

May/June 2015

Vol. 8, Issue 5

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# On Wisconsin Outdoors

with the

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TOM CARPENTER

# May Turkeys

## Discover afternoon gobblers

I still remember the spring day back in the very first year Wisconsin turkey hunters could be in the woods until 5:00 PM when I discovered the afternoon could be a good time to kill a turkey. Up until that point, I had bought into conventional wisdom that turkeys were only callable and killable in the morning. What I didn't factor into that equation was that turkeys are out there being turkeys no matter what the clock may say.

Rather than being out hunting around 3:00 PM on a beautiful May afternoon, I was driving the back roads around my hunting area. From a ridge road I spotted several black figures in a hayfield corner. I stopped the truck and brought binoculars up to my eyes. Two hens fed in the foot-tall alfalfa with a red-headed gobbler dutifully following along, occasionally puffing into a half-hearted half-strut.

It was a farm I had permission on, *and I could be sitting there right now*, I thought, *shooting that bird*. I watched the turkeys feed and couldn't think of a good approach to them. Finally, the birds headed back into the oak timber.

The next afternoon I was stationed in that same field corner at 2:30 PM. The birds showed an hour later but on the field's other side! The important thing was the lesson learned: if you have the time, even if it is the afternoon, why not be out there hunting?

Afternoon hunting is not just killing time, especially in May. Those later hours of the afternoon, from 3:00 to 5:00 or so, are most productive, sometimes even more so than the evening. Here's why.

*Turkeys are hungry.* A May day is mighty long. Think about how early the sun comes up. Birds go out on the feed again by late afternoon. Nesting hens are especially likely to leave their eggs and eat now, their one feeding session for the day.

*Gobblers are still interested.* With hens leading the way for an afternoon feed, gobblers are not far behind. The gals may not show much interest in breeding now, and that gives you a decent chance to call away a curious gobbler who has been jilted and ignored most of the day.

*Shadows get long.* By late afternoon, many woods' edges can produce the shade necessary for feeding turkeys to feel safe. Note that most afternoon turkeys stick close to cover, so they can duck back into the timber or brush if something appears amiss.

*Gobblers feed, too.* Contrary to some belief, gobblers do feed during the breeding season and afternoon is when they do it. The birds are too busy in the morning trying to get some hen action. But by late afternoon gobblers settle in to fill their crops in a greening hayfield, plowed or un-

*continued on page 4*



The author with a Green County gobbler shot on a May afternoon.

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NEAL HERRMAN

# Late Season Tom

## Biggest gobblers often vulnerable

It's mid to late May. You've been out for a season or two chasing long beards and tagged one or two or maybe they've given you the slip. It's fishing season and there are summer projects to do. But wait! Some of the best turkey hunting is upon us. Those gobblers that were tight with hens early on are so lonely that some of the oldest and smartest come running to their demise.

The best birds I've ever killed have been in the E and F seasons. My best bird was in the E season a few years back. As spring progressed, the 10 - 12 hens that had been hanging around him had nests to sit on and had no time for his endless gobbling and strutting.

As season E grew closer, I saw my chance to put a tag on this old gobbler. While watching him with a couple hens one evening, I noticed he roosted a few hundred yards from them along a field edge. To come up with a plan, I drove by the evening prior and found the tree he was roosting in using my binoculars. The next morning I went in extra early right under his tree and made plenty of noise on the ground, causing him to fly out of the tree. The few hens that were left roosted a little ways away and I wasn't concerned about them flying out of their tree. He flew off to the north about 200 yards, and I sat down right under his tree and waited.

As light grew brighter, I could see his hens sitting in their tree about 150 yards away. They eventually flew down, not saying much the whole time. At this point the gobbler hadn't said a word, which I expected. I got out my Hooks assassin slate call and did some



Late season double with my wife, Colleen, using a full body mount decoy.

lost yelping and clucking and purring, and within minutes that gobbler was standing about 100 yards away looking through the brush at the hens feeding in the field. With so much cover, it took just a few seductive clucks and purrs from a new hen (me) and he fed right into my lap for an easy 25-yard shot. He weighed in at 26.2 pounds with a 12-inch beard and 1 1/2-inch spurs.


Luck, you say? Just seven short days later during season F, the final season, I found myself under a pile of brush watching a single lonely gobbler hanging off a big elm limb overlooking a cattle pasture in Dunn County. Again, I got in good and early. Figuring this bird was probably alone I decided to put out a full body mount hen decoy to my left about 25 yards.

As the morning progressed he gobbled a fair amount. Looking up a ridge until I felt it was about fly down time, I again pulled out the Hooks assassin slate call, did some soft yelps with a few clucks mixed in, and he about gave

himself whiplash turning around on that limb to see where the calling came from. He then started gobbling almost uncontrollably. As he pitched down, I raised my gun and he landed just 20 yards in front of me. He started to strut, making his way to my decoy. With the pull of the trigger I had downed my second gobbler in a week, breaking the 26-pound mark. This one with a 10 1/2-inch beard and 1 3/8-inch spurs.

Before the sun had fully risen and with some toms still gobbling in the roost in the distance, I'm pretty sure my feet didn't touch the ground while carrying him out to my truck.

Some tips for late season: unless it's a pasture/field bird, leave the decoys at home. Foliage is prime and my favorite tactic is to get in the hardwoods on a ridge or a big flat area. Sit using a slate or softer toned call. Do some softer yelping, scratching in the leaves and keep your eyes peeled. Go to the spot you've seen that gobbler at all spring and get there an hour before you usually see him. Sit and call quietly every 20 minutes and wait for the show.

The next spring season is ten long agonizing months away. Go get one more hunt in. Who knows? It may end up being your best one yet! 

Neal Herrman has been turkey hunting for 16 years. He has harvested birds in seven states and has two grand slams. Neal won calling titles in Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and placed top 15 in the nation. He is on the Hooks Custom Calls pro staff and designed their strikers. Neal is an active member of the NWTf.

CARPENTER, from page 3

plowed grain field or open pasture.

There are two good ways to hunt afternoon gobblers. If you are a patient sort of person and have some birds patterned, set up at a likely spot and wait them out. Decoys may not always be a good bet for this kind of afternoon hunting. If you *know* the spot is one turkeys like, don't alter the environment with a fake.


If you like to move and hunt, there's nothing wrong with going on the move and glassing for birds, then putting on a sneak to get into position to call one.

Calling afternoon turkeys can work, but keep your approach subtle. Birds are mostly quiet at this time of day, and anything but the softest clucks, purrs and yelps will arouse suspicion.

Since that fateful May day so long ago I've killed a good handful of afternoon gobblers. Every one was a challenge either through long waiting, careful maneuvering, smart calling, or a combination of all three.

The most recent bird came on a damp late May afternoon that probably had pushed two gobblers out of the woods to feed ahead of an approaching storm. I snuck my way up a creek bottom ditch to get within 100 yards of the birds, but that was as close as I was getting.

With light calling, they started to feed my way, probably figuring there just might be some worthwhile hen action down in those trees. Standing against a wash-out bank, with just my head and shoulders above the edge but behind a screen of grass, I shot the lead bird at 30 paces after 10 minutes of light cajoling on the call.

A variety of other things could have been occupying my time, but turkey country seemed, and turned out to be, a mighty fine place to spend a May afternoon. 

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

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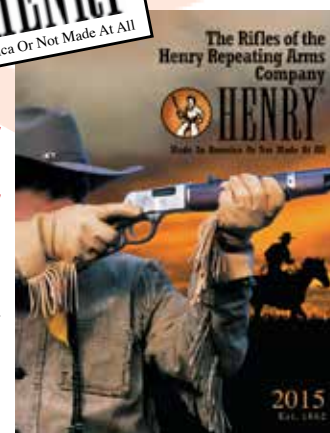
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JIM SERVI

# Close Encounters

## Jake bait trips trigger on tentative gobblers

Every May a familiar scene plays out across Wisconsin. A ready and more than willing gobbler fans out repeatedly, pursuing unresponsive hens across a field or open area. Despite the fact that the hens seem to have little or no interest, many turkey hunters have tried to lure these love-struck Toms away with little luck. To turn the table, two turkey hunters from Merrill, Wisconsin, took another approach and have had great success luring these weary gobblers into close quarters.

Many sportsmen watch hunting and fishing videos and think, "There's no way that would work in my neck of the woods." Others, like Ryan Kufahl and Hugh Rankin, decide to give it a try. They were watching turkey hunting videos on YouTube and saw one that caught their attention, Man Versus Turkeys. The hunters in the videos were nearly being run over in exciting, fast-paced hunts. They figured they'd give it a try during the upcoming turkey season.

First, they found a decoy with a

screw-in stake and replaced it with a jake fan. Others simply trim gobbler feathers on the decoy so that it resembles a young bird with longer feathers protruding from the center surrounded by shorter, less developed feathers on the rest of the fan. Next, they had to find a willing gobbler to test out their new strategy.

Driving through their favorite areas, Ryan and Hugh finally found a nice gobbler strutting to an unresponsive hen in an open field. After parking well out of view, they moved to the closest point in the woods and entered the field. Crawling toward the gobbler, they gave a few calls while remaining hidden behind their decoy. The result was instantaneous. The aggressive tom quickly covered the distance to chase off the competition. Within minutes they were shocked to have their first turkey on the ground using their new tactic.

Pumped up by the quick, in-your-face action, the hunters wanted to be sure it wasn't a fluke. They proved it wasn't

when they repeated the same success less than an hour later with Ryan's dad. This time there was only one difference. Instead of taking a few minutes, it only took a minute once they hit the field. With that, they knew they were on to something.

That first hunt was nearly four years ago, and since that time they've perfected their "assault the fence" tactic. Here are some of their tips.

First and foremost is safety. They never attempt this strategy unless they're positive that no one else is hunting the area. Second, they've found that having someone off to the side calling helps distract the approaching gobbler. They also tried this tactic on feeding birds with mixed results. Once in a while they were able to get close enough for a shot, but most times the flock drifted off. It's best to stick with strutting toms to play off their aggressive tendencies. Lastly, and this is the best part, be prepared for close encounters. Ryan said that they had to throw in the towel once when a

Ryan Kufahl with Sami Blaubach's turkey after a successful stalk.



group of jakes teamed up and wanted to destroy their decoy.

Last year they took Sami Blaubach turkey hunting for the first time and had a bird respond within minutes that was "so close that the gobbler was almost on top of the decoy." His uncle's hunt was yet another close encounter. They had three gobblers within five yards and he got to take his pick.

Not surprisingly, Ryan is addicted now and took part in 13 turkey kills last year on what he calls, "my favorite type

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LEE GATZKE

## NextBuk Outdoors

### Pre-season deer stand prep

Usually by the time May rolls around the countryside is in full bloom and the trees and brush have sprouted new leaf growth. Things are “greening up.” Fishing is on our minds, crops are being planted and humans become more active outdoors. After spending the last few weeks prior to green up scouting the woods and swamps, getting torn up by brush and stuck in marsh muck, I’m ready to switch over to some warm weather activities.

The ice rotted off my favorite panfish lakes in late March leaving me the entire month of April to scout for deer. Based on sign found prior to green up, I chose a number of tree stand and ground blind locations that required some work to have them ready for this coming deer season. I like to prepare my stand sites early to avoid having to go into my spots shortly before the bow season opener, alerting deer to my presence. Setting up a stand site makes a lot of noise and leaves human scent all over the place in areas the deer have come to consider safe. This intrusion does not go unnoticed by the resident deer, and they become wise to human interference making them harder to hunt. For this reason preparing stand locations in April/early May allows me to be ready to hunt a spot long before the

season opens giving the spot plenty of time to settle down, allowing the resident deer to return to normal patterns.

Set up or preparing a stand location in early springtime involves putting the tree stand or ground blind where I want it. Then, if I’m on private ground, I cut shooting lanes and make sure I can cover the trails I’m hunting. On public land I rely on natural openings for shooting lanes since trimming branches is not permitted. After that, I remove the tree stand or blind and abandon the spot until I come back to hunt it in the fall. At that point I’m ready to do a quick and quiet set up on a spot I’m confident will produce deer sightings.

In early May, just after the leaves have formed, I’ll return to see if I am still able to have clear shooting from each stand location. On private land any additional branches that need to be trimmed to clear shooting lanes are removed and I’m finished prepping the site. Coming back now also familiarizes me with my access to and from the stand now that the woods and swamps have greened up and everything looks different.


The beauty of setting up stand locations prior to green up is that it looks the same as it will this coming fall after the

Prior to green up in early spring stand sites are prepped for the coming season, months later.




leaves have fallen. Under these conditions sign is much more visible and you can more easily determine the best places to set up your stand/blind. Walking the deer trails past your stand location will reveal natural shooting lanes or show what branches need trimming (on private ground) to create clear shooting. Repeating this step once the leaves have recently sprouted ensures that you will have clear shooting in early bow season as well. Once this step is complete the stand site is ready and you can leave it alone until it is time to hunt it. If you are hunting on public land, it is mandatory that you remove your stand or blind set up at the end of the day. Similarly, removing your stand/blind on private ground at the end of the day is also a good idea, so prepping trees and ground blind spots ahead of time aids in being more successful in setting up quickly and quietly.

Once I’ve done my final tweaking of a

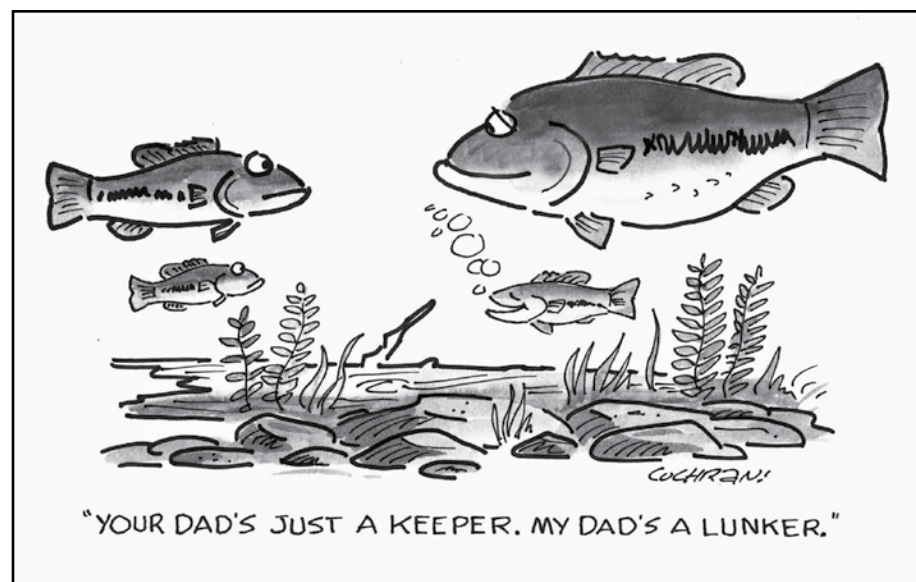
stand site just after the landscape greens up in May, I do not return until it’s time to hunt in the fall. It’s a strategy that has paid off many times by keeping the area free of human scent and interference, resulting in deer feeling secure there, which makes them more likely to hang around. This means I’ll have a better opportunity to see deer there during hunting season—the ultimate goal. 

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.

SERVI from page 6

of hunting. It’s just such a rush!” This spring when you come across that strutting gobbler that’s glued to his hens, pull out your decoy and start your stalk. Just be ready so you don’t get run over. 

Jim Servi is an outdoor writer, educator, consultant, and a Local Field Director for the US Sportsmen’s Alliance. He is currently serving in the US Army Reserves and is a veteran of Afghanistan and Iraq. This lifestyle gives him maximum time to hunt, fish, and trap everything that is fair game in Wisconsin. Jim lives in the middle of the woods on the family farm outside Wausau with his wife and two boys. Contact Jim at [Jimservi10@gmail.com](mailto:Jimservi10@gmail.com).



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DICK ELLIS

# On Wisconsin Outdoors

## Chequamegon Bay's bigger smallies

Prevailing high winds had kissed Chequamegon Bay's shallows to a chocolate brown and blew good fishing into tomorrow. Stable weather, clear water and incredible early summer fishing for the monster smallmouth bass of this 84,000-acre Wisconsin paradise had literally gone with the winds, at least for a few hours.

Despite poor water visibility on this July, 2014 morning, from the high spotting platform on his Ranger 19 foot Cayman, guide Roger LaPenter visually locates bass for client Frank Ciccirelli. He push-poles quietly forward and points out an abstract shadow ahead. Armed with a flyrod, retiree Ciccirelli works from the bow and manipulates the heavy line to gently settle another offering just above the bass waiting below among the shallow weeds and wood.

Ciccirelli will take the long ride from DuBuque to Ashland annually because he knows LaPenter is a special guide who knows Chequamegon like the back of his hand. Every day during the first three weeks of the May-June spawn, LaPenter's clients have taken and released a half dozen smallies over 5 pounds, including a 7-pound, 21 1/2-inch fish. Even now, in the storm-churned brown water, LaPenter is confident he will put Ciccirelli on a very big smallmouth.

