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September/October 2015

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TODD LENSING

Safety First!

Preparation key to successful waterfowl hunt

Yet another waterfowl season is right around the corner and we all are busy ensuring that our gear is ready for one more grueling fall. We clean our decoys, touching them up with paint if needed, brush up the blind, practice our calls, et cetera. We're all guilty of these summer pleasures that bring a little more excitement the closer we get to September. However, along with the simple joys of sprucing up hunting gear, it's important to keep our safety equipment and plan in tip-top shape.

The other day I was finishing my application for a guide permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) when I came across one of the sections in the several pages of material called "Safety Records, Equipment, and Training." It got me thinking that my safety plan and equipment that I have taken for granted over the last 12 years is actually pretty extensive, especially when I have to write it all down. I also thought about how important safety on the mighty Mississippi really is and how

it's usually the last thing we consider, if considered at all.

Over the years I have had a few close calls on the water and have helped many more in dangerous or potentially dangerous situations. Good preparation and planning can get you out of a treacherous ordeal, while under preparation and lack of safety equipment can make risky matters even worse.

The following information contains a couple of segments from the application I sent to the USFWS concerning safety.

Emergency Preparedness Or Safety Plan

At the time of booking, my clients are given a set of safety rules to review prior to their hunt. On the day of the hunt, before we leave shore, I go over the entire boat safety plan pointing out where all items are located. These items include fire extinguishers, Type I life jackets, first aid kit, safety blankets, and cell phone. I also explain the use of the marine radio and why we monitor the channel the way we do.

I also let my clients know which launch we are departing from, approximately how many miles we are running up or down river, and if we will be hunting on the east or west side that day. My wife, Donna, also knows my approximate hunting location and where I launch each day.

Note: This is what I do and is only an example. The point of a safety plan (especially if you have new hunters on board) is to provide enough information about safety equipment and location as well as hunting location so if the need arises, everyone is prepared.

List All Safety Related Equipment And Supplies

Type I life jacket, orange flotation ring, orange throw bag, flare kit, two fire extinguishers, advanced first aid kit, safety blankets, spare GPS, river maps, survival kit (including wet light matches, saw or machete, and knife), dry bag with spare clothes, food and water, tools and spare parts, spare drain plug, and



Safety equipment at steering console including compass, GPS, marine radio and throw bag.

spare gas.

This list may sound excessive, but I am also responsible for up to four other people in addition to myself. Safety equipment should be tailored to individual needs.

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FRED SCHAFFHAUSER

The Bowstring Is King

Proper maintenance helps fasten a tag

As summer winds down, bow-hunters' minds across Wisconsin are turning to the upcoming whitetail hunting season. For some that means planting food-plots, setting stands or looking for that new piece of gear or camo. Around our archery proshop, this time of year is spent helping bowhunters ready themselves and their equipment for the shot that will put meat on the table and trophies on the wall.

As we prepare our equipment for the upcoming season, the bowstring and cables deserve most of the attention. Nothing can wreck your bowhunting trip quicker than a damaged string or cable.

Most everything about the performance of your bow starts and ends with the condition of your strings and cables. Stretch, peep position, silencers, loop, nocking points and kissers buttons are all important to the tune of your bow and how well it is prepared to shoot a broad-head straight to its mark. Strings and cables are constantly changing throughout their lifespan and need to be looked

at occasionally to insure proper condition and measurements.

Generally, strings and cables should be replaced at minimum every three years. The condition of strings deteriorates over time regardless of use. They are under tension constantly, and even a seldom-shot bow should have the strings replaced after three years. Archers who shoot year round need to replace their strings more frequently, perhaps as often as yearly based on use, bow type and maintenance. If a string becomes damaged prematurely, it must be replaced regardless of how old it is.

Unfortunately, just looking at a string gives little indication of its useful life. Someone who cares well for their strings and cables may keep them appearing to be in good condition well past their useful life. For instance, one of the most punished parts of the bowstring is the point where the arrow attaches to the string. This is the location where there is often a loop or nocking points installed. It is also the place where the string is constantly

flexing as the bow is drawn and shot. The string strands are hidden under the serving (wrapped portion of the string), so it is very difficult to assess the condition of the string at that point. Bowstrings and cables are made up of a single strand of material that is wrapped end over end to form what becomes a multi-strand string. The problem is if just one of the strands is damaged or cut, the string needs to be replaced. If that damage occurs under a served section of the string, it is sometimes impossible to detect. Fortunately, there are some things we can do to extend the life of our strings and cables.

Waxing keeps a string from drying out and becoming abrasive to itself. A light coating of wax worked in to the strands is helpful to extend the life of your string. That old clump of bees' wax your grandpa gave you is fine in a pinch but use something more pliable and viscous that applies lightly and penetrates deeper into



Fred Schaffhauser took this northern Wisconsin whitetail in the peak of the rut.

the strands. Most string material today does well with a silicone-based wax.

Too much wax adds weight to the bowstring, inhibiting bow performance and arrow speed. Never apply wax to the wrapped areas of the string. It will soften those areas and promote separation and early deterioration of the serving material.

Remember, the materials used to make strings are strong but can be damaged

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SCHAFFHAUSER, from page 5

easily when abraded. Make sure all accessories attached to a bowstring, such as nocking point loops, peep sights, silencers and kissers buttons, are applied over served sections of the string or tied in properly. Never use any glue on a string or serving as glues tend to become hard and can rub against the string fibers and damage or cut them.

As you get your gear ready for the upcoming hunting season, pick up new arrows, broadheads, scent control products and the like, don't forget to wax your strings and cables, replace the rubber peep tube if you use one, check your tie-

ins and servings, or take your bow into your local proshop for a string change if it's due. Keeping a spare string and cable in your case is always a great idea. If your strings and cables fail on a hunt, you may be able to get to a proshop near your hunting land, but they may not have your string size on hand. If you have a spare set with you, it might be able save your hunt! *OW*

Fred is co-owner of West Town Archery in Brookfield, Wisconsin. An avid bowhunter, archery technician and target shooter, Fred has two national titles and several state titles in indoor target archery to his credit. Connect with him at westtownarchery.com.



Big boat for big water.

LENSING, from page 3

Let's face it. Water fowling on the river is an exhilarating, yet dangerous sport. We all need to make sure that we are adequately prepared so that if a dangerous situation were to arise, we are able to utilize our planning and safety gear to make it out and live to hunt another day. *OW*

Todd is owner/operator of Flyway Fowling Guide Service, Pool 9 duck hunting outfitter. He and his wife, Donna, also own the Grandview Motel in Ferryville, located on the Mississippi River in southwest Wisconsin. Contact them at 608.734.3235.



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MIKE FOSS

When The Hounds Run First

No worries, says Wisconsin bear bait expert

As I slowly reached the next baiting destination and turned off the sputtering motor of my ATV, the familiar baying of distant hounds in training fell over the silence of the still, muggy August morning.

In Wisconsin, bear hunters sitting over bait and hunters chasing bears with hounds annually alternate the privilege of being the first group to start the season. In 2015, hounds hold that advantage, beginning the bear season on Wednesday September 9, with baiters poised to join the game on September 16.

Every year before the bear season, the topic becomes a hot debate. Some bait sitters are concerned that noisy hounds pushing bears over miles of country will diminish their own chances for bringing bears to a quiet bait station ... and their own chances to fill a tag.

I read the posted and often negative comments in bear hunting forums raising the concern of the bait hunters that are often novices to the sport. I listen to the concern from my own clients. It's understandable. After sometimes waiting eight years for a harvest tag, a bait hunter does not want a chance to fill it ruined by an intruding dog pack. After spending my life watching and hunting bears, viewing thousands of trail cam photos and videos, and sending an overwhelming number of our hunters home with the tag filled, dogs or no dogs, don't forget to pack your optimism.

Start with these statistics. Northern Wisconsin Outfitters success rates do not change regardless of whether hound hunters or bait hunters begin the season. Our hunters achieve near 100 percent shot opportunity and more than a 95 percent kill success rate. Much more crucial to filling that tag is the consistency of your baiting in the preseason, the placement of your stand in regard to wind direction and detection from the ground, and the number of hours the hunter is willing to wait on stand for the arrival of his bear.

If the bears learn to habitually come to the bait, they will. If the bear smells or sees the hunter, he won't come in. And if the hunter leaves early, none of it will matter anyway. Hounds have immediate impact on a bait station but little long-term effect on a bear's routine. If chased but not harvested, the bear will be back soon, often within the same day.

When we lead our hunters to their stand, they know the station had been baited since snow melt and that the stand is set for the highest probability of a kill. Even when the hounds hunt first, we know that if the hunter toughs out his vigil on stand, he is probably going to have an opportunity to shoot. Whether he chooses to shoot or ultimately makes the killing shot, that is out of our hands.



This bear with a white blaze marking routinely visits one of many Northern Wisconsin Outfitter bait stations.


During a recent hunt, one of our clients sat in anger and disbelief watching two bellowing bear hounds ramble through his secluded bait station. He seriously considered abandoning the hunt until he recalled what I had told our entire group of hunters the night before: there was a possibility of bear dogs interrupting the hunt. The message? Stay put.

Thirty minutes later the hunter stood over his very large bear. "What a great hunt," he thought.

As I stand near the ATV, bait pail in hand, memories of hunting with dogs decades before fall over me with the growing sound of the distant hounds. My heart pounds not in anger that the dogs will invade this bait station set on private property—they know no boundaries—but with excitement that I may glimpse the bear they are chasing.

The pack moves through and one dog breaks away, nose to the ground. The hound is just yards away before she notices me, comes to a stop and briefly contemplates this man from nowhere. Then she is gone again, hurrying to rejoin the chase with the others gaining distance into the Bayfield County morning.

If you are a hunter expecting that long-awaited Wisconsin bear tag in the near future and are weighing whether you should risk your hunt when dogs run first, there really is no difference. And if the hounds do come when you are on stand, listen to the moving miracles in the distance. If your worlds collide, take in and enjoy every second of the show. But when they fade away again, a word of advice....

I hope you're ready. 

Connect with Northern Wisconsin Outfitters at northernwisconsinoutfitters.com or call Robert Hass and Mike Foss at 715.373.0344.



To find success on your fall turkey hunt, find what the birds are feeding on.

TOM CARPENTER

Fall Turkey Success

Know their menu

Picture a plucked wild turkey, rubbed with garlic and stuffed with juicy wedges of orange, then roasted gently to moist perfection in its golden-brown skin. Add mashed potatoes, thick gravy made with the precious few drippings, sweet yams, homemade cranberry sauce with walnuts, buttery green beans, a good loaf of bread ... and apple pie. That's one turkey dinner menu.

But in fall turkey season, another menu should interest you even more: the *turkeys'* menu. Gobbler, jake, hen or jenny, Wisconsin's fall turkeys have one thing in common: they need to eat heartily to stoke up for winter. What is on the turkeys' menu should guide where you look for birds. Understanding fall turkey foods is the secret to finding the main course for your own turkey dinner.

Finding The Food

Turkeys are gastronomical opportunists and, quite frankly, will eat most anything. Still, it's helpful to categorize the food groups that might comprise their fall diet in our state.

Hard mast. Nuts and seeds from trees. Hard mast includes primarily acorns but also hickory nuts, beechnuts, cherry pits and ash seed.

Soft mast. Berries and fruits. In fall, wild grapes, wild cherries, dogwood berries, sumac, juniper, chokecherries and other delicacies ripen or are still available.

Grains and agricultural crops. A grain field harvested to stubble attracts fall turkeys like flowers pull bees. Corn is best but soybeans, wheat and oats will do. Hayfields provide greens that turkeys relish, as well as flowers if the clover is still blooming.

Seeds. Grass seed makes excellent turkey food in fall, and its abundance is at its peak now. Think meadows and fallow fields.

Insects. Insects are a secondary fall food, but any self-respecting turkey will nab protein-rich grasshoppers, ladybugs, spiders or other bugs when available in a field or on the forest floor.

