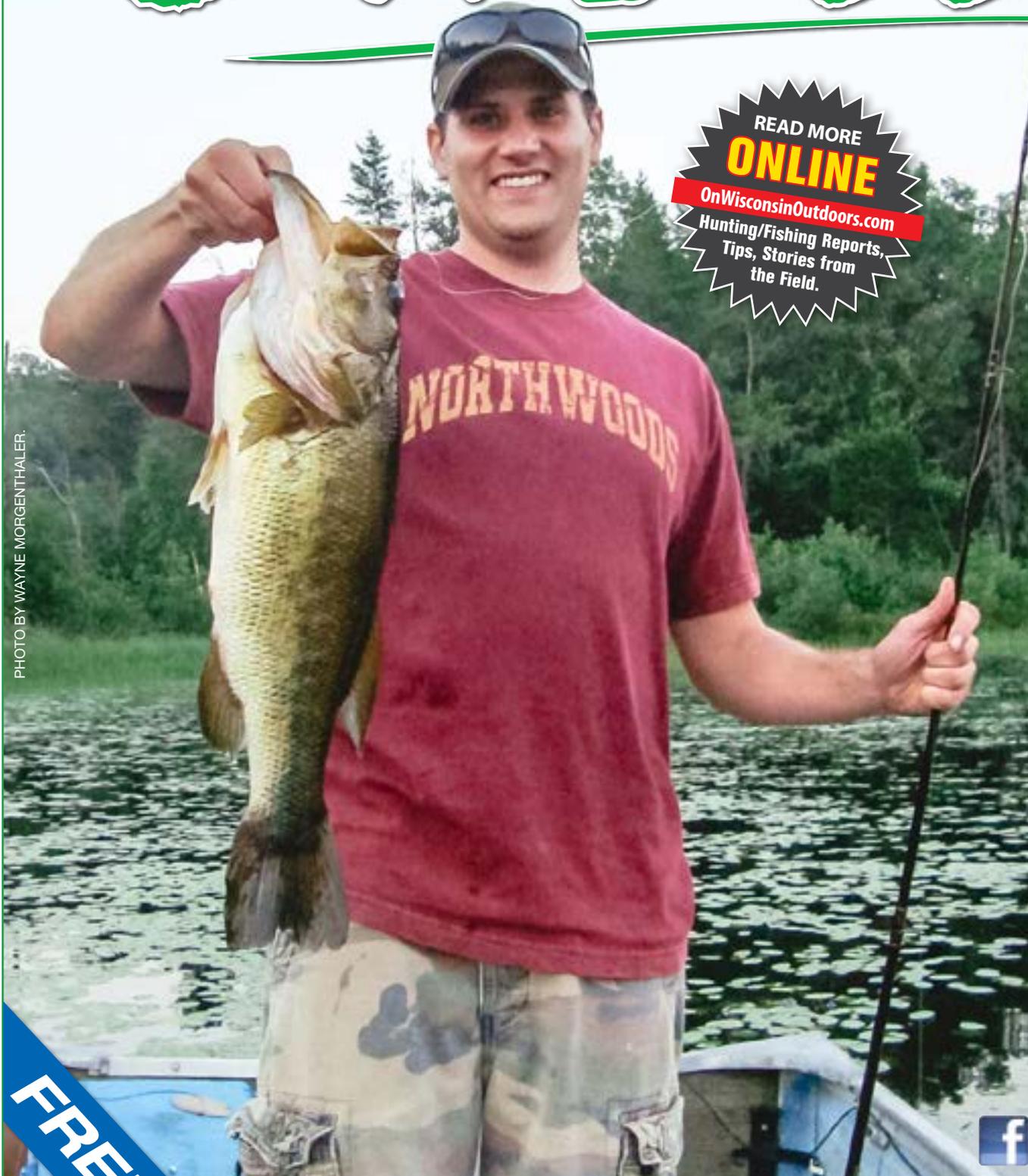


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**CAPTAIN ADAM COCHART**

# Stealth Setup To Keep King Salmon Biting All Day Long

## Getting the most out of your time on the water

Every king salmon angler traveling to Lake Michigan has two wishes as they plan for their fishing trip: calm waters providing a comfortable ride and the perfect setup to catch a lot of fish. But oftentimes a calm day with clear skies is the most difficult time to catch salmon.

So how do you get the bites and keep them coming all day long? The answer is to create a stealth setup using lead core and copper fishing line. Both line concepts basically serve as a long sinker, which takes lures down to the depths that active salmon are feeding. These segments of line can be as short as 50 feet if the fish are really high in the water column or at lengths over 500 feet if the fish are deep in the water column. The idea is that your line is sinking into the water column without the use of a down rigger, dipsy diver, or weight that would be attached near the bait, which could otherwise scatter or scare off the fish. Instead, lead core and copper users are able to put a fluorocarbon leader, which is invisible to the fish, between their lead core or copper and their bait of choice to create a sneaky approach, especially on calm, clear days when the light penetrates deeper into the water column.

Being able to run multiple lines using this tactic will keep you catching salmon all day long. To add additional lead core or copper lines to your spread, you want to use planer boards to carry your lines away from the boat and away from each other. Boards add strike-triggering action to the lures behind them. As the boat makes slight turns, the boards on the inside of the turn slow down, mak-



Jeremiah Noffke of Menasha shows off a nice midday king that he caught while his grandpa, Wayne Noffke, reels in another trophy in the background.

ing the line and lure sink, while the boards on the outer side of the turn will speed up, making those lures rise in the water column. This movement in the water column makes your lures act like injured baitfish on the slower (inner) side as they slow and sink. Meanwhile, lures on the fast (outer) side act as baitfish rising up and fleeing from the predator salmon. Use every strike that you get to build a pattern and fine tune your setup to put more fish on the boat.

Principles to remember when fishing with lead core and copper line: copper dives deeper than lead core and must be run closer to the boat to ensure that the lines do not get tangled together;

each line set to the inside is longer and goes deeper; to avoid tangles between board lines, the shorter, more shallow lines are set first and go to the outside of the spread. Resetting outside lines and getting them past the inside lines takes patience and timing. You must let all of the weighted line into the water, attach the boards to the backing, and then let the board out behind the boat, occasionally thumbing your reel to keep the line from sinking all the way to the bottom in shallow water (less than 80 feet). When you've let enough line out that the board will plane into formation, engage the reel and put the rod into the rod holder. The board will pick up enough speed to lift the line over the inside lines



Captain Adam Cochart of Bay Lake Charters landed this 30-pound salmon using a spoon trolled behind 300 feet of copper fishing line.

*continued on page 10*

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This event is for people with disabilities and offers Trap shooting, Fishing, Pontoon Boat Rides, an animal petting area, along with a picnic with music, and games. Directions: From New Berlin go south from I-43 on Moorland Road about 4 miles (Moorland Road becomes Durham Drive). Watch for Hunters Nest sign on the right.

The Wheelin' Sportsmen program of the National Wild Turkey Federation is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing opportunities for people with disabilities to enjoy the great outdoors. Wheelin' Sportsmen Events bring together the best of the outdoors-camaraderie, fun, fellowship-into an action packed adventure. The shooting event pairs disabled participants with non-disabled volunteers for a day of adventure and a lifetime of friendship.

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TOM CARPENTER

# Wading Wet For Bronzbacks

## Summer smallmouth splash

The sun beats down. Your favorite lake feels as warm as a baby's bath. Pleasure boaters assault the waters. "Fishing's no good now," you rationalize as an excuse to stay home. But don't laze away a day of high sum-

mer's glory in air conditioning or on a shady hammock. Better to wade into a smallmouth bass stream and cool off there. Your only companions will be the swish of water around your bare legs, cicadas singing in the trees above, and

hungry smallmouths splashing at the end of your line.

### Gearing Down

Simplicity makes wading wet for summer smallmouths both affordable and

relaxing. No waders or hip boots allowed. You're good in a pair of shorts or swim trunks. Wear an old pair of sneakers.

Use a light or medium-light 6-foot graphite spinning rod and a quality reel spooled with tough, abrasion-resistant 6-pound monofilament to fight the rocks. Rig up with a gold or red size 6 or 4 hook and a single split shot just big enough to keep your bait ticking above rocks and snags in the current.

Hook a fat nightcrawler half through the middle. To a smallmouth, it looks suspiciously like a crayfish when bounced through a run, riffle or pool. Minnows, hellgrammites and grasshoppers also work. Carry only a little bait at a time, leaving your main supply in a shaded cooler on the bank.

Artificial alternatives include small crankbaits in crayfish colors, in-line spinners, and 1/16- to 1/4-ounce lead-head jigs tipped with curly tails or Berkley Gulp! Minnows (try the 2 1/2-inch emerald shiner).

Wear a good pair of polarized sunglasses to read the water better.

### Fishing Strategies

Stream smallmouths don't discriminate against anglers who sleep in or go home for dinner. In fact, the best fishing often happens in the afternoon, especially on dark or stained water where the bass can now hunt visually. Mid-morning through late afternoon is prime.

Mid-stream rocks serve as current deflectors for feeding bass. Exposed rocks are obvious, but also look for the bulges and humps that indicate submerged boulders. Drift a bait into the hole behind a rock. But the most aggressive fish will be in the slackwater break ahead of a boulder.

Active fish will be near fast water but not right in the swiftest flow. Look for foam and swirls that indicate an eddy or backwash. Bounce a bait along with the current and see if a bass will dart out and hit. If not, then drift a bait into the eddy or make a gentle cast right into it.

Smallmouths like current. Fish a section of fast, faster and fastest water from the downstream end up. Fast water—what a trout guy would call a run—will be deepest; work with patience. Move upstream and fish faster water, casting

*continued on page 7*

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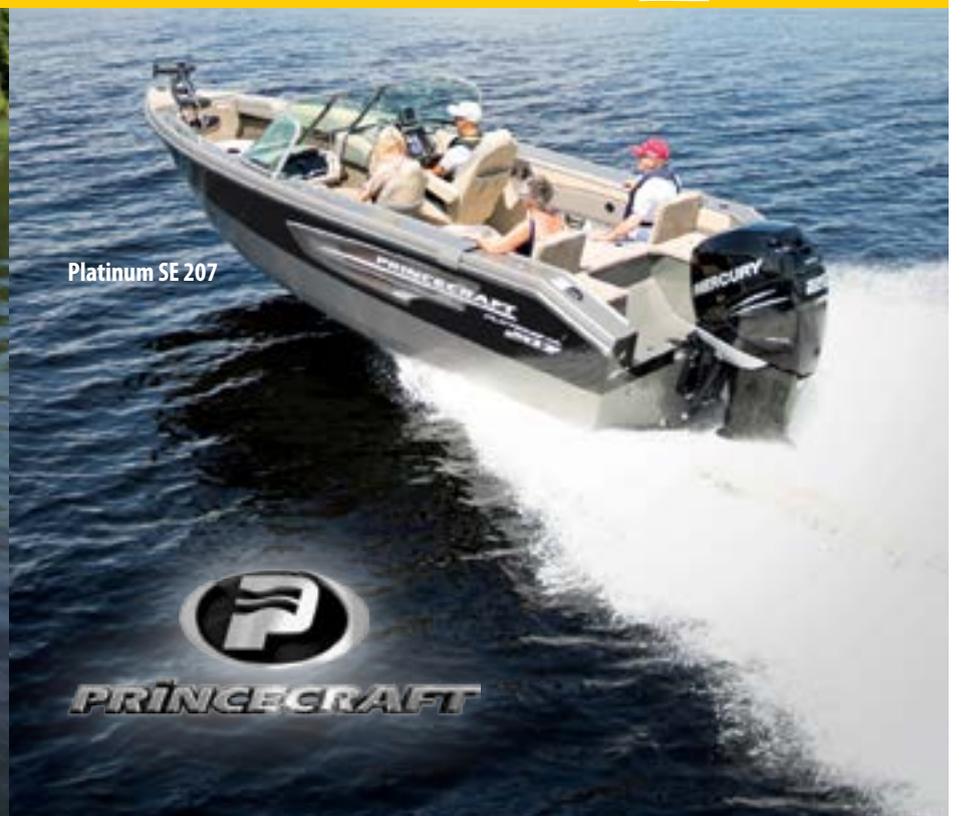
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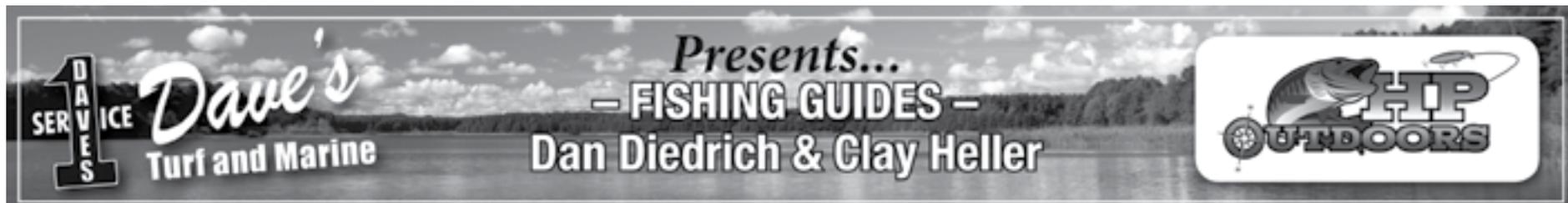


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CLAYTON HELLER

## Moonstruck Muskies

### Fishing the lunar phases

As a musky guide I get to spend time on the water with a wider variety of people each year. Some of them are seasoned anglers and others have never fished before. No matter who it might be, a few of the same questions always seem to come up during the trip.