LaPenter is also the primary reason smallmouth bass anglers from throughout Wisconsin and worldwide now come to Ashland. With virtually no protective regulations prior to the early 1990s, Chequamegon Bay's trophy-class smallmouth could be taken from the spawning beds and kept. Three anglers in one boat familiar with the shallow spawning territories, primarily Kakagon Sloughs, could visually locate beds and legally take 15 prize smallmouth, instinctively protecting those nests.

Under LaPenter's lobbying, smallie regulations were changed to catch and release until the third week in June, with a one-fish, 22-inch minimum after. LaPenter points to the regulations as the absolute reason that fish here average 18 inches, with smallmouth at 20 inches

or better not uncommon.

"It's definitely because of the regulations," he said. "The average is 18 inches, but we're seeing bigger fish. There is no question that people come here from across the country and even other parts of the world because of the regulations. They know they're going to find a quality fishing experience, they know they're going to catch big fish and that is what they're here for."

"Take the regulations off the smallmouth and this population could be literally wiped out in two seasons," he said. "Wisconsin is the best smallmouth bass state in the country."



*In addition to great fishing on Chequamegon Bay and inland, Ashland offers unsurpassed, complete family vacation planning and tourism sights like the stunning, giant murals.*

The shadow rises, and Ciccirelli's rod bends under the weight. Experienced in this game, he patiently allows the fish to dictate when it's ready to surrender. Finally, an appreciative Ciccirelli sits on the bow with an "average" 18-inch fish, poses for two photos, and gently releases the smallie back to its home.

"The smallmouth is just a great fish," he says with a smile. "Even the small ones fight. But I like catching big smallmouth with my two grandkids, and I like to fly-fish."


"Frank casts a nice line," LaPenter says. "Under usual

conditions we could anchor and get 30 to 40 fish without moving. We've had clear water and an incredible spring of fishing. Early season is the best for big fish. For three

weeks we won't see a fish under 17 inches, and we will have 30 to 100 fish days."

Although it is big smallmouth that draws anglers from throughout the country to Chequamegon Bay, LaPenter was excited when two smaller bass representing a younger year class of fish hit the fly despite the dirty water. Successful spawning and new recruitment of fish is as vital to the fishery as the rules that promote big bass. But in the end, it is what those smaller fish have the potential to grow into that has most anglers turning to Chequamegon Bay and Ashland, Wisconsin.

"I've caught and released my two largest smallmouth that were 23 1/2 inches and 8 1/2 pounds, and I've seen them bigger," LaPenter said. "If you let them go, they're going to grow, and we're the prime example of that. There isn't another place like it. If people want to catch a trophy fish, this is where you come. This is a pretty special place."

Contact Anglers All and Captain Roger LaPenter at 1.715.682.5754, anglersallwisconsin.com or lapenter@charter.net to inquire about guide trips or current fishing conditions on Chequamegon Bay. For information on lodging, entertainment, dining, and family tourism sites like the giant murals of Ashland, connect with the Ashland Chamber of Commerce at visitashland.com, ashchamb@centurytel.net, or 800.284.9484. 



*With Guide Roger LaPenter, who worked diligently to have protective regulations placed on Chequamegon Bay's smallmouth bass, Frank Ciccirelli of Dubuque visits Ashland annually to catch and release these very special smallies.*

SUBMITTED BY ASHLAND AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## Ashland

### More than just a great place to fish!

Although the Chequamegon Bay area is certainly known for its world-class smallmouth bass fishing, there is plenty to experience and enjoy even if your particular passion in life isn't hauling in a trophy fish.

Ashland is home to a full-service, 121-slip marina, conveniently located in the center of town. While the anglers in your party head out on the world's largest freshwater lake in search of musky, trout,

salmon or walleye, you can explore our unique shops, galleries and specialty stores where you'll find everything from local delicacies and gourmet delights, to outdoor gear, vintage clothing and fine art. Ashland also offers a wide variety of mouthwatering mealtime choices.

Grab a quick bite to eat before venturing out to

*continued on page 9*



DAVE DUWE

# Hook, Line & Sinker

## The technique of choice

Fishing is not always about the most expensive gear and tackle. The majority of the time keeping it simple produces the most fish. Over the two decades that I have been guiding, I have chased fishing trends, trying to catch more and bigger fish. Out of all the products and methods I have fished, I always come back to the tried and true method: the split shot rig.

The split shot rig is as simple as it gets. A round split shot and a hook. The key is using a round split shot because it doesn't get hung up on the weeds as frequently as the removable ones with the wings. The depth you are fishing dictates the size. The shallower the water the smaller shot you can use. For less than 10 feet I use a 3/0 and go up from there as I fish deeper. All round split shots aren't created equal. Water Gremlin seems to be the best as they stay in place better. Cheaper versions have a tendency to hook up in the vegetation and slide down the line.

The split shot rig can be used with live bait or plastic baits. Nightcrawlers and fat head minnows are my preferred bait choice. If I use leeches, I use a swivel because leeches have a tendency to twist the

line. For plastic baits I like to use a small 4-inch lizard or a 4-inch finesse worm.

Hook size can vary with the type of fish you are after: smaller for panfish and larger for more sizable game fish. I usually use a size 12 Kahle hook. It is a rather small hook, but I find it is effective with a nightcrawler on the hook. The split shot pulls through the weeds almost completely weedless. When walleye fishing, I use a #4 hook painted in chartreuse or red, usually tipped with an extra large fat head minnow hooked through the lips. For plastic baits I like a 1/0 light wire, wide gap worm hook. The leader length for the split shot to the hook is usually 18 to 24 inches. It is basically a shallow water version of the Carolina Rig.

Though the split shot rig goes through vegetation easily, it has a tendency of getting snagged in rock or wood. If the bottom structure isn't conducive, I will employ a different fishing technique.

The split shot rig isn't exclusive to freshwater. Most of the captains in Florida I fish with employ the rig in their arsenal of techniques. The saltwater approach is slightly different from the freshwater approach. In saltwater most

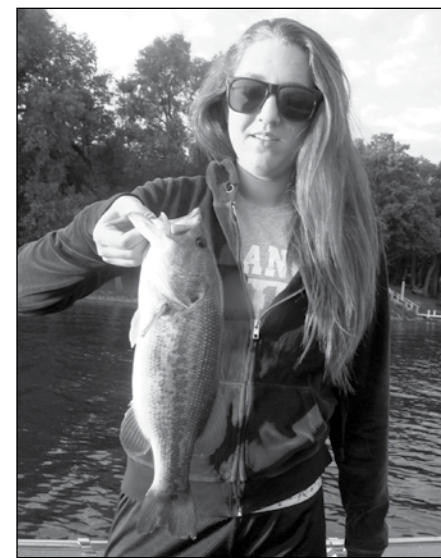


Author with a nice split shot rig largemouth.

captains use a Berkley Fireline for the main line with a fluorocarbon leader. The length of the leader is 2 - 3 feet in length with a 2/0 circle hook, tipped with a shrimp or piece of cut bait.

For freshwater fishing using a split shot rig, my line choice is either 6- or 8-pound test Trilene fished on a medium to medium light rod, teamed with a Plueger spinning reel.

The rig can be backrolled, casted or fished vertical. My personal choice has been to cast them to the weedline and slowly retrieve them back to the boat. You want to have several pauses on the retrieve. Over 70% of the strikes occur



Client of Dave Duwe's Guide Service with a fine largemouth.

with the initial fall. I don't let the bait sit too long on the bottom. You need to make a bunch of casts for the most success.

The split shot rig is my go-to rig and the choice of many charter captains throughout the country. It's both effective and inexpensive. There are plenty of options out there, but the tried and true hook, line and sinker is still the best.

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](http://fishlakegeneva.com) or [fishdelavanlake.com](http://fishdelavanlake.com) or contact him at 262.728.8063.

### ASHLAND, from page 8

sightsee or savor a candlelit dinner on the pristine shores of Chequamegon Bay. Gather local organic treats and artisan breads and cheeses for a picnic in the northwoods. Check out one of Ashland's locally-owned eateries for home-cooked specialties or sip an award-winning craft-brewed beer with your meal. And with charming B&Bs, rustic cottages, fine hotels and family-owned motels, you'll find just the right lodging establishment in Ashland to fit your family's needs.

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Since painting their first historic Ashland mural in 1998 as part of the state's sesquicentennial celebration, northern

Wisconsin artists Kelly Meredith and Sue Prentice Martinsen have conceived and created more than a dozen vibrant murals throughout this storied city nestled on the shores of Lake Superior. Thanks to the efforts of those two talented artists and the support of the entire community, in 2005 Ashland achieved the distinction of "Historic Mural Capital of Wisconsin," making the city a year-round public art destination.

Self-guided Mural Walk Tour brochures are available at the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 746, 1716 W. Lake Shore Drive, Ashland, WI 54806; or by calling 1-800-284-9484. Check out [www.visitashland.com](http://www.visitashland.com) for additional mural information and history.

Submitted by Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce  
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JOHN LUTHENS

## To Stay In The Field

*Lyme disease—a personal account*

I met Mary Beth Ascher on a sandy hillside in Oconto County to talk of a troubling aspect of nature that grows no bigger than a poppy seed. A clear lake stretched below, and it was one of those calm mornings where the water reflected the clouds and pines in a perfect mirror image.

While the physical size of the problem was tiny, the biological and medical implications were substantial. The problem was not unlike the view; it was hard to tell where the water ended and the horizon began.

Mary Beth is a mother and grandmother, still very active and still a kid at heart. She flashed a beaming smile when she talked about her family, but her eyes were serious and her voice was even. In some variation or another, hers was a story that everyone versed in the outdoor world of Wisconsin has likely heard before.

"My daughter never saw the deer tick that bit her," Ascher began. "There was no tell-tale rash. She started having a sore shoulder one week and a sore hip the next. We initially chalked it up to our active outdoor lifestyle and the inevitable signs of simply getting older."

Soon after, Ascher's daughter began to have mild panic attacks and show signs of anxiety and depression. After undergoing a host of tests, she was finally diagnosed with Lyme disease.

"It may have been a blessing in disguise that she was diagnosed first," said Ascher. "When my grandson began having trouble focusing in school and seemed tired all the time, we already knew some of the signs."

Ascher's grandson was also diagnosed with what some medical professionals call chronic Lyme disease and what others, such as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), call Post-treatment Lyme Disease Syndrome.

Spread through the bite of an infected deer tick, Lyme disease attacks the immune system. Properly diagnosed early, it can be fully treated with antibiotics. Left untreated, it may develop into a confusing array of ailments.

*continued on page 17*

NICK TURKAL, MD

## Summer Safety

### *Bound for the woods? Take care.*

Living where we do, there's a strong urge to get out and make the most of our precious warmer months. As an avid hunter, I get it. Too often, though, I see people who skip the basic steps to staying healthy, safe and comfortable. Here are some tips to keep in mind as you venture outdoors, especially if you're heading for the woods.

### Beware The Bite

Insect bites are typically harmless but sometimes infect their victims with diseases like Lyme disease (ticks) or West Nile virus (mosquitoes). Chiggers don't carry disease, but their bites itch like mad. And any bite can become infected from scratching.

Keep bugs away by wearing protective clothing and using an insect repellent containing DEET. Other ingredients known to be effective on mosquitoes include Picardie, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol and IR3535. Read the labels for special precautions, especially concerning children. If using a product deemed safe for children, apply it to your own hands first and then apply to the child (avoiding his or her hands).

If you are also using sunscreen, apply that first and then the repellent. I'd stay away from combination sunscreen-insect repellent products, as sunscreen needs to be re-applied more often than repellent.

In addition, clothing and camping gear can be treated with an FDA-approved pesticide called permethrin. If you decide to use permethrin or buy items pre-treated with it, be sure to follow all directions carefully. Never put permethrin directly on skin or pets!

West Nile-carrying mosquitoes are known to bite between dusk and dawn, so try to stay indoors during those hours. If you must go out, be sure to use repellent or protective clothing.

Along with chemical insect repellents, you can take behavioral measures. Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants and hats. To prevent tick bites in wooded or brushy areas, tuck in your shirt and tuck your pants into your socks. If your sleeping area is exposed to the outdoors, use a bed net.

But what if you *do* get bitten?

For mosquito bites, do not scratch! Good old hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion will help reduce itching. Some people like to numb the area first with ice.

Ticks are another matter, because you have to find and remove the tick from your body. This means hitting the shower or bathtub as soon as you come in from a woody area. Visually inspect *everywhere* on your body (use a mirror if necessary). If you find a tick, you can safely remove it with tweezers. This is not difficult, but technique matters, so I recommend going to [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) and searching "tick removal." Don't forget to check your kids, pets, clothes and equipment. If a fever or rash develops in the weeks after a tick bite, see your health care provider.

### Manage Seasonal Allergies

Allergy sufferers know that itchy, watery eyes, sneezing and other nasal and sinus symptoms are annoying and uncomfortable. Even worse, these symptoms can affect your vision and, if they interfere with sleep, make you less alert. Combine all that with water sports or an ATV and you've got safety risks.

In Wisconsin, tree pollen counts are high in the spring; grass in the summer; and mold, ragweed and weeds in the fall.

You can take steps to make allergy season more livable:



*An avid outdoorsman, Aurora Healthcare President and CEO Nick Turkal offers a few tips to help you stay in the field through the summer months. Turkal is shown pheasant hunting with his English Setter, Emma.*

- When possible, limit outdoor activity when the pollens that cause you the most problems are at their peak.
- Take an over-the-counter antihistamine to alleviate symptoms. Nasal decongestants, nasal sprays and eye drops can also provide relief. Be aware of potential drowsiness, however, and plan accordingly in terms of who is driving or operating any equipment.
- Ask your health care provider if you would benefit from a nasal steroid spray. It may relieve symptoms yet has minimal side effects.
- If your symptoms are severe, consider seeing an allergist to pinpoint your triggers and provide more specialized treatment options.
- When you do come back inside, keep doors and windows closed to give yourself a break from troublesome pollens and molds.

### Get Enough Sleep

Not even we rugged, outdoor types are immune from the dangers of sleep deprivation. Did you know people who average less than seven hours of sleep a night are found to be three times more likely to get sick than those who averaged at least eight hours? Not getting enough sleep may also be linked to increased levels of cortisol, a hormone that increases the risk of stroke or heart attack. Lack of sleep also takes a toll on your immune system. And none of that is conducive to getting maximum fun from our oh-so-brief Wisconsin spring and summer.

Personally, I look forward to plenty of trips up north this summer with my family. Finding the time can be a challenge, but it's always time well spent, and the memories keep growing richer.

*CWO*

*Nick Turkal, MD, is president and CEO of Aurora Health Care.*



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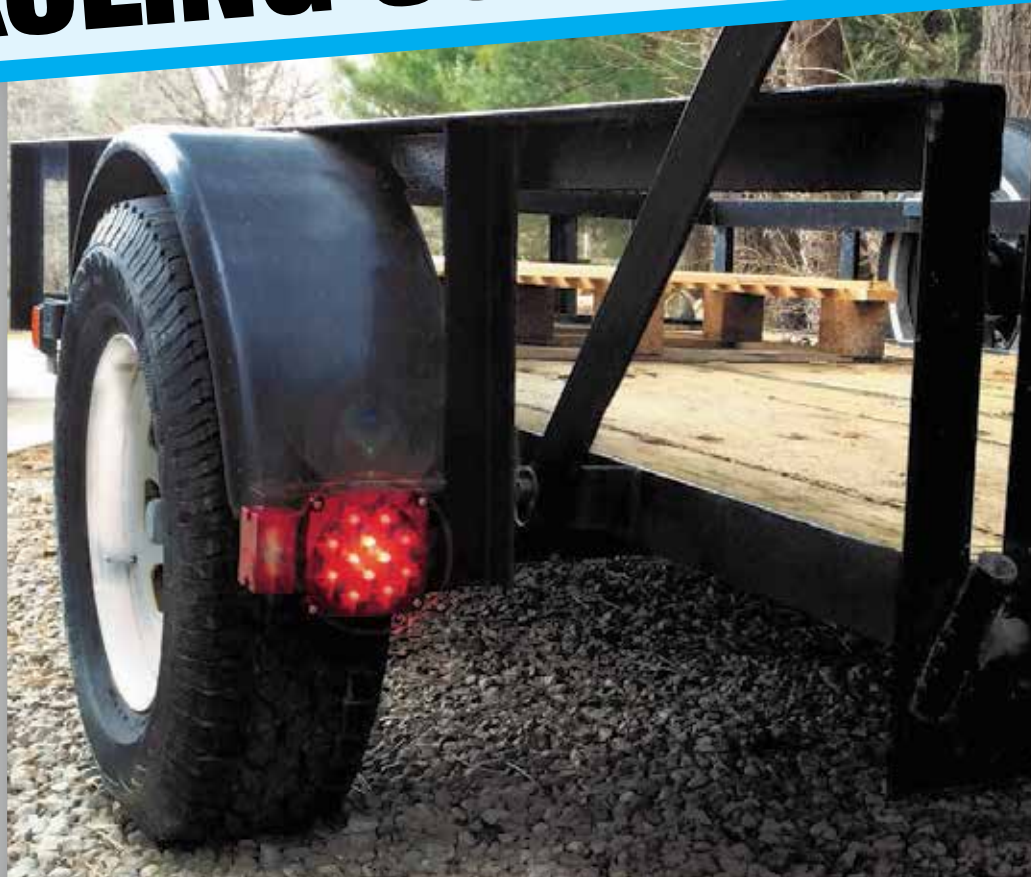
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JERRY KIESOW

# Fly Fishing In Wisconsin

## A new pattern for two states

As this is being written, it is still March, but the rivers in south-eastern Wisconsin have cleared themselves of ice and I am getting ready to try out some new fly patterns. One in particular should be interesting.