The Green County countryside I hunt presents endless fall turkey food. Oak-hickory woodlots offer acorns and nuts. Fence-lines and forest edges grow tangles of bushes with berries and fruits. Hayfields and pastures provide greens and insects. Fallow fields produce incredible amounts of grass seed. Corn and soybeans are everywhere for the gleaning once the combines start

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GARY ENGBERG

Gary Engberg Outdoors

Get ready for Wisconsin's dove season

Wisconsin's 13th mourning dove hunting season opens this coming September 1st and runs through November 29th. This year's spring call count survey, done by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in most of the 40 states where doves are hunted, estimated the dove population at 400 million birds, marking it as the country's most abundant game bird. The annual dove harvest in the U.S. is about 41 million doves with about 125,000 harvested in Wisconsin.

Data indicates between 4 million and 5 million doves migrate through Wisconsin each fall. Two different segments of the migratory dove population use Wisconsin. One is the doves that are born in Wisconsin. The other is doves from Canada and other states that travel through the state and might even winter in Wisconsin. One migratory route goes to Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi and the other route goes to Alabama, Georgia and Florida.

"The 10-year population trend for

Wisconsin shows a six percent increase. Hunters should expect to see numbers of doves similar to the last couple of years," said Kimberlee Benton, an assistant migratory game bird ecologist for the Department of Natural Resources. Hunting does not affect dove numbers because doves have a high mortality rate from predators, disease, weather extremes and accidents.

Mourning doves breed from central Canada to Mexico and nest from April to September with the peak nesting being from May through August. Each nesting pair has numerous broods each year of two white eggs.

Mourning doves are most numerous in the state's southern two-thirds. Wisconsin has a daily limit of 15 birds and 45 in possession. Annually, Wisconsin hunters harvest over 120,000 birds. Kent Van Horn, migratory game bird ecologist for the DNR, has a few tips for hunters. "Doves use a wide range of habitats, but fields with an abundance of weed seeds or grain, open gravel areas and

water sources are all good locations to find doves," he said. Dove hunting will improve as farmers harvest their crops. Harvested open fields with waste grain and crop residue are excellent locations to hunt doves. The closer the fields are to the bird's major requirements—suitable habitat, roost trees, water and grit (for digesting food)—the better.

The birds fly from their roosting trees to their feeding fields and watering spots early in the morning. They rest during the middle of the day and then return later in the afternoon to feed and water again before they retire, which is why early morning and late afternoon are the best times to scout for birds.

Some Rules and Tips for Hunting Doves:


- Shotguns must be plugged so they can't hold more than three shells.
- Hunters need a small game license and be H.I.P. (Harvest Information Program) enrolled, but no state or federal stamps are required.
- Baiting is not allowed, and the hunt-

A mourning dove.



ing hours are 30 minutes prior to sunrise to sunset.

- Do yourself a favor and have a new 2015 Early Mourning Dove Regulation booklet in your possession.
- Wisconsin's 20,000 dove hunters are asked to check any harvested birds for leg bands. Wisconsin is taking part in a national survey to access dove populations for harvest management. Hunters who harvest a banded bird should report to the Bird Banding Lab at 800.327.2263.

The mourning dove is also a tasty game bird that you should try. Breast the bird and cut the meat into smaller pieces, which you wrap around a water chestnut and a piece of bacon secured with a toothpick. Cook these treats on an open fire or a grill and enjoy! 

Contact Gary Engberg at 608.795.4208 or gengberg@garyengbergoutdoors.com, or visit garyengbergoutdoors.com.

JIM SERVI

Learning To Trap Again

Now is the time to prep for fall

Christmas is always a magical time of year, but even more so for an 11 year-old boy hoping to expand his collection of fishing lures. Like many young Wisconsin boys, I was obsessed with the outdoors, excited to finally get to hunt during the upcoming season and riding my bike to my favorite fishing spots at every opportunity. But when I opened a present from my grandma that year, I got a gift that truly changed my life. Wrapped in the cardboard box were four traps. That following fall I received another dozen from my grandpa. As much as I loved the outdoors and anticipated hunting and fishing, surprisingly, trapping had never crossed my mind.

That quickly changed as I spent the next 12 years growing my trap collection while trying to outfox furbearers throughout middle school, high school and college. Admittedly, I never became an expert but managed to catch a nice mix of species. After graduating college, getting married, tours to Iraq and Afghanistan, moving several times, and now having three boys of my own, trapping kind of got pushed to the back burner. In many ways, it has by society as well. Unfortunately, trapping is a dirty word to many and fur is even worse to them, but what they don't understand is that trapping is part of

our heritage and even more relevant in the 21st century with humans and animals living side by side. Trappers know that there is no better way to keep populations in balance and have nature coexist in harmony.

This year I plan to return to the trapline as I learn how to trap again. Many avid outdoorsmen have had the same notion in recent years, partly due to rising fur prices but also as another way to enjoy time outdoors. Here is some basic advice for those ready to take on the challenge.

First off, it's important to remember that even a small trapline takes time and commitment. Most sets need to be checked daily, and animals need to be tended to shortly after harvest. To get started, take an inventory of what you have and what you need. Starting with the basics, you'll need your traps or snares, stakes, wire and a good set of pliers. After the catch, you'll need a sharp skinning knife and stretchers for your fur. That's all you really need to get started, but as with any hobby you can get as complex or keep it as simple as you'd like. If you're new to the sport, I'd recommend picking a few species and starting small.

Mink, muskrat and raccoon are common in nearly every body of water. Beavers are a little harder to find

but worth the effort. For dry land trappers, coyotes and foxes can be found in virtually every rural landscape. Fisher, bobcat and otters all require multiple years of applying before you get a permit here in Wisconsin, so start now as you perfect your trapping techniques. Weasels are fun to chase during the winter, and skunks and opossums will find their way in your traps even if you try to avoid them.

My grandpa always preached location, location, location just as the trapping articles I read as a youth. It's better to have fewer traps in better locations. Many experienced trappers rely on bait and lures, but other experts strictly use blind sets and take advantage of their knowledge of animal movements. Edges, pinch points, holes and anything that grabs an animal's attention is a great place to start. It's best to have the list of locations for each trap before the season starts rather than wasting time looking on your first day out.

Stewardship is also an important trait of every successful trapper. Leave no sign that you were there and avoid setting traps where the neighbor's pet will find them. It's usually not the best way to meet them and a good way to get bitten in the process. Trust me, I know.

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LEE GATZKE

Lee Gatzke

Deer in daylight

A deer on its feet in daylight is a hunt-able deer. Filling a deer tag typically requires intercepting a deer traveling in daylight hours. Most often this is accomplished by having some knowledge of when and where they will be on their feet during legal shooting hours. September and October see a lot of variation in daylight deer activity. September offers very good daylight activity. October starts out slowly but ends up with a bang on the daylight activity scale. Let's look at the four stages of daylight activity that occur in September and October.

Stage One: September. From opening day until the end of September deer remain in their summer patterns. They're daylight active and on their feet in the early morning, especially so the couple hours prior to sunset. This makes September a very good time to be in the field. At no other time of the season except during the main rut are deer as active during daylight.

Stage Two: October Lull. Once October arrives deer activity in daylight decreases. My experience has been that the first half of October sees a noticeable decrease in daytime deer movement making for tough hunting, the "October Lull." But I have tagged a number of nice bucks during that time. The key to finding deer on their feet during shooting hours now is to hunt close to their bedding areas. I've noticed that when deer have a good acorn crop to feed on at this time of year they bed close by. Locate oaks dropping acorns, and if there is sign of deer feeding on them, you have a worthwhile spot to set up. Deer, even now, often arrive at this food source in daylight hours. Seasoned hunters know to set up down wind, and deer will often show during shooting hours. The key is to find a number of these spots, because deer will quickly become aware of your presence at each one. After one or two sits, you will have burned up these spots. Every year some of the biggest bucks taken are shot during the October Lull.

Stage Three: Pre-rut. By mid-October many bow hunters are gearing up for the coming rut and plan to concentrate on hunting the last few days of October through the end of early bow season in November. Many ignore devoting serious time to the pre-rut,



The first couple weeks of archery season find deer actively moving about during daylight hours.

roughly October 16 - 26. While young bucks and does are still in the October Lull mode and lying low, older bucks seem to be the only ones on their feet in daylight. Many older bucks are relocating to areas they will patrol for breeding purposes, moving miles away. They will remain there until they have bred all the does they can during that estrus cycle, then move on to look for more receptive does elsewhere. This pre-rut timeframe is the only time during the hunting season when the majority of deer I see moving during daylight are older bucks.

On October 20 of last season I set up to hunt a particular older buck. Two hours before sunset a two year-old eight-pointer passes within five yards of the tree I was in. During the next two hours four more older age class bucks passed by within shooting distance. The last of them wasn't the buck I was hunting for but was too good to pass on. He stuck to heavy cover, never giving me a clear shot. Daylight was fading fast as I watched him walk away, ignoring my calls. Fishing my bow rope

out of my pocket, I was attaching it to my bow as I prepared to call it a day. From behind me I heard something, turning to see the buck I'd originally intended to hunt only 15 yards away. He was gone before I could knock an arrow. During this sit six different bucks, mostly three and four year-olds, got within shooting distance. It was my best hunt of the year.

Stage Four: Rut. The last few days of October see a major increase of daylight activity by all bucks and breeding age does. The main rut is days away and the whitetails' daylight activity is at its peak for the year. It's prime time for seeing deer. For those who can't or haven't had the opportunity to properly scout, it's the best time of the year to get lucky. *WO*

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.

On Wisconsin
Outdoors
With the Dick Ellis Experts

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EXPLORE WISCONSIN

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STUART WILKERSON

Plastic Fantastic

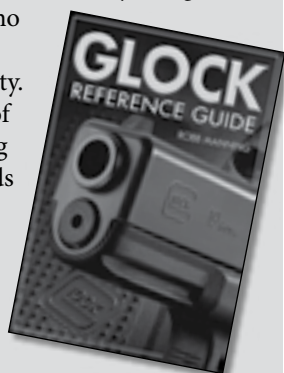
A review of "Glock Reference Guide"

According to legend, Glock pistols were invisible when they landed on American shores in the early 1980s. The news media, Hollywood and a gaggle of politicians claimed that the new high capacity pistol from Austria could evade airport security because of its plastic frame. Their fear was that terrorists would be able to sneak these undetected weapons onto airliners and highjack them.

In actuality, Glocks were and are as detectable as any other weapon when X-rayed by airport security, but, hey, why let facts get in the way of a good story? Today, no one can argue Glock's visibility. They are one of the best-selling firearms brands in the United States, and nearly three-quarters of the nation's police departments arm their officers with Glocks. Glocks aren't just an American phenomenon but a worldwide one as well. In addition to law enforcement agencies, dozens of nations, including Israel, Britain and Switzerland, issue Glocks to their armed forces.

The reasons for the proliferation of Glocks around the planet are that they are as reliable as an anvil, accurate, easy to service and maintain and reasonably priced. Since the adoption of the Model 17 by the Austrian Army in 1982, there have been four generations of Glocks in a dizzying variety of calibers, frame sizes and barrel lengths.