The first one is the obvious: what's your favorite bait? You can find the answer to that in my article "Making The Cut" in the March/April issue of this publication. The second question usually has something to do with moon phases. It often starts out very skeptical like, "So do you believe in the whole moon phase thing?" The simple answer is yes, I do. The bigger question is why?

Trust me. I was very skeptical about the whole moon phase thing when I

started out. I thought it was just someone trying to sell me another calendar, but there is truth to it. I'm not going to pretend to be Bill Nye and get into gravitational pull and its relationship to the tidal waters and all that jazz. My belief in the moon phases' effects on fishing is much simpler than that. After spending 100-plus days on the water yearly and logging fish catches and sightings, I have noticed a very distinct correlation between fish activity and moon rise and moon set, along with several of our biggest fish each year being caught during a full or new moon phase.

Moon phase is often just a small piece of the puzzle that is musky fishing. Weather seems to always trump moon. Some days, however, it can be the decid-

ing factor. During one tournament that I fished last year my partner and I scored a fish five minutes before moon set, approximately 8:15AM. We called for a judge boat only to find out that they were on the way to register another fish in a different part of the lake. On the way to register that fish they watched as another team slid a fish into the net. My partner and I scored our second fish of the day about an hour later, and the only other fish came with about a half hour left in the tournament. All in all, five fish were caught and three of them were caught in a 15-minute window surrounding moon set.

With all that being said, remember, you can't catch 'em if you don't go. The best time to fish is always whenever you

Author and his partner with a moon phase tournament musky.



can fish. Just be sure to pay attention to moon phases while you are on the water. If you notice that moon rise or moon set is coming up, try to get to your best spot or return to a fish that you might have seen earlier in the day. Try "fishing the moon" and see if you don't put a few extra muskies in the boat. *OW*

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.

CARPENTER, from page 4

over likely lies and bouncing a bait through, concentrating on seams and eddies. Hit the fastest water, focusing on exposed and submerged rocks.

If fast water isn't producing, the fish are holding or resting in deeper pools. Probe pools slowly and carefully, lobbing soft upstream casts and working baits slowly and deeply with what current there is.

Don't overlook wood. A downed tree edging over the bank, a trunk lodged midstream, and submerged or undercut roots make fine smallmouth holds.

The best approach for most smallmouth spots is to cast upstream, then tick the bait along with the flow, letting the current take your offering right to the fish. Hold the rod high to feed line and guide your drift, feeling for the solid "whump" of a bass. *OW*

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



Escape the crowds on a hazy, hot day this summer. Wade wet after smallmouth bass in a cool Wisconsin stream.

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PUBLISHER | EDITOR:  
Dick Ellis  
[ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com)

COPY EDITOR:  
Heidi Rich  
[submissions@onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:submissions@onwisconsinoutdoors.com)

DESIGN | PRODUCTION:  
Ali Garrigan  
[ali@onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:ali@onwisconsinoutdoors.com)

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TOM LUBA

## The Dam

### Moving water largemouth

As you grow, there are times when you just have to take that next step. But I certainly didn't think of that when I was 12 years old.

My brother and I loved fishing. My aunt and uncle used to take us up north for a two-week fishing vacation every July. One structure we fished from the top was a 25-foot high dam that drained an upper flowage into a river system below. My uncle was always there, fishing for bass and bluegill.

While traveling down the dam to net fish was scary, my uncle's solution was to simply go down the side, which had a very steep angle. There wasn't a handrail, just a lot of loose sand and gravel mixed into the larger surface rock, which made the footing treacherous. After my aunt watched my uncle skid down the hill, she knew he was the only one who'd be taking fish down for netting.

One afternoon, my uncle decided to go fishing on the lake. Being on the edge of thirteen, I got bored easily. After begging, I got my aunt to take me to the dam.

"I don't want you to slide down this hill if you get a bass," by aunt sternly warned.

I nodded my head but thought, "Out of sight, out of mind."

After about an hour with no fish, I was disappointed. But just when I was ready to pack it in, the cork that held my night crawler up off the rocky bottom went slowly under. A few seconds later it started to move out from the spillway current. I'd seen that happen before. I pulled hard. And a fish did, too!

A few seconds later when the fish jumped, my eyes bugged out. It was the biggest bass I had ever seen.

My initial reaction was panic. My uncle was gone. How do I land it?

By now my aunt noticed the big bend in my fishing rod as I walked the fish over to the side of the dam. The first words I heard were, "You can't come down the side of the dam! You'll get hurt!"

I heard her, but I wasn't losing a

fish this big without a battle. Better to beg forgiveness ... provided I lived.

So down the hill I went, grabbing any rocks or roots I could to stop me from going in the drink. I came to a stop right in front of another angler. The fish was still on!

The other angler grabbed my line and then the fish. But when he pulled it out of the water and handed it back to me, the fish flipped and the hook broke free. I couldn't hold on to the fish, either, and it started to slide down the last few feet, right for the water. That's when he sat on the fish as it slid down. He deftly grabbed it and handed it back to me.

Boy, did I hold on this time. In a flash, I was up the hill and doing 90 mph as I ran back to the cottage to get it on a stringer.

Catching that bass was important. It took away any fear I had about working my way down the gravelly, slippery hill alone. I just couldn't wait to see the look on my uncle's face later.

When my aunt saw how much it meant to me, she forgave me, after a serious lecture.

The largemouth weighed 3 3/4 pounds, a monster to me. My uncle was impressed.

Though I'm sure it had nothing to do with my experience, when we got to the dam the next year, there were new stairs, with hand railings, on both sides of the dam.

My uncle and I fished the dam for years afterward. And my aunt felt a lot better, because I could now use the stairs to take the fish down myself.

By the way, I learned a long time ago that largemouth bass are not as current-shy as many people think.

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.*

DAVE DUWE

## Slip Bobber Fishing For Big Bass

### A "hot" summer tactic

The ups and downs of the weather and the changing seasons add a challenge for my clients to put fish in the boat. In the late part of summer the bite has a tendency to slow down a bit. This time is known as the dog days of summer. To ensure success I need to resort to more live bait presentations to make customers happy. One of my favorite methods is a slip bobber rig, not for walleye and panfish but for huge bass and pike. It is basically the same presentation that Florida guides have been using for decades: balloons and large shiners for monster largemouth bass.

The standard slip bobber presentation is a slip bobber knot, a bead, a slip bobber, weight, and a 1/0 hook. The key part of the rig is a large bobber. I use the Thill Big Fish slider. The bobber is large and tapered at both ends. The tapered end allows the bobber to be pulled down with very little resistance. When using a small-to medium-sized sucker or chub, the float will lie flat on the water when the bait is calm. However, when a fish gets close or the bait gets excited, the bobber will stand straight up alerting you to the proximity of a fish before it strikes. Unlike bluegills or walleyes, the bass strike aggressively without hesitation. Because of the aggressive nature of the strike, once the bobber is under I immediately set the hook. This eliminates the possibility of getting the fish deeply hooked. Largemouth bass have the tendency to release the bait if they feel any resistance. When fishing any slip bobber, before the hook set one needs to reel all the slack line back to the reel. This increases your odds for a solid hook up.

The rod set up I prefer is a heavy one: a 7-foot Berkley Lightening rod heavy action with a Garcia 6500 and 20-pound test. The 6500 reel offers a bait clicker feature, which is nice to have to indicate strikes. It allows you to fish the reel on free spool while still having some tension on the line. With an aggressive hit the line will be allowed to release.

My bait of choice is medium and large suckers. They have the ability to survive being cast more than a fragile golden shiner. Even though the suckers are pretty durable, you still need to have a gentler cast and avoid slapping the bait on the water.

On hot summer days the bass are usually on the deep weedline, but with a cold front or a rain event the bass move into



Delavan Lake largemouth.

the shallows. This is the best opportunity to slip bobber largemouth bass. I like areas where there are scattered weeds associated with hard bottom adjacent to a deep water weedline. Once you locate the bass they have a tendency to be in large schools. You can catch over 10 fish in a very small area. The lakes I fish most are Delavan Lake and Lake Geneva, both in southeastern Wisconsin. The most productive areas are less than 10 feet of water.

Slip bobber fishing is great for walleye and panfish, but don't overlook the method for big bass, especially during cold fronts and rainy days in the heat of the summer. When nothing else works, the tried and true live presentation will give you a better opportunity for success. W

*Dave Duwe is owner of Dave Duwe's Guide Service and guides the lakes of southeastern Wisconsin, specializing in Delavan Lake and Lake Geneva. Find him at fishlakegeneva.com or fishdelavanlake.com or contact him at 262.728.8063.*



Big bass on bobbers on Delavan Lake.

JERRY KIESOW

## Fly Fishing In Wisconsin

### The basics of casting

Last issue I told you about a new streamer I designed for our kids in Missouri, the Missouri shad. I said I would report on how it works. Simply, it does. Our daughter tells us that they have used it and have caught many Lake of the Ozarks crappies up to 14 inches.

I decided it looked so good that I would use it for steelhead this spring. Well ... steelheading did not work out well for me this year. But during the second week of May, as I was preparing for my Beginners Fly Fishing class at Riveredge Nature Center, I scheduled some “research time” in the Milwaukee River—for the benefit of the class, of course. Part of that research involved the new fly.

The results? In about 90 minutes of using the Missouri shad I caught three smallmouth bass: 14, 16, and 10 inches, in that sequence, and a northern pike about 22 inches. All on my three weight. The fly did not cast very well because it is just a tad too big for that rod/line combination (three inches long, on a #1/0 hook), but based on the success of the day, the Missouri fly works in Wisconsin, too. I just thought you might like to know.

If you missed the story and want complete info on the fly, including the recipe, go to [onwisconsinoutdoors.com](http://onwisconsinoutdoors.com) and check it out in the May/June issue. End of report.

Now, on to this story: different ways to cast a fly.

In May and June while showing students in the above-mentioned classes how to do the overhead and roll casts, I told them that after they get comfortable with these casts, they will find there will be times when they will modify them to accommodate whatever situations might arise. They may have to sidearm, cross body, change-of-direction, and maybe

even need to use the short “hold, toss, and drift” cast.

What I did not tell them, but will in future classes, is that casting while standing on a mowed lawn, where we were learning, is different than when casting from the shore of a pond or lake or stream/river or wading a stream/river, or from a sitting position in a boat, canoe or kayak.

When casting from a shore, you will be standing (maybe kneeling), and sometimes you will have plenty of room for your back cast. However, there will be places where you won't and will have to roll cast or maybe even do the short hold, toss, and drift cast.

When wading in either a small stream, large river or in a lake, you will also be standing (or, rarely, sitting or kneeling), but you will not always be in shallow water in that comfortable, solid standing position we were in when learning on the lawn. Many times you will be waist deep in a fast, strong current, desperately trying to remain upright, and your casts will have to be made from difficult angles and/or with your arms in a high, outstretched, position. Sometimes you will not always have a clear back cast, so you will have to try a combination the sidearm-in-front-of-you and change-of-direction cast, making the change just prior to releasing the line.

Then, when fly fishing from a canoe, kayak or an old-fashioned boat, you will be casting from a low, sitting position, a totally different experience from lawn casting. Some people find that when casting from a sitting position, they can only cast comfortably to one side of the boat. Casting to both sides of the craft is a skill you need to master if you want to fish certain waters.

*continued on page 10*

*When wading, you are often not in such a comfortable position as shown here. Many times you are waist deep in fast running water and casts must be made from different angles and/or with your arms in a raised position.*



PHIL SCHWEIK

## Shallow Thinking

### Washed up walleyes change the rules

How many times have you gone walleye fishing in the heat of the summer and come home empty handed? How often have you targeted what you thought were characteristic walleye locations only to find that the fish weren't there or they certainly weren't biting? Or maybe you're among the masses who think that only the break of dawn or dusk brings the feeding windows necessary for effective walleye fishing.

Think again.

With water temperatures in the upper 70s, and maybe even the lower 80s, most people target walleyes in deep water. Many anglers wouldn't consider searching for walleyes in anything less than eight feet of water, much less look for them in less than three feet. Change

that “shallow” thinking as an angler, and take the walleye bite back from the dog days.

Many years ago, I stumbled into a non-typical walleye pattern while bass fishing along a shallow shoreline marked with downed trees protruding out into the water. The depth of shoreline water ranged from one to three feet, extending out to about five feet where I positioned the boat. Pitching a jig and beavertail to the submerged wood, I would make precise drops along the timber to target bass that I suspected were holding under the trees.

As the jig would hit the water I would let it drop alongside the tree and wait for an initial strike. If I didn't get the hit, I would pop the jig a little and slowly



*Chad Widginton with a nice walleye.*

work it alongside the structure. On this first eye-opening trip when that strike did come and I set the hook, to my surprise, instead of a big old bass what I had on the other end of the line was a 24-inch walleye. Yes, a two-foot walleye taken in two feet of 84-degree water.

