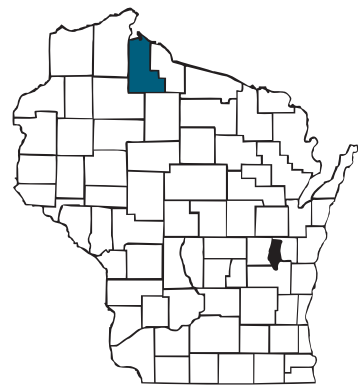


# On Wisconsin Outdoors

With the Dick Ellis Experts



## A Change On The Wind

*Mother Nature moves big water trip to Ashland's front yard*

by Dick Ellis

Chequamegon Bay seemed tame enough as Professional guides Jim Hudson and Aron Kastern dropped anchor and went about the business of setting dead bait for Lake Sturgeon that could reach 150 pounds. For as far as the eye could see over this 84,000 acre doormat to Lake Superior, Chequamegon was flat and calm. Climbing temperatures and early morning sunshine already had three anglers stripping outer clothing necessary

during the open ride across the bay in Hudson's 21-foot Tracker. Occasionally now, as rods were placed bow and stern and the trap set, the huge swirl of a sturgeon verified that the fish were here.

Fishing lake sturgeon on Chequamegon Bay means targeting the primary spawning ground where the fish congregate from the end of April until about the middle of June. Spawning territory includes a large wash-out area formed by endless current



Professional Guide Jim Hudson prepares to release a nice pike on Chequamegon Bay near Ashland. Hudson was targeting lake sturgeon but knew he could catch almost any gamefish species on the Bay using the dead bait.



Professional Guide Aron Kastern with an 80-pound lake sturgeon caught during the spawning season that continues into June on Chequamegon Bay near Ashland. Kastern also expects trout, northern pike, walleye and any number of gamefish species when targeting sturgeon.

from the break wall far out on Chequamegon Bay, west to the oar dock that reaches out from the city of Ashland. Anglers fish dead bait like smelt, clams and shrimp.

This spring, fishing sturgeon for less than two weeks, Kastern boated 14 fish with a large sturgeon of 62 inches and 80 pounds. He said a typical struggle with a prehistoric monster once hooked

lasts from 20 to 45 minutes depending on the size of the fish and how much the angler "leans on it".

"You're allowed one fish per year per angler with a 50-inch minimum," Kastern said. "We do pretty well. It's a lot like cat fishing. There's a pretty strong population here and it's an under-tapped fishery."

The beauty of waiting for lake sturgeon on



*Fred Claremboux and Dan Sullivan of Ashland close in on another big pike fishing the Chequamegon Bay shallows just off of Ashland. Boats aren't necessarily needed to catch any gamefish in Ashland*

Chequamegon Bay is that the angler doesn't know if the next hit will be from a sturgeon at all, but perhaps from a big brown trout, a monstrous pike, or as Kastern put it, "just about anything that swims." Known in part for its trophy smallmouth, the fishing world never stops turning in Ashland. Come open or hardwater, walleye, perch, steelhead, lakers, kings, herring, smelt, whitefish, and coho will also make rods bend or flags fly. Those catches, as Hudson knows firsthand, can be extraordinary.

Trying to schedule a 2011 date with Hudson to either icefish for lake trout or open water fish for the monster fish just after ice-out, I had followed his journeys with clients via his website. One day on the hardwater in particular reflects the potential of this fishery. Hudson's group of six anglers landed 13 fish over 32 inches in two hours of fishing time, with several of the lakers weighing in at more than 20

pounds and 38 inches.

"We had fished two spots but had only caught one fish before we hit the motherload," he said. "I actually never caught a fish. I was running back and forth helping folks land fish. We lost another seven fish and landed 18 total in that two hour span. It was quite unique. Anything can happen. That's what's so nice about Chequamegon Bay."

After a short wait, Hudson quietly announced that a fish had picked up the dead bait and set the hooks on what we hoped would be the first sturgeon of the day. He battled and landed a 35-inch northern that was released to fight again and hopefully to grow to its Chequamegon potential. On this water, 45 to 50 inch class fish are possible.

Soon, the sheer power of the current would also verify that in the end it is Mother Nature that makes...or alters ... all fishing plans on the Great Lakes. The strongest

*continued*

## You Got Ashland!

by Maribeth Monroe,  
Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce

**G**ot fresh water ... Got scrumptious food ... Got Great Shops ... If you do, then you Got Ashland Wisconsin!

Ashland Wisconsin, Lake Superior's Hometown is situated on Lake Superior's Chequamegon Bay. Ashland is known for their unique mix of historic charm and modern convenience and is a great start point for both the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and southern Ashland County, home to Copper Falls State Park, Saint Peters Dome and Morgan Falls. Ashland offers endless waterfront activities; hiking & biking, boating, kayaking, canoeing, beaches, and camping.