I have to admit that I had little interest in Glocks prior to reading "Glock Reference Guide" by *On Wisconsin Outdoors'* contributor Robb Manning. One Glock pretty much looked the same as another to me. I knew they had a good reputation for reliability and were issued to many law enforcement agencies, but I just could not get past their polymer frames and appearance, nor could I crack their model



continued on page 11

ROBB MANNING

Product 6-Pack

Great gear for the woods, fields, and waterways



SILENCERCO: SALVO 12

Save your eardrums and the eardrums of those around you with the first commercially-available shotgun suppressor (or silencer, as the ATF refers to them). It's available in 12-gauge and operates with most shotguns on the market and almost all makes of ammunition. It works with semi-autos, pump actions, you name it. It reduces sound to 136.8 decibels and also decreases felt recoil. Sections can be removed to change the length and weight. It mounts to the shotgun using choke mounts that replace the standard chokes and comes in improved cylinder, modified, improved modified and full. 34.5 ounces, 12 inches in length. Made of aluminum and stainless steel. (\$1400).

silencerco.com



T.A.B. GEAR: SAS-R

Rifle suppressors get very hot very fast, especially when shooting rapid fire out of a military-style rifle. So hot that the heat mirage coming off of it will impede the view through your scope, making it almost impossible to accurately hit the target. If you touch the suppressor with your hand, you'll leave behind a layer or two of skin. A suppressor cover is a definite must-have, but not all are created equal. Some work fine with bolt actions and some semi-autos (like the T.A.B. Gear SAS), but if you're shooting ARs in 5.56 or full autos, you'll need something with a little more insulation, like the SAS-R. It's made of a 1000 D Cordura outer shell for durability and a Nomex inner shell, which can withstand 1800 Degrees Fahrenheit. It can be installed with your suppressor attached for convenience and comes wrapped in bungee cord to prevent it from creeping off while shooting. (\$68). OWO tested and approved.

tabgear.com



SIBERIAN COOLERS: SIBERIAN 30

Molded using a rotational-molding process for even walls and one-piece construction, Siberian makes coolers as tough as any. It has anti-slip rubber feet, recessed carry handles, rope carry handles, E/Z drain plug and robust locks to keep it secure. The Siberian 30 measures 22 inches long, 12.5 inches wide, 13.5 inches tall and weighs 16 pounds. Mostly, it will keep your ice for days. Who wants to drive for ice every day like with a conventional cooler? (\$199).

siberiancoolers.com



MINN KOTA: TALON

Long known for their world class trolling motors, Minn Kota also leads the pack when it comes to shallow water anchors. It starts with a motor above the water line for quiet operation that won't spook fish. Add speed, toughness and strength, and you get Talon. The vertical deployment also means it's out of the way, so your fishing line doesn't get tangled with it like conventional anchor ropes. Choose between hard and soft bottom modes. Built-in wave absorptions means the anchor won't come undone in choppy water. Comes in 6-, 8-, 10- and 12-foot depths. (Starting at \$1399).

minnkotamotors.com



SNAGPROOF: WOBBLETRON

Hollow body frog lures have been around since I started fishing. I remember them

being a really big thing when I was a kid, but then the market became saturated with them, and they kind of fell out of favor amongst the larger fishing populace. Still around, and still one of the best, is Snagproof, who have been making hollow-bodied frog lures for over 50 years. It's bigger, heavier and badder than their other models and sports an extra-wide gap duel hook and an internal glass rattle. The leg action kicks out behind it causing a commotion that big fish are going to hone in on attack. It's great for open water but still dominates the weed beds. It's 0.5-ounce and comes in Black, Pearl, Brown Bullfrog, Wild Bullfrog, Tweety, Chartreuse, Chicklet, and Fred's. (\$10).

snagproof.com



SAFETREE OUTDOORS: THE TREE CLAMP

One of the most dangerous parts about hang-on tree stands is hanging them on. No matter what device I've tried, it still comes down to balancing on a ladder stick when trying to wrap the cord around the tree while attempting to balance the tree-stand. That all ends with The Tree Clamp. Simply attach it to your treestand, slap the treestand against the tree, and The Tree Clamp holds it in place while you secure the stand to the tree with the manufacturer's attachment straps. (The Tree Clamp is not meant to hold a person.) Once the treestand is hung, you remove The Tree Clamp and move on to hang the next stand. It's like having a second person up the tree with you, holding it against the tree as you secure the straps. It weighs 8 pounds and is made of carbon steel and aluminum. It mounts to any treestand on the market and fits trees that are 9 to 25 inches in diameter. 100 percent made in the USA from a Wisconsin homegrown company. (\$200).

safetreeoutdoors.com

More Products Reviews.
OnWisconsinOutdoors.com/FeaturedProducts

BILL CUNNEA

Customizing An Upland Bird Gun

Transformation of a Winchester

I should just leave the story at that, sounding like a six-figure Holland and Holland collector's gun. But in the interest of full disclosure, the shotgun started life quite a few years ago as a Winchester Model 370, 12-gauge, full choke, 30-inch-barreled single shot. The 370 is a lower grade version of the Model 37, I believe.

I've had the gun a few years, and since it duplicates my Hercules single 12 gauge, I kept looking at it as a possible candidate for a pheasant gun I've always wanted. Since I had some very good pointing dogs, Button and then Young Bert, the not-right dog, I usually had a chance to get closer to the bird before it flushed. With a full choke, especially, and even with a modified one, I would have to wait a bit for many birds to get up and away before shooting. If I'd hit them with a tight pattern closer, I would have done too much damage, and, really, I'm pretty much a meat hunter. It would defeat the whole purpose of being there.

Also, as the years go by, I've found I most often hit the bird with my first shot, and when I'm shooting a second barrel, it is frequently an exercise in futility ... not always, but often. As much as I love my side-by-side AYA 20 gauge (improved cylinder and modified barrels,) even that gets heavier as the days (and years) pass. Later in the season I usually carry a single shot for weight, figuring if I don't hit with one shot, well, that's fair; I had my chance. When jump-shooting ducks, of-

ten more than one bird goes up at a time, so then the double barrel makes sense to me, but with pheasants, less so.

With that preamble out of the way, I took the 370 to a legendary gunsmith. He's a local guy who has Parker collectible shotguns shipped to him from across the continental U.S. for rehabbing, such is his skill level. He's an older man, a congenial guy with skills on many levels: fabricating parts, sculpting stocks, checkering, and general arms knowledge.

I wanted the 370 single cut down to 25 inches and threaded to take different chokes. I brought an improved cylinder choke with me. Mossberg, Winchester and some other manufacturers use the same thread pattern for their screw-in chokes. I've never had a shotgun with changeable chokes; mine are all older, more traditional hunting guns. I was seeking a light, fast-handling, more open-choked single shot for my remaining pheasant years. Of course, the gun was worth less than the cost of the modifications, but this was an itch I'd wanted to scratch for quite a few years.

The result was wonderful. The gun isn't prettier, even with the home-refinishing I did to the much-abused wood, but it comes up fast, tracks well, and opens its pattern nicely to cover my misjudgments in selecting the exact flight track of the birds.

Of the 12 birds I got last year, eight of them were



Mick with a pheasant taken by the Winchester 370.

with the Model 370. I'm shooting 2 3/4-inch number 5 shot shells. With the wider pattern and somewhat heavier shot than I formerly used, if even a few pellets hit the bird, it will come down. If I am spot-on, there is less pattern density to ruin meat.

The biggest problem I've had this year is that Wisconsin only allows a hunter to have four birds in possession in total, including at home in the freezer, so I've been giving birds away—a new problem for me. I wish that processed and frozen birds could be exempt from that quota, since I would store and consume pheasants well into spring. I think the two-a-day limit is fine, but I wish a hunter were allowed to preserve his game into the future.

A customized shot gun need not be expensive and can be a delight. I'm loving mine. It might be a worthy consideration for you, don't you think? *W*

Bill Cunnea has been a writer, teacher, consultant and outdoorsman for over 30 years. He continues to be taught lessons by his dogs in southwest Wisconsin, where he's lived for over 20 years. He's never caught a lunker nor shot a 12-point buck, and he has the lack of trophies to prove it.

SERVI, from page 8

Remember to check your regulations to ensure that you're in the correct zone on the right date using legal traps.

It sounds like a lot, and I'd be lying if I said it was easy, but what I do know is that it is worth all the effort. Not only will you enjoy the challenge and appreciate

animals that you've only seen from afar, but you'll have another excuse to spend time in the great outdoors. *W*

Jim Servi is a freelance writer who spends every chance he can in the great outdoors with his wife and three boys. Contact Jim at jimservi10@gmail.com.

WILKERSON, from page 10

number code.

Robb cracks the code and then some. "Glock Reference Guide" painstakingly details every model manufactured up to the publication of the book. Dimensions, weight, magazine capacity, generational changes, comparisons among models, and more are given no short shrift. The amount of detail is amazing. As a certified Glock armorer, Robb knows his Glock parts and when changes were made to them and why, all of which are detailed in the book. "Glock Reference Guide" is profusely illustrated and, as Glocks become more collectible, it is destined to become the Bible of Glock aficionados.

The book is full of interesting and practical information. If you're wondering which model to get, I seriously suggest you buy "Glock Reference Guide" before making your purchase. Yes, to the untrained eye, many Glocks kind of look alike. Besides the obvious, such as the size of subcompact, compact and full size models, there are many subtle and not so subtle variations and features to consider before making a final

decision. Robb does an excellent job discussing the various attributes of each caliber and model. As *On Wisconsin Outdoors* readers know, he is an expert on the topic of concealed carry pistols. His book thoroughly covers this issue in terms of how well various Glock models serve in the concealed carry role.

Robb's book contains valuable information on the care, feeding and maintenance of Glock pistols, as well as accessories and rare, unobtainable models, including those capable of full-auto fire.

Glocks are known in some circles as the Kalashnikov of semi-automatic pistols. Well built, durable and reliable, I can understand why they have earned this reputation. If you are considering the purchase of a Glock or already own one, I highly recommend "Glock Reference Guide." Well written and informative, it is an indispensable addition to any firearm collector's library. Robb's Glock Reference Guide is available at Gun Digest Books, gundigeststore.com. *W*

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



CARPENTER, from page 7

their fieldwork.

In fall, the challenge is not finding turkey food, but figuring out what the birds are focusing on, where.

Gathering intelligence on bird movements helps you locate turkeys and gives you a lead on what they might be feeding on. Ask farmers, other landowners in the vicinity, rural mail carriers, bus drivers, milk truck drivers, and anyone else who travels the back roads where they see birds.

Hunting The Birds

Once you hunt up the food and feeding areas, it's time to hunt the turkeys. After figuring out the birds' feeding habits, set up nearby ahead of time.

Attempt to call the intact group, or a curious bird, into range. If you're where the birds want to be, they're often close enough to want to take a look. Use decoys—something visual for birds to see and approach.

A friendly convenience store clerk in a small town gas stop put me onto a group of turkeys using a cut cornfield behind a country church I knew very well. I got permission to hunt there and glassed the birds when they fed toward the timber as dusk fell. Early the next afternoon I parked far away on another road, eased in quietly the back way and set up in the timber.

The weather was sunny one minute, cloudy the next, blowing and spitting some rain. I waited through it all. It even sleeted and thundered. Wait, was that a gobble? Another rumble. *Gobbleobble!* The flock's jakes were shock gobbling.

So there were birds out there somewhere! My heartbeat quickened. My calling intensified. Finally, the wind broke a bit and the sun poked out, low on the horizon. Yelps responded back.

I got ready, knees wobbling. Soon a blue head peeked over the rise 30 yards ahead. Two hens bobbed over the hill, looking for the loudmouth that had been yacking at them from the woods. Hands shaking and breath coming short, I took the biggest bird at 25 yards as she poked her head up for another look.

As I arranged her feathers and admired their glistening bronzes, purples and greens in the evening sun, I dreamed a bit of a turkey dinner menu. Not corn and the year's last grasshoppers out in the field she had come from but that other kind of turkey dinner menu. *W*

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

DICK ELLIS

On Wisconsin Outdoors To stay in the field

There are “constants” often found with being an older outdoorsman in Wisconsin. The desire to hunt or fish doesn't diminish with age. In fact, hours in the field become more cherished with time. The ability to do what we once did in the field naturally lessens, a reality compounded when we face healthcare issues from orthopedic to cardiac to any of so many things that dare to interfere with our time outside.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weaker. The reality: we may need medical consultation and expertise if we are to stay out there, where we want to be.

Meet Dick Henske of Manitowish Waters, retired educator, lifelong avid Wisconsin outdoorsman, and, over the last year, “stay in the field” example magnified. Henske, who turns 80 in October, knows another constant. Pain is the unwelcome catalyst that will either retire the outdoorsman from the field or inspire him to seek the professional help that will keep him in it.

“You realize as you get older that you still want to do this stuff and that you can,” he said. “If you have knee or hip problems and pain, you have to take care of it. The pain is not going to get better without a good doctor's evaluation and care. Do your homework, pick a good doctor and have faith.”