*continued on page 11*

JOEL DEBOER

# Summer Smallmouth On Top

*Cash in on some of the most exciting bass action of the season*

Smallmouth bass are a popular game fish in our state for many reasons. For starters, there are good numbers of them within many Wisconsin lakes, rivers and flowages, including true trophy class specimens exceeding five pounds. In addition to being plentiful, they are exciting to catch as they put up a powerful battle, often displaying their acrobatic prowess by going airborne multiple times. July and August can be an excellent time to target smallmouth and often leads to one of the most thrilling of tactics to target bronze backs: fishing with surface lures.

I am a surface bait junkie. There are few things that make my heart pound harder than a solid strike on top of the water, be it bluegill on a fly rod or bass or musky exploding on a surface lure on more conventional gear. Being a successful surface bait fisherman for smallmouth begins with the proper equipment. Longer rod lengths excel for fishing with topwater lures. It is seldom that I fish with a rod shorter than seven feet anymore, especially when fishing baits on top.

Longer rods not only give an angler better leverage for hook sets and fighting fish, but using surface lures allows the angler to keep as much of the line as possible off the water. This aides in maximizing the action of the lure, makes the presentation as natural as possible, and in ultra-shallow water situations aides the prevention of spooking fish. For



*Summertime is topwater time as the author shows here while posing briefly with a dandy smallmouth caught on a Skitter Pop.*

smallmouth bass I prefer a 7- to 8-foot St. Croix spinning rod in a medium fast action. I complete the outfit by adding a spinning reel spooled with a supple line such as Sufix Siege in either 8- or 10-pound test.

There are a variety of lures that will score on smallmouth that fall into the category of topwater baits. One of my favorites is the popper-style lure such as the Rapala Skitter Pop or Storm Rattlin' Chug Bug. These lures are surprisingly

versatile and work in conditions ranging from glass calm to a slight chop. Their ability to be worked extremely slowly is a big bonus. Work poppers with a stop-and-go retrieve, varying your cadence and the amount of time the lure sits at rest. There have been days when the smallmouths have dictated that we let the lure sit for over 30 seconds between pulls in order to provoke fish strikes.

Walk-the-dog style baits like the Skitter Walk are mesmerizing lures to both

fish and fishermen alike. This family of lures typically works better during calmer water conditions and during daylight hours. As with poppers, it's important to work walk-the-dog style lures while varying both your retrieve speed and cadence. There will be days when the fish want longer pauses and an irregular retrieve, just as there will be days that are the exact opposite. Keep experimenting.

While there are volumes more that could be written about fishing with surface lures, one rule that needs to be followed at all times is the "reel 'til you feel" technique. Simply put this means that no matter what your eyes tell you, hold off on setting the hook until you actually feel the weight of the fish. With all the adrenalin pumping during a topwater strike, it's easy to pull the bait away from a fish before it's had the chance to get the bait in its mouth. Train yourself in this manner and I guarantee you will boat many more of the fish that strike. If you haven't experienced the thrill of fishing smallmouth on top, you owe it to yourself. I'll see you on the water. 

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

## COCHART, from page 3

and your outside line will be set once again.

Additionally, lead core and copper lines work great for trolling flashers and flies, spoons, or plugs, so know that they will work with all of your favorite salmon lures. Team your past knowledge of what has produced fish with your new stealthy approach of lead cores and coppers and you will have increased your odds at enjoying that clear, calm day on Lake Michigan. Tight lines, calm seas, and fish on! 

*Captain Adam Cochart grew up in Door County, fishing the waters of the Bay of Green Bay and Lake Michigan. 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. For more information, visit baylakescharters.com or call Adam at 920.594.0910.*

## KIESOW, from page 9

These are things I can tell the students about but cannot teach. Only after one gets comfortable with the basic cast can one advance to the other situations.

So if you are a beginning fly fisherperson, practice casting until it becomes second nature. Then, when the day comes that you need to modify that cast, you will. And when that time comes, suddenly you will find that you are enjoying fly fishing even more.

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.*



*When fly fishing from a canoe or boat, you usually are casting from a lower, sitting position.*

WAYNE MORGENTHALER

# Wisconsin River Backwaters

## Canoe to fast fishing, isolation

**M**y favorite time of year to target the Wisconsin River and its backwaters mainly in Richland County is the middle of June through August. The backwater lakes are all just about the same as far as the make-up, but the size of the lake can make a difference. I always check to see how much algae and weeds are on the water surface. Too much debris makes it difficult to fish with much success. My mode of transportation is the canoe, but kayaks or flat bottoms work just as well.

If you really want to have a successful trip, don't get on the water until about 6:00 PM or 6:00 AM. Your choice, but I like the evenings better as the bite gets more intense toward dark.

I like to target different types of fish species. First on the agenda is the large-mouth bass. Use a long spinning rod supplied with at least 8-pound test line. Try fishing with weedless baits on the top through lily pads. One of the artificial baits of choice is the Scum Frog—great for big splashes and quick reflexes. Make sure to give a big-time jerk right after the splash.

Another fun lure is the Lethal Weapon fished with a plastic crawfish in green-brown color. Just swim it through the pads and wait for that awesome strike. The near 7-pound bucketmouth on the cover of this *OWO* issue caught by my son, Kevin Morgenthaler, shows



Kevin Morgenthaler with a 5-pound walleye.

the potential of the fish waiting for you. I prefer to use a small metal leader with this bait, as northern pike love the action of it moving through the pads and then striking just after the crawdad hits open water. Try your own favorite bass baits and keep track of the colors that are most successful.

Around 7:30 PM it is time to switch gears and go for the panfish. I love a pink and white 1/16-ounce jig fished with 4-pound test on an ultra-light rod. With the sun setting below the tree line, the shadows are covering the lake. You now have the edge, as most backwater lakes are crystal clear. Start fishing the weedlines. Most evenings the wind has subsided, which is important when fishing with artificial. I cast right next to pads and let the bait slowly sink for



Author with two crappies caught on Mini Mites in pink and white.

about three seconds. Then start a jerky retrieve, watching your line all the time. If the line starts going off to the side, set the hook. Crappies like to mouth the bait and swim with it before inhaling.

Another point to remember is that if you like to fish the bottom, your chances of picking up perch will increase. Perch are an aggressive feeder; you will know when they hit. Male bluegills love the pink and white and are found close to the lily pads. They do not make any excuses and will hit the jig with full force. Crappies are the last in the chain of pan-

fish that will bite better with darkness.

Enjoy the late evening flight of ducks and geese as you depart. Also, this is the time when the mosquitoes are looking for a good meal. I like to wear head netting, long light pants, and a nice light long sleeved shirt. Have fun and always remember to bring a friend. *OWO*

Wayne Morgenthaler has fished southwestern Wisconsin for the past 45 years. He has written outdoor articles for *MidWest News'* website under the name *Little Bobber*. A retired high school teacher and coach, Wayne is married with three children.

### SCHWEIK, from page 9

Surprised was an understatement as I stood there looking at this beautiful fish. All I could think of was that the circumstances around the catch must have been a fluke. What would any self-respecting walleye be doing in less than three feet of water? The idea that the catch was an accident disappeared quickly as I continued down the shoreline and actually caught more walleyes than bass. The walleyes were literally stacked along this "washed-up" shoreline and piled under the adjacent structure.

As that dog day wore on I became more and more convinced about my newfound technique and pattern. Never expecting to see walleyes up that shallow, especially in summer, I was like a kid in a candy store. I had all this "new" water and basically had it all to myself.

I had never seen anyone target walleyes up this shallow—only the bass or pike anglers. The one exception to finding walleyes up this shallow was during the spring spawn, and even then it was for only a short period of time.

Looking shallow isn't your only key to catching these walleyes. The real key to unlocking great summertime walleye fishing is location. These fish were holding in exact locations that related to specific pieces of structure. If the wind was blowing into the area, even better; the stirred water kept visibility even lower.

When targeting these fish oriented to shallow water structure, I had to make precise casts to get the jig accurately within six inches of the structure and the closer the better. If the bait landed any more than a foot away from the wood, I did not get a strike. The walleyes

were holding so tightly to the structure that it was like I was surgically removing them when I did hook fish.

I continued with that specific pattern for the remainder of the summer and found that it was successful right into the fall. Since that initial revelation I have applied the technique year after year, and with a few modifications a "fluke" has evolved into a reliable walleye pattern when the dog days of summer arrive. *OWO*

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.



The author's daughter, Cassandra Schweik, with a fine Wisconsin River walleye.

DICK ELLIS

# On Wisconsin Outdoors

## Winnebago walleyes fall to cast and drift

Although Lady Luck plays her part, successful fishing is most often based on right decisions. For the experienced angler, the decisions are calculated. Where do I set up? When do I go? What do I use?

Jim Olsson made the perfect decision in July when he canceled a planned trip to Lake Winnebago targeting walleyes. Extended still weather and scorching temperatures hung over Wisconsin. Olsson reasoned that with no wind to stir up baitfish, the predator had no reason to move, either, and would hold tight on the bottom instead of moving up to feed on the shallow, vast weed bars.

Since our tactic would be drifting and throwing crankbaits over the shallow bars, with trailing crawlers also part of the arsenal, Olsson waited for dropping temperatures and rising winds. Our payoff when we hit the state's largest inland lake days later was Winnebago gold: big walleyes and lots of them.

Scott Heitman and I of New Berlin

put in with Olsson and Doug Graber of Mukwonago at Nagy Park on the west end of Winnebago before first light. Our sights were set on Long Point Reef, a huge bar and one of many that a fisherman can't come close to covering in a day drifting and casting. Although the lot was filled, Winnebago is so large at 137,708 acres and 30 miles long by 10 miles wide that only one other boat worked this particular reef.

Olsson was a doubter who evolved slowly into a true believer by fishing Winnie and listening to the banter. His cousin's first trip to Winnebago resulted in a four-man limit of walleyes to 18 inches. There is no size restriction on the self-sustaining Winnebago with a five fish bag. Those May fish, Olsson thinks, were males still returning from the spring river runs.

"I listened to the talk on Winnebago," he said. "I knew how good the July and August walleye and perch fishing could be. I started to think, maybe I'm missing something."



Jim Olsson, Doug Graber, and Scott Heitman with some of the walleyes taken on crankbaits and trailing crawlers while drifting.

Doug Graber shows a 23-inch walleye and the crankbait it fell to drifting and casting. Jim Olsson put the July anglers on fast action.



Before our trip, Olsson returned several times to Winnebago to learn the lake and try to determine where the fish would be each time, why and when. He found answers in success and failure. He never caught a walleye nocturnally despite fishing all night. When he rescheduled our trip, his eyes were on the radar.

"The fish were shut down for a long time during the hot, still weather," he said. "When we did hit the water, we would be in cool temperatures and ahead of a big storm front coming in. I think Winnebago is best in 10 mile per hour winds. We had a lot higher winds than that, so we put out the wind sock and used an occasional double-anchor drag."

Olsson used his 18-foot Tracker with Merc 115 to move across the lake and used the east/southeasterly winds to push our first drift across Long Point reef. We then moved north or south a few hundred yards on the reef to work new water. Winds rising to 20 mph fed the constant two-foot chop to the occasional three or four footers. Boats could be seen silhouetted on the horizon in the never-ending trolling circle pattern utilized by many anglers here on fish.

"These reefs are all over the west side of Winnebago," Olsson said. "On the

north and east side there are deep mud flats where the walleyes suspend to feed. Early in the year people are generally trolling the deep water. I like the sting of a strike when casting crankbaits."

That sting came often. When we had to pull green weeds from the hooks of our jointed Shad Raps, Husky Jerks, or Berkley Flicker Shads, we prepared for walleye strikes. We also pulled crawlers on #8 Baitkeeper hooks with split shot, which caught walleyes but also six sheepshead to every gamefish.

Graber broke the ice on the first pass with a 22-inch fish and another at 23. Olsson caught the morning's biggest walleye at 24-plus and a limit on crawlers and lures. Heitman caught several fish, including one walleye at 21 inches. I was waiting for my five-fish limit when fast action stopped after three hours of drifting and throwing. With 15 walleyes collectively and four fish between 20 and 24-1/2 inches, we were thick in Winnebago gold.

"It was my best trip in two years," Olsson said. "I've never seen that many bigger fish. Normally it's fish 18 or 19 inches that we would be talking about."

Good call, Jim Olsson. Sometimes things are hot when things are not. 

RON STRESING

# Whiskered Warriors

## Catfishing the Wolf River

**M**y rod tip barely twitched before the rod bent double in the pole holder. Yet another channel catfish had hit and taken the bait with the subtle pick-up of a speeding dump truck. After tossing the catfish into the cooler, I dried off the orange dip worm and re-baited it with the smelly peanut butter-looking bait from the jar. Before sunrise and boat traffic ended this memorable morning on the Wolf River, I had caught 10 nice-sized fish. Once I had unlocked the right combination of bait flavor and worm color, filling up the cooler with catfish wasn't all that hard.

Dip bait, also called "stink bait" due to its aromatic qualities, is a deadly efficient way to catch a lot of channel catfish. It's easy to use and transport and has the advantage of being a catfish-specific bait. (In over 20 years the only fish other than a catfish I've caught on dip bait was a 14-inch bullhead.) Unlike night crawlers or red worms, it will not attract non-target species of fish like freshwater drum (sheepshead) carp or suckers.

