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PHOTO BY JOHN MORTON

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CHRIS HAMERLA

# Protecting Trapping

## Aquatic Invasive Species 101

This April, I was kayaking through a marsh and came across a muskrat hut surrounded by purple loosestrife, a non-native invasive plant. I checked to see what the muskrat was using to make the hut. Cattail and bur reed made up the bulk of material. Even with all the available purple loosestrife just feet away, there wasn't a single stalk used in the hut.

Cattails, bur reed, arrowhead, pond lilies, bulrushes, wild rice, sweet flag, and pickerelweed are just a few of the native aquatic and wetland plants that offer both food and shelter for muskrats and many other marsh critters. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) do not offer these benefits.

AIS are non-native species capable of out-competing native species because they lack predators or controls and can live in a wider range of conditions. AIS disrupt food chains, degrade habitat, and in some cases pose health risks to wildlife. Purple loosestrife, non-native phragmites and flowering rush are AIS capable of degrading habitat by crowding out native plants, leaving minimal quality food or habitat for most animals and birds.

Invasive faucet snails are small yet can pose serious health risks to waterfowl. Faucet snails reproduce quickly and are hosts to parasitic trematodes. When faucet snails are eaten by waterfowl, the trematode completes its life cycle in the birds. Mass die-offs of coots and scaup (bluebills) have occurred due to this process.

In the boating and fishing world in Wisconsin we are reminded to remove all aquatic plants from equipment and drain all water from live-wells, bilges and other equipment before leaving the landing. Plant fragments like Eurasian water milfoil can fall off and grow in new areas. Plants can also have small animals like zebra mussels attached to them. Water moved to another water body can contain viruses/diseases, spiny water fleas or young, microscopic zebra mussels.


Many trappers visit multiple streams, ponds and even states. For trappers, not moving mud should also be a major concern. Small animals and seeds of invasive plants are easily transported in mud stuck on footwear and equipment like trap stakes and tools. To prevent spreading AIS, all these items should be cleaned of mud, plant

*Muskrat hut with native vegetation and no invasive purple loosestrife.*

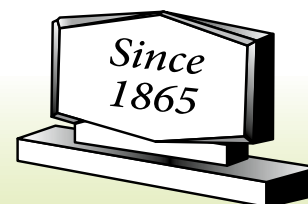


material and attached animals. This quick and easy action greatly reduces the chance of moving AIS.

Think about your trapping habits. How many different areas do you trap? Do you clean your boots and equipment? Starting in 2016 the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will have five AIS questions added to their annual Fur Trappers' Survey. These questions will increase awareness of AIS among trappers and help collect data on trapper behavior.

Trappers see and interact with animals that most of us rarely or never see while they frequent places most others will never go. Preserving the animals and areas we enjoy depends on our responsible actions. It is crucial that we prevent spreading invasive species by cleaning our gear. Prevention is important but so are our observations. Finding populations early makes control easier. If you find a suspect plant/animal, collect a specimen and record the location. This information can be given to the DNR or local Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator. 

*Chris Hamerla, a former Wisconsin Deputy Warden Water Guard and Conservation Warden, is a current Regional Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Coordinator for Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc. Hamerla monitors for AIS and educates volunteer groups on how to identify and control AIS in their lakes. He enjoys traditional outdoor recreation, photographing wildlife and cooking.*



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MIKE FOSS

# Close Encounter

## Stubborn bear leaves impression

By the time this OWO issue hits the shelves it will be just days before the opener of the 2016 Wisconsin bear season. Assisting with the pre-set up and day-to-day operations for Northern Wisconsin Outfitters' new owner, Robert Haas, has been most challenging. Storms with high winds and torrential rains have tossed trees like toothpicks, washed out major highways, and left Haas and me wearing waders and carrying chainsaws each time we carry in buckets of bait.

Today began with Robert picking me up before first light. As I slip into his truck, I notice the smell of anise attractant spray and bear bait and the sticky steering wheel—all badges of honor with this type of work. This morning's journey includes 14 stands to rebait and safety check before 11:00 AM. Once complete, I'll be headed to bait and set more trail cameras in the northernmost reaches of our Bayfield County bait circuit.

With the day half done, my aging body is already fatigued and sore, but I have a 25-mile ride ahead and four stations left to bait. Temperatures hover at 83 degrees. Sweat is dripping from my ball cap. I slowly make my way one-half mile down the logging road with the clear-cut on each side allowing the sun to beat down. I stop any time a rare gust of wind offers reprieve, set the bucket down, and remove the cap to turn my face to the breeze.

As I near the wood line, I feel a familiar anxiousness with the realization that the afternoon is growing late. I have



Bear guides and hunters run the risk of confrontation with hungry bears whenever replenishing bait stations.