With escalating pain challenging his field time, Henske found good doctors and addressed hip replacement needs in 2011 and 2014, when he also faced medical crises that would shake an outdoorsman of any age. A tree stand fall in the autumn of 2013 left 11 broken ribs, a collapsed lung and a broken arm. A fall from a bike during recovery and a broken femur threatened further a lifestyle outdoors that transcended decades.

Introduced to fishing at the family cottage on School Section Lake, Henske remembers annual vacations on Turtle Lake in Winchester and Little Silver Lake in Waupaca. Over a career in education as teacher and principal from Holmen to Milwaukee, Henske was in the field weekly and utilized weekends at his hunting shack in Crivitz and the summer months at his cottage on the Manitowish Chain.

In retirement Henske took lifelong passions from weekly pursuit to daily quest. He and wife, Mariel, moved to Vilas County. He hunts and fishes Wisconsin religiously. He's visited the western states numerous times and has taken 30 trips to Canada. In addition to fishing, he's hunted grouse, waterfowl, caribou, moose, elk and bear. His license is purchased for an October 2015 hunting trip to Montana.

But time demands dues. Henske had successful hip replacement surgery in 2011 with Aurora Healthcare, motivated by dull but growing pain that intruded on both sleep and quality field time. “The pain slows you down,” he said. “When it bothers you all night, it's time for expert help.”

The initial surgery by Dr. Joseph Davies at Aurora Medical Center in Grafton placed Henske outdoors again without pain until the near tragic fall from a lock-on tree stand. Moss had gathered on the stand carpet, and at age 78 he slid off to crushing injuries. Without a cell phone, an agonizing crawl to his truck and return home spanned five hours.

“I was in ICU for a week, but I shot a buck on opening day of the November 2013 gun season,” he said. “I couldn't lift it



With his 80th birthday in October, Dick Henske approaches hunting and fishing with a bit more care and occasional guidance of medical experts. Here he chases pheasants at Wern Valley at Christmas, 2014 with English Setter, Lucy.

into the truck, so I tied it to the bumper and slowly drove it to a local tavern. The guys in the Howling Dog lifted it into the truck for me. It cost me \$18 in beer.”

Pain in the right hip and knowledge that an anterior surgery procedure was available, which would not require muscle incisions but would expedite recovery and allow reentry to the field quicker, initiated a second orthopedic surgery in June of 2014. Recovery was again well underway when a fall from his bike in August broke the femur bone of Henske's right leg, the same side as the new hip. Another ICU stay and extended rehab led to a faster return to the field than even his family would have liked.

With his English Setter, Maggie, and a walking stick, Henske was hunting grouse daily by early October in Wisconsin's northern forest. By the end of October, he hunted deer and enjoyed fabulous fishing in Canada. The bottom line, he stressed, is to hunt and fish more carefully and enjoy a good, long life. But when life does take its natural toll, rely on the medical experts to stay in the field.

“A good doctor will evaluate your personal needs and that's not always surgery,” Henske said. “I get shots occasionally for my knees at the Marshfield Clinic in Minocqua and that really helps, too. Surgery took care of my hips and I'm out in the field again. There is no question that I needed surgery. You will not believe the places in the field you will be able to hunt and fish again after recovery.”

“There is no reason you have to stop hunting and fishing because you get older. You do need to be more careful. I bypass difficult terrain now to walk down to my trout streams. I grouse hunt two hours instead of four. In the past I might have been on the ice already at this time in the morning. Today, I'll be on my deer stand this afternoon. I always said morning is for loving; you can hunt later.”

“And I know this ... if you rest, you rust.” *W*

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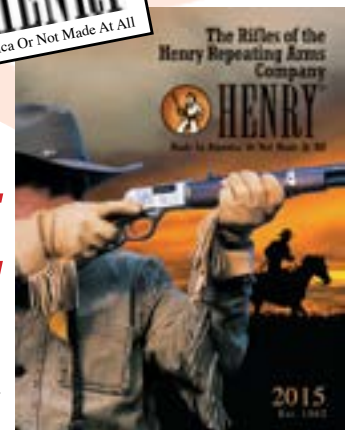
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NICK TURKAL, MD

Hunting Safety

Health Care Style

I've been an avid hunter for many years. Through the years, I've read a lot about hunting safety (usually gun and bow related), and each year my bird-hunting magazines focus on getting your dog ready for the fall hunt. But there's another part of hunting safety: Getting ourselves healthy and ready for the hunt.

Being ready for the fall hunt is all about good overall health. If you're in good shape and you exercise regularly, you may be ready. But a lot of hunters are too sedentary much of the year, and then try to do "marathon" hunts. That's why, each year, we hear about folks having heart attacks, breathing problems and orthopedic injuries in the field. So here are a few practical tips:

- If you don't have a primary care doctor, now's the time to get one. Make an appointment for an overall health checkup. If you do have a doctor, make sure you've been in for a routine visit in the past year, that your medications are up to date, and that your doc feels you are healthy enough to hunt.
- Get those immunizations. Flu shots keep people healthy and prevent thousands of deaths every year. They are usually available in October. If you haven't had a tetanus booster in the past 10 years, that should be updated. And, depending on your age, you may


need an immunization to prevent pneumonia or shingles. Nothing ruins a good hunt like getting sick in the field, far from home. Many illnesses are preventable.

- Know your cardiac status. If you have heart disease, have risk factors or it's part of your family history, be sure to ask your doctor if you need any testing, like a stress test, before heading into the field. These tests find the problems when they are fixable.
- If you're out of shape, ask your doc about an exercise program to get ready for the field. And if you have muscle/joint issues, ask about how to best protect those vulnerable areas.
- If you smoke, it's high time you quit. In addition to all of the other reasons, you'll do better in the field.
- Use appropriate bug spray. Ticks and other creatures can live well into the Wisconsin fall season.
- Alcohol and guns don't mix, ever. If you're going to enjoy modest drinking, it should be after the guns are safely stored away.
- Gun safety in general should always be top of mind. I'm picky about hunting partners, and only go out with someone who is as careful as I am. When I taught my kids to hunt, we had two primary rules:

Sadie and Emma in off-season. They keep in shape by swimming and fishing!



Don't shoot the dog and don't shoot Dad. In that order. I always figured if I came home without the dog, I better just not come home!

There are, of course, other areas that may need attention to be healthy for the field. Like many parts of life, an ounce of prevention... Happy hunting! 

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



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RON STRESING

A Blast From The Past

Bolt action shotguns of the '50s and '60s

Starting right after WWII and into the 1960s, Americans purchased thousands of bargain-priced bolt action shotguns. Manufactures included H&R, O.F. Mossberg, Marlin, Stevens, and High Standard. All turned out various models of these “popular-priced” scatterguns. A bolt action gun was a step up from a single shot break action gun yet priced about one third the cost of a pump, or even a “plain Jane” double barrel. Besides the attractive price, they offered a safe, user-friendly way to bring a youngster into hunting or the shooting sports. The majority feature an easily manipulated bolt, large safety catches, reliability, and a slow rate of fire that make the user take the extra second to actually aim.

Most of the guns share some common traits, even though produced by a number of different manufacturers. The wood was usually stained birch, but some early guns used walnut or white ash. The fit and finish on some reminds me of my Soviet military surplus rifles. Tool marks from milling or lathe turning were not polished out, and the bluing quality was minimal. As a result, it's hard to find an example of one of these guns without some rust damage on the metal. Some featured internal or box magazines, some were tube fed, and there were even single shots. Another deluxe feature was the adjustable chokes some guns carried. These

were copies of the original Poly Choke, which allow the user to turn a knob to a setting for a desired amount of choke constriction. Below are descriptions of some of the bolt actions that filled the niche of bargain-priced “starter” shotguns.

H&R is credited with bringing out some of the first bolt shotguns in 1946. They had 12-, 16- and 20-gauge guns with three shot tubular mags. The model 120 was the basic gun, with the deluxe model 349 coming out in 1954. The model 349 was the pinnacle of H&R's line, complete with a recoil pad and an adjustable Vari-Choke. It sold for a pricey \$33.95. These are rare in collector circles, and I have never seen one in person.

The Sears, Roebuck and Company J.C. Higgins brand was probably the best selling of all the bolt scatterguns. Advertised in 12, 16 and 20 gauges and in several different models, they dominated the market from 1945 - 1959. Most were made by the High Standard Company, but later O.F. Mossberg, Stevens, and Marlin made guns that sold for \$30 or less under the J.C. Higgins name. Both of the guns in my collection are J.C. Higgins guns, made by High Standard and wearing white ash stocks. One is a three shot, tube fed 12-gauge with an adjustable choke. The other is a 20-gauge single shot. Some Sears guns were recalled in the '90s for catastrophic bolt failures, so if in doubt, check before firing!



Top: Mossberg .410. Bottom: Sears J.C. Higgins 12-gauge with adjustable choke. Photos by Donna Stresing



Early 1960s Mossberg bolt action .410 shotgun.

O.F. Mossberg marketed guns under their brand name and also made Revelation brand guns sold at Western Auto and Montgomery Ward stores. Twelve-, 16-, and 20-gauge guns and some .410 bore guns were produced. Better models came with recoil pads and adjustable chokes. My first shotgun was a .410 bolt made by Mossberg. It has a birch stock, holds three shells in an internal magazine, and is chambered for 2 ½- or 3-inch shells. After extraction, fired shells were kicked out of the receiver by a stiff wire. I still have it some 48 years after receiving it, and my son, Adam, harvested his first game bird with it.

Marlin made several models of bolt guns. The most common was the Model 55 in 12-, 16- and 20-gauge

continued on page 21

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STUART WILKERSON

Kustom Kalashnikov

The AK platform is becoming as adaptable as the AR

One of the main reasons for the AR-15's continuing popularity is its ability to evolve. An almost infinite variety of optics, sights, furniture, lasers, lights and more abound that will fit the M16/AR-15 platform. This was not always the case, according to Midwest Industries' Andy Yohnk. "The old M16A1 had bad iron sights and no provision for a scope until someone made a carry handle adaptor," he explained. "Then the A2 came along with better sights and then the A4 with the flat top for optics mounting. The platform has evolved as technology did and as people wanted new ways to use accessories on their rifles."

Gun enthusiasts are now witnessing a similar evolution with the Kalashnikov platform. For most of its life, the Kalashnikov was saddled with a simple U-notch rear and front post sight, a non-adjustable fixed or underfolding stock, heavy steel magazines, and a simple muzzle brake. Later, sometime around the year 2000 (I'm guessing),



Midwest Industries' two most popular AK products. Left: the Universal Handguard for the installation of lights, lasers and/or optics. Right: the Side Rail Scope Mount. These products add an incredible amount of versatility to the Kalashnikov platform.

Kalashnikov-type rifles began being imported with Warsaw Pact side mount plates. This made it possible to attach Russian and Eastern European telescopic and red dot optics. These optics were inexpensive, heavy, rugged and extremely frustrating and confusing to adjust, at least for me. They didn't operate like a typical western optic, and their owners' manual, often poorly translated into English, only added to the confusion.

Other mounting options were available, but most were of poor quality and design. Western optics could be fitted to

inexpensive dust cover and side mounts, but they often could not hold zero because of the mounts. Better options now exist, thankfully, because the price of Russian and Eastern European optics and mounts are rapidly approaching, and exceeding, the cost of other superior optics.

Today, there are a number of U.S.-made optic mounts. Some of the most respected are Midwest Industries (MI) handguard mounts. These mounts come in several versions, including universal, keymount and extended versions.

All are made of high-quality aluminum with an anodized finish and require no gunsmithing or permanent modifications. With this mount, a red dot or scout-type scope can be attached to the standard gas tube of virtually any Kalashnikov. Owners don't need a side plate. AK iron sights are heavy duty and effective, but they can be extremely difficult for older shooters to see, let alone focus on a target. The MI handguard mount puts older shooters back in the game and at a reasonable cost. As an added bonus, lights, lasers and bipods can be attached to MI handguards.