The heat that kills and transforms expensive night crawlers into smelly goo only serves to make most dip baits more soft and sticky. Dip bait can sit in your boat all summer long—no refrigeration needed. Since it conveniently comes in a jar or tub, you can pre-bait rigged dip worms, leaving them at the ready in the tub. When a catfish swallows a worm, you can unclip the leader on that worm, snap on a freshly baited worm, and you are back in business.

What makes dip baits so effective are the amino acids and scents they release. Channel catfish can literally taste the water they are swimming in due to the millions of sensory organs they possess. The fish key on these scents, follow them to their source and hit the baited worm. When doing research on dip baits, I spoke with Sonny Hootman, Sr., inventor of Sonny's Super Sticky Channel Catfish bait. He stated that if it were possible to isolate the specific amino acids the fish key on, it might be possible to make an odorless catfish bait. The plastic dip worm serves mainly as a carrier for the bait. Try several brands until you find one that works well on the rivers you fish. I tried several brands until settling on Sonny's blood formula as my go-to bait.



Tom T. with the whiskered warrior of the Wolf.  
Photo by Tom Tersine.

Not all dip worms are created equal. Look for soft plastic worms with rings or holes to help hold the bait, rigged with good line and sharp treble hooks. Small or low-quality, easily bent hooks can cost you fish. Carry a variety of colors, from naturals like brown or black, to bright colors like fluorescent orange and chartreuse. Try bright fluorescent colors in stained water or on overcast days. Use glow-in-the-dark dip worms at night or before sunrise. Like walleyes, catfish have a special light-gathering lens in their eyes that helps them see in low light conditions, which is why worm color makes a difference. Some anglers prefer a longer, thinner dip worm. I like the shorter, fatter worms like the K&E Stopper, as they give the catfish less chance to steal the bait.

Rig your dip worms on a slip sinker rig with about 18 inches between the bait and the sinker. Most dip worms have a leader about this long, so just add the sinker, sinker stop, and swivel. One-ounce sinkers work on most of the rivers I fish. I prefer to use an oversized snap swivel. This allows for a quick change when a catfish has swallowed a baited worm. The swivel also prevents line twist, as cats love to roll in the line. I have a 5-gallon bucket set up for dip worm fishing with assorted color worms, bait, extra sinkers and swivels. It also has a flashlight and a small bat to dispatch catfish before tossing them into the cooler. Bring along rags to dry off worms before reapplying bait. Those little bamboo chopsticks from Chinese restaurants make great bait-application sticks.

Catfish are most active in low light and love feeding during times with less

boat traffic. Some of my best catches on the busy Wolf River have been between 3:00 AM and sunrise. Try areas with current breaks, inside of river bends, scour holes near bridges, or wood piles. Deep water near feeder creeks that wash food into the river can also be hot spots. I mostly fish catfish after spawning. The smaller "fiddler" cats are good eating. Enjoy some fillets dipped in egg and rolled in cornflake crumbs and you will know why I fish catfish! 

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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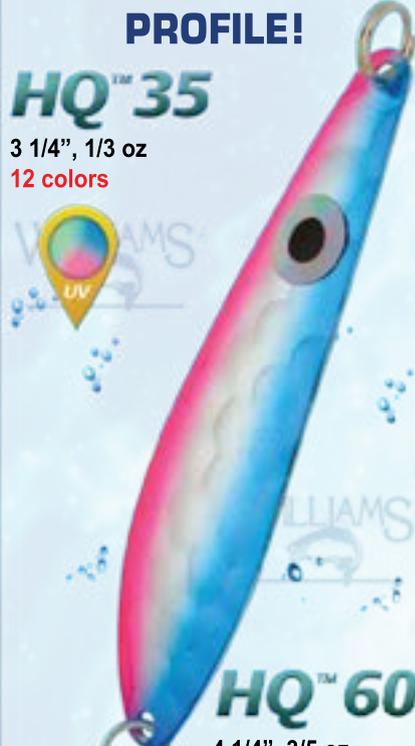
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GARY ENGBERG

# Gary Engberg Outdoors

## Rock Lake is well worth fishing

Rock Lake is located in Wisconsin's western Jefferson County, conveniently situated close to Milwaukee, Chicago and Madison. Rock Lake, being a quality year-round fishery, can get crowded on summer weekends. I suggest fishing it early or late in the day during the summer months.

Basics to know before fishing Rock Lake:

1) The lake is 1,371 acres with 5.8 miles of shoreline and a maximum depth of over 50 feet. The mean depth is 16 feet with almost 90% of the water deeper than 20 feet.

2) The water is extremely clear with a bottom content almost equally divided between sand, gravel, and muck. Rock Lake has a wealth of varied structure with good weeds, steep breaks, mid-lake humps and bars, numerous piers, and many cribs.

3) Rock Lake has excellent landings on the north, southwest and eastern shores.

4) Facilities include a park and toilets.

5) The lake has a diverse, quality fishery with walleyes, northern pike, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, and all panfish species. The lake is stocked with walleye and pike, with some natural reproduction of all species.

6) The town that the lake is located in, Lake Mills, is home to a Wisconsin DNR's fish hatchery.

If fishing Rock Lake for the first time, make sure that you purchase and understand a good map and have quality electronics. The "chips" that you can buy from Navionics and Lake Master give you the exact contours and many features that a map won't. Before hitting the water, decide what species of fish you're going to target and look on your map or chip for the structure, depth and locations that you plan to fish.

Walleyes, regularly stocked with fry and fingerlings, are a major species targeted on this lake. Natural reproduction occurs, but stocking is needed to maintain the fishery. Walleyes average

15 to 20 inches with the possibility of a trophy. Summer locations to try include the steep drop from 15 to 40 feet south of Ferry Park on the lake's western shore. Hit the other rock bars on the lake: Center, Gravel, and the "Knob." Fremont Bar in the center of the lake should be fished during low light periods using fathead minnows and leeches on jigs and slip-floats over the gravel and rocks. Also fish all the major lake points for summer 'eyes while rigging, jigging or float fishing.

Northern pike are another fish anglers can target with pike to the 28-inch range numerous and the occasional fish over 40 inches. Pike are stocked to maintain the fishable population. Pike can be caught all summer on the western weed beds from the northwest corner all the way south to and including the "marsh." Rock Lake's "good" weeds are all on the west side. Other locations to fish are man-made cribs around the lake, docks and piers, and transition areas near the mid-lake bars where water goes shallow to deep. Cast buzzbaits, crankbaits and surface lures for pike.

Largemouth bass are common throughout with the average fish being 12 to 15 inches and up to 20 inches. Fish the weeds on the west shore, along the docks on the east shore and in the southern marsh. Normal spinnerbaits, buzzbaits, and shallow-running crankbaits work in most lake locations. Largemouth can also be caught by fishing a slip-float and leech just outside the numerous



Guide Ron Barefield with a nice smallmouth bass.

weed beds.

Smallmouth bass are increasing in numbers with some natural reproduction. Smallmouth like rocks and gravel, which are key to catching them. The Sand Bar in the lake's northwest corner is a nice spot to cast jigs with tubes and black spinnerbaits. Cast deep-running crankbaits like #5 or #7 Shad Raps in the perch color anywhere there is rock. Smallies will also use piers and cribs as structure.

Catch all panfish all year long, with summer being the best time. Large schools of panfish suspend over Rock Lake's main basin. Try drifting over the suspended schools in water from 30 to 50 feet, using wax worms and crappie minnows. Use your electronics to locate the schools.

Rock Lake is a "must fish" summer lake with something for everyone. And it's only a few gallons of gas away!

Contacts: Muskie Mikes Bait Shop in Lake Mills. 920.648.3136. 

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

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DAN MOERICKE

# An 'Up Nort' Report

## Take a hike!

Statistically, I guess that it's not uncommon after many years of marriage for a wife to tell her husband to "take a hike." Mine does so on a regular basis. Fortunately for me, she doesn't want me to leave ... she just wants me to accompany her on a trek through some pretty scenic places.

On a recent spring weekend I was pried out of my boat for a day on the hiking trails in the Upper Peninsula. Our destination was Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. The park sits on the south shore of Lake Superior and is less than a two-hour drive from our cabin in Eagle River.

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park encompasses 60,000 acres of hills, rivers, waterfalls, lakes, campgrounds, and hiking trails (over 90 miles of them!). It is largely unspoiled by commercial endeavors. There are no zip-lines, go-cart tracks, waterparks, or jet-ski rentals ... just nature. I'm pretty sure I had zero bars on my cell phone. Heck, I didn't even take it out of the car. Some people may not be able to deal with that.

This year the park is celebrating its 70th birthday. If you decide to check it out, I recommend that your first stop be at the Visitor Center. The cost for a non-resident

*continued on page 17*



Trails along the Presque Isle River offer scenes like this.

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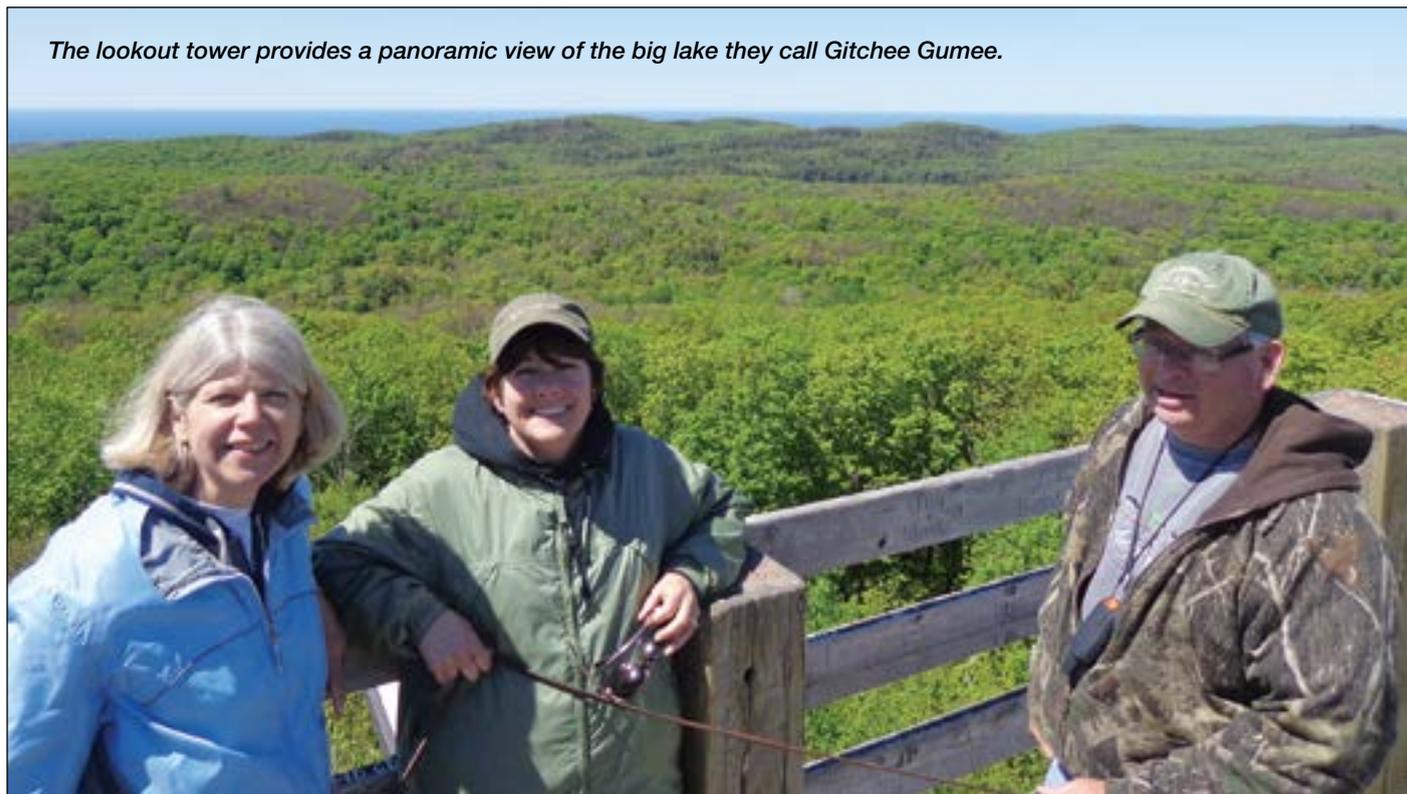
**MOERICKE, from page 16**

vehicle is \$9 a day. The young woman at the desk was very helpful in pointing us toward the “must see” stops for a day trip. While we’d been to the Porkies multiple times before, it was still good to get a refresher on the layout. For more information, visit [mi.gov/porkies](http://mi.gov/porkies).

On this day our friends Mike and Sandy Bishop joined us for our adventure. We started with a picnic lunch at one of the park’s many campground/picnic areas. Grills, picnic tables, a shelter, and restrooms were all available. As it was a cool spring day, there were no crowds and, thanks to the breeze, minimal mosquitos.

Our first hike was along the Presque Isle River where it flows into Lake Superior. One thing I have to say for the Yoopers is that they love their boardwalks! I am always amazed by the amount of boardwalks, steps, bridges, and platforms along these trails. It boggles the mind to think about the labor that went into building them. Recent rains had the river flowing full force, and the falls were roaring.

Our second hike was to the lookout tower. This involved a half mile trek up trails and more boardwalks but was worth every step. Fortunately for us, the



*The lookout tower provides a panoramic view of the big lake they call Gitchee Gumees.*

morning clouds had been replaced by blue skies by the time we made our ascent. The view was spectacular.