Where's Waldo? The second cub on a Bayfield County bait station plays in the hollow log.

been a guide for decades and I have been close to bears over 600 pounds in the field. But I do not like baiting after 3:00 PM. The cameras have told me that this well-established and isolated bait station that I now close in on draws many hungry bears, and they will soon be on the move.

I step inside the thick cover of the woods and it is as if someone turned off the lights. I strain to hear over the winds rattling the treetops and step silently on the forest floor softened by recent rains. I struggle to part the brush with the bucket to walk the final steps to replenish the bait when the black ghost ahead sends a shot of adrenalin through my body.

I'm not alone, and I am suddenly on a level of extreme tension ... unlike the bear. In fact, I see (with heart pounding) that he is sleeping. In the many past encounters where I have bumped bears off of bait stations, a flash of black as the animal quickly escapes has been the end of each story.

Mentally, I check off my options. Feeling for the bear spray on my hip, I instinctively hiss out loud to send the bear running. In a split second, though, the bear is on his feet. To my dismay, he doesn't exit the scene but instead holds his ground.

I pull the can of bear spray from my belt with my eyes glued to his ears. I am familiar with a bear's "attitude" and know what I do not want to see. If his ears are laid back, this bear means business. They are and he steps forward.

"No!" I command again and again with all the volume my lungs can muster. The standoff feels like minutes but lasts only seconds before the bear turns and surrenders the bait. I leave the bucket and exit the scene as quickly as possible, feeling my entire weakened body trembling with the full effects of the encounter and the adrenalin. The journey back up the logging road to the truck is somehow much longer. I look back often.

I debated writing this story. Bear hunters, especially those inexperienced on stand as the darkness falls, often exit early when thoughts of such encounters with bears intrude with the darkness. I've seen that many times with clients. But I understand it ... even better now. *OWO*

Mike Foss was born and raised in Washburn, Wisconsin (Bayfield County) and spent years as a professional bear and deer guide. He now assists Robert Haas Northern and Northern Wisconsin Outfitters. Connect with NWO at 715.373.0127 or northwiout@att.net.

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MIKE HART

# 2016 Bear Season

## The hunt closes in

**M**y first Wisconsin bear hunt is quickly approaching. I have turned up my practice sessions with the bow and have begun seeing a consistent pattern to my shots. Thank goodness for that. I am planning for what will be an extremely exciting yet totally new outdoor adventure, and a well-placed shot is priority one.

As the month of July crept toward August there was one thing I had not done: meet owner and bear guide, Robert Haas. Robert recently purchased Northern Wisconsin Outfitters from long-time guide and hunter, Mike Foss. After two years of talking with these guys, I would be joining up with Robert and Mike in Bayfield County to see what role a guide plays in their clients' successful pursuit of a black bear.

The meeting took place on July 26. Immediately I knew I was going to be in good hands. After brief introductions and a bite to eat, we were off to the woods to check out different stands and bait sites that these guys have been working on for months. My contributions for this outing were a truckload of tasty breads and doughnuts from a friend who insists the bears will come running for these delicious treats. From my brief experience, I believe he's right on the money.

Today I was the "guide" and would be in charge of baiting stand sites, checking cameras and looking for new areas for other clients to hunt. Of course, not having a clue what all this meant, I had to rely on the assistance of Mike to show me what this actually involved. Let me tell you, from my sore legs and back, this is not a job that just anyone can do. It is difficult work, and I was amazed at how easily Mike made his way through the thick, dense woods.

We headed to areas where it seemed like man had never set foot. According to Robert and Mike, this is the key to finding and scoring on big black bears. Taking the path of least resistance is not how these guys do it. I was amazed at how Mike knew his way through these lands and was glad he knew where we were heading.

I was too busy looking for a bear to come charging out of nowhere to enjoy me as a snack rather than wait for us to replenish what was once a full bait pile of goodies. Approaching these bait stations, we made sure to make some noise to let the bears know we were on our way. Mike carries with him at all times bear mace that would serve as our only protection. He insists he hasn't used it, but I didn't want to see for myself if it really worked.

Upon getting to the stand, I placed the 10 gallons of bait carried in on our backs into the area where the previous evening meal had been. I then arranged several logs and stumps in a vertical line over the bait, and Mike checked the cameras and changed the card out. Going through the pictures captured later that evening was awesome.

Within minutes we were done with one site and on to the next. This scenario was repeated over and over again as we moved throughout Bayfield County for the next six hours, making sure that all the sites were active and taken care of. What made this even more difficult were the numerous downed trees from recent storms that had come through Lake Superior country. My trip up from south-east Wisconsin was uncertain due to washouts of major highways, and more than once we had to use pole and hand saws to move trees and branches off of stands and sites.