At the time of this writing, MI was offering a handguard combined with the highly-regarded Vortex SPARC red dot for only \$299.99. By way of comparison, a Russian Kobra now costs upwards of \$400.

MI also makes a side mount for Kalashnikovs that will fit the Warsaw Pact side plate and take a variety of optics.

continued on page 26

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STUART WILKERSON

Fall Fest Family Fun

Something for everyone

Midwestern Shooters Supply once again demonstrated its commitment to family and community at their Seventh Annual Fall Fest. Approximately 10,000 people attended this free event on August 14 and 15 at their store in Lomira.

First and foremost, Fall Fest is a means for Midwestern Shooters Supply to help support local clubs, organizations and athletic teams, according to Vice President Randy Boelkow. These groups raise literally thousands of dollars through fundraisers made possible through Fall Fest. Among those taking part this year were the Lomira High School football team, Campbellsport FFA Alumni, Lomira FFA Alumni, the Lomira Lions Club, Campbellsport Youth Trap Shooting Team, the Eden Chapter of Wings Over Wisconsin, and the Lomira Fire Department.

In addition to food and raffles, Fall Fest was an opportunity to check out some of the latest offerings by a number of firearm manufacturers. Midwest-

ern Shooters made a wide variety of trial guns available for testing. Many outdoor-oriented vendors had goods and services on display, including build-it-yourself cabins, ATVs, hunting blinds and more.

The author wished he had brought some cash on hand, because there were some great deals found at the "100 Gun Auction." Fall Fest is Midwestern Shooters Supply biggest sale of the year; everything was on sale.

Other commitments prevented me from watching the ever-popular pig wrestling matches in the afternoon and the evening entertainment. I hope to catch them at the 2016 Fall Fest.

For more information about Midwestern Shooters Supply Fall Fest, visit their website at mwshooters.com or contact them at 920.269.4995 or 866.269.4995.

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



The Lomira Gridiron Club sponsored a pancake breakfast on behalf of the football team.

Photos courtesy of Emily Wilke



There were opportunities to test fire shotguns and get some shooting tips.

STRESING, from page 16

from 1954 - 1964. Perhaps the most famous were the 10-gauge Super Goose and 12-gauge Goose Gun with 36-inch barrels. Marlins were well made and fairly common. They often turn up at pawn shops and gun shows for around \$100. Not to be outdone, the Stevens Company also produced the Model 58 line of bolt guns in 12, 16 and 20 gauges. These were of the same quality and price range. Please have any old bolt guns checked by a competent gunsmith *before* firing.

While the Golden Age of bolt action shotguns is over, I'd say they are here to stay. These old shotguns were the no frills, economy-priced working man's guns of their day. Today, they have become collectable curios but still make serviceable hunting arms. I'm passing my old Mossberg .410 down to my son, so hopefully another generation can learn to shoot with it. *WO*

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

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TOM LUBA

Measuring Cover For Fall Largemouth

Green weeds equal more fish

At times bass fishing can be pretty simple. In spring you watch the weeds grow to provide the shallow cover bass need to feed and spawn. In fall you watch those weeds die, so you can get at the fish that spent all summer hiding out in that lush green stuff. Sounds easy. But you have to determine exactly where those weeds stand to avoid constant foul-ups.

The best ways to tackle fall weeds for largemouth is by selecting the right tools. In this case, two baits shine: the Rat-L-Trap and the soft plastic stick worm, the Senko.

As weeds die, they open up the upper water column and active bass like to set up on top of those weeds that are still green. All the better to see potential meals. However, when they are not as active, or more neutral, they may sink down in those weeds and be hard to locate.

By late September into early Octo-

ber surface weeds begin clearing out. So if you now have shallower weeds five feet down and other weed drop-offs or weeds on a point that top out a little deeper and a deep weed line that tops out at three feet, how do you maximize your efforts to catch as many bass as you can? By putting those aforementioned tools to work.

While normal diving crankbaits will run at a depth based on bill length, they can impede your efforts. Deep divers will plow into shallow weeds, and shallow runners will be way too high to do any good on deep weeds. That's how they're programmed. They just don't know any better.

A Rat-L-Trap is a more versatile type of crankbait. And it can shine in the fall because the normal ½-ounce Trap sinks. You can control the depth. Shake it so it rattles. Buzz it over shallow weeds. Rip it through the weed tops (a killer tactic.). Sink it to mid-level weeds and do the same thing. Same with the

deep edges. Or you can yo-yo it along a deep weed line as if it were a jig. You're in control and the result can be more bass.

The normal Senko is a 5-inch tapered soft plastic bait that has a sink rate and wobble that are pure magic. I credit the bait's effectiveness to the salt/plastic formulation. It sinks just so absolutely right! Other stickbaits will catch fish, but the Senko has set the bar.

Fish it Texas-rigged and weightless when the fish are tighter to the weeds. It's best flipped out, then worked slowly through the green weeds. You can use a small slip sinker if you need to fish it deeper. But it's pure wonder when you can fish it un-weighted and let the natural action do its thing. Rig it on a 3/0 Z-Bend wide gap worm hook.

For Senkos, black with blue flake is hard to beat. For Rat-L-Traps, chrome with a black back is a good choice. Don't be afraid to try watermelon seed or



Plastic stickbait Senkos will catch fish all year but are particularly effective when allowed to sink down in the still green weeds of October.

green pumpkin. And the realistic blue-gill pattern ½-ounce Rat-L-Trap is just too cool.

Finding bass in the fall means you have to find the cover they are using. Once the surface and shallow weeds are gone, use your sense of touch to measure how deep the weeds are. On deeper weeds, your underwater eyes and electronics can also center in on weed depth. Then use these baits to maximize your bass catching. *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.

DENNY MURAWSKA

Cane Poles

For the kid in you

There once was a time when simple tools and materials dominated our world. Long before the days of high modulus graphite, titanium, and space age hoop-dee-doo became all the rage, man fished with materials from the natural world. Bamboo rods, silken lines, hooks of bone ... these things all go way back. I know because I go way back. As I have inherited boxes of old black and white photos from my youth, I remember well the small boy in the pictures. Shielded from the withering summer sun in my giant straw hat, I recall fondly my cane pole fishing.

While some may scoff at these whippy bamboo poles as kids' stuff, the truth is far more complicated than a skinny rod used to jerk tiny panfish from their tangly lairs. Properly set up, cane poles can be fished in places and under situations that will make fly anglers and spinning rod snaggers cry in frustration.

The beauty of pole fishing is its sim-

plicity. Any kid can do it with zero frustration. Yank 'em out of the pond, re-bait and keep on catching. At some point, young anglers may graduate to spinning gear or even fly fishing. It then seems that reverting to a cane pole would just be a childish thing to do. How wrong that is! Casting into shore from a boat can often lead to snags on the vegetation right next to shore where lunkers lie in wait.

Another way of stalking these wary fish is to wade or use a float boat to get right up to the tight weedy spot or brush pile and drop your bait straight down into the honey hole. This works for fishing shallow slop areas too thick with algae to drag a lure through. Crawling on your belly up to the bank of a clear trout stream and dropping your offering into a promising hole without being seen has all the drama of sneaking up on a big buck.

Here in the Driftless Area of Wisconsin we have some great trout streams, but they can be a nightmarish jungle to cast

into. A technique known as "dapping" involves taking a fly and making it dance over a productive pool, only now and then touching the water with it. Just like a real bug! You may be surprised when a fish explodes from beneath the surface to inhale your fly.

Bass anglers often use a sweeping technique to grab the attention of a big bruiser. Using just a few feet of line on the end of the pole a noisy, gaudy lure, such as a buzz bait, can be swept back and forth right up along the bank or shallow weed edge. Many crappie enthusiasts still prefer dabbling a live minnow or jig into a woody brush pile that is probably decorated with scores of hooks, bobbers and lures. At times there is no more effective method for nailing some nice slab panfish.

Adults take this whole thing much more seriously in Europe, where carp fishing has been venerated as an art. Even in the United States there are Pole Fish-

It is not a cane pole, but I was advanced at a young age!



ing Championships where high tech hollow carbon poles can reach over 42 feet in length. If you think this is kids' stuff, check out the pricing on some of the monster poles like Daiwa's Yank 'N' Bank Pro model. Even large saltwater grouper have been caught on simple poles.

For me, I will stick with real cane on small lakes and farm ponds just as I did when I was a youngster. It is the kind of fun that still brings out the child in me. *W*

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



TOM CARPENTER

Badger Birds


Fox sparrow

You're on your deer stand in the forest or walking slowly along a woodland trail, and something's shuffling slowly and noisily through the leaves toward you. You're expecting something big, but here comes a hopping, handsome little reddish-gray bird. A fox sparrow! Named for its rufous feathers that resemble the coloration of a red fox, this handsome native sparrow migrates through Wisconsin's woodlands, bushy areas, backyards and gardens in autumn and again in spring.

Look for a foxy-colored bird on the ground. With rusty-red and gray above, along with white underparts striped in rusty-red and a prominent blotch on the chest, fox sparrows are easy to distinguish from other native sparrows.

Listen for the telltale scratching noises that fox sparrows make as they hop, skip, kick and scratch for seeds and insects on the forest or thicket floor. In spring, fox sparrows sing a short and sweet warbling song.

Encourage fox sparrows to visit your yard. Leave brushy areas intact, plant shrub beds and build a brush pile.

Did you know that fox sparrows take on different color forms in different habitats? Fox sparrows in the wet Pacific Northwest are very dark and brown, while birds in arid areas are paler and grayer, with birds in Wisconsin displaying true foxy-red. 

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

DAVE DUWE

Dialing In For Smallmouth Fishing on the deep rocks

As the summer sun warms the lake waters, the smallmouth bass start to move to the deep water structure. The smallmouth become easy to pattern in the early fall months, typically associating with the thermocline. A thermocline is the separation in a lake between the warm surface water and the colder water near the bottom. This happens because the warmer surface water is lighter than the cooler water down deep. It makes the lake stratified like a layer cake.

There are several lakes that fit the bill for deep smallmouth bass in southeastern Wisconsin. My favorites are Lake Mendota in Dane County, Lake Geneva in Walworth County and Pine Lake in Waukesha County.

Smallmouth bass prefer areas of scattered weeds and rock. The fish actively feed during the early fall in preparation for the winter months. The fish will switch from feeding on crayfish to bait fish. In the lakes I fish, most of the smallmouth bass target yellow perch as their main course.

There are a lot of ways to catch these deep fish. My personal favorites are drop shotting, Carolina rigging or live bait rigging. For drop shotting, I use a 3/8-ounce Xcalibur Tungsten weight, a one-foot leader with a size 2 octopus hook. I prefer a red hook since it seems to produce the most action. I tip the rig with a Yum brand Houdini worm (wa-

termelon with red flake is always a great choice) and fish straight beneath the boat. I like a longer fishing rod, 6 feet 6 inches to 7 feet, with my spinning reels spooled with 8-pound Silver Thread. The clearer the water, the lighter the line. I shake the worm four to five times and pause it. The pause typically initiates the strike.

For the Carolina rig approach, I choose a bait caster reel spooled with a 17-pound main line and a 10-pound fluorocarbon leader. For over 20 feet of water, I use a 3/4-ounce weight with a 1/0 worm hook with a 24-inch leader. My lure selection is an Arkie Crawlin Grub in root beer or watermelon black/red flake. If the grub doesn't work, I switch to a green pumpkin 6-inch lizard. I make long casts and basically drag the rig back to the boat. Most of the time, I cast perpendicular to the structure and work it over the structure. The majority of the strikes come when I pause the lure over the structure. When the strike occurs, reel all the slack line back into the reel and set the hook firmly. Because of the depth of water being fished, a firm hook set is imperative.


If artificial methods aren't working, I'm not shy about lindy rigging them with live bait. Due to the deep water, I use a 1/2-ounce walking sinker with a size 6 hook. The preferred length of the rig is similar to the Carolina rig of 24 inches. I work the rig while back trolling



Dean with a nice late season smallmouth in Lake Geneva.

vertically over the structure; fishing with too much line out will make you lose the feel of the presentation. The bait of choice is either night crawlers or small suckers. Both will be hooked in the head. The gear I fish is exactly like that of the drop shot rig.