Our last stop of the day was Lake of the Clouds. The overlook is only a couple hundred yards from the parking area and made for an excellent vantage point to enjoy a cold beer, as happy hour was de-

clared to be “close enough.” Again, with clear skies, the view of the lake and surrounding hillsides was exceptional.

The park offers lots of campgrounds, cabins and remote camping opportunities. For a day trip, the drive is an easy one and the scenery can’t be beat. So if you’re looking for a cool day trip to break

up your north woods visit, head on up to the Porkies and “take a hike.” 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.*

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DICK ELLIS

# The Baiting Game

## Hard work brings the bears

**PUBLISHER'S NOTE:**

Due to a Transient Ischemic Attack (mini stroke), OWO columnist and Wisconsin bear guide Mike Foss has sold Northern Wisconsin Outfitters to top NWO guide Robert Haas. Foss, who has offered his expertise and uncanny knowledge of black bears to Wisconsin hunters and readers of this paper for years, will continue writing his column and assisting Haas in the field on a less strenuous basis.

Foss's expertise in putting hunters on bears and his knowledge of bears to those of us who watch him annually in the field is extraordinary. Hunters achieve near 100 percent shot opportunity. Foss hunters have produced a 638-pound boar, 500-plus pound bears, and numerous bears exceeding 400 pounds. He knows how to dissect the puzzle of Wisconsin's largest, most intelligent and elusive bears. Foss also invests the field time necessary in baiting from snow melt to September and in strategically placing stands to ultimately fasten tags to those largest bears.

Disabled hunters and youth hunters facing life-threatening illnesses and their families have come to know Foss's generosity and compassionate side as the guide donates NWO hunts and his field time routinely. This reporter also knows Mike Foss as one good friend. He's emotionally beaten up a bit from making the change, but he can't get away from us. I can also tell you from watching Foss and Robert Haas work together for years that this Washburn, Bayfield County camp remains in very good hands.

Dick Ellis

The black bear did not reach his size without carrying a kind of sixth sense to survive the years and Wisconsin's rugged Bayfield County. Pushing 500 pounds, the boar cautiously approaches the bait station established five months before this 2014 fall morning when winter snow melt first allowed guides of Northern Wisconsin Outfitters to access the backcountry.

The bait has been replenished often since that first April morning, and the guide's circuit becomes a weekly, then daily routine with the season looming. Black bears learn that there will be food at these stations spread over 30 miles when the ATVs leave and habitually return to feast. The hard work over the summer months means virtually 100 percent shot opportunity for the hunters who draw the coveted Wisconsin bear tags each fall.

Now, on this brisk September morning, a lone archer holds vigil over the bait. He's waiting for the monster bear nicknamed "Bacon" after being caught on video vigorously rubbing the sapling smeared with bacon-gel bear attractant by guide Mike Foss. (See this bear video on the homepage at [www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com](http://www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com)) Northern Wisconsin Outfitters has a reputation of tagging monster bears, as large as 638 pounds, and this brute has also been captured on trail camera several times on this bait.

The veteran hunter has been warned that he will have one opportunity for the kill and any mistake will keep the bear from returning. That mistake, or maybe no mistake at all but just the



This 400-pound bear captured on trail cam never returned to the bait during shooting hours after busting the archer on stand during the 2014 season.

sixth sense of the boar kicking in again, is marked by the soft crack of a branch. The hunter slowly turns his head to watch the enormous backside of the bear in a slow gait as he abandons his approach of the bait to melt into the forest.

The guides are right. The hunter did not see Bacon again in 2014, but he was there. Each night when the archer departed the stand at the close of shooting hours, the bear would return 15 minutes later to feed in the black. Cameras recorded the evidence.

With the 2015 season now just two months out, bears are again habitually visiting the bait stations and the guides again laying out the ambushes for Bacon and others like him. "Scruff Face," a bear in the 500-pound class nicknamed for the mangled head and lost eye most likely suffered in combat with another boar, is out there again. So is "Bus-15," the 700-pound mammoth that captured

center stage in 2014.

Foss and head guide Robert Haas have the game plans in motion. Bacon's stand has been moved to accommodate a rifle hunter 60 yards off the bait and opposite of where the original stand was set and the archer busted. Big bears have long memories. Boars are known to venture miles chasing sows during the summer mating season but can still be counted on to return to their core territory and bait they visited the year before. A natural shooting lane will also offer cover to the rifle hunter. The plan is marvelous in theory, but this is Wisconsin bear hunting targeting the biggest ... and the brightest.

Foss is excited as he slowly takes the long walk along the field edge with bait bucket in hand toward the ambush. This is his first time back since the stand has been moved. The bear has not been seen in almost a year, but mon-

continued on page 26

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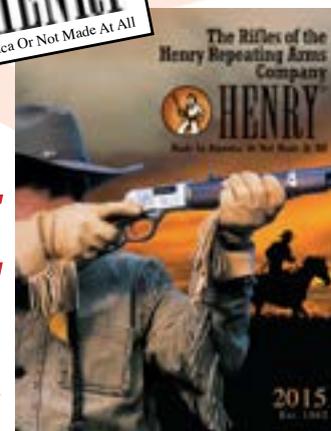
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TODD BOHM

## Wounded Warriors In Action

### Helping heroes heal in Marathon County

Who says that America doesn't have heroes anymore? During the weekend of May 15 - 17, I had the opportunity to host four purple heart heroes from the Wounded Warriors in Action program for two days of turkey hunting and fishing in central Wisconsin. My family was proud to host our seventh annual "cast and blast" event. Combat veterans/heroes who participated in the program included: Kenneth Southworth, Jacob Elbe, Jeremy Albrecht, and Karl Simandl.

Wounded Warriors in Action was founded in 2007 by retired Army Lt. Colonel John McDaniel. The purpose is to provide world-class hunting and fishing opportunities for purple heart veterans who have been wounded. A native of Wisconsin and 20-plus-year army veteran, McDaniel has made it his personal mission to help with the physical/mental healing of our returning wounded heroes. Centering on the healing powers of the outdoor experience and developing new friendships,

McDaniel's program has grown over the past eight years. It now provides purple heart heroes over 60 opportunities during 2015 that include saltwater fishing trips, alligator hunts, bear hunts, duck hunts, and whitetail hunts.

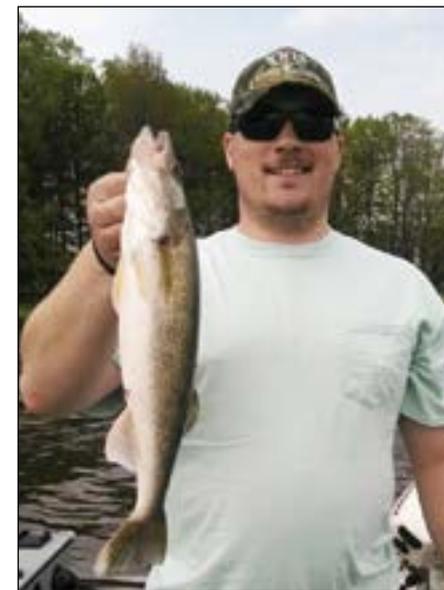
The four veterans who participated in the central Wisconsin program arrived via car and plane. Within minutes the common bond that only combat veterans can know soon had the men talking and sharing stories. Following a Wisconsin-style fish fry the veterans hit the rack in preparation for the Saturday hunt that would begin at 3:00 the next morning.

As dawn broke on Saturday morning, three heroes found themselves scattered around southeastern Marathon County hunting turkeys with three volunteer guides. Hero Jacob Elbe decided to try his hand at fishing and Wisconsin Angling Adventures guides Joel Deboer and Joe Szarkowitz soon had him putting fish into their boat. Hero Karl Simandl had the best opportunity to

harvest a gobbler, as we had snuck into a pre-positioned blind and soon had tom gobblers thundering in the roost tree just 100 yards away. With a picture perfect set-up, the tom flew from his roost, hit the ground 80 yards away from the blind, and, unfortunately, decided to move to a different field. Once in the other field, the tom proceeded to gobble all morning but would not come to our calls.

After a quick lunch and nap, the hunters went back to the woods and Jacob again hit the beautiful waters of central Wisconsin. Although no gobblers were shot during the evening, all of the hunters had opportunities to see and hear toms.

Sunday morning saw all four veterans choosing to turkey hunt. Angler extraordinaire Jacob Elbe connected on a huge tom that charged into the decoy spread of volunteer guide Ken Maciaz. The other hunters once again were treated to a symphony of early morning wildlife songs that only turkey hunt-



Hero Jacob Elbe with one of the many walleyes caught during the WWIA Wisconsin Cast and Blast weekend.

ers know, but no other toms were shot. Wounded hero Karl Simandl summed up the weekend by saying, "This has been an awesome weekend. I could stay out in the woods forever; it is so peaceful and calming."

Special thanks goes out to all of our heroes who have sacrificed so much in defense of the freedoms that we en-

*continued on page 29*

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



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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 meal-time choices.



Grab a quick bite to eat before venturing out to sightsee or savor a candlelit dinner on the pristine shores of Chequamegon Bay. Gather local organic treats and artisan breads and cheeses for a

*continued on page 26*



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LEE GATZKE

## NextBuk Outdoors

### Passing smell test is most difficult deer hunters' challenge

In today's technically advanced society there are some claims that very successful companies preach that don't pass my "smell test." A lifetime of hunting and the experiences of a network of hunting friends have convinced me that there is currently no scent-eliminating or masking product that will prevent a deer from smelling your presence.

My friends and I have tried everything on the market to mask or eliminate our scent when hunting and none have delivered as promised. What we have concluded is that if a deer is downwind of you or walks across your trail, most of the time you're busted. Even when you've cleansed yourself with the bacteria-killing soaps, donned the latest activated carbon-layered suit, sprayed on odor-eliminating compounds, and used the ozone-emitting contraptions.

A deer's sense of smell is such that it can detect a human's scent trail up to four days after we have been there and gone. Its sense of smell is much more dependable and efficient for detecting humans than any other of its senses. We've been able to reduce the

amount of scent we omit but not disguise it enough to escape detection by a deer. Weather conditions affect how long our scent remains detectable by deer, but as a rule of thumb, expect a deer to be able to detect your scent trail for up to four days. I liken it to a road-killed skunk when its freshly squashed smell is overpowering but eventually fades away.

Once deer have detected human scent in areas they are not used to encountering it, they become super alert, and, in effect, they then hunt us. By traveling downwind of the scent trail at a safe distance they do their best to locate the source, us, so they can skirt our position without getting too close. It's no wonder why the first time we hunt a spot that is devoid of human scent the resident deer, having not yet noticed our presence, go about their normal activities.

The deer are on their feet in daylight and are readily spotted by hunters who have properly-placed stands. Once these same deer spot us or get a whiff of human scent the game changes. It may take them a few hours or a few days to discover humans have invaded their



Author checks wind direction with milkweed seeds.

previously secure hideout, but they will detect the scent we leave behind and know we were there. Then they move less in daylight, sticking to heavy cover and using the wind religiously to scent check everything from a safe distance before proceeding. If the path ahead doesn't pass the smell test, they detour.

It seems funny that a farmer going about his daily activities sees deer out in the open, casually feeding or traveling, seemingly ignoring him. He drives his tractor within a stone's throw of them as they occasionally give him a glance. They accept him as a part of the natural order of things, a scene that has innocently repeated itself a hundred times and is no threat to them. Once that same farmer alters his normal routine, for example, by chasing a cow on the loose into their woods, those deer become alert and take notice.

Deer learn the routines of humans that inhabit their turf and develop a tolerance for these people going about their normal business. They learn to read us, sensing when we are or are not a threat to them. Farmers working their fields and tending to their livestock, the mailman delivering mail, kids playing in the yard—all these activities they have learned are not threatening and are tolerated. Once those routines are altered, like the farmer chasing his wayward cattle through the woods, the deer notice and go on high alert. They may take flight or go into hiding. Likewise, occasionally when humans enter the woods to hunt, the deer take notice. Seeing or smelling a human where they normally do not alarms them. The deer will change their habits to avoid coming into contact with humans. Using their nose and knowledge of the landscape they seek out a new refuge, and if it is free of human odor, in effect passing the "smell test," they settle in.

Fooling a deer's nose is the hardest obstacle a hunter has to overcome, and I have not found anything better to do so than staying downwind of them. <sup>WO</sup>

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...





TOM CARPENTER

## Badger Birds

### Killdeer

Meet a shorebird without the shore. The adaptable killdeer frequents Wisconsin's open areas such as lawns, golf courses, athletic fields, pastures, plowed fields, vacant lots, and even parking lots in summer. Killdeer are famous for their jerky *run-stop-run-stop* gait, designed to scare up insect prey as the birds hunt along.

**Look** for a graceful, long-legged bird with a brown-tan back, white undersides, two black bands across the chest, a white neck ring and a pointed tail. The bill is narrow, pointed and black, while the legs are pale colored.

**Listen** for the killdeer's namesake call, a loud and shrill *kill-deer, kill-deer, kill-deer*, made in flight. Killdeer will even make this call at night when startled.

**Observe** a killdeer doing its broken-wing-drag act when you come too close to the bird's cryptic nest or well-camouflaged chicks. The killdeer will then flush on slender, pointed wings and call loudly when the danger has been successfully lured away.