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I am not sure how many bear hunters have done this before, but let me assure you whatever price you pay to hunt it is a bargain. These guys don't do this for the money as much as they do it for us. They want us to be successful and enjoy what bear hunting has to offer. I am thankful and appreciative for their efforts and help.

After the lessons learned this week, I have a greater understanding and appreciation for bear hunting. The work behind the scenes is what makes us have a safe and enjoyable hunt. When all is said

and done, the guide has done his job so you can do yours.

If you are interested in a quality bear hunting experience, contact Robert Haas at 715.373.0127. His spots fill up quickly so plan ahead. Stay tuned. My hunt is closing in. 

Mike Hart is a former MLB player (Minnesota Twins/Baltimore Orioles), retired Physical Education teacher (Greenfield Schools,) and outdoor enthusiast.

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**PUBLISHER | EDITOR:**

Dick Ellis  
ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com

**COPY EDITOR:**

Heidi Rich  
submissions@onwisconsinoutdoors.com

**DESIGN | PRODUCTION:**

Ali Garrigan  
ali@onwisconsinoutdoors.com

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**TYLER FLORCZAK**

## Summer Scouting Can Lead To Opening Day Buck

### Locate, pattern, strategize for bucks on hit list

Virtually every whitetail bow hunter dreams of arrowing a wall-hanger each fall; however, many overlook the opportunity to fill their tag opening day.

Hunting in late October and November is certainly a special time to be in the woods as the rut kicks in. All bets are off at this time and bucks can burst onto the scene at any moment. Early season bow hunting, on the other hand, allows hunters to pattern bucks prior to the hunt through low-impact scouting to strategically set the stage for the perfect ambush.

In order to seal the deal on a Pope-Young buck, or better yet, an opening weekend Booner, bow hunters need to use a few different tactics to keep the cards in their favor.

Low-impact scouting is arguably the most important step to bagging an early season whitetail.

With bucks following a consistent bed-feed-bed cycle in the summer, patterning a bruiser can be somewhat of an easy task. Taking a countryside cruise at dusk often allows hunters to take surveillance of the deer herd from a distance.

Focus on food sources—soy beans, snap/green beans and alfalfa fields—in July, August and September. By scouting these plots from roadways with binoculars, you can keep a watchful eye on this year's target without alarming him. Spend time in the evenings and early morning hours glassing where deer routinely enter a field or food plot. Identify these spots and hang stands well before the season.



*Bow hunters can pattern monster bucks during the summer months through low-impact scouting. Pictured is a nice 9-point buck in July 2016.*

Trail cameras are another useful tool to chart bucks on your hunting property, but keep intrusion to a minimum and do not over-check trail cameras in the early season. Unless disturbed, early season bucks are generally set in their ways.


*Note: Bucks seek out the most nutritious foods, which can change quickly in the fall. Hunt food plots where deer activity has been high. As acorns begin to drop and agricultural fields get picked, a buck's pattern can instantly be altered and early season scouting will fade into distant memory.*

If the pre-season scouting phase is done, you have a trophy (or two) on the hit list and stands in place, the only thing left to do is prepare for the elements. Temperatures and mosquitoes are two somewhat unpredictable elements

in early season hunts. Be sure to dress in thin layers and carry additional clothing like a jacket and facemask. Travel to the stand in light clothing to minimize sweat odor and dress as needed once in the stand. This is also a time to bring essentials like scent killing spray or field wipes (Dead Down Wind, Scent Killer) to eliminate sweat odors built up from the walk to your stand.

A Thermacell is an absolute must for those planning to hunt while on stand. The Thermacell device creates a 15 x 15-foot zone of protection from biting insects and is virtually invisible. It emits an odorless scent (although there are earth scent devices available) and does not seem to spook or alert deer.

Remember, bucks are likely still in bachelor groups the first couple weeks of bow season. Summer scouting should give you intel on which bucks are running together. Be patient and try not to shoot the first buck you see. If you see a buck or two from the bachelor group, you can almost guarantee the trophy on your hit list isn't far behind.

Instead of waiting until the rut is in full swing, locate a bruiser now. Figure out his daily feeding pattern and harvest him before anyone else has a chance. 

*Tyler Florczak is a sports and outdoors editor for The Chetek Alert newspaper in Chetek. He has been working as a writer, photographer and videographer for more than five years. His 182-inch whitetail buck harvested in 2015 was recently accepted into the Boone & Crockett Club and was featured in Field & Stream, Deer and Deer Hunting and North American Whitetail.*

**TOM MUELLER**

## Picking A Retriever Pup

### How do you choose?

What a tough decision! There are so many unknowns when looking at a litter of retriever pups. You're trying to decide which one you're going to take home with you and they're all so darn cute. Everyone has a vision of the superstar retriever they want their new pup to become, but how do you ensure you've picked the best dog for you? Actually, picking a puppy out of a litter is the easy part. It's really the final step in the process.