As a rule, the fish will be schooled up, and if you catch one, you will probably get sore arms reeling in a lot of fish. An average day for me with schooling fish would be 15 fish during a four-hour fishing trip.

Deep water offers an abundance of opportunities. This late summer try some deep water smallmouth. You might just be surprised at how well you do. 

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

WILKERSON, from page 20

This mount has the added benefit of sitting lower on the receiver than Russian and East European versions, weighs less and is much easier to attach. Warsaw Pact mounts usually require some mechanism adjustments before they will slide on and stay on a slide plate.


Most Kalashnikovs on the market have a fixed, Warsaw Pact-length buttstock that is generally too short for most shooters unless they're wearing a heavy winter coat. Non-adjustable side-folding stocks are also available, but, again, are often too short for many types of shooting. MI offers several Magpul buttstocks, including the Zhukov-S model that folds to the side and is adjustable for length-of-pull. The Zhukov-S is also less expensive than Warsaw Pact side-folders.

With the demise of the assault weapon ban, so-called flash-hiders can be attached to pre-ban and AK-type rifles manufactured after the expiration of the ban in September of 2004. Flash-hiders don't actually minimize muzzle flash from anyone but the shooter in low-light conditions. Without a flash hider, under such conditions, the shooter's vision can be severely im-

paired by the muzzle flash of a Kalashnikov. MI sells a number of different flash hidere and muzzle brakes at reasonable cost. Muzzle brakes do not reduce flash, by the way. Rather, they decrease muzzle rise during shooting.

Perhaps the worst pistol grip ever made is the standard AR-15 version that comfortably fits no one in the known universe. The typical AK pistol grip, while better than a standard AR, is nothing to write home about either. MI sells far more comfortable versions.

Since it does not have an easily changeable barrel, a Kalashnikov will never be as versatile as an AR-15, but it certainly can evolve with parts and accessories from MI. For more information, visit their website at midwestindustriesinc.com or their retail store at:

Midwest Industries, Inc.
W292S4498 Hillside Rd.
Waukesha, WI 53189 

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

JERRY KIESOW

Fly Fishing In Wisconsin

Let the current work for you

Last issue we talked about how, once casting becomes second nature, you will be able to adjust your cast to almost any situation. One of those adjustments will be when you are fishing a river or stream. Because this is flowing water, you will not be casting your fly directly to specific cover or fish, because you cannot. The water flow will not allow you to do so; it will drag your line away from your intended target. Instead, you must learn to cast so the current takes your fly to the fish. This is especially true during the upcoming (perhaps present, depending on when you read this) season in the Great Lakes tributaries where salmon are/will be spawning.



Let the river work for you.

To do this you have to know how to mend your line. Mend? Yes, but mend does not mean becoming a seamstress so you can repair the line. This is the scenario: you cast across stream, the line moves downstream ahead of the fly, creating a bow and dragging your fly unnaturally. To correct this, raise your rod, lifting the bowed line off the water and flip it back upstream, allowing the fly to continue downstream, free of drag, ahead of the line. You have just mended the line. During this fall salmon season, you will do this a lot. If you cannot, find someone to teach you.

Mending is also required on trout streams like the ones I fish in Marinette County. Although, there are situations when, if I feed the line slowly off the tip of the rod like I did when I bumped a nightcrawler downstream into the pockets and undercut banks, that approach works even better. The method is old; only the bait/lures have changed, but it works. Both ways, mending and feeding line, use the current to get your lure to fish.

Recently I used the current to length-




Even in small streams, like those in Marinette County, you are required to know how to mend the drift of your fly in order to obtain at least some success.

en and improve my odds of getting the fly to the fish for another reason: I was using a fly that was too big for the rod. I was trying to cast a 3-inch streamer with a 3-weight rod—way too much wind resistance to cast properly. If you get into this situation, cast the best you can. Then lengthen that cast by feeding line to the fly and letting the current take it downstream. (Don't be surprised if you get a hit as the fly drifts; it happens ... often.)

If you are casting upstream, you will not be mending. Your concern then will be collecting the slack as the line comes back in your direction. This is done by stripping the line with your free hand and coiling it on to your rod hand. That way you can keep connected while maintaining control of the line for your next cast. (Of course, you really don't want to have to make that cast. You want the drift to be interrupted by your quarry.)

So this fall when you are fishing for those salmonoids that are in the rivers to perpetrate their kind, instead of casting directly to them (and most likely spooking them), cast so the current brings the fly to them. Let the river work for you.

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.

SUZETTE CURTIS

Recipes By Suzette

Cisco Treat

During a family visit last September, our son and grandsons from Portland, Oregon, wanted to experience some uniquely Wisconsin outdoor adventures. One of those adventures was a fishing trip on Green Lake. However, since they were flying home the following day, I was the lucky recipient of a bagful of Cisco. Happily, they were already cleaned (I hate that part), but I had no idea what to do with them. After a bit of research and tweaking a few different recipes, I decided to smoke them. They turned out fantastic, and we were able to share them with friends and family. What a treat!

Smoked Cisco

- 2 ¾ cup pickling salt
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp. nutmeg
- 2 tsp. garlic powder
- 2 tsp. onion powder

Place one third (about 1 cup) of the dry brine mixture into a large zippered plastic bag. Add one fish at a time to the bag, seal and shake until fish is coated. Remove fish and place in a large non-metal bowl or container. (I used a big crock that I have for making refrigerator pickles.)

Once fish are coated and placed in bowl, cover and refrigerate six to eight hours. Remove fish from refrigerator; rinse thoroughly. Place rinsed fish on paper towel-lined baking sheets and return to refrigerator. Refrigerate uncovered for up to a day. They are ready for smoking when the outer skin feels dry.

Prepare smoker according to your particular manufacturer's directions. Once the temperature has reached 220°, place fish on upper grate and cover. Continue smoking, maintaining temperature, for 2 ½ to 3 hours. Fish is done when the skin has taken on a slightly caramel color. Remove fish from smoker and place on drying rack until cooled. The smoked fish can then be frozen, or it will keep in the refrigerator for a week or two depending on how it is packaged. I find that it keeps better wrapped in foil as opposed to wrapping in plastic or plastic bags.

My little smoker worked just fine for this job. I had a total of 12 fish, and I worked in batches of four at a time. About one cup of brine mixture coated four fish, and four fish was the maximum that fit in my smoker. Adjust the job accordingly to the size smoker you will be using.

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.



Enjoy!

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JOHN LINDEMAN

Open New Doors

The art of bottom bouncers

When late summer strolls into Wisconsin, it should signal more than just a seasonal change to serious fishermen. It means that predictable summer fishing patterns of all things that swim suddenly don't produce fish with any consistency.

Bluegills and crappies suspended over deep water seem to have left the building. Perch roaming inches off the bottom looking for plump larvae of all types are suddenly calorie conscious. Walleyes that recently didn't care if you were pulling crawler harnesses or crankbaits are now only interested in a certain custom-painted Whopper Stopper from the Internet.

Truth be told, nobody on this earth really knows what the real story behind this is. Guys that log tons of hours on the water are much better at coaxing a few fish into a little tug-o-war than I. That's why guides are worth their weight in gold. You can, however, increase your success if you learn the art of fishing with bottom bouncers.

This is the time of year you can take advantage of a few unique tactics specific to bottom bouncers. These tactics can be classified as under power, playing wind and currents while drifting, and combina-

tions of both.

When using bottom bouncers under power, you can control both boat speed and the depth of any trolling pass. This method is the favorite of northern Illinois husband and wife fishing partners Rick and Wanda during their annual late summer trek to Michigan's Little Bay de Noc.

Rick and Wanda concentrate on classic shoreline breaks and various types of structure by deploying bottom bouncers on planer boards. To increase the distance of each trolling pass, they know the bottom bouncers will keep crawler harnesses out of trouble in shallow water and yet remain effective in deeper water while targeting suspended 'eyes—all within a single trolling pass.

The couple frequents Little Bay de Noc's well-known spots but also enjoy searching for walleyes in classic pike-holding areas. Rick explains the big pike are there for a reason, and I love pulling walleyes they are looking for out from under their noses.

Minnesota Tournament Trail anglers Allen Kichler and Mike Klein use a combination of bottom bouncer methods during events on the famous Lake of the Woods. Kichler said they started the last

event jigging, but fish caught would not move them up the leader board. After switching to pulling spinners with bottom bouncers, the first two fish measured 19 and 27.5 inches. The duo finished in 18th place that day. On day two stronger winds called for a 2.5-ounce weight. Slowly trolling spinners to locate pods of fish paid off with a 28.75-inch, 7.63-pound walleye and fifth place.

As for me, a trip to Wisconsin's Turtle Flambeau Flowage was rescued from disaster by slowing my troll and drifting with KFin bottom bouncers to locate active fish. I say "rescued" because daily storms seemed to send fish into witness protection programs.

The late summer skinny on this flowage is casting shoreline structure pounded by wind, drifting the Beaver Flats and hammering humps along the old river channel. Well, not with the weather patterns my father and I were facing. Only after drifting in deeper water near island structure with bottom bouncers and floating jig heads were we able to boat a mixed bag of fish. Perch, crappies, smallies and walleyes were all coaxed into submission using this method.

In each situation mentioned, the fish

*Rick L. has
harvested his share
of late summer Lake
Michigan walleyes
using KFin bottom
bouncers.*



didn't plan to cooperate. But fish will be fish if you give them enough time to think about it and bottom bounce a crawler between their eyes. Whether Lake of the Woods, Little Bay de Noc or the Turtle Flambeau Flowage, bottom bouncers will work. Sometimes they even work when nothing else will. So dust off those bottom bouncers tucked under the extra boat cushions and get reacquainted with the art of fishing with them. *W*

Each angler referred to in the column above used KFin bottom bouncers, designed by Wisconsin native and writer John Lindeman.

John Lindemann has turned his passion for fishing into a business that provides effective products with innovative twists. The owner of Kingdom Fishing Innovations enjoys all types of fishing from small creeks to the Great Lakes. He can be reached at jlindeman@gokfin.com.

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See Ashland County in all of its autumn splendor! Come for the fall foliage and stay for the great food and exciting events like Ashland's Mural Fest & Car Show on September 12 and the CenturyLink WhistleStop Marathon/Half-Marathon and Blues & Brews Festival October 9 - 10. And be sure to Follow the Mural Brick Road to fun and cash prizes. **Click on Ashland County.**

Port Washington in fall is a great place to be outdoors. Fishing is great, either with a charter or from shore. Bring binoculars—the fall bird migration is underway, and we're right on its path. And after a day on the lake, stop in at our Saturday beer garden, overlooking Lake Michigan. **Click on Ozaukee County.**

Check out picturesque Long Lake, Walleye Capital of Wisconsin, located in Washburn County. This spring-fed, 3,300-acre lake reaches depths of over 70 feet, spans 19 miles in length, and creates 99 miles of scenic shoreline. Resorts and amenities are plentiful along the lake, making Long Lake the perfect family vacation destination. **Click on Washburn County.**

September 19, 2015 – Ferryville Fall Fest at Sugar Creek Park on Hwy 35. Food, vendors, fun. November 7 - Bird Migration Day. Fall colors fantastic along Hwy 35. Raptors migrating south, so bring binoculars. Fall fishing and hunting in full swing. **Click on Crawford County.**

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PHIL SCHWEIK

Three Steps To Musky Success

Planning for bigger fall fish

If I had to choose any season of the year to be in the outdoors, it would be fall. That feeling you get when you open your door and step outside is indescribable. The cool, crisp morning air hits you in the face and it's more than welcome. The picturesque beauty of the surrounding landscape is breathtaking. And, of course, the most important sensation: you are going to have excellent musky fishing!

Musky hunters know that fall is the time of year to catch a true trophy musky. The big girls are putting on the feed bag in preparation of winter and they become a lot more accessible. The odds rise of enticing a strike from a monster that many of us dream of, and the chances of landing the dream becomes much more the possibility.