As one advances in the art of fly tying and becomes proficient with standard patterns, the urge to create your own recipes becomes overpowering. It is a fun thing to do. And when you actually catch fish on one of your own patterns ... that is the ultimate high.

There are several flies that I designed decades ago of which I am proud. Two in particular stand out because they still catch fish on a relatively consistent basis: my Rapids nymph and my Squirrel tail streamer. Both were the result of extensive hands-on-in-the-stream research. Both originated as trout flies and have evolved into panfish and bass lures. (But they still catch trout, too.) I expect to catch fish every time I tie one to my tip-pet, but, like all frauds, they are not al-

ways what the fish want at that time.

I have entered even newer territory. I have tied a fly for Missouri, and for our kids, and it looks good. I have dubbed it "The Missouri Shad." I will be using it for Wisconsin fish, too.

I created this lure because the kids told me that white bass were chasing shad near their pier and they could not get them to hit any of their lures. I researched the shad that live in the Lake of the Ozarks, found some photos and sat down at the tying bench.

After several experimental ties, here is the recipe I ended up with:

**Hook:** 1/0 Mustad-Aberdeen streamer

**Thread:** Black, 6/0 UNI-thread

**Body:** Flat medium silver tinsel

**Overbody:** White rabbit hair strip

**Sides:** Six to eight strands of silver Krystal Flash on each side

**Underwing:** White bucktail

**Overwing:** White, medium/dark blue



*The Missouri Shad*

and black bucktail. The blue and black together equal amount of white.

As always, begin by winding thread from the eye back to the bend of the hook with thread. Tie on the tinsel, wrap the thread forward to near the eye; then wind the tinsel, edge to edge, up to the thread.

Next, add a strip of white rabbit hair about a half inch beyond the bend of the hook to help bulk up the body. This gives the body some substance to mimic the profile of the shad. *Note:* I am tying this well back from the eye, about the length of three eyes back. We have a lot of material to add here, so we don't want to crowd the front and end up with no space for the head.

To add flash, tie on six strands of silver Krystal Flash on each side of the underwing using the rabbit hair to separate



*Hopefully, by the time you see this image it will depict that the Missouri Shad also works in Wisconsin.*

them. These should be as long as the rabbit fur.

Add the underwing of white bucktail. If it helps, remove the hook and put it back in the vise upside down. The underwing should only be as long as the bend in the hook.

Finally, add the top wing consisting of three layers of bucktail: white, dark blue and black. Tie the hair on one color at a time, making the white bucktail as thick as the combination of the blue and black. Trim each layer of hair on an angle so you have a nice taper to the eye.

Finish the fly with a neat head, whip *continued on page 21*

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PHIL SCHWEIK

## Opening Day Muskies

### A new look

With every season that passes I see more and more fishermen on the water pounding for muskies. With more people on the water it gets harder to catch these fish, especially on heavily pressured waters. Over the years I have had very good success when it comes to catching muskies, but it has not been without change. By doing a few things differently than normal anglers, and by searching out various areas, I have been able to not only catch nice fish, but I have been able to make a career out of it!

Here are a few techniques that most anglers wouldn't think of using on opening day, but believe me, not only will they work, you may be amazed at how well they produce.

Most anglers consider downsizing early in the season. Why? Have you ever had a big musky come up and grab a walleye during the spring walleye run? How many times have you heard about the big musky that took someone's bass alongside the boat and hung on to it for

minutes without letting go? Both these scenarios constitute what a musky is willing to eat early in the year. If a musky will take a 15-inch walleye or a 14-inch bass, why am I throwing 5-inch spinner baits?

Each year my clients and I catch numbers of muskies early in the season running large baits. I'm talking about Big Bulldawgs, Big double bladed Cowgirls, 9- and 10-inch Suicks, and other very large lures that will attract muskies and produce strikes from some really large fish. Lures like this constitute what a musky is willing to eat at any time of the year. With the proper presentation and location early in the season, you will get to see how effective they can be.

When it comes to targeting early season muskies, most anglers will look for shallow backwater bays with emergent weeds. Some anglers target river systems that have other traditional spring holding areas like feeder streams and small inlets. These are all great locations and



Kevin Munson with another large musky. Note the big lure on the passenger dash.

these areas will and do hold fish. But what if the area has been pounded all day long? Now where do you go?

One of the best techniques that I have found for early spring muskies is to fish what I call the "second break." This is the area that is out from shore where your weeds or initial "first flat" have ended and you are now entering the next level of water depth. You may be in 5 to 8 feet of water, or you may be in 12 to 15 feet of water. It is all relative to the body of water you are fishing. This is an area that is not typically hit by musky anglers and it will generally hold fish. The good thing about these fish is that they have not been bothered and they are feeding fish. These are muskies that are lying in wait for an unsuspecting bluegill, walleye or bass to come out from the weeds or off the first flat and make the mistake of coming over that next ledge. Bam! Dinner is served.

Combine the two techniques mentioned above, running larger bait in new secondary areas, and you should find yourself at that next level of success. It has worked for me for over 20 years of guiding and tournament fishing and it will work for you! *OW*

Phil is the owner of Hooksetters Guide Service in central Wisconsin and Hookset Adventures in Eagle River, Wisconsin, which keeps him on the water over 200 days a year. Phil lives in Mosinee, Wisconsin, and can be reached at [pschweik@dwave.net](mailto:pschweik@dwave.net), on his website: [hooksetters.biz](http://hooksetters.biz) or [hooksetadventures.com](http://hooksetadventures.com), at 715.693.5843 or on Facebook at Phil Schweik.

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Eric Marone with a big spring musky.

DENNY MURAWSKA

# Hitchhiker Flies

## A presentation for spin anglers

While fly fishing has a glamor and artistry unparalleled in the fishing world, it does take a bit of learning to master. However, if you want to experience some of the advantages of fishing a fly without the years of education, there are a few productive ways to cheat just a little bit. This will also allow you to present a fly under conditions that would frustrate even the most adept master. I learned this trick down in Mexico, where well-heeled fly casters make an almost religious experience of fishing the “flats” for bonefish, permit and tarpon. Years ago, I, too, wanted to catch a bonefish but did not have the fly fishing skills needed. Anyway, it was really windy.

My guide took a spinning rod and tied a small curly tailed jig onto the line.

Behind the jig, on a length of line tied to the hook, he attached a small, shrimp-like fly. The idea was to simply cast it out, let it sink and jig it back. Although the splash of the jig spooked many a wary bonefish, it did work well. The rig was also attractive to snapper and some other fish inhabiting the shallow bays.

In Wisconsin, we all know how to catch panfish. However, the technique described above can be useful as another tool in your arsenal of tactics to land some nice slabs. Fish love to feed on insects and their larvae. Using the jig and trailer fly allows you to try different insect, crawfish, and minnow fly patterns without changing your well-honed tactics too much. As any fly fisherman will tell you, it is pure fun to discover a new fish fooling pattern that will trigger

strikes when few other methods may work.

We all enjoy the ruckus of a topwater strike. Some fly fishing purists adore their floating dry fly patterns as the ultimate way to trigger a strike. There is a way to do this as well that is just about as easy as chucking a rock into the lake. I call them bubble bobbers. Most are oval shaped, clear plastic bobbers engineered so you can thread them onto your line, fill with a bit of water, and twist them into place with a dry fly tied some length behind them. Since they are heavier than a regular bobber, you can cast them a country mile. They can be plopped down into brushy areas that might be almost prohibitive for the fly angler to access. Simply twitching them back to the boat is a simple and


Bubblebob



Jiggerfly



enjoyable way to fish. Using tiny, barbless hooks enables one to easily release stunned fish that might well swallow a gob of worms or a minnow.

Keep in mind much of the diet of many fish species consists of insects and other crawly arthropods that either live in or fall onto the water. Try hitch-hiking a fly and see who comes to give it a ride! 

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.

LUTHENS, from page 10


Sore muscles, fatigue, trouble sleeping, and flu-like symptoms are among the most common. Lyme disease has been called “The Great Imitator” and has the potential to lead to a lot of second-guessing.

“Especially with my grandson,” said Ascher, “his teachers and counselors didn’t understand the troubles he was having in school. Was it just the typical mood swings of a 15-year-old, was it something psychological, or was it a product of the disease? Honestly, some of his teachers still don’t understand.”

Ascher stresses that awareness is the key to prevention. Steering clear of high grasses and thick underbrush, wearing long pants and long sleeves, and using insect repellent are all commonsense approaches, as is a balanced diet and proper rest to bolster your immune system.

According to the CDC website, a deer tick likely won’t transmit the Lyme virus for 36 - 48 hours after attaching itself. Regular tick checks after being outdoors are always a good idea.

It is most important to develop a solid relationship with your physician. If you spend a great deal of time outdoors and suspect you have been bitten by a deer tick, it certainly doesn’t mean that you will come down with Lyme disease. Only an estimated 20 - 30 percent of deer ticks actually carry the virus. Detailing your outdoor activities and having your doctor ask the right questions can greatly cut down the odds of a misdiagnosis and lead to a path of proper treatment.

“It’s been hard on my family, but thankfully they are slowly recovering,” said Ascher. “There is a lot of misinformation on Lyme disease out there. Everyone is different and sometimes the symptoms of the disease may show in ways you wouldn’t necessarily expect. Being informed, and having a doctor who is informed, is very important.” 

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.

TOM CARPENTER

## Cubs Corner: Not enough June

June is crazy: so much good fishing, so little time to do it. But it’s a good crazy! And it’s the perfect time to get those kids out fishing.

With spawning seasons cranking up or winding down and water temperatures finally warming to preferred temperature ranges across Wisconsin, game fish are at their hungriest and most active. But what should you fish for—and how—to take advantage of all the options? Count the possibilities.

### Spawning Bluegills

Spawning bluegills aren’t difficult to find. Just look for their saucer-shaped depressions in the shallows. But for big June slabs, search deeper: in four to eight feet of water. Bigger sunnies spawn here, where predators don’t have easy access.

Use light or ultralight tackle and high-quality 4- or 6-pound test mono to make a delicate presentation with a small bobber (use a slip bobber when going for the deeper ‘gills) and a 1/64- to 1/32-ounce jig tipped with a piece of live bait. My favorite bait for saucer-sized bluegills protecting their beds is a tiny minnow.

### Stream Trout

With spring’s frigid water a distant memory and deep summer’s heat, bugs and jungle-like foliage just a scary promise, there’s no better time than June to be on a trout stream with a kid.

Rig up a plain size 8 or 10 short-shank hook and one or two tiny split shots on 4- or 6-pound-test line. Work your way upstream, tossing your offering

into likely lairs. Riffles, undercut banks, log jams, deep bends and pools are all good trout-holding spots. Let the current tumble your bait to waiting fish.

### Walleye Days

June is one long walleye feeding rampage. Water temperatures approach and then hold around the walleye’s preferred range of 68 to 69 degrees. The fish haven’t yet retreated to deep water, and young bait fish aren’t yet big enough to make a hearty meal. It all makes for hungry marble eyes!

On bright days, 18 to 22 feet of water seems to be about the right depth for June walleyes. On a breezy day, with the waves refracting the sun’s rays, the fish might be up as high as 10 or 12 feet of water; likewise on a cloudy day. In the evening, anchor up on a reef or breakline, use slip bobber rigs and wait for foraging walleyes to come up out of the deeper water to 6- to 10-foot depths over rocks or gravel.

### Pike Bonanza

With aquatic plant life emerging but not yet chokingly thick, the first week of June is perfect for working those bays and flats for hungry pike. Northerns, especially bigger 30-plus inchers, prefer cool water. You can find fish in relatively accessible spots now.

June is perfect for taking a kid out and letting him or her tangle with mean-looking, exciting-to-catch pike that can’t resist a sucker minnow. Set up

*continued on page 18*

**CARPENTER, from page 17**

with a simple slip bobber rig and dangle sucker minnows below them as you drift slowly across cabbage beds. Or anchor up or drift along a weedline.

**Smallmouth Action**

With a preferred water temperature range in the upper 60s to 70 degrees, smallmouth activity rises to a peak in June. Post-spawn, the stage is set for some of the year's best bronzeback fishing.

Head for boulders and rocks, where the

smallmouths' favorite food, crayfish, resides. During the day, the 15- to 20-foot depths produce the biggest fish, although smaller fish will be shallower. Work neutral-colored crankbaits that imitate crayfish or backroll simple slip sinker rigs baited with nightcrawlers or fatheads. Use slip bobbers to stay above the rocks if snags are bothering you.

**Largemouth Craze**

June makes for great largemouth bass fishing. Early in the month, while water

temperatures are relatively cool but on the rise, bass are very aggressive and active. By the end of the month, the fish are approaching peak metabolism. They are eating machines!

June's emerging weeds offer visual aids to follow as you work the waters for bass. As aquatic plants grow and spread, fish are quick to take advantage of the new cover that is also attracting forage in the form of young fish, tadpoles, frogs and other favored foods.



The author's son, Noah, displays some nice June walleyes and a few bonus yellow perch.

In early June, work inside weeds edges. Pitch chuggers, poppers, frogs, floating plugs and spinner baits. Later, move to outside weed edges. Work these deep edges with suckers or shiners.

**Conclusion**

June is the month to take a kid fishing in Wisconsin. The days are warm but not yet hot. Long early mornings and extended evenings produce plentiful prime low-light fishing. Perfect water temperatures put fish on the prowl. You and your young fishing partners should be, too. *W*

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

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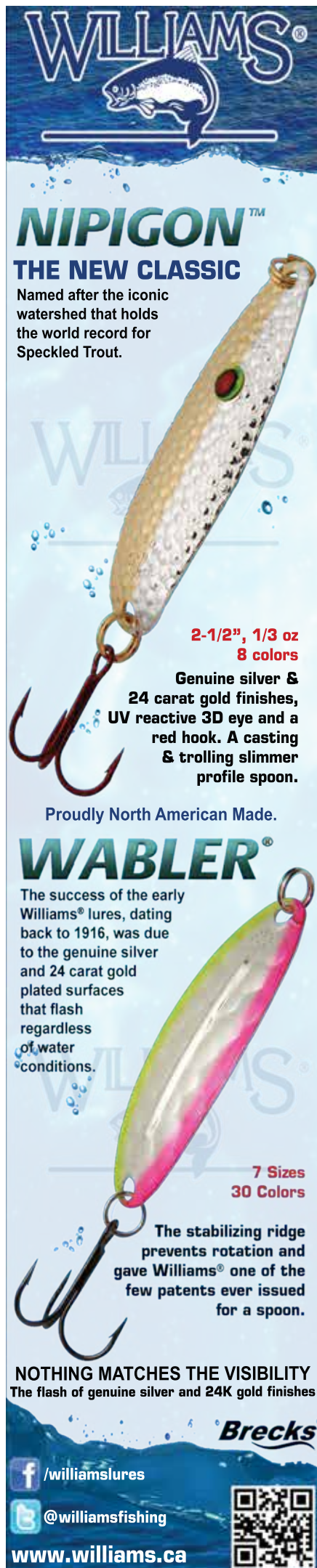
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RON STRESING

## Spring's Silver Salmon

### Cash in on early Coho salmon!

It was a calm, sunny May day on Lake Michigan, and I was setting out the first line for salmon. I had run a fly and dodger combination back about 60 feet behind the boat. I was about to attach the rubber band tied to the line to the down rigger release when the line and rubber band was suddenly yanked from my fingers! A feisty Coho had smacked the fly and dodger combination and was already bending the pole. Coho salmon continued to hit lures rigged on flat lines, down riggers and planer boards until we had our 10-fish limit.

Coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) show up in large numbers off of Wisconsin's Lake Michigan shores starting in May and June. Cool water temps allow both large and small boats to get a crack at them, as well as shore anglers. Limit catches are not at all unusual, as the fish are feeding voraciously and are often stacked in tight schools. Odds are, until their larger cousins, the Chinook salmon, show up, you won't get any hits that are line burning "screamers." What

you will have is fast action, big numbers and one of the best-eating salmonids in Lake Michigan. Below are a few ideas to help you collect some Coho.