At the Fox Valley Retriever Club Specialty and Obedience Training sessions, where we work with owners of new pups and young dogs to get them started in the right direction, I've listened to members' stories of the effort it took to find a

puppy. For all of them, the first step was to select a breeder. When I listened to what each one had to say about their process of searching for a retriever pup, it all started with looking for a breeder that had good lines and proven stock with credentials: FCs, AFCs, MHs and SHs. They often contacted more than one during their search. One new member told me he contacted several breeders. He chose one where the pedigree was jam packed with FCs, AFCs, and Master Hunters. He went on to say that this breeder and his retrievers came with great references. He was informed that it was an excellent line and that he would be a fool not to grab a pup from that litter. Same with two other fellows who attend these training sessions. They, too, did their research and they both ended up buying their pups from the same litter

from a breeder for the same reasons. The pedigree showed they were from proven stock, and the breeder had good references.

Other members that come to these training sessions with their young dogs also bought pups with strong lineage. One of them is an avid pheasant hunter and sought out a breeder whose dogs are bred more for that purpose and for pheasant competitions. All of these members got what they paid for, including me. I bought my first Golden to run in hunt tests in 1988. Her pedigree was packed with FCs and AFCs. Hunt tests were just starting back then, so no Master Hunters in her background. Out of the three pedigrees that I

*continued on page 9*





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FRED SCHAFFHAUSER

# Bowhunting Opening Day

## The best time of year to hunt predictable bucks

Late October and early November is my favorite time to chase mature whitetails, but it may not be the best time. Opening weekend in Wisconsin might offer the best chance to take that trophy whitetail.

We are blessed in Wisconsin with a three- to four month bowhunting season. The season starts mid-September and, with very few interruptions, goes until the first Saturday in January—sometimes longer depending on your area. We enjoy hunting in summer-like, fall- and winter-like conditions and each demands different tactics for success. For those willing to prepare, opening weekend of bowhunting season is the best time to put a mature whitetail in front of your stand.

Opening day whitetails act primarily like summertime whitetails, meaning we can pattern them. We can spend all summer observing how those trophy bucks approach and where they enter a field or food plot based on wind conditions and time of day. Plan on glassing those food sources right

up until last light. There is a good chance the biggest bruiser will be the last to enter the plot. We can identify bedding areas and travel routes. Summertime whitetails are predictable ... at least as predictable as deer ever get. In the summer bucks hang out together in bachelor groups and are generally comfortable with each other's presence. They may be a bit aggressive with each other, but food is at the top of the list for growing antlers and bodies.

This time of year, deer bed close to their preferred food source making it difficult to set stands and find an approach that does not alarm them. The hardest part of taking an opening day monster is having a stand set and then getting in and out undetected. Often, summertime patterns are repeatable each year. This is important to know so we can trim shooting lanes, trails and set stands in early spring minimizing disruption of a potential ambush spot before sitting it for the first time on opening day. If stands are not set in spring based on past summer




*This small bachelor group of bucks regularly visited this small food plot up until the second week of the season. I didn't capture them again in daylight until the rut.*

patterns, try to set them as soon as possible once a location is determined. Be careful to impact the area as little as possible. Just trim enough for a kill shot and come back the following spring if more lanes are needed. As we are scouting these bucks in late summer there can be an overwhelming urge to sit in the stand you plan on hunting opening day. *Don't.* Keep your ambush stand as scent-free and undisturbed as possible.

On the opener, if you have done your homework, you will know where that trophy is bedding and feeding. You will have observed when and where he moves and you will have set a stand or blind up to intercept him on that route. Scent control is key this time of year. Unlike the rut when big bucks might be a bit distracted, it will be hard to fool an early season buck's senses. Your time spent scouting should have revealed a plan for an undetected approach. Success de-

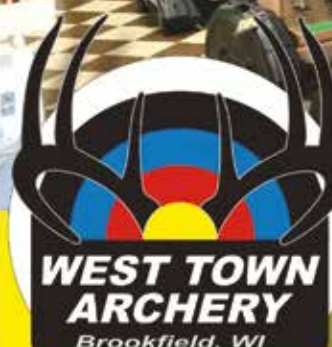
pends on it.

Many hunters put in time observing deer movement in spring and summer placing or relocating stands based on summertime deer sign or scouting but then take their hunting trips starting in late October into November. Any time you spend in the woods with a bow in your hand is time well spent, but once the bachelor groups break up, the magic is gone. The predictable summertime behavior will have ended. Let's not pass up the opportunity to take that buck on opening weekend when your summertime scouting has given you an advantage. 