Did you know that the killdeer is a great swimmer even though it inhabits dry land habitats? It's a throwback to this plover's shorebird origins. 

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

ELLIS, from page 20

strous tracks in the clay verify that the boar is a survivor again.

The guide is tense as he enters the corner of the timber. His awareness of the surroundings intensifies. The bait station lies just ahead. A shot of adrenaline brings him to a stop. His eyes fix on the bear he knows only from photos. The monster makes another slow escape. The bear pauses for one last look back and for a fleeting moment locks eyes with the intruder who has quietly caught him off guard. And then, as Foss says later, he evaporates silently into the foliage.

Home again, Foss views new photos and a video that confirm the return of the monster ... and also confirms a problem. Bacon's departure has sent him immediately past the new stand set-up. After studying the bear's retreat and discovering its new entrance and exit trails to the bait, Foss is convinced that one extraordinarily intelligent bear "thinks" he has already out-smarted the hunters again.

"I don't think so," Foss reflects. The chess match with the most wary of bear and others is far from over. But it is time for another move by the guides. The game, and conclusion with each of these monsters of Bayfield, will play out soon enough. 



*The same bear was kicked off the same bait pile by Mike Foss in June 2015. The chess match continues.*

ASHLAND, from page 23

picnic in the north woods. 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.

Take a fascinating stroll through Ashland's rich history by touring the city's colorful downtown murals, each highlighting a particular aspect of Ashland's past, with subjects ranging from the city's lumberjacks and military veterans to its railroads, old-time storefronts and recently demolished ore dock.

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 800.284.9484. Check out [visitashland.com](http://visitashland.com) for additional mural information and history. 

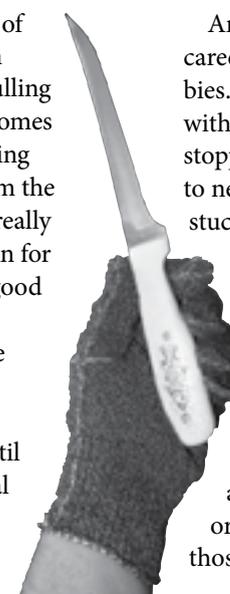
DENNY MURAWSKA

## Fillet Your Fish, Not Your Hands

*These gloves a worthy investment*

Well, it's that time of year again when you might be pulling in a haul of panfish. Then comes the task of removing tempting chunks known as fillets from the tasty beasts. One item you really owe it to yourself to invest in for this slicing and dicing is a good set of cut-resistant gloves. The older I get the more the cautious side of my nature emerges. I never thought much about such gloves until I saw a pair on sale at a local surplus store. I don't think they were much more than a couple of bucks. Money well spent!

I always remember the story my dad told of a fellow who was a bit on the impatient side who had one of those fillet knives with no hilt and a slick wooden handle. Evidently, he wanted to anchor his slippery quarry and impale the tail end of the fish with one knife while he worked on it with another. Using a stabbing thrust, his hand slipped down the knife and the cut was severe. We all cringe at the very thought of such a thing.



*Gloves like this help protect from a wet, slippery knife.*

Another instance from my teaching career still gives me the heebie jeebies. In any chemistry lab you work with glass tubing that fits into rubber stoppers. I always stressed to students to never, ever try to force it. If it is stuck, just throw it away. Of course, well-meaning advice is not always heeded. My student broke the tubing while trying to twist it out, severed a nerve in her finger, and lost feeling in it for good.

So next time you need to fillet a mess of panfish, slimy northerns, or just about any fish at all, protect those two indispensable tools known as your hands. Suitable gloves come in many styles. Some have steel threads in them, while others sport high-tech fibers like Kevlar. Get a pair you are comfortable with and use them. Forgive the pun, but they will not cost an arm and a leg to add to your tackle. They are surely worth every nickel you pay for them. 

*Denny Murawka 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.*

MIKE YURK

# Bassology

## New kid on the block: the ChatterBait

Over the years there have been a lot of bass baits. Some survive and some disappear. Many of the baits I remember seeing in the 1950s and '60s are long gone. Others have stood the test of time.

In the last few years one bait has hit the market and its unique design has captured both fishermen and fish. The new kid on the block is the ChatterBait by Z-Man.

It is essentially a jig with a hex-shaped blade in front. It also includes a plastic skirt and a split tail trailer on the hook. On the package Z-Man promotes the ChatterBait as having the "action of a crankbait, the profile of a jig and the flash of a spinner bait."

I bought a couple of them, and, like so many baits, it floated around the tackle box for a while until I finally tried it. From the very beginning I caught fish with it, and now it's one of my essential baits that I use regularly.

### How To Use Them

Generally I use the ChatterBait in shallow to medium depths from three to sev-

en feet of water. It is easy to use. Just cast it out and use a slow, steady retrieve. The blade in front has a very erratic movement affecting the skirt, which gives it a unique movement that triggers strikes.

To fish it shallow start retrieving it as soon as it hits the water. For use in deeper water let the bait sink for a moment or two before starting the retrieve.

The ChatterBait is relatively weedless, so it works well around vegetation. I especially like to use it in, around and over the top of weeds. It makes noise as well as having flash and a pulsating skirt that brings fish out of the weeds. I also use the ChatterBait near any cover and structure. It performs nicely around docks and especially areas where there is a lot of brush or fallen trees.

### ChatterBait Options

The ChatterBait comes in a number of colors and sizes. I use the ¼-ounce and 3/8-ounce sizes. I use it with a spinning rod and find 8- or 10-pound monofilament works well with those sizes. It is also offered in ½- and 5/8- ounce sizes, which probably work better with casting gear.

There are many colors from which to choose. There are silver and gold as well as painted blades and different colors for skirts and trailers. Some Chatterbaits come with a grub body and no skirts.

In an effort to keep it simple I use what is called The Original ChatterBait, which comes in ten different colors. My favorite color is white. It is the same color I predominantly use in spinnerbaits. My next favorite color is black and blue since it looks similar to the color of the jigs I use for pig and jig fishing. Both of these ChatterBait colors come with silver blades.

One summer day I went through my two colors of ChatterBaits and still wasn't hitting fish when my fishing buddy started catching fish on a pumpkin-colored bait in a larger size. Luckily he had an extra bait with him and leant it to me. We ended up catching a lot fish by the time the day was over.

Check out ChatterBait at [zmanfishing.com](http://zmanfishing.com). Or type in "ChatterBaits" on Google for additional information.

One word of caution: ChatterBaits can be a bit pricey, so I use them with a light 5-inch 12-pound wire leader to prevent



*The Chatterbait has the action of a crankbait, the profile of a jig and the flash of a spinnerbait.*

northern pike from ripping them off. I have caught some big northern pike as well as bass with ChatterBaits.

Although it may be a relatively new bait in the history of bass fishing, the ChatterBait is destined to be around for a long time because it catches lots of fish. 

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

RON STRESING

# Targeting Rainbows On Rough Seas

## Choppy water not just for walleyes

The Lake Michigan waves had built from choppy two-footers to three-footers, and by the look of things, this was going to be a short trip. My cousin Ken and I were about eight miles off Milwaukee when we set out our lines. The first hit came on a port-side planer board trailing lead core line. Along with the bouncing rod, you could see a beautiful silvery fish jumping clear of the waves. I fought and netted the fish, a sleek 7-pound rainbow trout. Kenny's 18-foot AlumaCraft was being bounced around like a cork in a washing machine, and you had to keep a hand on the wheel at all times. We fished for another two hours or so before determining we had all the fun we could stand for one day. We motored back into South Shore with three silvery rainbow trout in the cooler. Our short, rough water trip had yielded a 7- and an 8-pound fish, as well as a massive 17 ½-pound rainbow.

Like a lot of "big pond" anglers, I've always kept notes to help determine what does and does not work on Lake Michigan. One pattern I have noticed is that rainbow trout love to feed in rough, choppy water. Rainbows are

regularly found way offshore in Lake Michigan, often feeding in the upper one-third of the water column. They are frequently regarded as the most boat shy and wary of the Lake Michigan salmonids. It's pretty much standard operating procedure to run lines targeting the big trout on boards or flat lines run way back, away from the boat. Open water roaming rainbows regularly pick food from the surface, as evidenced by stomach contents like June bugs and butterflies found in the big trout.

My theory is the rough water gives the fish a feeling of security, as the chop breaks up the surface and limits light penetration. The wind also moves food around and out to the rainbow's offshore feeding zone. We borrow a trick from salt water anglers and look for gulls feeding on dead floating baitfish. Food like dead or wounded baitfish and insects often form floating "scum lines," and finding one out in open water can be the key to locating trout. Work your lines in and out of the line in an "S" pattern.

We like to work the upper one-third of the water for rainbows, with lines set as shallow as 10 feet down. Run long lengths of line between the downrigger ball and bait. Planer boards should be set out and back, usually with lead core line. Reliable "bread and butter" rainbow baits include the fly-and-dodger combinations, diving crank baits in blue/silver or green/silver, smaller versions of plugs like J-Plugs, and spoons like Slammers.

Be sure to set out glow-in-the-dark colors during low-light periods and on cloudy, overcast days. We like to set out a mix of colors and let the fish pick out their favorites. For example, all three of the trout taken on the trip mentioned in the beginning of the article were taken on Bloody Nose pattern Slammers. By the end of the trip, we had all four of that pattern of Slammer out for trout.

Use GPS or landmarks to stay in an area where you find fish. Even though they are roaming open water, rainbows often form schools, and where you find one fish, you are likely to find more. Sometimes lone pieces

*continued on page 29*

TOM CARPENTER

## Cubs Corner

### Canoe away a summer day

When you're looking for an activity the whole family can enjoy this summer, here's a suggestion: take a canoe trip down one of Wisconsin's beautiful rivers. It's an outing you can do in a day or you can combine it with an overnight camping adventure. Either way, canoes, kids and summertime make a potent combination for creating memories that last a lifetime.

The day trip has always been a staple for my family. It's something everybody can do, and even my wife likes to canoe now when summer is in the air. Plus, there's so much to do to keep everybody happy: stop for a swim and cool off at a sand bar; explore a mid-river island for butterflies; watch eagles soaring overhead; throw in a nightcrawler-baited line or two to see if we can catch a catfish or smallmouth bass.

The secret to success on an overnight canoe camping trip is packing light and keeping the foray simple. Heck, we even forego a tent in most cases. Nothing like sleeping out under the stars! The only

real concern is making sure everybody has enough to eat. A big cooler full of food, snacks, bottled water and lemonade keeps the stomachs happy and everybody hydrated.

A bag of charcoal and bottle of lighter fluid assures we can grill some brats or burgers for dinner, maybe even a fish fillet or two if we catch some. Roast marshmallows, too. The river banks provide enough wood for a campfire later.

It's fun to prop up a rod in a forked stick as it gets dark and fish for catfish as we sit around the campfire. Camping on a sandbar is best, but make sure no rain is in the forecast lest a rising river surprise your slumber.

So where can you do some canoeing this summer in Wisconsin? The following list outlines some of the best spots as well as a few lesser-known gems.

#### Wisconsin River

It's hard to find a river better than the Wisconsin. Most of it in late summer is shallow (like knee-deep-or-less-on-

an-adult shallow), so nobody ever feels unsafe. Still, as with all canoe outings, wear your life jacket! The Wisconsin, especially the river's lower reaches below Sauk City, offers countless sandbars for camping.

#### St. Croix River

I consider the St. Croix my home river these days. The water is stained brown from the water's tamarack swamp origins, but this is a super-clean river. My favorite runs are Danbury to Grantsburg and Taylors Falls down to William O'Brien State Park across the river in Minnesota. The fishing is excellent.

#### Chippewa River

The Chippewa is another classic Wisconsin canoe stream. The 48 miles from the Arpin dam down to the Flambeau are best. Choose a stretch and go!

#### Wolf River

In Wisconsin's eastern region you can't beat the upper reaches of the Wolf River for easy, enjoyable, family-style

canoeing. Day trips are best. Work the New London and Waupaca areas.

#### Three Southern Wisconsin Gems

Here are three suggestions for canoeing fun in southern Wisconsin. The Kickapoo flows through some of our state's most ruggedly stunning countryside. In contrast, the smaller Sugar River in Dane and Green Counties wanders through a gentle, pastoral landscape of prairies, crop fields, cow pastures and lowland forest. A little to the west the Pecatonica meanders slowly through rolling hills of woods and farms.

#### More Ideas

For more great summer canoe trip options and ideas, check out Wisconsin's water trails at [dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/watertrails](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/watertrails) and [wisconsintrailguide.com/paddle/paddle-trails](http://wisconsintrailguide.com/paddle/paddle-trails). 

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

SUZETTE CURTIS

## Recipes By Suzette

### Freezer finds

#### Dove Hash

- 1 cup cooked dove meat, chopped
- 1 cup frozen diced hashbrowns, thawed
- 2 T. butter
- 1 T. olive oil
- 2 T. flour
- 1 ½ cup chicken stock
- salt and pepper to taste
- Preheat oven to 350°.

In ovenproof skillet, melt butter and heat olive oil over medium high heat on top of stove. Stir in flour to make a paste. Gradually add chicken stock, stirring constantly. Reduce heat to simmer and continue to stir occasionally until sauce is thickened. Add dove meat and potatoes.

Place skillet in oven, uncovered, and bake 25 minutes.