Water temperatures permitting, Coho salmon tend to stay in the upper half of the water column. Work the top half and spread out your baits. As always, if you find large schools of bait, stay in and work that area. Set down rigger lines at or slightly above the level baitfish are marked at. Lead core lines can be run off to the side on planer boards or run flat straight behind the boat. Oftentimes the temperature breaks in water column in Lake Michigan haven't really set up yet. Fish tend to be scattered at different depths, and even cold-water-loving fish like lake trout can be caught in shallow. Scatter baits at varying depths until you find a pattern of success.

The classic combination of a fly and dodger has probably boated more Coho salmon than any other lure. We always start with an orange dodger and a green/red fly with silver tinsel. I'm sure in the

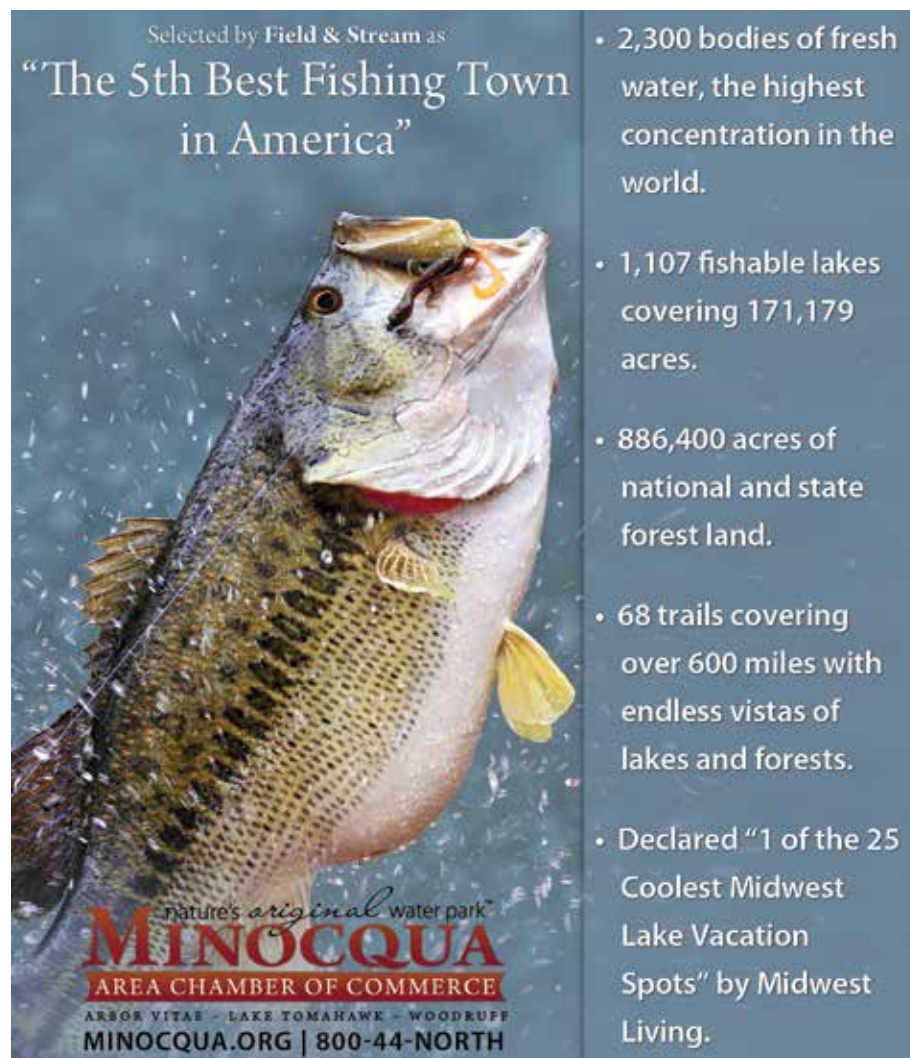
30 years or so we have run this combination hundreds of Coho have fallen for it. Try orange, chrome or chartreuse dodgers and any color combination of flies until you find what the fish like. If the hot ticket for the day is a chrome dodger and purple fly, put out as many of those as you can. Remember to keep the length of line between the dodger and the fly no more than one and a half times the length of the dodger. Lately, trolling flies seem to be tied in shorter lengths. I like a fly at least four inches long to give the fish a better target to bite at. Rainbow (steelhead) trout often hit flies that are run back and away from the boat. We often set a fly-dodger combination run way out there as "steelhead insurance."

Shore anglers can find success casting spoons and soaking live minnows from breakwalls, early and late. Cast classic spoons like Cleos and Kastmasters and diving crank baits. Minnows or alewives can be fished on bobbers or on the bottom with floating jig heads or Styrofoam floaters. Look for baitfish and the salmonids won't be far away.

Seeing as Cohos average two to four pounds this time of year, keep your baits on the smaller side. Most of the alewives they are eating are three to four inches long, so "match the hatch." Smaller spoons in green/silver, blue/silver, pearl and bright florescent colors like orange or chartreuse can be very productive. Scaled-down versions of J-Plugs and diving crankbaits are also good bets. We often run a full-sized bait like a J-Plug or Slammer spoon down on a deeper line just in case a stray Chinook salmon shows up.

Unlike mid-summer when you may have to venture out to 100 feet or more of water to find fish, spring Coho are often close to shore. Now is the time to stock up on those good eaters before the fish scatter far and wide. Good luck and good fishing. 

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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## CAPTAIN ADAM COCHART

# Playing The Wind For Walleye Success

## Find Green Bay baitfish and the walleyes will find you

Anglers targeting the great post-spawn walleye bite on the Bay of Green Bay is nothing new. With increased natural reproduction due to improved water quality, the Bay's walleye population is the best many fishermen have ever seen.

As walleyes finish spawning in the rivers along the Bay or eastern shoreline during the spring, their first instinct is to feed. But as the previous year's baitfish hatch has been whittled down and the current year's hatch has yet to occur, food availability is at an annual low. And after eating next to nothing during the spawning period, the fish are hungry and eager to find baitfish. This provides an outstanding opportunity to catch walleyes on the Bay. Most days they seem to be on the prowl, hitting baits with rod-bending force.

The most used tactic at this time of the season is to troll crankbaits behind planer boards, enticing the fish and giving anglers the pleasure of fighting them to the net. The ability to troll either the west shoreline along Suamico and Oconto, or the east shoreline up through Door County—depending on the wind's direction—offers a fantastic advantage when spring winds favor the fishing on one shoreline over the other. As the wind pushes waves ashore baitfish become more concentrated in these areas. They also have less light penetrating into the water and pro-

vide better feeding conditions for walleyes, which leads to more and bigger fish. Trolling also becomes easier during these conditions as fish tend to be higher in the water column, allowing anglers to achieve the proper depths with less line behind their boards.

When selecting colors for spring walleyes, keep in mind water clarity, because this will help you to choose color patterns in your crankbaits that work best. We like to group our baits into two categories: natural colors and highly visible colors. During clear water conditions or sunny, calm days you will see our selection feature baits of the natural color patterns. While in conditions with darker or stained water—from a cloudy day, wind or rain runoff—we use high visibility colors so the walleye can see our baits through the low visibility of the water.

Targeting walleyes on the wind swept shoreline is something new that Bay Lake Charters is now able to offer on our 33-foot charter boat. Harboring out of Green Bay during the month of May, we will be able to reach either the east or west shoreline at any given time, providing clients with the best fishing the Bay has to offer. Not to mention fishing in first class comfort on our fully-enclosed heated boat, which includes a cozy cabin, full restroom and top of the line gear and electronics. Hosting groups of up to six people, this type of comfort and amenities are suitable




Finn Stuth was all smiles after landing this 30-inch walleye while fishing with Bay Lake Charters.



Bay Lake Charters Captain Adam Cochart with a nice post-spawn walleye caught on a Flicker Shad while trolling the Bay of Green Bay.

for families and larger groups to enjoy.

Bay Lake Charters also offers charter trips in Algoma, Wisconsin, for salmon and trout during the summer months, which include customized multi-trip packages with lodging, fishing licenses, and light on-board breakfast and refreshments. Standard full and half day trips are also available. 


Captain Adam Cochart grew up in Door County, fishing the waters of the Bay of Green Bay and Lake Michigan since early childhood. He is on the water nearly every day from May through October, sharing his passion for fishing and knowledge about walleyes on the bay and salmon and trout on the lake. Adam and his wife, Rachael, live in New Franken, Wisconsin, with their avid rabbit hunting Beagle named Trip. For more information visit [baylakecharters.com](http://baylakecharters.com) or call Adam at 920.594.0910.

KIESOW, from page 15

finish and lacquer. Voila! The Missouri Shad.

Hopefully, by the time you read this I will have tested it out myself. Or, at least, the kids will have. This looks good enough for me to try for steelhead as they enter from Lake Michigan. What do you think? I will give you a report.

See you in the river.

Keep a good thought! 

Jerry enjoys all aspects of the outdoors. To keep track of what he is doing and where, see his photos, and read some of his other writings, including his book, "Tales of The Peshtigo Putzer," check out his website: [jerrykiesowoc.com](http://jerrykiesowoc.com).



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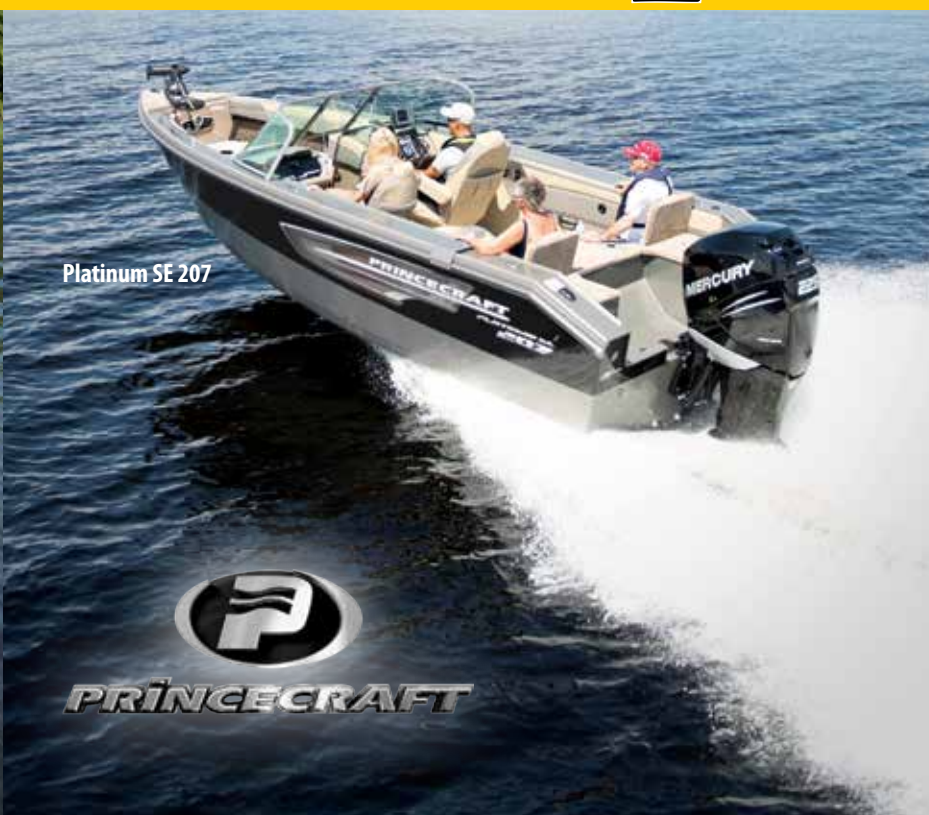
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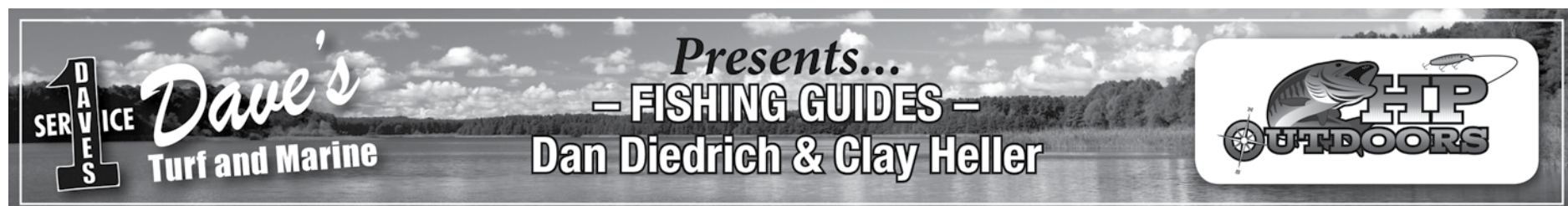
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CLAYTON HELLER

## Shallow, Small, Slow

### Three S's for early season success

The southern Wisconsin musky opener is Saturday, May 2nd. There are lots of great waters to choose from in the southern half of the state: Pewaukee, Okauchee, Oconomowoc, and the Madison chain of lakes, just to name a few. No matter where you choose to fish, three things can help put the odds in your favor to start the season off right.

#### Shallow

Start your search for early season muskies in the shallow bays. These shallow bays are typical spawning areas that will hold fish until they move out to transitional areas on their way to main lake structure as the water warms. The

shallow waters of these bays will warm up first and be home to the first new weed growth of the year. This new weed growth will hold plenty of bait fish and provide both cover and the ability to grab an easy meal while recovering from the vigors of the spawn.

#### Small

Small baits tend to shine this time of year. Whether it's a bucktail, spinner bait, twitch bait, or a glider that you choose to throw, smaller is better. These smaller presentations will most effectively match the hatch by mimicking the bait fish that are in the area.

#### Slow

Typical water temperatures at this

time of year are usually in the mid-50s. The muskies you encounter will likely be on the sluggish side. The fish are not looking to exert a lot of energy chasing down a meal. Slowing down your presentation will allow you to keep the bait in the strike zone longer and increase your odds of triggering a bite.

This spring try going shallow, small and slow and see if it doesn't pay off with some early season muskies in your boat. Good luck and we'll see you out there. *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](http://hp-outdoors.com) or at 920.256.0648.*



*A nice early season musky caught with my wife while fishing in a shallow bay.*

GARY ENGBERG

## Gary Engberg Outdoors

### Shallow water panfish on the Madison Chain

Soon is the inland lake fishing opener. Though the panfish season is open year-round, now is the time to target shallow water crappies and bluegills. The water temperature in most area lakes is approaching 60 degrees, which is prime time for crappies that are spawning or close to it in most area waters. Bluegills are also in the shallows and can be caught alongside the crappies, but they won't spawn for a few more weeks.

Most species, including walleyes, bass, northern, and muskies are still in water under 12 feet deep and often in only a few feet of water. It's possible for a shore angler to have as much success as those fishing from boats. It's possible to catch most fish species before they head deeper to their summer haunts.

Many people don't fish because they don't have a boat or anyone to fish with. You don't need a boat to fish on many waters around the state of Wisconsin

because there is public access on most lakes, rivers, creeks and disabled piers. When you shore fish, there are usually other anglers in close proximity and you often end up meeting people doing what you are: enjoying themselves outdoors.

Good spring locations for crappies and bluegills are quiet, calm and shallow bays, canals that lead to a main lake, backwaters areas, wooded and brushy shorelines, downed trees and stumps, fish cribs, and areas with new emerging weeds. What you're looking for is waters that warm up quickly and contain feed or forage for the hungry crappies and bluegills. Warmer waters get the food chain going with bug and insect hatches. Other things to look for when pursuing crappie fishing spots is smaller bodies of water, lakes with dark or mud bottoms, and southern facing shorelines that receive more sun. All of these variables warm the water quicker and contain the key ele-

ment of food.

The other important factor that affects panfishing is the weather. Ideally, you want warm and stable weather with moderate evening temperatures with lows in the upper 40s to 50 degree range. Cold fronts will push the fish back to the deeper water. There also is no reason to get on the water for panfish at the crack of dawn. Wait until the sun shines and has a chance to warm the lakes waters before going fishing. Mid-day can often be the best fishing time of the day!

As far as gear or equipment goes, use ultra-light rods, reel, and line (Berkley Trilene mono is good) in 4-pound or no more than 6-pound test. The light line is necessary for finicky and spooky fish and can make a big difference in your fishing success. The terminal tackle needed is small stealth floats or bobbers, assorted ice fishing jigs, some plastic tails (Gulp is great), small split shots, and some tube



*A happy child with an early season bluegill.*

jigs. The Bait Rigs Cobra jig works wonders under a slip-float for all panfish! Live bait usually rules with wax worms, spikes, and small minnows all working at different times, but try to have all kinds of bait so that you're covered on tough days. A rod from 6 1/2 to 7 feet long helps you make longer casts and avoid scaring the spawning fish out of the shallow water. Make sure to get a rod with a fast tip for light biting panfish.