*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](http://westtownarchery.com).*

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TERRY RUSS

## Terry's Tips

### Coyotes 'R Russ

1. Think elevation because of tall grass weed and crops. Look for elevated calling spots like old barns, creek banks and tree stands.
2. Call early mornings and late evenings when temperatures are cooler.
3. A shotgun is a good choice because of thick cover and young coyotes coming in close to calling box or caller.






Which one would you pick?

MUELLER, from page 6

looked at, the choice was a no-brainer. I was told by my mentor that this breeder had a very good reputation of producing field trial Golden Retrievers that performed very well. I've stuck with that breeder ever since.

Whether you're considering a breeder that's been producing litters for years and years or you're looking at someone who enters their retrievers in field trials or hunt tests and does occasional breeding, retrievers from good lineage do what they were bred to. That being said, you would expect that any retriever pup from good lines and proven background would be equal in talent and ability to any other retriever pup. Not necessarily true. Puppies inherit their

abilities and demeanor from their parents and grandparents. This is true from generation to generation to generation. Therefore, you can expect any litter you are considering picking a puppy from will have some of its parents' and grandparents' personality traits.

Next issue: Questions you should ask yourself and questions you should ask the breeder. 

Tom has been avidly training retrievers since the early 1980s. His passion has evolved into helping others achieve the satisfaction that he has had. For more information about the Fox Valley Retriever Club visit their website at [foxvalleyretrieverclub.com](http://foxvalleyretrieverclub.com). For a gift certificate for three free training sessions contact Tom at [winddancer.rtrvr@hotmail.com](mailto:winddancer.rtrvr@hotmail.com).

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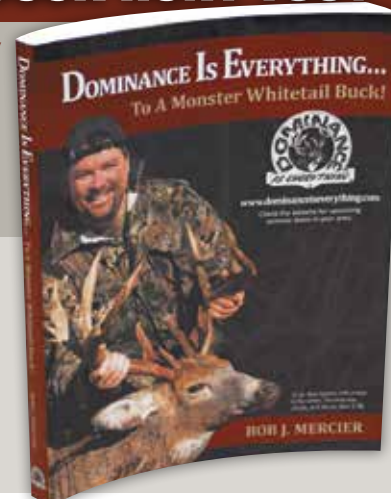
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JOHN CLER

# Stay Safe While Hunting From Tree Stands

## Learn to make a safety line

Mandatory hunter education in Wisconsin has helped dramatically reduce the number of hunting accidents due to mishandling of weapons. Hats off to our volunteer instructors across the Badger State! Hunters are now much more likely to be injured in a fall from a treestand than be shot with a firearm. The good news is that these falls are easily preventable.

If you hunt from any sort of elevated platform, you need to wear a good safety harness. Most of these come with a strap that is to be attached to the tree once your climb is complete. This means, however, that you may still fall while climbing up or down your ladder or while getting into or out of your stand. A safety line ensures that you will be safe from the time you leave the ground until you return.

A reliable safety line begins with quality kernmantle rope. This is the type of rope used for mountain climbing and rappelling. It has a strong core (kern) surrounded by woven protective cover (mantle). This rope can be purchased online or at a store that supplies mountain climbers or arborists (people that work with trees). You will need ½-inch or 7/8-inch static (non-stretch) for the safety line and some smaller diameter kernmantle rope for the sliding knot you will attach to the safety line. I use ¼-inch rope for the knot. It has a tensile strength of 2950 pounds. You may use a larger diameter as long as it is of smaller diameter than the safety line.

You must first decide how long to make your safety line. This depends on how high you place your stands. Cut the line so it is about 10 feet longer than the height of your



**Top: Safety line with overhand knot.**  
**Bottom: Loop with overhand knot for Prusik hitch.**

stands. Sliced ends should be burned with a torch to prevent the rope from fraying. Form a small loop and secure with an overhand knot on one end. The free end of the rope will be passed through the loop to secure the line to the tree above the stand.

The sliding knot, known as a Prusik hitch, is made using 3 to 3 ½ feet of the smaller di-

*continued on page 30*



**Completed safety line attached to tree.**

GARY GREENE

# Memories From An Old Hunter

## The Lake Michigan duck hunts

Our traditional goose hunting party was discussing expanding our waterfowl hunting opportunities. Jesse suggested we try a Lake Michigan hunt. My son, Nate, and I had never hunted the big lake, and we immediately told Jesse we were in. Jesse did the outfitter research and he selected Ryan Engel and his Coastal Wisconsin Outfitters.

We have hunted with Ryan for several years, and due to high winds we have only hunted in the more protected areas of Green Bay. We have set up several miles offshore and in less than 20 feet of water. Previously, we decided to hunt with two rather than three shooters so not to greatly reduce each hunter's time in the layout boat.

No longer am I very agile, so Nate helped Ryan with the sliding of the layout boat into the bay and the setting out of what I remember as being six lines of about a dozen Bluebill and Goldeneye decoys. My job was to keep myself in our boat and not get hurt doing nothing.