This is also good if you crack a few eggs over the top of the hash at around the 20-minute mark and continue to bake

until eggs are done to your liking. Great breakfast!

#### Pineapple Pheasant

- 2 pheasants cut into serving pieces
- 2 small onions, finely chopped
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 1 tsp. ginger
- ½ cup orange juice
- 1 can (16 ounces) pineapple chunks, drained but reserve juice
- 2 tsp. cornstarch
- ¼ cup cold water

Place pheasant pieces in slow cooker; sprinkle onions over top. Combine soy sauce, ginger, orange juice, and pineapple juice; pour over top of pheasant and onions. Cook on low setting for 6 to 8 hours.

With a slotted spoon, remove pheasant pieces and set aside on serving platter tented with foil. Combine cornstarch and

water in small jar; cover and shake to mix.

Turn slow cooker to high setting and gradually add cornstarch mixture, stirring constantly. Stir occasionally until sauce has thickened. Add pineapple chunks and heat 1 to 2 minutes. Pour sauce mixture over pheasant in serving dish.

This recipe is especially nice served over jasmine rice.

#### Venison Liver Loaf

- 1 lb. ground venison liver \*\*
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 small onion
- 2 tsp. parsley
- 1 T. celery, minced
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup whole milk
- 3 slices thick cut bacon
- Preheat oven to 300°.

Place ground liver in large mixing bowl; add beaten eggs. Grate onion over bowl allowing the juice to fall into the bowl as well. Add remaining ingredients except bacon; mix well (best done with your hands).

Line bottom of loaf pan with strips of bacon; top with liver mixture. Bake for 1 hour or until cooked through.

Serve with sliced onions that have been sautéed in a mixture of butter and olive oil for additional flavor.

\*\* To grind liver, remove the outer membrane and soak liver in hot water for five minutes. Drain water, cut liver into manageable pieces, and push through grinder. 

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

**BOHM, from page 22**

joy here in the United States. This event would not have been possible without a number of individuals/businesses that donated services including: The Grand Lodge in Rothschild, who donated all of the rooms; Log Cabin Restaurant; The Bar of Wausau; landowners Mark Milanowski of Sampson Creek Ranch and Jeff and Carol Mills; volunteer hunting guides/mentors Tony Kopchinski and Mike Drenkler of the Mosinee Sportsman club; Ken Maciaz; and fishing guides Joel Deboer and Joe Szarkowitz of Wisconsin Angling Adventures.

It has truly been an honor for my family to host these events. Over the past seven years we have hosted 23 veterans. Many great memories and friendships were made on the seventh annual Wounded Warriors in Action central Wisconsin "cast and blast" weekend. Plans are already being made for spring 2016. Anyone interested in joining or helping give back to our wounded heroes should contact Todd Bohm or check out the Wounded Warriors in Action website: woundedwarriorsinaction.org. 

*Dr. Todd Bohm is a lifetime educator and principal in the D.C. Everest School District. He is an avid fisherman and hunter who guides the waters of central and northern Wisconsin, specializing in all species of fish, including trout. Contact Todd at wisconsinanglingadventures.com or call 715.297.7573.*

**STRESING, from page 27**

of structure in the middle of nowhere will hold baitfish. Mark that spot and visit it during prime rainbow fishing conditions. We have a shipwreck off Milwaukee marked for just such occasions.

Please use common sense. Don't push the safety envelope for your boat, as no fish is worth your life. I recommend wearing your life jacket when fishing rough water, especially when leaning over to net fish or set lines. If you can safely venture out in rough conditions, target those oversized Lake Michigan rainbows. You may be pleasantly surprised by the results. Good luck! 

*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.*

## Everyday Carry.

OnWisconsinOutdoors.com/Firearms

**ROBB MANNING**

# Product 6-Pack

## Great gear for the woods, fields, and waterways

**MIDWEST INDUSTRIES:  
AK-SSK KEYMOD HANDGUARD**

Nothing on an original Kalashnikov is precision machined. Contrast that with this handguard, which is as precision machined as it can get. Once installed, it's about the only part that doesn't rattle when shaken. What's new about this handguard is the introduction of Keymod, which is a modular accessory mounting standard developed to replace Picatinny accessory rails. Picatinny rails aren't comfortable to grab. They add bulk and weight and tear up your hand when firing. Keymod allows accessories to be directly attached, or small sections of Picatinny rail can be mounted to it if you have accessories that are Picatinny specific. The best part is that it turns the AK into a modern weapon with optics, lights and other accessories. The AK-SSK is as good as it gets on an AK. It's simple to install and weighs only 8.7 ounces. 6061 Aluminum. Comes with three different top cover choices: standard (\$139.95), optic specific (\$149.95), and 30mm scope ring (\$159.95). A homegrown Wisconsin company. **OWO** tested and approved.

midwestindustriesinc.com

**AXTS WEAPONS:  
RAPTOR CHARGING HANDLE (7.62)**

USGI charging handles worked well up until the 2000s when the way we charged the AR changed. It was developed to take the strong hand trigger finger and second finger, form a "V," and pull back to charge it. Then someone realized it best not to take your shooting hand off the grip, so we started training to charge the weapon with the non-trigger pulling hand. This creates torque on the handle, though, and it's not as easy to do. Charging handles like the

Raptor fix that problem. The Raptor is also designed so that it can be charged using fingers or by palming. As a winter glove-wearing Wisconsinite, I can appreciate being able to palm-charge the weapon.

7075 Aluminum. Also available in 5.56. (\$99.95). **OWO** tested and approved.

axtsweapons.com

**NEW ARCHERY PRODUCTS: NIGHT-  
HAWK DROP AWAY REST**

If you're not an all-year shooter, the time is fast approaching to pull your bow out and practice for the upcoming season. Perhaps it's time for updates to your gear. A new arrow rest can go a long way in improving your set-up's performance. There is zero fletch contact so the accuracy potential can be realized. It has Santoprene padding around the inside of the rest for sound-dampening. It's made of aluminum and magnesium for durability while maintaining a light weight, and it won't kill your budget. (\$49.99).

newarchery.com

**YETI: RAMBLER COL-  
STER**

Yeti has expanded their Rambler lineup this year with the Colster beverage insulator. Made from kitchen-grade, double-wall, vacuum-insulated 18/8 Stainless Steel, the Colster keeps your beverage cold until the last drop. It works with cans and bottles. The ThermoLock gasket keeps your hands from getting cold while locking in the cold around the beverage. No Sweat design. It comes with a steeper price than a foam Koozie, but it works as advertised, keeping drinks colder a lot longer. Plus, it will last forever. (\$29.99). **OWO** tested and approved.

yeticoolers.com

**ICETREKKERS: STREAMTREKKERS**

STREAMtrekkers keep you from slipping when you're wading in fast-moving bodies of water. It consists of diamond beads with hundreds of biting edges that grip in all directions for sure footing on even the most slippery surfaces like slime-covered rocks. The beads are made from a case-hardened metal alloy and strung on a steel cable. It's then attached to a solid rubber band that fits snug to any footwear. It works on felt soles, rubber soles, or any other type of soles. Turns any waders into stream/river waders. (\$41.95).

icetrekks.com

**UMPQUA: TAILGATER ORGANIZER**

It turns any tub storage bin into a fly-fishing basecamp. It fits around the tub and has ten pockets, several attachment loops and webbing, plus a tool sheath. It stores fly boxes, extra spools, reels, hemostats and any other gear you need, plus waders and boots inside the tub. It also serves as a prep station for tying on flies and rigging leaders, tippets, etc. Two saddle-bag style organizers straddle the front and back walls of the tub. Adjustable to fit most tub sizes. Made of durable 400D Poly Fabric with YKK Zippers and a foam fly patch. 12 inches by 21 inches. Slate Grey. (\$79.99).

umpqua.com



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

# County Teasers



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Sparta, the "Bicycling Capital of America," offers a lot this time of year. Motorcycling, horse-back riding, kayaking, hunting and fishing, and, of course, biking. Celebrating 50 years on the Elroy-Sparta Trail. Sign up for a ride. Sparta—a choice destination in western Wisconsin. **Click on Monroe County.**

The 1st Annual Musky Tournament will be held September 12 - 13, 2015, at Timber Breeze Resort on beautiful Butternut Lake in Price County. \$40,000 in cash prizes. Registration and reading of the rules Friday evening with fishing on Saturday and Sunday. Non-anglers will enjoy hundreds of ATV/UTV and silent sports trails in the region. **Click on Price County.**

Port Washington celebrates summer outdoors! Fishing is great; book a charter, launch your boat, or drop a line. Launch a canoe, kayak, or stand-up paddleboard from South Beach. Rent a bike and hop on the Interurban Trail for a spin. Or just grab a bench and watch the lake. **Click on Ozaukee County.**

Ashland is the "Historic Mural Capital of Wisconsin." July - 4: Parade, band concert, fireworks. 15-16: Maxwell Street Days. 17-19: Bay Days Festival. 19: Sprint

Triathlon and Little Minnow Kids' Triathlon. August 20 - 23: Ashland County Fair, Marengo. Come to Chequamegon Bay, a world-class smallmouth bass fishery and four-season fishing destination. **Click on Ashland County.**

Find your peaceful retreat in Washburn County. With over 900 lakes, secluded campgrounds and resorts, and home of the Bluegill and Walleye Capitals of Wisconsin, you are sure to find a spot to unwind and relax in the great north woods. Visit us in Washburn County where you'll find "North woods in every direction." **Click on Washburn County.**

The Minocqua area has one of the largest concentrations of fresh water in the world, making it the ideal destination for outdoor fun year-round! Whether you seek the solitude of the forest and a calm lake, or the excitement of water-skiing or zip-lining, Minocqua offers fun for everyone. **Click on Oneida County.**

Exciting fishing and boating in Ferryville. Use the Ferryville Boat Launch (Pool 9) to access the best fishing on the Mississippi River. July 25 is River Bluff Daze—a great festival with free fireworks, tractor pull. Visit us! **Click on Crawford County.**

EXPLORE WISCONSIN at OnWisconsinOutdoors.com

ROBB MANNING

## Everyday Carry Glock G43

Glock fans and concealed carry permit holders have been clamoring for Glock to introduce a single-stack 9mm for several years now. It's finally here. Named the G43, it's everything needed in a concealed carry weapon.

Whether you call them micro-compacts or single-stack sub-compacts, I've shot most of them: the Taurus 709 Slim, Smith & Wesson Shield, Walther PPS, Ruger LC9, Kahr PM9, and Kimber Solo. Hands down the best shooting out of that group is the Walther PPS. It's the most comfortable to shoot with the least felt recoil, the most controllable, and has the best trigger. The G43 is as good as the PPS but in a slightly smaller package.

The G43 weighs 17.95 ounces unloaded and is 6.26 inches long, 4.25 inches in height and is 1.02 inches in width. It comes with two six-round magazines, one with a flat base and one with an extended base.

My everyday carry pistol is a G26, and the G43 compares favorably to it. Recoil was slightly more noticeable in the G43 due to it being a little lighter. Also, the wider grip found on the G26 fills the hand more, so the felt recoil is spread over a larger area than is the narrow G43. Being a little narrower makes it easier to conceal, especially when wearing a regular shirt. There are two downsides to that, the first being the G26 carries ten rounds and the G43 carries six. The other downside is that the G26 can use G19 or G17 magazines, so as a spare you can carry a 17-round magazine, while the G43 only uses a magazine specific to the G43.

Those who carry a Glock pistol, whether for duty or personal carry, will appreciate that the G43 feels nearly the same. This is important, because if you train with a Glock, your muscle memory will kick in and handling the G43 won't require much additional training. The only difference in controls between this and any other Glock is the trigger pull weight. This is the only weak spot in the G43. Every other Glock (with a few specific exceptions) has a trigger pull weight of 5.5 pounds. While the G43 is listed at 5.5 pounds, my trigger pull weight scale averaged 8.1 pounds. It did improve slightly after shooting 400 rounds through it, to 7.4 pounds. Perhaps after more rounds, it will continue to improve. Glock should note that the only weak area on the G43 is when Glock gets away from being Glock.



The Glock G43 is a single-stack 9mm. It offers a full power cartridge in a little package that's easy to shoot.

This past winter I wrote a Gun Digest Glock Reference book and was fortunate enough to get to shoot every model of Glock available on these shores except for the G17L and G24. Some models I even fired both Gen4 and third generation. That's probably around 40 different Glock models/generations, firing 3000 - 4000 rounds. I didn't have any malfunctions that were weapon induced. In my initial testing of 230 rounds, the G43 had two more than that. At round number 64 there was a failure to eject, and at round 223 a failure to feed. I'm now up to 500 rounds and haven't had an issue since. It's not uncommon for guns to need a break-in period of anywhere from 200 to 500 rounds. I've just never had a Glock need that. It's not a concern for me, and I'll be shocked if I ever have another. Additionally, I fired under-powered and +P ammunition through it—two areas that the first G42s had issues with—and it didn't have any problems cycling through that.

The drawback with early adoption of a new handgun model is the lack of holsters. I found two makers for the G43. Both are small businesses and both make outstanding holsters. I got an Outside the Waistband holster from Eclipse Holsters ([eclipseholsters.com](http://eclipseholsters.com)) and an Inside the Waistband holster from Tulster Holsters ([tulster.com](http://tulster.com)). Both companies have great customer service and are very friendly.