This time of year, some of the best lo-

*continued on page 37*

GLENN WALKER

# Spring Bass Fishing

## Get bass lookin' up!

With spring upon us, the days are finally getting longer, the trees are blooming and bass are in the mood to feed. After a long winter hiatus of fishing, many anglers resume bass fishing as if they had never stopped fishing last fall. But many anglers leave the lures that they used in fall buried in the bottom of the boat. In the spring, a great technique to go after these bass is to bring your lure across their head and get them looking up for an easy meal.

With water temperatures on the rise, the activity levels of bass also increase. Several key characteristics that an angler should look for include water temperatures that are warmer than other sections of that given body of water. New emerging vegetation is another important characteristic that these bass will key in on. Shallow water bays and sections of shoreline that have new lily pad or grass growth are examples of areas that bass will be holding around.

Once I have located bass in these areas, I put three types of lures to use. The first being a staple lure in the bass fishing world, a buzzbait. A buzzbait is a good choice when the bass are very active and are willing to chase down the bait. A ¼-ounce compact profile buzzbait is my choice, because these fish are still not in their summer feeding mode. Color options vary based on water conditions and preference of the angler. Light colors such as white and white with chartreuse are my two my personal favorites.

A walk-the-dog style bait also does a good job in the spring, because an angler can work it as fast or slow as the bass wants it. Once a bass shows interest in your topwater offering, you can stop working this bait and let it sit there, just enticing that big spring bass to explode on your bait.

To achieve the maximum action out of your bait, it is important to use a rod that has a soft tip but yet a strong

backbone to haul in that big bass. Using a monofilament line will also get the most action out of your topwater bait since monofilament floats and has some stretch to it.

As the spring progresses and vegetation continues to mat up, I rely on a hollow-bodied plastic frog. You want to use a frog that walks-the-dog with ease, casts far and can be skipped underneath overhanging trees.

The other lure that has helped me catch numerous bass in the spring is a swimming jig. For this application I like to use a ¼-ounce jig that has a light weed guard and a fine wire hook. This allows me to retrieve my jig just below the surface yet above the emerging vegetation. If the bass are in an aggressive mood, you will be able to buzz your jig just below the surface, which some may call "bulging" the surface. However, if the bass become more finicky, you will have to swim your jig slower and let it tick the new vegetation.

Colors again will depend on water clarity and weather conditions. Some select colors that I have had success with are white, white/chartreuse and jigs that represent a bluegill. Sometimes it is best to have a jig and grub combination that mimics the forage the bass are feeding on, while other times a more stand-out color combination will grab that bass's attention better.

These three lure combinations all have a place at the end of an angler's line. When you choose to use them is up to you. Soon enough we will all be on the water chasing after bass. I look forward to seeing you on the water! *OW*

*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](http://glennwalkerfishing.com) or [facebook.com/glennwalkerfishing](https://facebook.com/glennwalkerfishing).*



*Prowling the shallows with my trolling motor and shallow water anchors.*



*Get your bass looking up this spring and you can get giants like this! Photos by Josh Dahlke*



*Largemouth bass love choking down a frog in the spring!*

*With water temperatures on the rise, the activity levels of bass also increase.*

TOM LUBA

# Bass Plastics 101

## A course in plastic worms

I learned how to bass fish with night-crawlers. What I remember is that I caught some ... as long as I didn't get my crawler too close to cover. When that happened, I either snagged a log or got in extreme proximity to a weed with muscles. Either way, I reeled in a bare hook and got a dirty look from Dad that said, "You're wasting good bait."

One day after watching fishing shows on T.V. and avidly reading whatever I could find on the subject, I approached Dad.

"You can get these plastic nightcrawler imitations," I said, "And they're rigged already on hooks. Bet I wouldn't lose any of them," I finished.

Dad thought for a minute and I swear I saw the gears moving as his computer of a noggin ran the data. "Plastic ... won't rip loose ... pre-rigged ... don't need hooks ... may not catch anything ... but that's more crawlers for me. Situation affirmative."

Then he shook his head and said, "Where can you find them?"

"Ace Hardware," I shot out, figuring

we got our hooks and sinkers there, so they must have everything else.

Off we went. Ace didn't have everything. But they did have one pre-rigged 6-inch worm, much like the pre-rigged setup Crème Lures makes today, on the peg board in a nice gaudy translucent blue.

"Doesn't look like a nightcrawler," Dad said, a bit skeptical.

"It'll work," I said, figuring that if I didn't get it, I might be watching my last chance slip away.

That was on a Wednesday. A nice, early summer day.

That Saturday, we were off to a "secret" farm pond. It was probably one of those places that get the "secret" name because Dad and one of his buddies talked the farmer into letting them fish there. Otherwise, we'd be at a "secret" place on the Little Vermillion River or a "secret" place on the Illinois Hennepin Canal. (We grew up in north central Illinois.)

\*I found out later that most of these places were discovered by my dad's fish-

ing buddy, Ben. I also found out later Ben was more than a little fibber. Lying doesn't befall all fishermen, but for others, well, it drives them over the edge. Ben was pathological.

We dodged cow flops and checked for snakes as we walked through the six-inch tall grass and finally spotted an opening that looked like it could be water.

It was. And as I got ready to try my blue worm, Dad and Ben headed for the other end of the pond. I guessed that's where the fish were.

Ready to be skunked, I flipped out the worm and watched it sink. A few seconds later, the line twitched and started moving away. I lifted up, felt weight and leaned back on the rod. A fat, one pound largemouth fired up out of the water! And I got it to the bank without losing it.

I hoped to prove it wasn't a fluke, and tossed the worm out again. It wasn't. And by the time that Dad and Ben made a circuit of the pond, I had caught about



*This is a pre-rigged 6-inch Scoundrel plastic worm from Creme Lure Co. Pre-rigged worms make ideal starting lures for people who want to fish plastic worms for bass. There are also baits that experienced worm fishermen go to when they want to change up the approach. Sometimes a little flash from the spinner on the lure can make the difference.*

about 15, ten over the limit. I showed them the limit. They didn't have any.

Turned out it was a banner day for the blue worm. And it gave me the confidence to keep using plastic worms. Been through a bunch since then. And learned it's a mite easier to fish a plastic worm around wood and weeds than it is a live nightcrawler. And I still carry some pre-rigged Crème Lures 6-inch Scoundrels in my worm box. They still catch bass. And make a wonderful introduction for kids that want to learn how to fish plastic worms. *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.*

JOHN LINDEMAN

# From Crappies To Walleyes

## Scents make sense

When fishing, it doesn't matter what you smell like, does it? Reading this may send shockwaves racing through your brain as you check the soles of your shoes. Don't even think about cracking the car window. Smell should be embraced, nurtured, cultivated and experimented with. In fact, smell should be repeated when needed, especially when fishing. Naturally, I'm speaking of the fish attractant variety of smells.

I first became concerned with what I smelled like as a teenager while deer hunting with my dad and his cronies back in the '70s. I would hang my hunting clothes on the deck, never bringing them inside. My dad's buddies had a blast with my peculiar behavior. That is, until I explained that when I climbed into my stand, I did not want to smell

like bacon and eggs that were smoking a cigar.

Since the '70s the scent industry in the world of hunting and fishing has exploded. Think scent blockers, ionizers, sprays, soaps and wafers. Had I known this, I could have been a multi-millionaire.

What does this have to do with fishing? Like all anglers, I had an epiphany when getting out-fished by my buddy, Appleton's Jon Markley. He was gently setting a tiny hook on a spring Wisconsin crappie when it hit me like a ton of bricks.

"Are you using scent," I screamed?

"No," he responded, hiding a smile.

Wrong ton of bricks, I guess. After watching yet another crappie sail into the boat on his line, the correct ton of

bricks landed directly on my head. It wasn't what the lure smelled like; it was what I smelled like.

There are two factors at play: first, live bait or lures. Second, slow or fast lure presentation. When Jon and I are slowly working live bait, he barely out-fishes me. But when we are slowly working lures, he dominates. When vertical jigging a minnow, we are even, but when using plastic the same way, he rules again. When trolling six rods, we take turns, so it's even up. When snap jigging Echo Tail Blade Baits by Vibrations Tackle back to the boat, I tend to shine ... finally.

When fish are reacting to faster presentations, I out-fish Jon. However, when finessing bait or plastics, Jon rules the roost. What the heck do I smell like

*This northern Wisconsin spring crappie seemed to think Spooner's Mark Olsen smelled just right.*



to a fish? I may never know, but I might have found a solution.

Fish attractants are the key. On numerous trips to the waters of Lake Michigan, whether Green Bay or Little Bay de Noc, fish attractants have made the difference. This also goes for Lake Winnebago, which brings us back to my ton of bricks.

This May, 'Bago crappies will be heading into the shallows, not only to spawn but to offer you the opportunity to test

*continued on page 27*

DONNA LENSING

# Mother And Daughter Take A Walk

## *Inspired by recent a visit from a world traveler*

Back in mid-March when we were finishing cleaning our motel rooms, daughter Ruby asked what I had planned for the rest of the day. I told her I needed some things from across the river in Lansing, Iowa. "Great!" she exclaimed, "Let's walk there!" That's nearly eight miles from home, but I remembered our pact to try taking some small adventures of our own, as we were inspired by a guest who stayed at the motel back in January who arrived on bicycle.

In the last issue of OWO I wrote about Sarah Outen, a woman who is traveling around the world solely via human-powered means. Her journey has been by bicycle, kayak and boat. She was two-thirds around the world when she arrived at our motel and has since traveled to New York City where she's doing speaking engagements, media appearances, and resting up for the final leg of her trip, which will be crossing the North Atlantic by rowing her specially designed boat.

It was a beautiful, sunny and unusually warm day as we set out on our journey. Our route began in Ferryville heading north on Wisconsin's Great River Road for four and a half miles. Then we turned onto "the dike road" as it's referred to by locals, crossing from Wisconsin to Iowa.

Highway 35 is fairly wide, with a pretty generous shoulder, so we felt safe walking. It was exhilarating to glance back and see the progress we quickly made around the slight bend, up over the rise, and soon home was no longer visible.

Along the way we crossed over Rush Creek where it feeds into the Mississippi River, and we were delighted to look down at the beautiful patterns in the sand that had been washed over. Shortly after that we spotted several muskrats popping through the melting ice to nibble on snacks. There were other critters, including the rabbit we startled as we cruised past.

It was a thrill when we turned left onto Highway 82. We were well over halfway there! We had three miles to go, including three smaller channel bridges and then the historic Blackhawk Bridge, built in the 1930s, over the main channel. It was tricky on the smaller bridges as they don't have any extra room for pedestrians. The huge steel bridge feels even narrower for some reason.

On this stretch there are lots of backwater areas. We were treated to the sight of many bald eagles as they sat on the ice eating fish. There was a group of guys still ice fishing, but they had to cross open water with a boat in order to get to their spot. They were bundled up in snowsuits as we strolled past in our shorts and t-shirts, having shed our jackets a couple miles back.

At the last bend of the dike, there she was: the "scary bridge." It's got a steel grid deck that goes up at a pretty good rise, levels off for a while then drops back down at the end. It was helpful to be able to hear the traffic

heading our way. As vehicles approached we'd pause and hold onto the side of the massive structure, waiting for traffic to pass.

What a feeling it was getting all the way over. My first task was to call my husband, Todd, to exclaim that we indeed made it and inquire when he would be heading out to pick us up. There was no way we wanted to hoof it back home after almost three hours of walking. We stopped at a restaurant and enjoyed a nice late afternoon lunch. Then we walked to the stores to pick up the items we needed and waited at a little downtown sitting area for the black pickup truck to arrive.

Fortunately, we're in pretty decent shape. I'm over 50 and a fairly active person, and Ruby's a 16 year-old athletic girl. We were happy to feel so good when we were done, without stiffness or soreness the following days. We decided our hasty decision to go on our big walk was a good one.

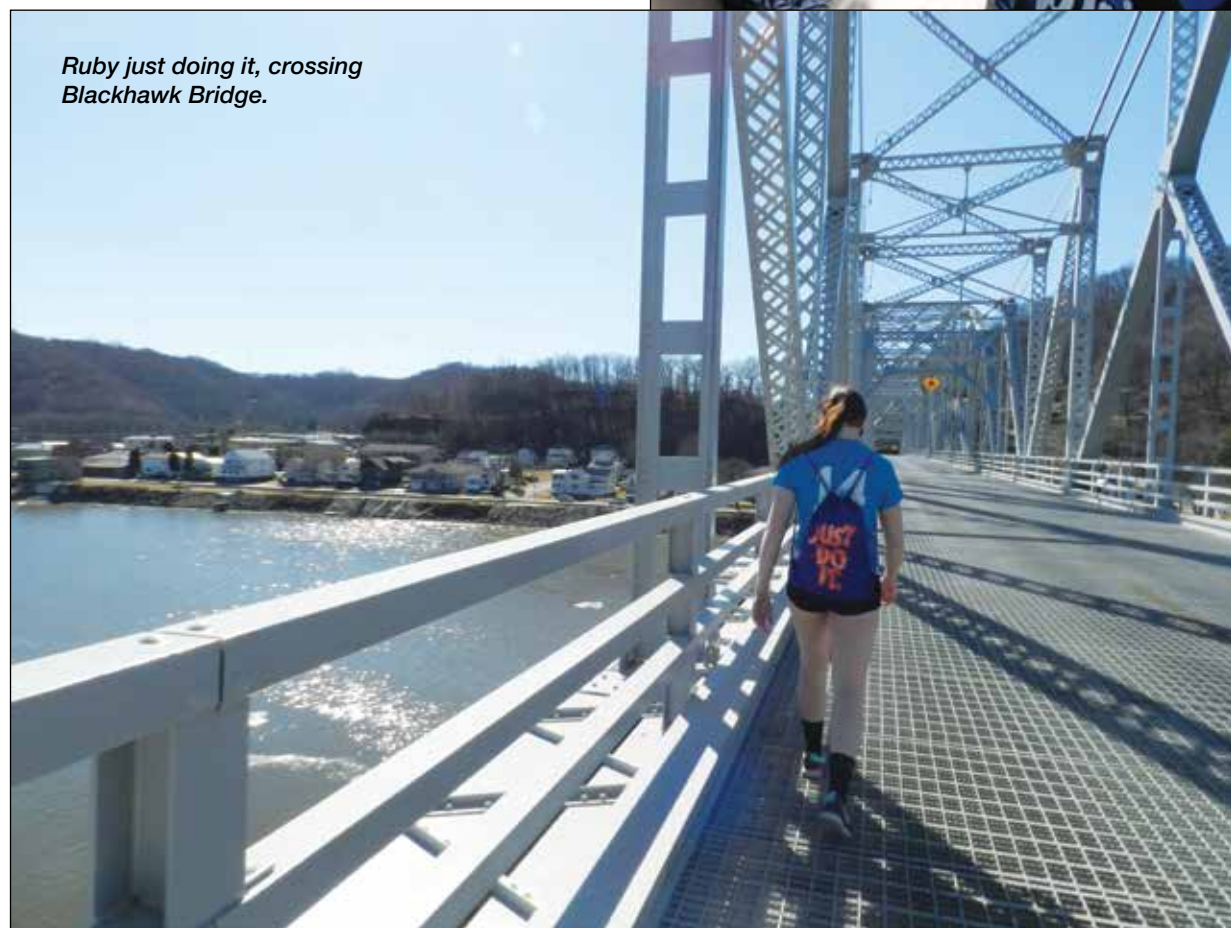
The very best part of the journey? Talking and laughing with my awesome daughter. We are so lucky to live where we do, on this beautiful Big River. It was a great day to go for an adventure, and now we'll be thinking about what to do next. *OWO*

*Donna and her husband, Todd, have owned the Grandview Motel in Ferryville for nine years and also operate Flyway Fowling Guide Service, Pool 9 duck hunting outfitter. They have previously contributed articles to OWO and other outdoor publications.*

Contact them at 608.734.3235.

**We made it!**

**Ruby just doing it, crossing Blackhawk Bridge.**



WILLIAM F. KENDY

# Who Needs A Compass Anyway?

## You do!

In today's high tech world almost everyone has a smart phone with a built-in compass and even a GPS system. So why fool around with an old-fashioned compass? Here's why.

You are deer hunting and leave your cell phone at camp. Or you forgot to recharge it the night before and it has no juice. You are on stand and catch a glimpse of a buck working away from you. You start following him and suddenly you have no clue where you are and are completely turned around. Now what?

In most cases you are not that far from some type of road, path or waterway. You may have to break brush for a while, but if you have even a general idea of direction, you will run into something you can follow to get out. That is where a good old-fashioned mechanical compass comes in handy.