If you're thirsting for the coldest, freshest, water in the world, you'll want to experience the Artesian Well Water in two of the popular parks in Ashland. Natural Spring Water bubbling up and just waiting for you to fill your bottles and taste the wonders of Natural Spring Water! Ashland is home to a full-service 140 slip Marina, conveniently located in the center of Ashland. A stunning, exquisite, Attraction in Ashland is the Murals which depict the history of this 157-year old city. Ashland is the "Historic Mural Capital of Wisconsin", a title that was designated to them in 2005. The murals bring tourists from all

over to visit and see these life size murals painted by two artists on the sides of brownstone buildings in an 8 block historic downtown business district.

As the commercial hub of the Chequamegon Bay region, Ashland is proud to provide visitors a variety of friendly, updated shops and restaurants that will please everyone. Fresh Smoked Fish, Homemade Sausages, German Cookies and Chocolates, Wild Rice Soup, Gift shops, and the South Shore Brewery, home of the Nut Brown Ale. You'll find just the right lodging in Ashland. From full service hotel/motels, to chains, to mom & pops motels, and luxurious bed & breakfasts, Ashland has a great selection of lodging to fit your needs. Winter, spring, summer and fall-Ashland is a year round vacation destination that will fully meet the needs and expectations for the entire family.

Ashland offers Historic Charm ... great accommodations ... shopping ... dining ... murals ... four-season fishing ... and a get-a-way for the entire family. Don't wait! Check out a city filled with charm, fun, activities, attractions and friendly people.

For more information contact the Ashland Chamber of Commerce at 715-682-2500 or 800-284-9484 or [info@visitashland.com](mailto:info@visitashland.com). Connect at [www.visitashland.com](http://www.visitashland.com)



Chequamegon current the guides had ever encountered, actually a kind of tide that the guides encounter each day, had the surface waters at our anchor point boiling and preventing the boat from holding in the position it needed to be to target the lake sturgeon. Instead of being the end of our game, these experts born and raised in Ashland simply turned the page in their game-book. It became very clear very soon, a fisherman doesn't need a big boat or big water to find big fish In Ashland

"I like to fish for whatever is biting," Hudson said. "I learned to fish in Ashland as a kid. We might go out for a couple of hours trolling for trout and salmon, and then chase walleyes and pike and there is always the smallmouth bass. The smallmouth is what brings a lot of people here for, but we want people to know that there's a lot more to fish for than smallmouth bass."

After a 10 minute ride to the shores of Ashland, we began to throw crankbaits for shallow-holding pike and walleye in the shadows of the city. The area is referred to as the hot pond, where warm water discharge in spring draws pike, smallmouth bass and walleye. By evenings, according to my hosts, the shores often swell with wading anglers who know how good the fishing is in Ashland from spring through ice-out. Almost on cue, locals Fred Claremboux and Dan Sullivan ventured off the shores of Ashland in waders armed with rods and nets and apparently intent on catching every big pike in Chequamegon. Each time we looked up it seemed, either Claremboux or Sullivan



Ashland is a fabulous 4-season fishery. On a winter day in 2011, Jim Hudson clients targeting lake trout on the hardwater hit the motherload; 13 fish caught over 32 inches in two hours of fishing time, with several of the lakers weighing in at more than 20 pounds and 38 inches, another seven fish lost and a total catch of 18.

fought another fish.

After two hours of good fishing from boat and shore, Mother Nature took on her ugly personality again and sent us packing in front of a long line of nasty thunderstorms. It mattered little though. In a few hours this reporter had once again seen plenty of what Chequamegon Bay and Ashland has waiting for the Wisconsin angler.

"Most of the fishermen who come here to wade fish will catch, five, six, maybe seven pike with walleyes and bass mixed in," Kastern said. "Claremboux has a 28 foot fishing boat of his own and 17 footer too but today, he left them home because he knows how good this fishing can be. Big walleyes, big browns, just

about anything and everything is caught here and it lasts until November. People either wading or in 12 foot boats get some of the best walleyes of the year; fish up to 32 inches. To experience great fishing in

Ashland, all you really need is a 7-foot medium action rod and a good pair of waders."

*CWO*

More outdoors? Connect with [OnWisconsinOutdoors.com](http://OnWisconsinOutdoors.com).

For more information, contact Jim Hudson's On the Spot Guide Service at 715-779-5833 or 715-209-6431 or [Hudson@fishchequamegonbay.com](mailto:Hudson@fishchequamegonbay.com) or [www.fishchequamegonbay.com](http://www.fishchequamegonbay.com).

Contact Aron Kastern and Unlimited Trophy Outfitters at 715-413-0336 or 715-765-4210 or [akastern@unlimitedtrophyoutfitters.com](mailto:akastern@unlimitedtrophyoutfitters.com), or [www.unlimitedtrophyoutfitters.com](http://www.unlimitedtrophyoutfitters.com).

For more information on Ashland fishing, other recreation, dining, lodging and pure fun, contact the Ashland Chamber of Commerce at 715-682-2500 or 800-284-9484. or [info@visitashland.com](mailto:info@visitashland.com). Connect at [www.visitashland.com](http://www.visitashland.com)