Nate went first because I wanted my son to have the

prime early morning shooting opportunities and under these new conditions I wasn't real confident that I would shoot well. Nate did and called us on the walkie-talkie asking us to come and pick up his downed ducks. The main boat with Ryan and me had dropped Nate off in the layout and left him alone with the decoys. We traveled far enough away so he still was in our view but not close enough to shy away decoying ducks.

During my first attempt at getting my body off the side of the bobbing main boat and into that counter bobbing, kitchen table-sized layout boat, I insecurely felt that I had a 50/50 chance of missing that boat or dropping my gun and ending up submerged in the chilly waters of Green Bay. For years, on land I have shot from layout blinds, but my first attempt at shooting from that boat was nearly disastrous.

After several shots, I got a walkie-talkie call from Ryan asking if he should bring around the main boat to pick up the birds I shot. I had to inform him that there were no

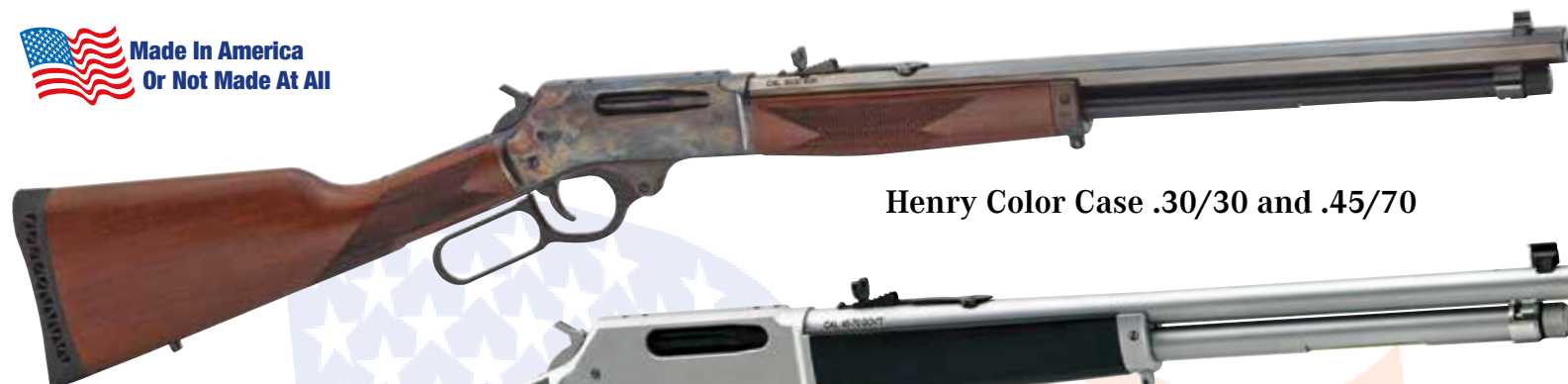
*continued on page 13*

**The author in the layout boat on the waters of Green Bay.**





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TOM CARPENTER

## Badger Birds Mourning dove

Mourning doves represent love, peace and goodwill, so to some people it's odd that we also hunt them. Those folks don't understand how many millions of mourning doves fill our Wisconsin skies. There are plenty of doves for the hunting that keeps their populations in balance with their habitat ... and plenty of birds to enjoy in our backyards, gardens and at our birdfeeders.

The mourning dove's song sounds very sad, hence its name. But these birds are subtly handsome to behold: pinkish-buff breast, black-spotted wings, powder blue and rosy accents around the neck, and a prominent black eye surrounded by a light-colored ring.

**Listen** for the mourning dove's distinctive five-note call: *hoo-ah hoo, hoo, hoo*. The last two notes trail softly off.

**Marvel** at mourning doves in flight. They are at once graceful, twisting and fast, reaching flight speeds of up to 40 or more miles per hour with ease (which also makes it hard for hunters to hit them). Doves




make clattering, whistling warning calls when flushing.

**Look** for mourning dove nests: flimsy, almost laughable affairs built of twigs or sticks in a bush or tree, often an evergreen.

**Attract** mourning doves with a bird bath or garden pond (the birds love shallow water) and seed on the ground: sunflower or sunflower hearts, millet, cracked corn or other grains. Doves will also visit tray and platform feeders.

**Did you know** that a pair of doves can produce up to five broods per year? (No wonder we can hunt them *and* enjoy them for nature watching.) Both parents work to raise the young.

**Note:** This year, mourning dove hunting season in Wisconsin opens September 1 and runs through November 29. 


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

GREENE, from page 10

birds down in the water. After I used up a significant amount of time missing shots, I improved and eventually Nate and I managed to get near our limit of ducks. It was extremely entertaining, especially watching those Bluebills, just a few feet off the water, come barreling down the runway between the decoys. The highlight of our morning was when Nate shot a beautiful, ready-for-mounting bull Canvasback.