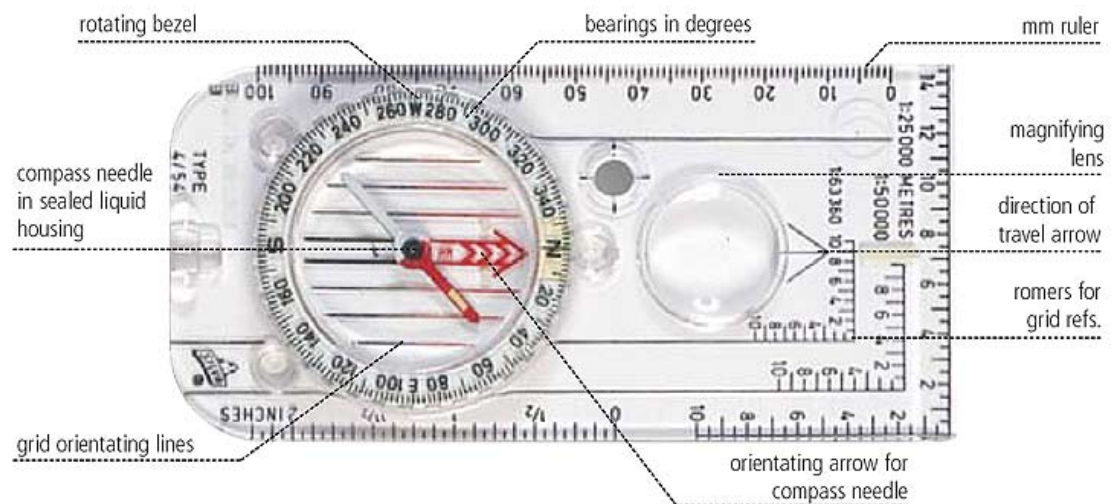
While this sounds like an obvious observation, there is no excuse for not familiarizing yourself with your hunting area by using a map—preferably a topographical (topo) map. Also, have an idea of where the main roads, trails, waterways, and other landmarks are.

Compasses come in all shapes, sizes and price ranges depending on how sophisticated you want to get. With proper care, they last a lifetime. I still have my first Silva compass that I got over 40 years ago and it continues to work like a charm.

A compass that you can use in the woods has a base plate with a line of direction of travel arrow (to point at where you want to go), index lines and measurements, a liquid-filled capsule in a revolving housing that is marked in degrees and directions, a magnetic needle with one end painted red that points to magnetic north, and a red orienting arrow.

A couple words of caution. Be sure the compass isn't near metal because the metal will affect the needle and give you an incorrect reading. Make sure that the red magnetic needle is aligned north; otherwise, you will be walking in the opposite direction of where you want to go. It is an easy mistake to make.

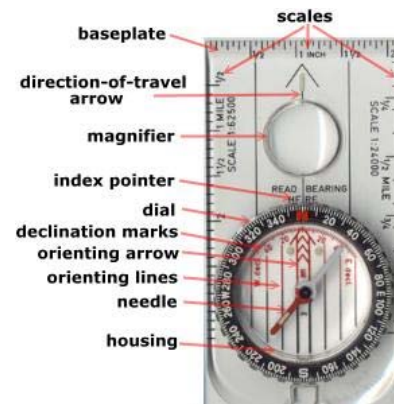
To find out which way is north hold the compass level about waist high, turn the degree dial until the orienting arrow lines up with the magnetic arrow (remem-



ber the old phrase “when the red is in the shed”) and the direction of travel arrow is pointing north.

Consider this. You are hunting directly east of a north/south road. If you get turned around, you can find your way back to the road by simply traveling west. It is exactly opposite. The only problem with this scenario is that while you will reach the road, you have no clue whether you will end up north or south of where you want to be. If you want to hit closer to the mark, you need to take a bearing to determine the direction from one object to another in degrees.

There are 360 degrees marked on a compass with north being at 360, east at 90, south at 180, and west at 270. With your compass oriented to the north, pick a landmark to the east, turn your body to face it, and point the direction of travel arrow at it. Turn the dial until the “red is in the shed” and read the degree markings on the dial. Let's say it is 45 degrees, meaning you will be traveling 45 degrees, which is directly north-east. To return, set your direction of travel arrow at 225 degrees (180 degrees plus 45) and you will be walking southwest. It is simply opposite but using degrees gets



you closer to your destination.

When you are hunting, you don't want to spend all of your time checking your compass. In forested areas you can't see great distances and everything looks similar, so try to pick something at your bearing that stands out and is unique, like a tall oak, group of pines or a hill and work your way there. When you reach your guide point, take another

bearing and pick another mark. It is a little tedious but it beats walking in circles.

A compass is a handy, simple, inexpensive tool to keep you on the straight and narrow. It also forces you to think about where you are going and what is around you. You can use it in conjunction with a topo to more accurately schedule your route and triangulate to find out where you are when you are in the field.

Regardless of what you think is the right way to travel, always trust and follow your compass. ☺

*Bill Kendy is a professional freelance business writer, consultant and speaker who is heavily involved in the firearm and outdoor industries. He is a lifelong hunter, shooter, fisherman and camper.*

LINDEMAN, from page 25

this article. While other guys are busy chasing down walleyes between massive mud flats and numerous reefs, check out the incredible crappie bite most are powering past.

You will need four things for the 'Bago crappie bite: fish attractant; Mighty Mite jigs; a guy that unexplainably puts more fish in the boat than you; and some weed or wood structure. You are now poised to re-enact what Mr. Markley has done to me year after year.

On the day of my epiphany, we found the crappies around most every new spring weed growth we located. Jon, however, was catching and I was fishing. I was hap-

py for him, but dang!

In desperation, I reached for my “Here Fishy Fishy” fish attractant produced by ORGE, MFG. This attractant has been directly involved with some of my epic days on the water. Much to my relief, it also made an instant impact on the crappies Jon was catching. I was able to reverse a 4-1 deficit to a dead even crappie-catching race. So I did what anybody would do—I kept dipping my tiny jig into the attractant. Momma didn't raise no fool!

I believe all attractants do two things: attract and mask. The 'Bago crappies were telling me they didn't like how I smelled. Before that day ended, I regained

my fishing self-esteem and managed to put my share of crappies in the boat. If you have ever purchased an expensive custom painted stick bait, then adding an attractant to your fishing repertoire should be no trouble at all. Scents make sense. I am sold and my experimenting is over.

Why question success? ☺

*Wisconsin native John Lindeman has turned his passion for fishing into a business that provides effective products with innovative twists. The owner of Kingdom Fishing Innovations enjoys all types of fishing from small creeks to the Great Lakes. He can be reached at [jlindeman@gokfin.com](mailto:jlindeman@gokfin.com).*

DAN MOERICKE

# An 'Up Nort' Report Stuff I know

Sometime during March Madness a group of my friends got together for the 34th annual Wausau Insurance Trivia Contest. This contest started out way back in 1982 in somebody's living room with a bunch of people sitting around raising their hands to answer obscure questions. Fast forward to 2015 and there are eight five-person teams competing. An electronic lock-out board has replaced hand-raising. In addition to open questions, there are also written, video, and music rounds.

It was my team's turn to run the contest this year and we put together hundreds of what I thought were really tough questions. Amazingly, there seemed to be somebody in that room who knew the answer to almost every question. That's many brain cells clinging to a lot of really useless information. That got me thinking about what impractical information I have accumulated during a lifetime of rambling around the outdoors. The following are just a few of the things I know to be fact.

## 1.) A glowing ember rising out of a

**campfire will be attracted to the most flammable object within a 20-foot radius.** Indelibly etched in my memory is a vision of a crumpled up grocery bag being tossed into a blazing fire. The glowing volleyball-sized ember that it quickly became floated upward and then directly toward a nearby screen tent. No amount of flailing or blowing could alter its course, and, finally, in an act of desperation, it was swatted with a baseball cap, resulting in dozens of burn holes in the aforementioned screen tent.

**2.) You've never seen it all.** I've been fishing for over half a century and had never netted a hooked walleye while another walleye swam into the net. Last year it happened to me three times.

**3.) Muskies are pigs.** No bait is too big for them to tackle or too small for them to bother with. Both fish in the photos were caught less than an hour apart on the same 1/16-ounce jig tipped with a 2- to 3-inch fathead minnow. In the one case, that bait was 25% the size of the musky. In the other, it hardly seems worth the effort for the musky to



Size doesn't always matter to a musky.

pursue it.

**4.) You can't have too many flashlights (or compasses).** I got an excited call from a hunting buddy a couple years ago saying he shot a big buck and needed help dragging it out. Another friend and I raced to the scene. In our haste, we each took just one woefully inadequate flashlight. Our GPS stayed safely in the truck. Neither of us had a compass. What was to be a quick "in and out" ended up being three guys and one functioning cap light stumbling in circles for hours on an overcast pitch black night.


**5.) Some things that say "waterproof" aren't.** On more than one occa-

sion, I've purchased boots that said "waterproof" only to feel my socks getting wet after less than 100 yards of walking through wet grass. Read the fine print to find out just exactly what it is that supposedly makes the item waterproof. Things like Gor-tex, Dri-tex, rubber and neoprene are all good bets. Leather and nylon ... not so much.

**6.) Porcupines make creepy noises.** While bow hunting a few years ago, I heard a shuffling in the leaves. Hoping it was a buck scratching for acorns, my excitement ebbed as I turned to see a large porcupine waddling down the logging road. It made a left turn off the road and climbed a tree about 40 yards to my right. A few minutes later, I was serenaded with the most God-awful wailing I've ever heard. Had I not seen the porky, I would have sworn that somebody had abandoned a baby in the woods.

**7.) Animals fall out of trees sometimes.** My wife and I were taking a walk while on vacation in the Florida Keys a couple months ago when we heard a solid thud on the road behind us. We turned to see a very dead raccoon that had taken a header out of a palm tree. Last fall, while I was about 20 feet up a maple tree in my climber, I was startled by a red squirrel plummeting spread eagle past me. More fortunate than the coon, his fall was broken by a few balsams and he was able to quickly scurry back up to resume his pursuit of lunch.

This is only some of the useless stuff I know. There's lots more ... just ask my wife.

Just sayin'. 

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



DENNY MURAWSKA

# Outdoors Mumbo Jumbo

## Varmints of the writer's craft

Some words just give me problems. Using them in my ramblings about the outdoors often has me scratching my head. "Fisherman" is one of them. One cannot refer to all humans who entice fish to their baits as "fishermen." That leaves out the ladies and kids. But "fisherwoman" just does not sound right. What about the kids? Would "fisherkinder" be appropriate? I don't think so. I am afraid I am stuck using the term "angler" because "fisherperson" simply does not cut it, either. Maybe "fisher" would work, except that could be confused with a large member of the weasel family. "Hunter," "skier" and "archer" all work.

This is not a matter of political correctness. Don't even get me going on that subject. "Suspect" used to fine before "person of interest" became all the rage. In school, little Bobby may have made a "poor choice." He speared a classmate in the arm with a pointy pencil. No, Bobby screwed up, to put it a bit more bluntly.

I run into the same conundrum with the word "outdoorsman." In fact, all the terms I encounter in my handy thesaurus are no help at all. An outdoorsman is not precisely the same as a naturalist, environmentalist or survivalist, so I have to cast these by the wayside. I know "outdoorswoman" is used, but it just does not

sound right. "Boonie babe" is probably offensive to some. I am not sure why, but it has a better ring to it.

There are plenty more terms and redundant phrases that stick in my craw. While my verbal tool kit is by no means all-encompassing, here are a few quips that just floor me. At times, my only response is thinly-veiled sarcasm.

"Did you catch any pheasants on your hunt?"

"No. I am not quite as limber as I used to be and never could fly."

"May I ask you a question?"

"You just did. Now be quiet. I am trying to catch a fish."

"Did you physically drag that monster buck by yourself?"

"Physically, no. I accomplished the feat through a process involving mental levitation."

"You mean you caught that fish just to let it go?"


"That is from my Mom, bless her heart. I don't even try to answer that one anymore."

"Would you like to know the honest truth?"

Who would want the dishonest truth?

Using the plural of fish dumbfounds plenty of folks. If you are talking about a bucket full of one species, you can say "fish" for the plural. However, if you have mixed panfish in the bucket, it is a bucket of "fishes." Go figure.

Let us not forget terms used by some outdoors-loving folks that are just plain wrong. I once had a fellow come to the door with a scraggly, smelly, roadkill coyote skin. He then informed me he had just "skun" it and wanted to know if I could turn it into a rug. Okay, swim, swam, swum is fine English. Skin, skinned, and skun will not cut the muster.

Being a taxidermist, I often get asked whether a trophy fish can be "taxidermied." Sure. Just don't ask me to stuff it. In fact, don't say "stuffed" to any professional taxidermist. You may be surprised by your next trophy. I can carve and sculpt an anatomically correct form to mount the trophy on, but I only use stuffing in turkeys, usually for Thanksgiving. 

*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.*

TERRY RUSS

## COYOTES 'R RUSS Tips

### Coyote hunting

1. Coyotes have great vision, your uncovered shinny face or naked hands stand out. Always cover hands and face with camo.
2. Make sure you scan the area you are going hunt on, as you are walking in, at times there will be a coyote right there. If they see you, the chances of a coyote responding to your call is diminished. Every so often you will get an easy shot.
3. If you see a coyote driving to your stand, don't let off gas or hit brakes, or coyote will be gone. Drive by and park out of site and sneak in and expect fast action.



Explore Wisconsin | County-by-County at [www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com](http://www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com)

# County Teasers



Find out what our  
Explore Wisconsin  
Partners are  
planning for you ...

- 1 Connect with [onwisconsinoutdoors.com](http://onwisconsinoutdoors.com)
- 2 Click on the "Explore Wisconsin" page tab
- 3 Click on any county ... and explore!

It's back for 2015: the Lake Winnebago Tri-County seasonal boat launch permit. This \$50 pass can be used at any Calumet, Fond du Lac or Winnebago County owned launch on Lake Winnebago (eight launches in total). To get your permit, contact the Calumet County Parks Department at 920.439.1008. **Click on Calumet County.**

WWIA serves combat wounded Purple Heart recipients by providing fishing and hunting experiences to recognize and honor their sacrifice, encourage independence and connections with communities, and promote healing through camaraderie and a shared passion for the outdoors. WWIA owns private land in Price County for these Heroes. Please support us! **Click on Price County.**

As summer starts there is no better place to be in Wisconsin than Walworth County. The fishing is simply fantastic! This is when most of the fish are spawning and aggressively feeding. Lake Geneva and Delavan Lake are the go-to spots for the avid fisherman. I will be guiding on a daily basis. For guide trips contact Dave Duwe of Dave Duwe's Guide Service, 262.728.8063. **Click on Walworth County.**

Fun time in Ferryville on the Mississippi River. Use the Ferryville Boat Launch (Pool 9) to access the best fishing on the river. Opening day is May 2! Open all year and the docks go in as soon as spring river stage allows. May 9: Spring Bird Migration Hike, 8:00 AM, Sugar Creek Bluff. May 15 & 16: 70-Mile Garage Sale, "Rummage Along the River." Spring is here. **Click on Crawford County.**

Price County offers some of the best multi-species freshwater fishing in the country. You'll find walleye, musky, northern pike, large and smallmouth bass, trout, panfish and sturgeon. Freshwater fishing can be

done in many ways—from shore or a boat, from a bridge or dock, in lakes and ponds, and rivers and streams. Fishing guides and sport shops are eager to assist you in landing your trophy fish. Join the fun on June 6 & 7 at the 1st Annual Walleye Tournament and take a portion of the \$40,000 in prize money. **Click on Price County.**

Sparta offers a lot this time of year: motorcycling, horseback riding, kayaking, hunting and fishing and, of course, biking. Celebrating 50 years on the Elroy-Sparta Trail. Enjoy the local shopping, dining and peaceful, friendly relaxing times. Sparta—a choice destination in western Wisconsin. **Click on Monroe County.**

Looking for a back-country camping experience but don't want to travel too far? Check out Sawmill Park, located just north of Birchwood. Two canoe portage route systems wind through the dense forest with a high density of small glacial lakes. Be sure to bring your fishing pole as this is a hot spot for bluegill and bass! For more information, **click on Washburn County.**

The marina is open, and some charter captains have already been out fishing. Bicycles have started to roll down the trail, and kayaks and paddleboards are being launched from our South Beach. The season is heating up, and we hope to see you soon! Visit our website and download our free mobile app! **Click on Ozaukee County.**

Ashland, Lake Superior's Hometown, is the "Historic Mural Capital of Wisconsin." Enjoy a walking tour of the beautiful murals downtown. Check out these exciting events: Chequamegon Bay Birding & Nature Festival, May 14-16; Apostle Islands Inline Marathon/ALMT Half-Marathon on Madeline Island, June 20; Superior Vistas Bike Tour, June 27. **Click on Ashland County.**

HEIDI RICH

## Lessons in Blacksmithing

### Ancient necessity turned 21st Century hobby

"Blacksmith" is not a term we hear much anymore. The trade has been around for centuries, but with modern technology what it is, there isn't the need there once was. In fact, the only thing a machine still can't do is fit horses for shoes. A farrier, who needs to be trained in blacksmithing, needs to fit them.

For some, like family friend Chris Simpkins, blacksmithing has become a hobby with a link to the past. What better arena to learn about the past than Old World Wisconsin?