Over many seasons spent targeting and chasing muskies, I have evolved to follow three fall rules that consistently work. These are simple guidelines that don't require a lot of change, but by fishing within them and following a "slow down" technique offered as number three below, they have put big muskies in the boat for my clients and me.

One: Don't be afraid of inclement weather. I have found that the worse the weather, generally the better the fishing. If you get a cold, windy, just downright nasty day with some sort of precipitation (snow or rain), make sure that you are on the water. It may sound unappealing and uncomfortable, but this is the day to go. Many of you can't just plan a day with these conditions, but when the day you planned to fish turns out like this, don't just look out the window and think, "It's too miserable to head out fishing. I think I'll stay home



Brian Munson with a nice fall musky that was caught on a Bulldawg during a moon phase while fishing with Hooksetters guide Phil Schweik.

and watch the Packers play today." Wrong. Thinking like that guarantees missing the best days of the season. DVR the game instead.

Two: Watch for the fall moon phases. With many years of personal on-the-water research, I have noticed a definite increase in musky activity linked around moon phases. With a full or new moon phase, figure three days before and three days after that date as the prime days of the month to be on the water. To jack it up even more, check with a fishing moon phase calendar. Plan your trips accordingly around the moon-rise and moon-set as prime feeding times. Make sure you are on your very best location when that time period comes about, which is usually a 90-minute window running 45 minutes before and 45 minutes after.



Katie Trzebiatowski and Kurt Grelk with a giant fall musky that was taken on a Smitty bait on the Wisconsin River with guide Phil Schweik.

Three: Slow things down. Muskies are opportunistic feeders, but once the water temperature gets down in that mid- to upper 30-degree range, their intensity and metabolism just aren't what they were in the summer months. A musky is not going to exert more energy chasing bait than it is going to gain by consuming it. Run baits and lures at a much slower pace and work areas more thoroughly and methodically than you normally would in the summer months.

These three simple rules will increase your odds for one big fish ... or more. If you follow these steps, you will be more successful catching muskies this fall. Don't be surprised if you end up catching the largest musky of your life! ☺

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, on his website: hooksetters.biz or hooksetadventures.com, at 715.693.5843 or on Facebook at Phil Schweik.

GLENN WALKER

Bassin' On The Mighty Miss

A look at fishing current for bass

The body of water where I learned many of the bass fishing skills I use today is the Mississippi River. I am fortunate enough to have a family cabin on a section of the river that has some very good bass fishing, so I spend my summers chasing both large-mouth and smallmouth.

Autumn brings forth some amazing bass fishing on this winding water way that separates the nation in half. The Upper Mississippi River from Iowa and north

has plenty of great areas to pursue bass, both in size and numbers.

One of the most frequent patterns that put the angler in the position to load the boat is by fishing areas with current. Focusing on areas with current may seem like a daunting task since the entire main channel has current. But understanding how the bass position themselves in this current allows you to eliminate water

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A snippet of some prime lures to chase Mississippi River bass with.

TOM CARPENTER

Cubs Corner

Angling through an autumn afternoon

Like many red-blooded Wisconsinites, I am a hunter at heart and soul and a fisherman of convenience. Angling is important in the scheme of an outdoor year, but when I take my boys fishing during the summer, the conversation always seems to turn toward deer hunting, the Packers, turkey hunting, the Packers, duck hunting, the Packers

When my boy, Noah, and I found ourselves with a rare open Sunday afternoon last September with the Packers on hold until an evening game, we decided to give fishing one more shot before the hunting seasons got down to serious business. It would be good to get the boat out and put some bluegill fillets away to tide us over until first ice.

As an added bonus, my lovely wife, Julie, who understands and supports her four boys' outdoor passions but doesn't necessarily share them, said she would go along with her current book for the ride and the sunshine. So it was a date with me and our youngest offspring, the only one still at home.

I slipped the boat in, and the surface of the small lake we had chosen shone like glass, reflecting the blue sky above and the yellow leaves already turning in the lake-side birches. I wasn't expecting much in the fishing realm. Just being out there would be satisfying enough.

But that all changed when we stopped at one usually productive reef and got not one bite. I searched some shoreline drop-offs, a couple shallow weedy flats, and finally the deep drop next to some lily pad patches. It was quickly becoming more of a hunt than a fishing trip!

The beauty of the day made up for the lack of fish. Julie sat in the front of the boat, reading and soaking up the sun. A bald eagle drifted overhead. Wood ducks landed in a cove and paddled their square-tailed little behinds right into the reeds.

Then, finally, our hunt for fish paid off. It happened on a long, sandy point that extends farther out into the lake than one would think. Pleasure boaters moor their boats there in the summer, get out, and wander the shallows. But on either side of the structure, the contour breaks quickly down weedy slopes to a depth of 12 to 14 feet.

One slip bibber went under, the hook

was set, and a fat yellow-bellied sunfish circled and tugged at the other end before ending up in our boat and then the live well. As he fought, I glanced at the electronics: 8 feet of water. The slip bobber was set at about 4 feet, riding just above the still-green weeds.

From there it was field day. As long as I could use the trolling motor to hold the boat on that 8-foot depth in the light breeze, the hits were fairly consistent and the bluegills surprisingly good sized.

Then it happened. I had sort of half been expecting something else to hit, and when I felt the surges on my ultralight panfish rod, I knew a nice bass had found the bait. We drifted off the point to land the fish, because bringing her in was a chore.

I love how largemouths fight at any time of year, but there's something about cool water that makes them even friskier than usual. The bucketmouth wasn't a leaper, but her zinging runs and bulldogging surges made my knees wobble about as much as they do when a whitetail approaches my stand or a turkey gobbles at my calls.

Noah, the young old pro at netting fish, slipped the hoop under her when she was finally ready, and we admired 4 pounds of spectacular largemouth bass, hooked right in the corner of the lip with a short-shanked size 6 red hook. We admired her a moment—she had that fresh bassy smell and was fat as could be—then slipped her back into the cool water.

Back on the point, we pulled in a few more orange-, red- and yellow-bellied sunfish before the sun started to slant in the way it does at the start of a September evening. We pulled on sweatshirts and the bluegill bite slowed. I counted fish in the live well, calculating cleaning time, dinner and clean-up before the Packers would play.

As we motored in, the cool air felt refreshing on my sun-warmed face, and I remembered that I had forgotten about every one of my worries for a few hours. I looked at my boy and my wife, and they both smiled back as we passed yellow birch leaves decorating the water. *W*

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

WALKER, from page 29

quickly. Depending on the water level and the flow that each pool is at greatly depends on where the bass are located. The main factor that determines where the bass will be is whether there is cover for them to live in and if baitfish are present.

Cover on the river that will hold bass can range from the traditional tree and rock to the non-traditional barge tied up. Regardless of cover, the bass are using that cover to protect themselves from the current. While bass are holding just out of the current, they are watching carefully for an insect or baitfish to float by for an easy meal. If there is current flowing by a piece of cover, chances are good that there will be a bass on it. The three types of cover that are most commonly present on the river are rock, wood and grass.

To protect the river banks, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers put rock on the shore. This rip-rap, as it is called, can hold a good amount of bass. Bass will tuck in behind larger rocks or hold tight to the rocks to try to catch a quick meal. Eliminating unproductive sections of rip-rap takes a good deal of time on the water, but by looking for points that may be big or small or determining if there is a depth change near the rock allows you to quickly find the most productive section of rock to fish.

A large portion of big bass that come off of the river come from areas that have current and wood. These areas are primarily located in side cuts off the main channel that have water deeper than other sloughs and the current is on them. Bass will hold on different sections of the tree depending on how fast the current is and if they are feeding. Determining this when you first hit the water is done by fishing a piece of wood from all angles and hitting all the spots where a bass can be hiding behind that tree. Once you have an idea of where the bass are located on the wood you can replicate that pattern up and down the river.

There is a wide variety of vegetation that grows in the Mississippi River. Several kinds that an angler can key in on where there is current are eel grass, deer tongue and lily pads. I like to look for a grass line that starts shallow and works deeper to where the weeds meet the current. This allows the bass to move up shallow farther away from the current, or they can hold directly on the weed line in the deeper water where the current is present. Weed



A hefty river largemouth caught out of the slop.

lines that are in relation to other physical characteristics such as points, rock or sand can make a big difference in catching big bass.

Some of my favorite lure choices for fishing the Mississippi River during the fall include:

- **Crankbaits:** baits that range from diving to 6 feet all the way up to just under the surface are great ways to cover water quickly.
- **Texas-Rigged Soft Plastics:** these can be fished around any form of cover but shine around wood and grass.
- **Swim Jig:** this versatile lure can be fished in many ways and can be easily patterned to match what the bass are feeding on.
- **Soft Plastic Frogs:** these floating morsels can be fished fast or slow, but more importantly in the thickest cover imaginable.

Spending time on the water and learning new sections of the river is a great way to spend a day or an afternoon. With the information I provided you with, you, too, can explore the Mississippi River and find some big bass holding in the current. *W*

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



DAN MOERICKE

An 'Up Nort' Report Chocolate anyone?

In the movie "Forrest Gump," Forrest's mom advises him that "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get." Comedian Jim Gaffigan has a great bit along that same vein. He refers to them as the "gamble chocolates" and wonders if anyone has ever eaten one with any confidence. He alleges that some are filled with toothpaste. "I'll have to eat nine more just to get rid of that flavor," Gaffigan grimaces.

As a kid, I remember there always being a big box of those chocolates in the house at Christmastime. I'd hope for a caramel but seemed more often than not to get the one filled with "toothpaste" or latex caulk, or whatever. Later versions came with an index sheet showing what was in each of the various shapes, and that took some of the mystery out of it—some of the fun, too.

Sitting by the fire on a cold winter night with a Wis-

consin Atlas and Field Guide is one of my favorite things. Scattered across maps of the Wisconsin north woods is an angler's "box of chocolates." Loads of little lakes with marginal access, minimal shoreline development, and no indication of what might lie within. These are small places that aren't on the GPS chip in my locator or the Fishing Hot Spots books. These are chocolates that you actually have to bite into in order to see what's inside.

On a recent summer day, I convinced fellow Leinie's Guy Dale "Puck" Johnson to join me on a trip to one of these little lakes to see what might lie within. It didn't take much convincing as Puck is about as hardcore a fisherman as you'll find. We loaded up my canoe, took a couple of rods each, some basic tackle, and headed for a little lake that we'd been told had some big bluegills in it.

Puck Johnson shows that little lakes can hold big 'gills.



The first (and most important) objective on these little adventures is to actually *find* the lake. Some of the access routes can be a little sketchy. In some cases, I've thought I fished one lake only to find out later that I'd actually been on another. Oh, well ... another chocolate sampled.

We found our destination with only one minor detour and were pleased to find a good, well-marked path leading to a sandy shoreline. Such is not always

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CLAY HELLER

Putting It All Together Researching a new fishing spot

At the end of July I had a couple free days and I wanted to go on a fishing trip to someplace that I had never been before. It had to be reasonably close, because I only had four days. I also wanted to find a body of water that would allow me to target big fish. After a bit of hemming and hawing, I picked Lake St. Clair, which lies between Ontario and Michigan.

So now I had a destination, but, with over 430 square miles of fresh water and 160 miles of shoreline, where do you start? This is a question many people ask even about smaller lakes that they have never fished. Going to a new body of water can sometimes be intimidating, but hopefully I can provide you some tips to help you

shorten the learning curve and give you the confidence to get out there and explore some new areas.

The first thing to do when hitting up a new lake is to check the Internet. The Internet is full of people talking about fishing, and if you look, you will probably be able to find someone talking about fishing the location you are interested in.

St. Clair is a very popular destination, so there was no shortage of material out there. Some smaller lakes will take a little more digging, but you will usually be able to find a recent report somewhere. You can also hit up the DNR website to find lake maps, creel survey results and general fishing information.

That's one piece of the puzzle, so now what? Check with your buddies and see if any of them has been on the lake in question. If not, maybe they know someone who has been. In my case, my fishing partner had spent a few days on St. Clair at a different part of the season last year, and I had a friend that just returned from a short trip earlier in the month. I was able to gather some information from these sources that would likely get me pointed in the general direction of the fish.