So what's my verdict on the G43? If you're a fan of Glock, put your name on the waiting list and be prepared to hand over your money. If you're not a fan of Glock, try shooting it, because I really think you'll like it. I've shot most of the micro-nines on the market, and as far as shootability, I rank it tied for number one with the Walther PPS. Its slightly smaller size gives it the edge for being the one I would buy. 

*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.*

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STUART WILKERSON

## Ever See A Coatimundi?

# Incredible taxidermy collection just one reason to visit Midwestern Shooters' Supply

Chances are you've never seen a coatimundi. Or a black bear, lion, leopard, elephant or Cape Buffalo close enough to touch. Sure, lots of animals can be found at the Milwaukee County Zoo or the Chicago Field Museum, but a trip to those venues can be pretty expensive. That's why the zoo and museum are infrequent trips for many families.

There is another, far less expensive option, and it's conveniently located in Lomira, Wisconsin, home of Midwestern Shooters' Supply, 191 Church Street. At Midwestern Shooters' Supply you'll not only find a wide assortment of hunting, fishing, camping and other outdoor gear, but also one of the most impressive collections of mounted animals and displays in the country. Midwestern Shooters' Supply is as much a museum as it is a sporting goods store.

The "museum," featuring hundreds of mounted animals, was made possible by Midwestern Shooters' Supply President and renowned trophy hunter Phil Majerus. Phil has been hunting and having his trophies mounted since childhood. He has travelled across the globe, shivered through the cold, baked in the sun, and dealt with some seriously unsavory characters in pur-

suit of his passion. In doing so, he has helped to feed and support some of the least known people on earth and understands their culture far better than many anthropologists.

Phil is no stranger to hunting in Wisconsin and throughout the United States, Latin America, Canada, Africa, Southeast Asia, and more. "Each trip is an adventure, and I love an adventure," Phil explained. "I love hunting, travelling to different countries, meeting people and learning about their cultures."

While Phil's hunts are many and varied, there is one constant thread to each. Meat does not go to waste and is shared with as many people as possible. "I eat everything I shoot," Phil said. "Although, I don't like elephant. It's tough and not very good." His hunting guides and the people from their villages view the meat much differently. They will consume everything from the trunk to the meat from the elephant's skulls. "A typical elephant hunt can provide food for 350 villagers," Phil noted.

When Phil, now age 70, was young, hunting of every kind was an accepted and noncontroversial sport. To-



Midwestern Shooters' Supply President Phil Majerus with some of his mounted trophies.

day it is a different story, particularly big game trophy hunting in Africa, which is all but entirely gone. "Big game hunting was important to the people in the bush," Phil explained. "Guiding and working with hunters was a big part of their livelihood. Hunting was part of their economy and supported their families and villages.

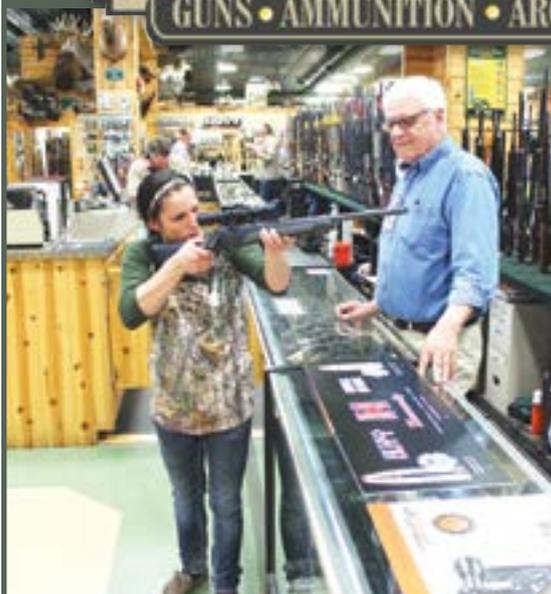
When the academics, who had no idea of what life in the bush was like or its culture, got their way and outlawed big game hunting, it was a disaster for people in

*continued on page 34*

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STUART WILKERSON

# Clash Of The Titans

*Which is the better rifle? The answer may surprise you.*

Armchair commandoes and Internet warriors have expended much oxygen and bandwidth over the years arguing which is the better rifle, the AR-15 or the AK-47/Kalashnikov. The truth of the matter is neither is better than the other and both have much to offer.

ARs and Kalashnikov rifles, while both excellent rifle platforms, are very different in purpose and design. Some of the major differences will be examined in this article pitting the best of both platforms against each other. Representing the AR-15 family is Midwest Industries (MI) AR-15 Billet Rifle Project, whose progression from parts to finished product has been chronicled in this magazine. Upholding the honor of the Kalashnikov family is the Arsenal SLRS-101.

Both rifles feature relatively uncommon receivers, which add to their accuracy by providing a more rigid platform. The MI gun has a machined aluminum billet receiver as opposed to the more



*The Arsenal SLRS-101, perhaps the best commercially available Kalashnikov.*

common forged receiver. The Arsenal sports a forged steel receiver rather than the more typical stamped steel receiver.

ARs and Kalashnikovs have entirely different operating systems. The AR uses a direct gas impingement system. When a bullet travels down the barrel, some gas is bled off into a tube that leads directly to the bolt carrier causing it to travel backward and eject the spent round and load another. The Kalashnikov has a piston-operated system. When the bullet travels down the barrel, some gas is released into a tube containing a piston. The piston is attached to the bolt carrier, which sends it rearward

to eject the fired case and load a fresh round.

The two rifles are of similar length, magazine capacity and ammunition cost. Major differences are weight, caliber and accuracy. The United States is a nation of rifle men and women. U.S. military rifles are generally built to tighter tolerances than their foreign counterparts and usually have much better sights for the sake of accuracy. Most AR-15s have a removable handguard with a Picatinny rail underneath that will easily mount an optic.

Russians have always put a premium

on simplicity of operation and reliability when it comes to their military arms, hence their looser tolerances. Russian weapons are usually uncomplicated, robust and rugged. Since most combat occurs at 100 yards or less, a Kalashnikov is more than up to the task.

Most Kalashnikovs now come with a side rail scope mount. The SLRS-101 used in this test has a Russian-manufactured 6 x 42 scope with a range finder and illuminated sight. Russian-made optics were once inexpensive bargains. That is no longer the case. Fortunately, MI makes a side mount that can accept a variety of optics as well as a front handguard system that will accept optics and numerous accessories.

One of the main advantages of the AR system is its adaptability. Calibers, configurations and barrels can literally be changed in minutes. With a Kalashnikov you're pretty much limited to one configuration. You can't switch barrels, for instance, without a hydraulic press.

*continued on page 34*

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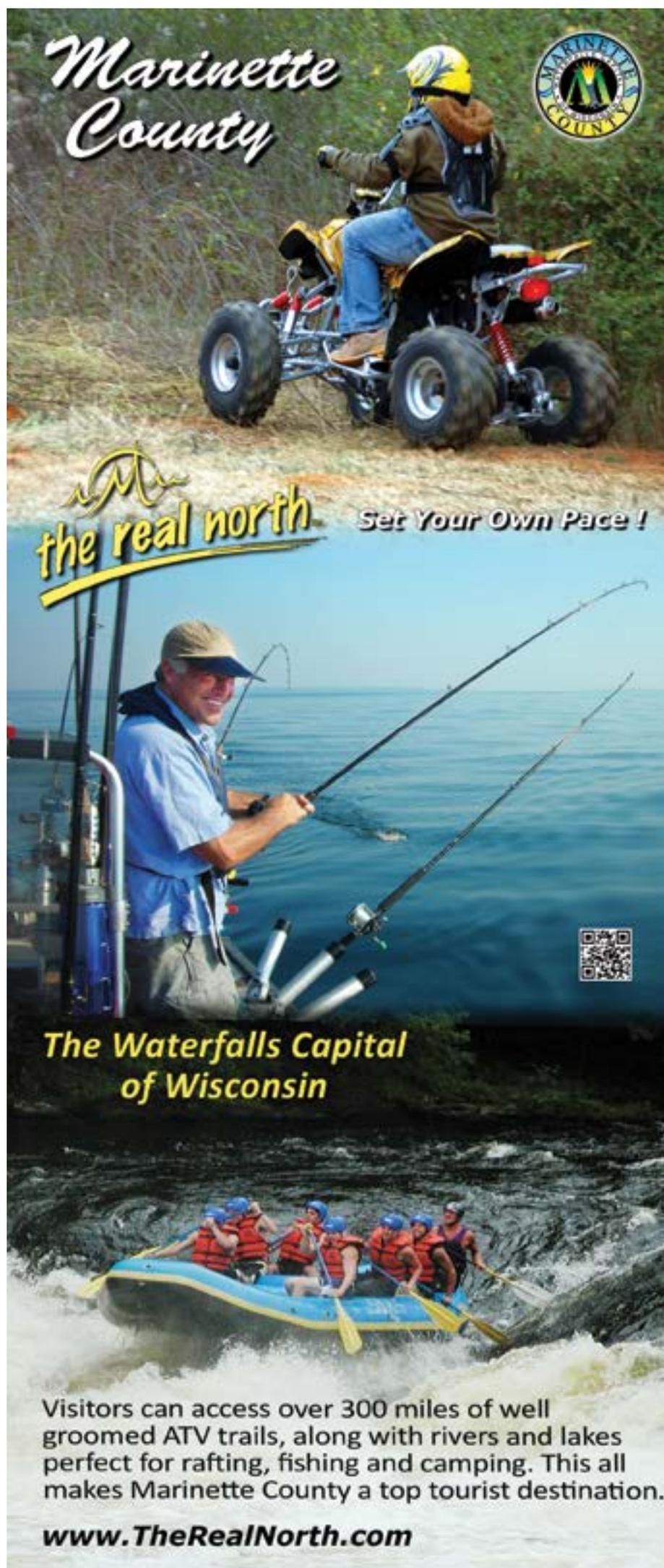


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**WILKERSON, from page 32**

the bush.”

The end of big game hunting came at a huge cost to many Africans. Trophy hunting was regulated and kept elephant and other animal populations in check. When guided hunting ended, so, too, did many of the rules and regulations that had effectively managed the animal population for generations. In their place, according to Phil, came unchecked population growth that led to death by starvation of thousands of elephants and widespread poaching.

Without big game hunting to support their economies and families, some people in the bush took up poaching simply as a means to earn money to survive. Phil hopes that one day those who imposed the hunting bans realize the damage

that they have done and allow its return. Regulated trophy hunting would restore the balance of nature in the African bush, curb poaching, and improve the lives of those who work with hunters, Phil said.

You can see and learn about many of the world's exotic animals by visiting Midwestern Shooters' Supply and seeing Phil's phenomenal collection. He's always happy to answer your questions and explain the importance of hunting to the environment.

And, if you're wondering what a coati-mundi is, it's a member of the raccoon family found in the American Southwest and South America. Rarely seen in the wild, you can view one on display at Midwestern Shooters' Supply. 

*Stuart Wilkerson is a freelance writer specializing in historical firearms and collecting.*



*The accurate, reliable and adaptable MI Billet Rifle Project.*

**WILKERSON, from page 33**

Typically, ARs are manufactured or built in .223/5.56 NATO caliber, while most Kalashnikovs are chambered in 7.62 x 39 caliber. An AR-15 can be expected to consistently shoot two- to three-inch groups at 100 yards with a forged receiver. With its variable power hunting scope cranked to 9 power the MI Billet Rifle Project consistently shoots sub two-inch groups with good ammunition.

A common stamped AK using inexpensive Eastern Bloc 123 grain, full metal jacket, 7.62 x 39 ammunition will most likely shoot four- to six-inch groups with iron sights at 100 yards and slightly better with a scope. A milled Arsenal with a scope should be able to hold at least two- to four-inch groups at this distance.

AR-15s with 16-inch barrels, the most popular variant, have a maximum effective range of up to 600 yards with 62 grain, full-metal jacket 5.56 rounds. The bullet travels 3100 feet per second with 1300 foot pounds of energy at the muzzle. A 7.62 x 39 round from a Kalashnikov exits the muzzle at 2400 feet per second and 1500 pounds of energy. With common Eastern Bloc ammunition, an AK has a maximum effective range of about 400 yards.

The difference between the 5.56 and

7.62 x 39 rounds becomes dramatic at 300 yards. The 7.62 x 39 round will drop 44 inches at this distance, compared to 22 inches with the 5.56 round. At 400 yards the AK round is producing about 460 pounds of energy compared to the AR-15's 536.

Possessing fewer parts, a Kalashnikov is easier to clean and maintain than an AR-15. Kalashnikov magazines must be “rocked” into place and are slower to insert than an AR's, which are simply pushed into place. Kalashnikovs are heavier. The Arsenal SLRS-101 in this comparison tips the scales at 12 pounds with a loaded 30-round magazine and Russian POSP scope. With a hunting scope attached and a full 30-round magazine inserted, the MI Billet Rifle Project weighs nine pounds.

Either rifle is a good choice. Kalashnikovs have a well-deserved reputation for reliability and durability but fall short in terms of accuracy compared to an AR. An AR like the MI Billet Rifle Project can be as reliable as a Kalashnikov, but it will require a little more in the way of cleaning and lubrication.

My recommendation? Buy or build a high quality AR from Midwest Industries and a newly-manufactured AK from a known manufacturer. You can't lose. 

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