My second trip was with Jesse and, surprisingly, I shot really well. Jesse always shoots well and within an hour our hunt was completed. We shot Bluebills, Red-heads, Goldeneyes and Buffleheads. A year later, again Jesse and I harvested our limit of birds. There were fewer birds in the air, but we shot well with the opportunities that

we had. I always seem to fire more shots at the wounded ducks in the water than I do at flying birds. When the water gets a little rough, those swimming birds are bobbing up and down and many times I end up wounding the waves rather than hitting the ducks.

Ryan is organized, has solid equipment and *scouts* for ducks. All guides claim they scout, but he actually does. Please check out our pictures on Ryan's Coastal Wisconsin Outfitter's website. I'm the old guy with the Hulk Hogan mustache. 

*Gary Greene is a lifelong bird hunter and for years has been a pheasant hunting guide. He also writes a weekly column for the OWO website. Gary, his veterinarian wife, Chris, and their five labs live in East Troy. You can contact Gary at ganggreene2002@yahoo.com.*

### ON THE COVER:

Lightning strikes twice. David Morton shows the 45-inch fish taken and released on Presque Isle with his father, John Morton that wins the 2016 Bob Ellis Classic. The father-son team also won the 2015 BEC.

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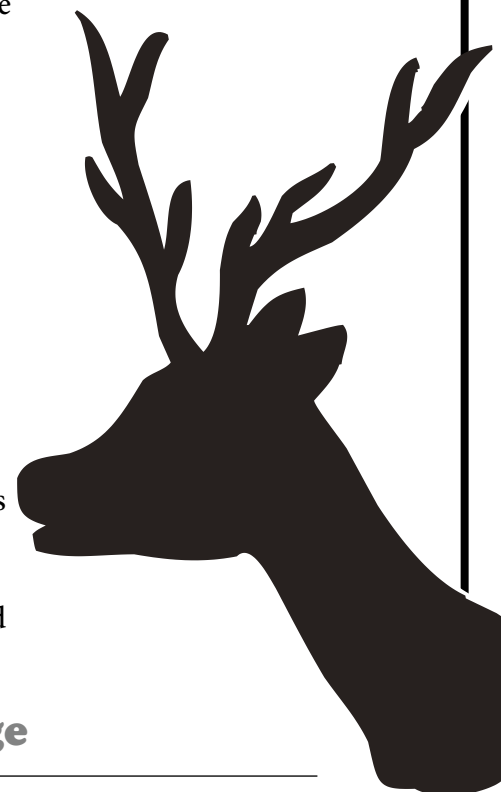
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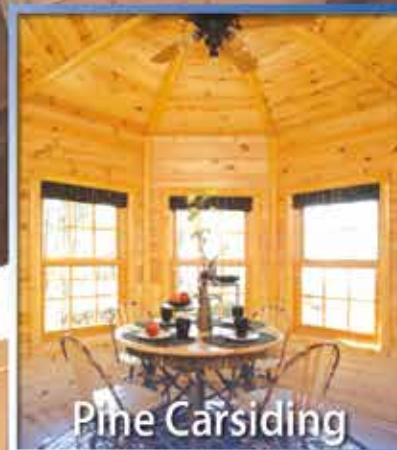
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**DAN MOERICKE**

## An 'Up Nort' Report

### One more cast

For the guys I fish with, it's become a ritual to declare "last cast" when calling it quits for the day. In addition to getting everyone on the same page for departure, it puts the fish on notice that if they're going to bite today, they'd better make it quick. More often than not (at least so it seems) the last cast will result in a bite, which in turn will warrant a "bonus last cast" and even the occasional "double bonus last cast."

There are those days when "last cast" is a welcomed announcement if the weather has been particularly nasty and/or the fishing particularly poor. Usually, though, the "last cast" call is a bittersweet announcement, softened by the knowledge that we'll be back tomorrow or next weekend or next month,

or next year ... except when we won't.

A recently retired friend of mine made his last cast this summer. Gary Jackson served in the U.S. Marine Corps, retiring as Lieutenant Colonel. He received the Bronze Star for Meritorious Service during Operation Iraqi Freedom. After the Marines, he served as a Special Agent to the Drug Enforcement Administration. While in the DEA he completed tours in South America and Afghanistan.

It was during his last tour in Afghanistan that I would receive some late night phone calls from Gary to talk hunting and fishing while making plans to "catch a bunch of crappies" when he returned. He was definitely missing the Wisconsin northwoods, and it was the anticipation that there would

be plenty of casts in his future that helped keep his spirits up.