Now I had a destination and a plan, and my partner and I were on the road in search of big muskies. When we got into town, I talked to a local bait maker for another piece of the puzzle: some current information. Local bait shops are usually a great source of information. Lots of times you will run into local fishermen who are plenty happy to tell you all about their latest encounters out on the water. Of course, if you are willing to spend a little money in their shop, the store owners will usually spill the beans on what's really going on.

Like anything, having a plan is only part

Sometimes when you put all the pieces together, you find a good one!




of the equation. Looking at a topographical map and reading reports will only tell you so much. After that, you have to get out on the water and see how the structure or weed beds actually lay out. When allowed, I love to troll while doing this. It lets me to cover water quickly, and I can learn quite a bit about how a spot fishes. As an example, if you find a large weed bed, trolling along the outside edge lets you quickly find prime locations such as inside turns that will likely hold fish. You can return later and cast the spots and focus on key areas.

Mother Nature can be a game changer. We were greeted with 25-mile-an-hour winds that made it nearly impossible to fish our first choice of the spots effectively. After getting beaten up all day by the wind, we sat down and studied the map and found a sheltered area that we believed would be holding fish. Based on the information that we had gathered and the current conditions, we made a move and changed our approach and started at least seeing fish. While we didn't score any fish on the first day, we did find a spot that was holding some and we were able to return the next day to put a couple in the boat and have a successful, rewarding trip.

Do a little research, make a plan and a backup plan, then get out on the water and put it all together to find your next adventure. Swing big. You might strike out occasionally, but sometimes there is a huge payout waiting for you. ☺

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

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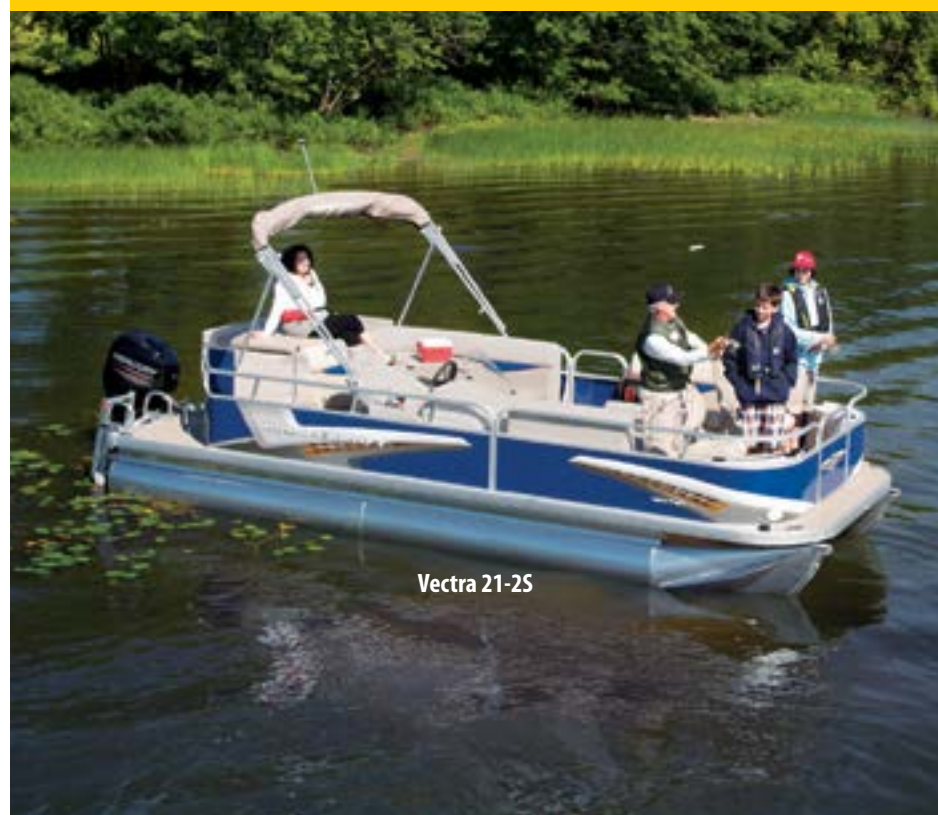
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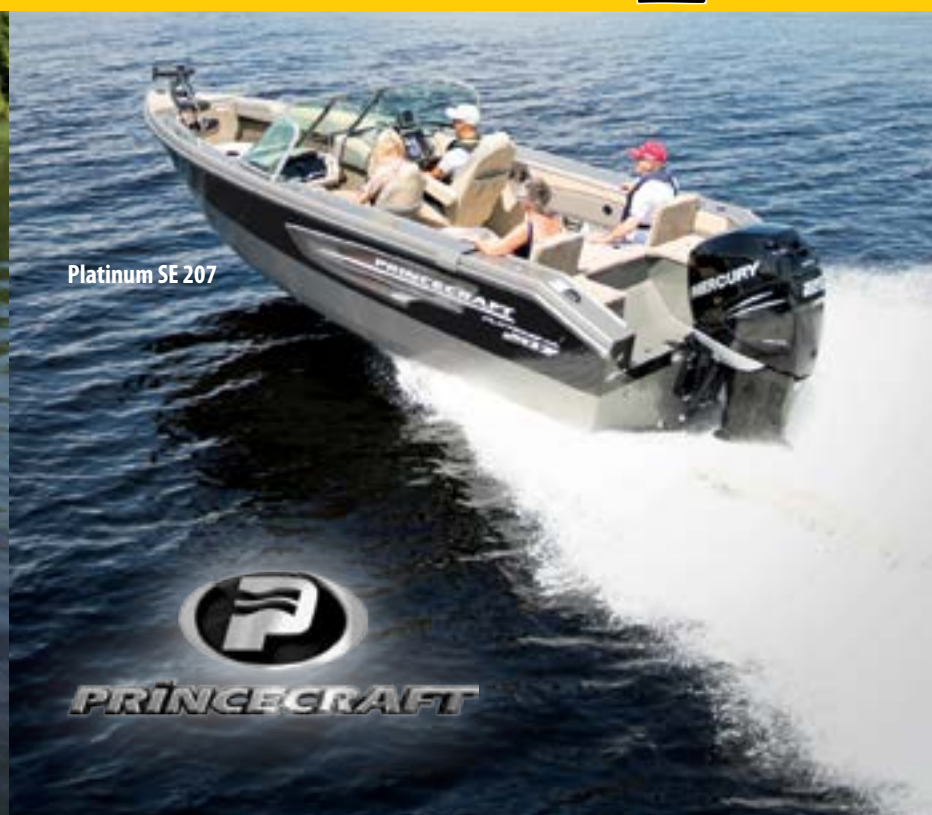
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A *Kwik Trip* Trip To Remember

Contest winners appreciate time with top guide

Lake Wausau, a 1,851-acre impoundment fed by the Wisconsin River from the north, the Rib from the west, and the Eau Claire from the northeast, seemed the perfect body of water to host the winners of the Kwik Trip-sponsored contest to fish a day with talented guide Phil Schweik of Hooksetters Fishing Services. Generous with its crappies and walleyes and back-of-hand familiar to Schweik since his boyhood days learning the Wisconsin River system in north-central Wisconsin, Lake Wausau would give up the fish.

Contest winners and novice anglers Dan Rose and his wife, Marie, weren't asking much. A little time together in beautiful northern Wisconsin, a bit of Angling 101 from one of the best, and maybe a fish or two.

"Marie told me that if she caught just one fish she would be happy," Schweik said. "We fished with slip bobbers and drift-fished with jigs and minnows keeping the bait right near the bottom. They caught 15 crappies and a half-dozen walleyes, but we would have had three times that many if we would have landed all the fish we had on. Dan and Marie just kept getting better and better."

The Kwik Trip contest invited patrons to sign up for a chance to fish with Schweik, who donated his day guiding. Customers could text in a series of numbers to the fishing contest for a chance to win or personally fill out entry forms in any of hundreds of Kwik Trip stores spread throughout Wisconsin.

"It's always a goal of ours to find new and creative ways to give back to our guests, and a true Midwest fishing trip with Phil and the Hooksetters team aligned well with that goal," said Kwik Trip Marketing Associate David Jackson. "Phil has been great to work with during the contest and was very flexible with getting the trip scheduled with our winner. We're looking forward to working with him in the future. The most important part of this was making sure the winners had a great time. We're delighted to hear that Phil was able to make that happen."

The winners came from a small town near Rochester in southeast Minnesota. Dan Rose saw the Kwik Trip contest online. "When David Jackson called and told me that I had won, I thought it was a joke," he said. "We had some medical issues and had to postpone the trip. I was willing to give the contest up to someone else, but they wouldn't have anything to do with that. If I would have known how much fun it would be, maybe I wouldn't have made the offer."

The group, which met at a Wausau Kwik Trip store, also included Steve Ellis and this reporter, who would fish from Hooksetters guide Glenn Moberg's Crestliner and photograph the trip. Lunch would be on Kwik Trip at Trail's End on the Rib River.

Dan Rose showed up wearing a purple Vikings jersey, but we treated him with Wisconsin respect. "Do you think," I asked, "that Halley's Comet or a Viking Super Bowl trophy will arrive first?"

Dan is an ultimate Viking fan, to the extent that the

Marie Rose, guide Phil Schweik and Kwik Trip contest winner, Dan Rose, welcome aboard more walleyes and crappies.



Guide Phil Schweik, Marie Rose and Kwik Trip contest winner, Dan Rose, show some of the crappies taken on Lake Wausau.


Rose household, adorned in Viking paraphernalia, has been the focus of television news feature stories in Minnesota. On the back of Dan's Viking jersey was the name "Grizzly," a tribute to his father, Donald Walter Rose, a truck driver who used Grizzly as a CB handle. Donald Rose lost his battle with cancer several years ago. As a member of the Viking World Order—fans pledging unwavering support for the Vikings no matter the season record—Dan helps with support benefits for sick children and disabled veterans.

"My father was my best friend," Dan said. "Every time I wear that jersey I have him right on my shoulder."

By day's end, Dan had learned to baitcast and to jig fist, Marie had caught crappies and the largest walleye of the day, and they both took home an appreciation of Schweik's ability and fishing. In fact, Schweik received a call that the Roses had to stop on the way home ... to look at a boat.

"That tells me they had fun and it made me feel good," Schweik said. "I was happy to be able to teach such nice people the basics. Enough so that they could take what they learned home and fish themselves."

"I just can't say enough about how great fishing with Phil Schweik was," Dan Rose said. "It didn't feel like a guided trip. It felt like I was fishing with a buddy. I can definitely see why he is so successful. For me the trip was made just watching Marie and the smile on her face when she caught fish."

"I loved it," Marie said. "I'm not much of a fisherwoman, but I did learn a lot from Phil. I got a few fish, most of them on bobbers. I like Wisconsin, but I still don't like the Packers. It's beautiful over there and so nice to see the scenery. It was an awesome, wonderful opportunity. We're pretty loyal to Kwik Trip. And that's not changing." 


Phil Schweik 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, on his website: hooksetters.biz or hooksetadventures.com, at 715.693.5843 or on Facebook at Phil Schweik.

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the case. We had the lake to ourselves, which often happens when fishing these small, out-of-the-way waters.

I'd like to report that the lake was a caramel and we caught monster bluegills on almost every cast. It wasn't, but it wasn't toothpaste, either. We caught more than a dozen bass in the 14- to 16-inch range and a handful of really big bluegills. We started working the shoreline wood and lily pads with zero success. We finally found the fish in the deeper water, using chunks of crawler suspended 5 feet below a bobber. We fished several hours, released everything we caught, finished off the trip with a cold Leinie's, and declared the scouting mission a success.

I've fished dozens of these little lakes across the north woods, and, like a box of chocolates, they all look good. By that I mean the scenery alone is worth the trip. The fishing is another matter and it can vary greatly, but you never know until you try.

These little north woods lakes are like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get. My advice? Take a gamble and try one ... or nine. 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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