plows through weeds and ice slush. It comes with ultra-sharp hooks that can be tipped with plastic or live bait. Ideal for multi-species. Hand painted in Minnesota. (MSRP \$2.99).

expeditionoutdoors.com



If you have recommendations for good gear that works for you, tell us about it at ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.


HENSKE, from page 20

motor. That's not too bad when you compare it to a trip out west. Cut costs and bring your own big boat rig, but use Gerald to put you on fish.

If you're going to Canada, do your homework on the Internet. Remember passports and \$25 to register rifles at the border.

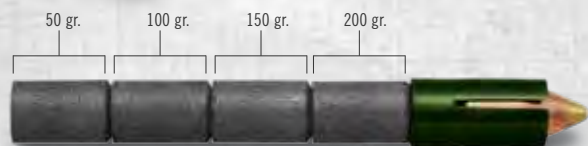
Next June our group is going to Selwyn Lake on the English River. This is a great fishing lake and there is only one resort on the lake, which is a requirement for our group on our one-week get-away. I'll write the story up next summer, but the resort is booked for the season. We have been there scouting it out and the walleyes won't quit! Till next time

P.S. Use a harness in your tree stand!

P.S.S. If you rest, you rust! 

Dick Henske is a retired Wisconsin elementary school principal who hunts and fishes Wisconsin, the western states and Canada. He winters in St. George Island, Florida, where he pursues many species of ocean fish.

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WIN92306MX4 Duck Creek

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