On a family visit to Old World Wisconsin a few years ago, Chris got to talking with some re-enactors in the Groteleuschen Blacksmith Shop who told him about the beginners' blacksmith Saturday workshop. The workshops are put on by blacksmith Darold Rinedollar who crafted all the blacksmith work at the Old World Wisconsin village. Chris thought the craft "looked like a neat idea" and decided to take the beginners' class with a friend. Chris later took Rinedollar's intermediate and advanced classes.

On a visit to Chris's home in Caledonia for a tutorial on beginning smithing, he showed me his two forges: one coal and the other propane. He explained that the propane forge can be used indoors (though you need to keep a door open for oxygen) and heats up a larger area than a coal forge. But a propane forge is harder to heat and thus won't work for welding. A coal forge must be operated outdoors since it contains fire and produces smoke. Chris found both his used forges on Craigslist for about \$200 each.

Among additional equipment required to smith is an anvil. The anvil is where the hot metal stock (fresh out of the forge) is placed for pounding and shaping. Chris's anvil was another craigslist purchase and he paid \$200 - \$300 for it (used). Anvils have a horn at one end, which allows for forming shapes in the metal.



Chris operating his coal forge.

Other beginning blacksmith tools, such as cross-pein hammers, can be purchased from Menards. Tools like tongs and vices can be purchased online and at blacksmith and farrier supply stores. According to Chris, tongs are needed in many sizes for varying sizes of metal stock.

I asked Chris how he can tell the stock is at the right temperature to be removed from the forge. The color of stock indicates how hot it is. As the stock grows hotter, it changes from deep red to orange to bright yellow. Once it is straw yellow it's hot enough to move to the anvil. Moving metal from the forge to the anvil quickly is essential. "You would be surprised how quick it loses heat once you take it out of the forge," Chris said.

Temperature is important because if metal is forged too cold, it can get stress fractures and is harder to shape. Metal gets longer the more it's hammered. Metal is not lost in the smithing process but is moved and reshaped.

Asked if he wants to be able to sell what he makes as he becomes more proficient in smithing, Chris said, "I don't think anyone goes into blacksmithing thinking they can quit their job." But he would like to get good enough to be able to sell smaller items. I may be his first customer. Once I saw the leaf pattern on a letter opener Chris made,

*continued on page 31*

EXPLORE WISCONSIN at OnWisconsinOutdoors.com



TOM CARPENTER

## Badger Birds Indigo bunting

In the soft shade of the spring and early summer woods, an indigo bunting appears nondescript. But let a shaft of sunlight illuminate him and you will behold nature's most vividly blue creation! You might describe this blue as electric, neon or merely vibrant. And *indigo* is as good a try as any.

For two splendid summers when I was a boy, a pair of indigo buntings nested in the privet hedge in our southwestern Wisconsin backyard. Watching them inspired my love of birds. Indigo buntings are closely related to cardinals.

**Look** for indigo buntings in thick cover—bushes, shrubs and dense thickets—and on the edge of it. Some of the best places to find indigo buntings in Wisconsin include logged areas that are springing back to thick brush, and abandoned pastures that are filling in with tangles of shrubs and bushes.

**Catch** flashes of bright blue as a bird flits in and out of streams of sunlight. These insect hunters stay above ground but seldom venture into the treetops.

**Listen** for the male's impatient but beautiful song: *sweet-sweet where-where chew-chew cheat-cheat*. When feeding, indigo buntings make single *spit* or *tick* calls.

**Identify** a female indigo bunting. She is buff brown with a pale, streaked breast and powder blue on the wings.

**Offer** sunflower seed at your bird feeders to attract indigo buntings. They also like thistle seed.

**Did you know** that indigo buntings migrate at night and use the stars as navigation beacons? Another fascinating fact: young birds learn local dialects in their singing, and the indigo bunting song you hear in a LaCrosse County coulee may be quite different than the one you hear in a Door County thicket.



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

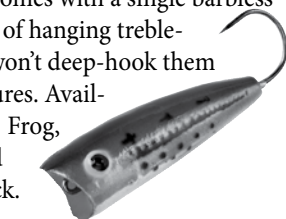
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Tie this chug bait onto your ultra-light set-up and slay some panfish. It's a tiny version of the pop-ular (pun intended) Pop-R bait. It might be small, but it's got a big heart. It comes with a single barbless hook instead of hanging treble-hooks, so it won't deep-hook them like a lot of lures. Available patterns: Frog, Ole Bass, and Chrome/Black. \$3.99.



rebellures.com

### PLANO: FIELD LOCKER

This super tough gun case provides top level security for your firearms, and it should; it was designed to meet military specifications. The water-tight seal keeps the elements out, while a pressure release valve equalizes pressure whether it's in the cargo hold of a jet liner or the trunk of a car in blistering summer heat. You can cut to fit the double density foam pad to your favorite firearm, or leave it as is for securing any firearm. For security it has extra wide latches and metal reinforced pad-lock gates. For comfort it has over-molded heavy duty handles and easy glide ball bearing wheels. Multiple cases interlock and can be stacked. It comes in three models: the single-gun (\$159.99), double-gun (\$249.99) and tactical (\$199.99). I have the double-gun, and it's outstanding. It's big and it's a tank, but it will keep your valued guns as safe as can be. Made in USA. OWO tested and recommended.

planomolding.com



### MAGNETOSPEED: V3 BALLISTIC CHRONOGRAPH

Using a ballistic chronograph on a busy public range can be a little bit of a hassle. So much so that I've sometimes avoided using a chrono when I really should have. To set up you have to clear the line to go downrange. Any further adjustments also require you to go downrange, so the shooting line must be cleared, as does taking it down when you're done. MagnetoSpeed

changed that with the V1 and V2 and have made vast improvements with the V3. Simply attach the bayonet-style sensor to the end of your barrel (or suppressor) and tighten with the strap. Adjust to make sure the bullet path is clear. Then attach the display. It's now ready to go. All this was done without clearing the shooting line. Just keep the cleared rifle with the muzzle pointed downrange and you're good to go. Since it uses a magnetic sensor instead of an optical one, it is immune to muzzle blast and the lighting sensitivities of other chronographs. Comes with a hard case or soft case. \$399. A Sporter model is available for \$189. OWO tested and recommended.

magnetospeed.com



### LYMAN: THE ESSENTIAL GUN MAT

Gun mats are essential in that they protect the finish of the firearm as well as the work bench. This one is made of chemical resistant, non-slip synthetic rubber. I like it because it has storage separators molded in to keep parts organized and secure, so small parts won't get lost. It also keeps small spills contained. Since it's not porous like a lot of cleaning mats, it's easy to clean. \$14.98.

lymanproducts.com



### WORK SHARP: KEN INION EDITION KNIFE & TOOL SHARPENER

When I was younger and had free time, I could take a stone and a little spit and put an edge on a knife that would split hairs. Somewhere in the course of becoming an adult and having a family, I lost the patience and free time to spend on sharpening knives. My knives have suffered. Then came along this offering from Work Sharp. It's awesome. I had an old Ka-Bar that was in desperate need of a sharpening, and with this I did it in less than four minutes.



An adjustable, precision guide sets the angle anywhere from 15 to 30 degrees. The flexible, abrasive belt gives a durable, razor-sharp edge to everything from scissors to file knives to gut hooks. Works on serrated knives, too. It sharpens everything, even an axe and other tools. The variable speed motor works for every task, whether honing an edge or grinding. Done in collaboration with famed knife maker Ken Onion. (\$149.95).

worksharptools.com

### SAVAGE GEAR: 3D LINE-THRU PIKE

Based on a 3D scan of an actual pike, this lure looks as real as it gets. The swimming action even resembles a real pike, with subtle movement coming from the tail, back and belly fins. The line-thru design allows for hooks to be placed along the belly or back. It also lets the lure ride up the line after the fish is hooked so it's out of the way, preventing fish loss. It comes in eight-inch (\$11.99) and twelve-inch (\$22.99).

savagegear-usa.com




If you have recommendations for good gear that works for you, tell us about it at [ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com).

### RICH, from page 30

I decided it would be a pretty cool thing to have.

If you are interested in seeing a blacksmith in action, visit Old World Wisconsin. You can find out about demonstrations and classes at [oldworldwisconsin.wisconsinhistory.org/Workshops/Blacksmithing.aspx](http://oldworldwisconsin.wisconsinhistory.org/Workshops/Blacksmithing.aspx).

Just goes to show you never know when you'll unexpectedly find your next hobby. 

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.

SUZETTE CURTIS

## Recipes by Suzette Spring fish

Spring fishing season is back, and our dinner menu at home becomes a little heavier to fish and a little lighter to red meat. A meal that includes fresh fish is something that's hard to beat. Try one of our favorite walleye recipes or a spring twist on northern pike. Enjoy!

### Baked Walleye

- 6 walleye fillets
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup melted butter
- 1 cup Panko bread crumbs
- ½ tsp. chervil

Preheat oven of 375°. Place fillets in a shallow glass baking dish. Spread mayonnaise evenly over top of each fillet. Melt butter in a small bowl and stir in breadcrumbs and chervil. Spoon breadcrumb mixture over fillets. Bake 30 minutes.

### Pike with Cucumber Sauce

- 2 to 3 pounds pike fillets
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1 lemon
- Sauce:**
- 2 T. butter
- 1 cucumber, cored, seeded and thinly sliced
- 6 green onions, sliced

Heat grill to medium high heat and lightly oil grate.

On stovetop, melt butter in skillet over low heat. Add cucumbers and sauté until translucent, about 10 minutes. Add green onions and sauté an additional 2 minutes. Cover skillet and remove from heat. Set aside.

Grill fish for 5 to 8 minutes per side until fish flakes easily. Place fish on serving dish and squeeze juice of lemon over all. Spoon cucumber sauce on top and serve immediately.

*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](http://recipesbysuzette@onwisconsinoutdoors.com)*



## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Henry Repeating Arms Honors Veterans, 1st Responders and NRA Instructors at the Great American Outdoor Show

HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA- February 12, 2015- Henry Repeating Arms of Rice Lake, WI presented tribute rifles to eleven deserving individuals at The NRA Foundation Banquet & Auction at the Great American Outdoor Show in Harrisburg, PA.

As lead sponsor of the event, Anthony Imperato, President of Henry Repeating Arms, chose to award local heroes of the community who've proven to go above and beyond the call of duty. "Thank You for saving lives every day," Imperato said as he presented first responders to thank them for their service. James Boddington of York received a Law Enforcement Tribute Rifle, Ed Kochanski Jr. of Throop received a Firefighter's Tribute Rifle and James Sherk of Orrtanna received an EMS Tribute Rifle.

Six Veterans received a Henry Military Service Tribute Rifle. "These men and their families sacrificed to protect this great country of ours, and we owe our freedom to them today," Imperato said, choking back tears. "Thank You for your service to our country," he continued as the crowd of 300 rose to applaud recipients Warren Plot of Hummelstown who served in the U.S. Air Force in WW2, Max Elwood Colbertson of Carlisle who served in the U.S. Army in Korea, Harold Bowman of Schaefferstown who served as a U.S. Marine in Vietnam, Matthew Corwin of Red Lion who served as a U.S. Marine in the Gulf War, Steve Macdonald of Mechanicsburg who served in the U.S. Navy in Iraq and Ed Fisher of Lewisburg who served in the U.S. Army in Afghanistan.

Imperato proclaimed NRA Instructors are the unsung heroes of the firearms industry. "They take their personal time and spend their own money to promote firearm safety and youth shooting sports," he explained. Instructors Ron Keslar of Mechanicsburg and Charles Fox of Troy were each presented with a Henry Golden Boy rifle.

For more information about the company and its products visit [www.henryrifles.com](http://www.henryrifles.com) or call 866-200-2354.

ROBB MANNING

## Everyday Carry Road trip carry

For me next week will be palm trees, beaches and bikini-clad beach-goers. That's looking pretty nice, because as I write this (March 24), we've had recent snow flurries and the rest of the week won't be very warm. As I throw my cargo shorts and sunscreen into my suitcase, there's one important thing to plan for and pack for: my carry gun. Fortunately, this won't be my first trip carrying a firearm.

The most important thing is to research the laws of every state in which you will physically be in. Do this first because it can affect the gear you need to take with you such as the holster, gun lock and the firearm itself. If you're traveling through large metropolitan areas, you'll want to make sure you check the local municipal laws also. Places like Washington, D.C. and New York City have very strict gun laws. Even if you're just passing through, don't get pulled over in Washington, D.C. with a handgun.

Make sure you can legally carry in each state you're passing through and that your permit is valid. Some states have reciprocity with Wisconsin; some states don't. Certain states that don't have reciprocity will allow travelers to carry while in the vehicle, but once you one step out of the vehicle you're breaking the law. Make sure that you know what to do if you're pulled over while carrying. Some states require you to declare that you're carrying or have a gun in the vehicle.

Think about what you must do if, while in another state, you must go into a building that doesn't allow carry. The best option is a handgun safe. The next best is a lockable glove box (if legal). Never should a firearm be left out and unattended, even if you don't have children. Speaking of buildings, make sure you know the laws about where you can and cannot carry. For example, some places allow for carry in bars, others don't. Some states also have different requirements for how those gun-free establishments post their signs.

As you research the laws, it's a good idea to print them off and take them with you. Most Smartphone makers have apps with concealed carry laws, or links to them. Not all law enforcement officers know all gun laws off the top of their head, and having the laws in writing can help avoid confusion. The last thing you want to do is lose a day sitting at the police department while on vacation.

Also plan for how you're going to carry




*Carrying while on a trip requires a little planning and some additional items. Don't forget proper attire (like the vest) and your holster.*

along the route and at the destination. When you plan for a trip, you have to look ahead at the weather to adjust your attire. If you're going to carry, take it a step further and see how that weather will affect your carry. When you're going somewhere cold, you can probably plan for a larger handgun. If going to a warmer climate, you'll need something more concealable. This also affects the type of holster you need.

You must also think about the activities you'll be doing while on the trip and the relative safety of the area. For example, if you're going to spend all your time in a safe suburb, you would plan on carrying a different firearm than you would if you were going someplace that you would describe as "backwoods." A few years ago I went on a trip where the drive was through Middle Of Nowhere, Texas, and the destination was a ranch with a wild boar problem. I packed my Glock G20, which is a 10mm canon, and a carry vest. The carry vest concealed the G20 on the road trip, and when I got to the ranch, I open carried.

Think about the living arrangements at the destination as well. If traveling with kids or staying with someone who has kids, you'll need something lockable to store the firearm in. When at a hotel, it's a good idea to lock your firearm, even with no kids present. Valuables left unattended can walk away and firearms are no different.

When going on a road trip, carrying your firearm can be just as simple as it is back home. Make sure you plan ahead and not only take the appropriate gear and attire but also know the laws. As any officer will tell you, ignorance of the law is not a valid excuse. 

*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, 762x51n80.*

S. WILKERSON

# Midwestern Shooters Supply Expanding Base

## Women, young people are future of shooting sports

Community involvement and welcoming non-traditional participants is vital to the survival of the shooting sports, according to Randy Boelkow, Vice-President of Midwestern Shooters' Supply. "The average customer in a gun store is probably between 50 and 60 years old," he said. "There are not many between 20 and 40." But there are some good reasons for optimism. "The fastest growing market segment is adult women and high school age students," Randy explained. "They make up an increasing share of the market. The shooting sports are no longer a gentlemen's club."

Women are involved in all facets of the sport, including target shooting, hunting and self-defense, Randy said. The evolution of the shooting sports began about five years ago when apparel and firearm manufacturers actively began targeting women as customers, he explained. Outdoor wear became fashionable rather than just utilitarian. In order to cater to the perceived tastes of women, stocks, pistol grips, and even entire guns were offered in pink and other vibrant colors. Women also became much more knowledgeable about firearms. As they continue to do so and become more comfortable with the use of firearms, they tend to buy more guns in larger calibers, just like their male counterparts.

"It used to be that firearm salesmen directed the conversation toward the husband even if it was being



*Avid Wisconsin outdoorswoman Jocelyn McCann checks out another shotgun at Midwestern Shooters Supply in Lomira. Women and the youth shooting sports are large and growing segments of Midwestern Shooters Supply clientele.*

bought for the wife," Randy said. "Today, you don't try to appease the husband to make a sale." Using that old tactic, he added, can lead to a response from a potential female customer such as, "Why are you talking to him? I'm the one buying the gun!"

Many firearm dealers have yet to realize that the shooting sports are no longer the sole domain of older men. This is not the case at Midwestern Shooters' Sup-

ply. I interviewed Randy at 9 o'clock on a Saturday morning, just as the store was opening. When the interview was finished about an hour later, I walked back into the showroom. I was surprised to see that a significant number of customers were husbands and wives, girlfriends with their boyfriends, and families. This is not your typical sporting goods store.

Randy informed me that a large number of rural area high schools have trap shooting, skeet and target teams sponsored by their schools and area gun clubs. As a city dweller, this came as quite a surprise to me. "It's amazing how many high schools have accepted shooting sports," Randy noted. In some rural areas, he said, "There are so many kids involved, they're running out of room to shoot."

Unlike football, baseball, basketball and other conventional high school sports, shooting sports are something that can involve the entire family. The sport is accessible to most teenagers. "Unlike football, you don't have to be 6'2" tall, weigh 210 pounds and lift weights all day to shoot trap," Randy said. Granted, the cost of a competition grade shotgun, ear muffs, protective and other gear can add up. Midwestern Shooters' Supply specializes in reloading and outfitting competitive shooters. They have the equipment to meet just about

*continued on page 37*



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DICK ELLIS

# Breaking Clay

## Trap excellence earns shooting scholarship

Justin Zuhlke stands poised on the Beaver Dam Conservationists' firing line and voice activates the bird launcher to send another clay target into the April sky. The 18-year old destined to begin a shooting scholarship on the trap team at Concordia College near Lincoln, Nebraska, in the fall of 2015 leads the target, squeezes the trigger of the Brown-ing over-under 12-gauge, and watches another bird shatter.

Methodically, or as Justin would say, "one bird at a time," targets are launched and broken. Justin moves to five stations on the 16-yard line as dictated by Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) rules with the same results. He will miss, of course, during an official trap round of 25 or four-round 100-bird competitive shoot, but rarely.

It looks easy to a photographer shooting Justin as Justin shoots and adds more powdered clay to the landscape. In reality, his is a journey built on love for the sport, raw potential and hard work.

Five years before, freshman Justin

Zuhlke had never owned a shotgun. It wasn't until joining the club sport and discovering a passion for trap that his parents answered his Christmas wish with a Remington .870. With that versatile hunter's shotgun, Justin paid his dues and learned the basics imperative to eventual trap shooting excellence.

"Some shooters are good naturally," Justin said. "I practiced bird by bird to get there. Trap sounded good. I tried it. I've been in love with it ever since. I practiced every day I could. I worked one-on-one with Coach Dan (McDermott). He and Coach Todd (Cook) and Coach Dusty (Schweitzer) made me the shooter I am; they work with me and everyone on the team."

A less than stellar performance in his first trap competition as a freshman motivated him to improve. His early 13-score average (of 25 possible targets) climbed with practice, to an 18 to 20 average by the end of year one to a 22 to 25 birds through sophomore and junior years.

Sophomore year he worked to earn the money needed to move from the .870 to purchase a SKB GC, a break-open single-shot 12-gauge designed specifically for the shooting sports. "My sophomore and junior year I shot great with it," he said. "It kicked like nothing and shot really well."

The first trap team, McDermott said, was founded on a \$6000 gift in 2011 from the Beaver Dam Conservationists and fully endorsed by the school board. Seventeen youths participated. Thirty-five high school students, including three young women, are on the roster today. With a hunter's safety certificate and safety equipment mandatory for shooters, a proper introduction to firearms and the shooting sports begins. As in Justin's case, starting shotguns often evolve to complement the growing expertise of the young shooter.

"From that beginning the kids and parents can make it as inexpensive or expensive as they want it to be," McDermott said.



*From never having shot a shotgun five years ago, Justin Zuhlke's expertise on the trap line will take him to Concordia College in Nebraska this fall on a shooter's scholarship.*

Zuhlke took his own modest shooting beginnings to the pinnacle. In July of 2013, the Golden Beavers participated in the two-day SCTP nationals held in Sparta, Illinois. With a score of 198 of 200 possible targets, Justin placed 13th of approximately 2000 shooters overall and recorded his first 100 score. "To shoot 100 birds straight is memorable," he said. "To do it at nationals made it even cooler."

*continued on page 37*

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S. WILKERSON

# The Airsoft Puzzle

## Which operating system is for you?

**A**irsoft is one of the best introductions to the world of firearms. Safe, versatile, affordable and fun, airsoft rifle and pistol replicas can be used where real firearms cannot be shot. They are an excellent way to teach a family member or friend the fundamentals of firearms instruction.

What's airsoft? They are spring-, gas-, or electric-powered air guns that shoot a comparatively "soft" plastic BB, as opposed to a much heavier and denser lead pellet or steel BB typically found in traditional air guns. Airsoft guns are far less likely to cause injury or damage than traditional BB or pellet guns.

Safer they may be, but many airsoft models are extremely realistic in appearance. This is why they are manufactured with orange muzzle caps to distinguish them from their real-world counterparts. Airsoft guns displayed in public without their orange caps are a recipe for disaster.

Despite their growing popularity, there is little, if anything, about airsoft guns to be found in firearm publications. This can make selecting an airsoft gun a bewildering experience. This article will attempt to describe the general types as well as their various attributes and cost. For much more detailed information, a great place to start is Airsoft Headquarters/TacticalToyStoreUSA.com in Waukesha.

### Don't Get Caught In A Spring Trap

Inexpensive manually-cocked, spring-driven airsoft rifles and pistols will lead to disappointment. This type of airsoft fires one round at a time and must be manually cocked for each shot. Commonly found in large department stores and often made of clear plastic, their lives are usually numbered in weeks or months. These should not be compared to excellent quality, more expensive manually-cocked airsoft bolt action and pump action shotguns, which are similar in appearance to hunting rifles and shotguns and available at Airsoft Headquarters.

### A Better Choice: The Automatic Electric Operated System

For not much more money than cheap manually-cocked airsoft rifles and pistols, you can purchase one with an automatic electrically-operated system, often referred to as an "Automatic Electric Gun (AEG)." Good quality AEGs with metal gears come with a warranty, are accurate and reliable, and can be rebuilt and upgraded if necessary. The great majority of AEGs are carbines or rifles. Quality versions are very durable and will provide years of shooting enjoyment.

AEGs utilize a battery-operated motor that drives

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NEVER REMOVE, DISGUISE, OR COVER THE ORANGE MUZZLE TIP!  
ALWAYS TRANSPORT AIRSOFT REPLICAS IN A CASE!

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three gears in a gearbox. A piston is compressed by the gears against a spring. When the trigger releases the piston, a spring drives the piston forward to launch the pellet down the barrel. AEG long-arm velocities range from about 200 to 450 feet per second and are accurate up to 75 feet. At this range a good quality AEG can penetrate a soda can, so be careful! There is a huge difference in quality between a cheap AEG with plastic gears found at a department store and those with metal gears at Airsoft Headquarters.

With a good quality AEG, you can experience hun-

*continued on page 37*

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STUART WILKERSON

# There Is A Difference

## Bullet weight and type influence accuracy

There are many factors that affect rifle accuracy, not the least of which is bullet weight and type. When it comes to AR-15 ammunition, in many cases you get what you pay for.

In an effort to determine which ammunition worked best in the Midwest Industries (MI) Billet AR-15 project, I enlisted the help of long-time fellow gun enthusiast Toothpick Jim. Jim is a former competitive shooter, and while I'm not a bad shot, he is more consistent. Since money was an object in this test, which is to say, quality ammo isn't cheap, Jim did most of the shooting.

Today, accuracy tests are typically done firing five-round groups. We shot three-round groups, because, quite frankly, we're pushing 60 and wear progressive bifocals. Younger shooters with better vision may have bested our scores. I was concerned that there was too much likelihood of flyers shooting five-round groups, which, in my opinion, could have unfairly reflected on the rifle's accuracy potential. We were also

pressed for time because of previous commitments.

Readers of this series will recall that the project rifle is based on MI billet upper and lower receivers, standard M4-type, 16 1/2-inch barrel, MI Generation II free-floated handguard, and a one-stage Stag trigger. Affixed to the upper receiver is an MI one-piece scope mount which holds a Leupold Vari-X II 3 - 9 power scope. In this configuration, professional coyote hunter Terry Russ bagged a coyote at 150 yards with one shot. He used .223 caliber Hornady Super Performance Varmint 53 grain ammunition with a polymer tip. This round was capable of shooting close to 3/4-inch three-shot groups at 100 yards, which is pretty incredible considering the rifle's standard M4-type barrel. This is not a match gun but one that is certainly capable of good target and hunting accuracy.

AR-15 ammunition can be found that is comparatively inexpensive. Steel cased Eastern European ammunition, for in-

stance, can be found at bargain basement prices, but I would not suggest using it. Sure, it's cheap, but it's very dirty and can ruin extractors in time, something you don't want occurring when your rifle absolutely, positively needs to fire.

One of the more popular, and controversial, inexpensive rounds is the 62 grain, surplus M855 "Green Tip" ammunition that the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau recently considered banning. ATF, seemingly out of the blue, decided that M855 5.56 x 45 caliber was an armor-piercing round and therefore should be banned for sale to the public. This was a reversal of a previous ATF decision that found nothing inherently evil about the round. A strong public outcry has, at least for the time being, allowed for the continued sale of the round.

As luck would have it, Jim happened to have some Green Tip for our test. Securely held in a Caldwell Matrix shooting rest, Jim managed a 2-inch group



Toothpick Jim takes aim with the MI Billet AR-15 at a 100-yard target.

with the Green Tip. With more time and ammunition, he may have gotten better groups, which is true of all the ammunition we shot. By way of comparison, I have shot 1 1/2-inch groups with Winchester .223 caliber 55 grain FMJ ammunition, another inexpensive round.

Since the MI Project gun will be primarily used for 100-yard target shooting, mainly due to cost, I was pleased that it shot 2-inch and less groups with inexpensive ammo. When it comes to ammunition, you generally get what you pay for. As previously stated, the best group was shot with 53 grain Hornady .223 caliber Super Performance Varmint

*continued on page 37*

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cations in the Madison Chain of Lakes area include: University Bay, Marshall Park, County Park, Dingles Bay, Warner Park, and Warner Bay, which are all on Lake Mendota. Lake Monona's Squaw Bay, Pirate Island, and the "Triangle" area around Brittingham Park are also all good spots. The south end of Lake Wabesa and Hog Island produce on this Chain Lake. Finally, Mud Lake can be productive early in the season for all species of panfish. Most of these spots can be fished from shore, waded or by boat.

Other fish-catching locations in the surrounding area include: Crystal Lake near Roxbury, Lake Wisconsin between Lodi and Merrimac, and the many backwaters

and sloughs of the Wisconsin River. Most days the shore angler can regularly catch crappies and bluegills on Crystal Lake. Fish these hot spots now before the fish move deeper to mid-lake structure and become much harder to catch. Keep enough for a few meals, but don't be a fish hog. Release some big females for future generations and the next angler. This is also a great time to take children fishing and introduce them to a sport that they can participate in for life. It's easy for kids to catch fish while they're shallow and accessible. Have fun!



Contact Gary Engberg at 608.795.4208 or [gengberg@garyengbergoutdoors.com](mailto:gengberg@garyengbergoutdoors.com), or visit [garyengbergoutdoors.com](http://garyengbergoutdoors.com).

**WILKERSON, from page 33**

any budget.

Midwestern Shooters' Supply is much more than a gun store. A wide variety of archery, fishing, camping gear and more is also available. Of great interest, too, is the mounted animal collection of Phil Majerus, a president of Midwestern Shooters' Supply and noted big game hunter. His collection, besides being impressive, is extremely informative and will be featured in an upcoming edition of *On Wisconsin Outdoors*.

Midwestern Shooters' Supply is more than a place of business; it's a member of the Lomira area community, Randy said. In addition to contributing financially to many clubs and community service organizations on a regular basis, Midwestern Shooters' Supply annually sponsors "Fall

Fest." Recent fests have attracted as many as 10,000 people over a two-day period. Past fests have featured store specials, vendor reps, trial guns, sportsmen's rummage, gun auction, raffles, food, live music, and pig wrestling. Much of the Lomira area community participates and hosts fundraisers at the event, including Lomira High School, Fire Department, and Lions Club. "We're very much engaged in the community," Randy said. Fun Fest will take place on August 14 and 15 this year.

Midwestern Shooters' Supply is working hard to expand the world of shooting sports and make a meaningful contribution to their community. Visit them at 191 Church St. in Lomira.

S. Wilkerson is a freelance writer specializing in firearm topics.

**ELLIS, from page 34**

Other perfect scores would follow, including a 100 at a Hartford shoot. It was the manner in which he relates the story of a "top gun" finish with a 98 at a Berlin shoot, though, that emphasizes his humility.

"It was great to score 100 in Hartford," he said. "I knew I was the best shooter there. When I won top gun with the 98 in Berlin, I knew better shooters there would have beat me if they had shot in better weather the day before like I did."

Recognizing that trap is a sport where missing one bird can mean the difference in five places in competition, Zuhlke practiced whenever he could find time prior to senior year, often meeting Coach McDermott on the trap line to find and eliminate even slight errors in shooting mechanics that could prove costly in competition. That commitment to excellence was reflected in his Golden Beavers' practice title with a 24.5 average, and to the Top Gun award in the first Kettle Moraine Conference meet

his senior year in 2014.

Prior to nationals in Sparta, Illinois, concluding his senior year, Zuhlke mentally prepared to take one bird at a time. A day one score of 100 was good for a tie for first with three other shooters, which he retained with a total score of 199 following a second day early miss. SCTP rules then considers a "reverse score," or the number of consecutive birds each shooter has broken without a miss to determine final placement. Technically, Zuhlke's nationals finish was fourth.

Justin will attend Nebraska's Concordia College on a shooter's scholarship this fall. "My parents and I visited Concordia in January," he said. "My mom said, 'Don't go for trap first; go for my education.' But to be able to go to school to get an education and also do something I love is truly special."

"He's a leader, genuine, well raised by his parents, and he appreciates everything regardless of how small," McDermott said. "Justin is pretty special."

# ATTENTION

Attention Wisconsin youth shooting sports teams.

*On Wisconsin Outdoors* looks forward to promoting your teams online at [www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com](http://www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com) and in print. Connect with [ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com) with competition results or story ideas.

**WILKERSON, from page 35**

dreds of rounds of full-auto-fun for literally pennies; 5,000 rounds of high quality plastic BBs can be had for a mere \$16, the cost of about 100 .22 rimfire rounds (assuming you can find a store with .22 rimfire in stock).

In appearance, many AEGs are virtually exact replicas of their real-world counterparts. A good quality, serviceable M4 or AK47-type AEG can be had for as little as \$89 at Airsoft Headquarters or as much as \$450. The difference between the two price-points can be found in features and accuracy. By way of comparison, an M4-type Bushmaster AR-15 is fairly inexpensive and a good rifle. A reasonable amount of additional money, on the other hand, will allow you to build or buy a Midwest Industries AR-15 with an improved barrel, trigger, and stock furniture that will deliver even better performance. Either rifle will be totally functional. The choice comes down to how much you want to spend, accuracy expectations, intended purpose, and other factors.

**Compressed Gas System**

Gas-powered airsoft guns are typically pistols and can provide the most realistic firearm experience when designed with a blowback feature to simulate recoil. They also often look just like their real counterparts. Gas-powered airsoft guns use "Green Gas (a combination of propane and silicone)" or Co2 cartridges to operate their firing systems. Compressed gas models are available in full- and semi-automatic.

Like AEGs, compressed gas airsoft guns are far less costly to shoot than centerfire and rimfire cartridges. This is why an increasing number of law enforcement agencies utilize compressed gas (and AEG) airsofts for training purposes. Priced 9 mm or .40 caliber ammunition lately? When 5,000 pellets and a can of propellant can be bought for \$32, it's little wonder so many serious shooters are turning to airsoft. That and the fact that you don't need to pay a range fee. "A backyard, basement or garage will work perfect," Airsoft Headquarters/TacticalToyStoreUSA.com President Scott Boyd said.

The best introduction to airsoft is a visit to Airsoft Headquarters. Whether its spring, electric or gas, their expert staff can direct you to the airsoft gun that best serves your needs and budget.

**WILKERSON, from page 36**

ammunition. Success was also found with Remington UMC .223 caliber 45 grain jacketed hollow points, which shot 1 ¾-inch groups and Nosler SSA 5.56 caliber 77 grain open tip match rounds, which shot 1 ¼-inch groups.

Our ammunition test of the MI Project AR-15 was by no means scientific. We would have needed a lot more ammunition and time to seriously wring the rifle out for accuracy. Hopefully this test does demonstrate the versatility of this gun and round. I wanted a rifle capable of shooting 2-inch groups or less at 100 yards and I now have one.

While we were at the range, we also fired Jim's CMP AR-15 match rifle. The rifle, with its lead filled stock and super-heavy match-grade barrel and 6 - 24 power scope tipped the scales at over 14 pounds, nearly twice as heavy as the MI project. The CMP gun had a 2.5-pound trigger pull compared to about five pounds on my rifle. Not surprisingly, Jim's rifle was amazingly accurate, shooting groups as small as half an inch at 100 yards.

You can buy or build an MI AR-15 that will provide amazing accuracy. Which got me to thinking: my barrel and stock furniture suit my purposes just fine, but maybe I should look into a better trigger and scope for the MI project.

There is no end in sight to this project.

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