Gary retired just a year or two ago and put a lot of time and effort into his retirement home and hunting land near Eagle River. He had proudly accumulated all of the toys that every outdoors guy would want in retirement. He was looking forward to a lot more casts. He was just 58.

Gary was a good man. His love for his country took him to places that I'd never want to be and had him experience stuff that I'd never want to see. He was one of the good guys who did the dirty work so that guys like me are free to do the stuff we do every day in relative safety. I always thought we'd share at least one more cast, one more



Whether in fish camp or deer camp, Gary Jackson always had a story.

*continued on page 32*

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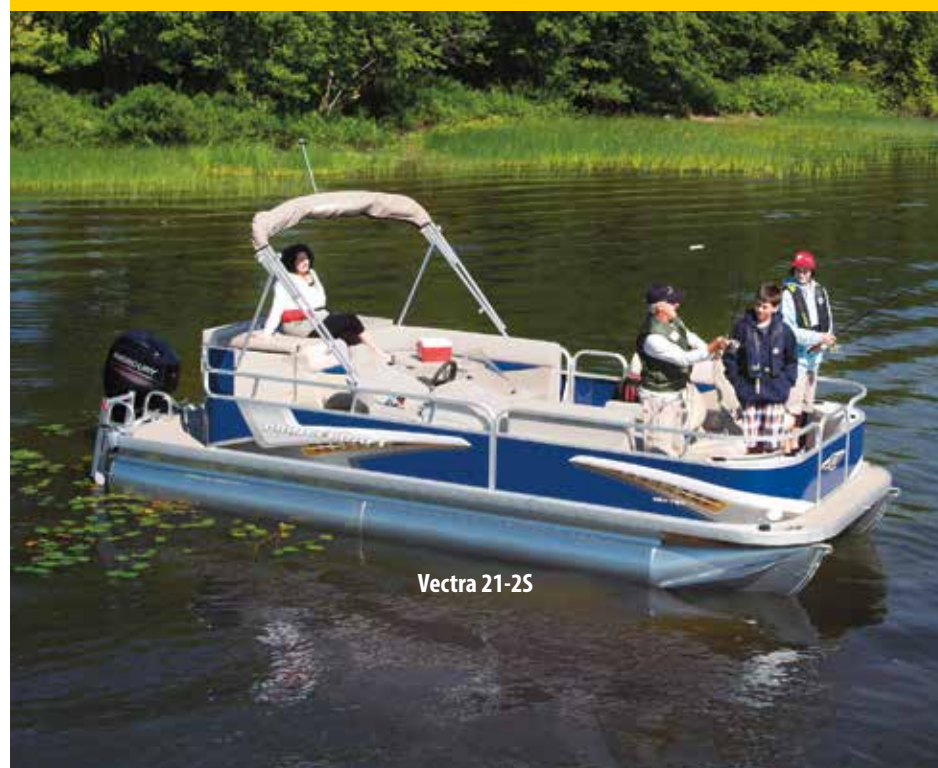
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JERRY KIESOW

# Fly Fishing In Wisconsin

## Take something extra along this salmon season

This fall when you go out to chase those migrating salmonoids, along with your standard gear—eight/nine weight rod; weight-forward, floating line; 1X and 2X leaders; and boxes filled with bright egg flies and gaudy streamers—also include a camera, but not just any camera. And I am not talking about the one in your phone, either. I mean a camera you don't have to worry about ... one that can take rough handling, accidental happenings and in any kind of weather. A camera that allows you to concentrate on catching fish, not dropping your phone in the river. Actually, I recommend carrying a camera with you all the time, but this is a column about fly fishing, not cameras... sort of.

There are a wide variety of weather tight/waterproof image takers out there. I have had mine for about eight years. It can be dropped a reasonable six feet, sat on by a 220-pound individual or rock, operates in extreme temperatures, and, most importantly, can be submerged in any depth of water you are going to wade. It is one tough camera and I am really glad I have it. Why did I feel I needed such an instrument when I also have a good SLR? Allow me:

My first point-and-shoot camera was be-



*Whether shooting inside or out, this camera can do it all.*

fore digital. It used film. Remember film? I bought one because whenever I fished or hunted or did anything outdoors except deliberately take photos, that big camera hanging around my neck or over my shoulder got in my way. I also did not want to ruin it if it rained or snowed and I could not cover it quickly and properly, which almost happened many times.

When digital cameras arrived, I bought one. One day, while my camera was in one of my packs, I tossed the pack in the back of the truck. When I later retrieved the camera, the screen was cracked. Oh, the camera still worked but not completely. I could not



*Author can release the salmon with one hand and operate the camera with the other.*


see anything on the screen. That was when I started looking for something more durable.

I found the camera you see here. It has been with me in all kinds of weather and under all kinds of conditions. If I ever have to replace my equipment, this is the camera I will replace first. It goes with me everywhere.

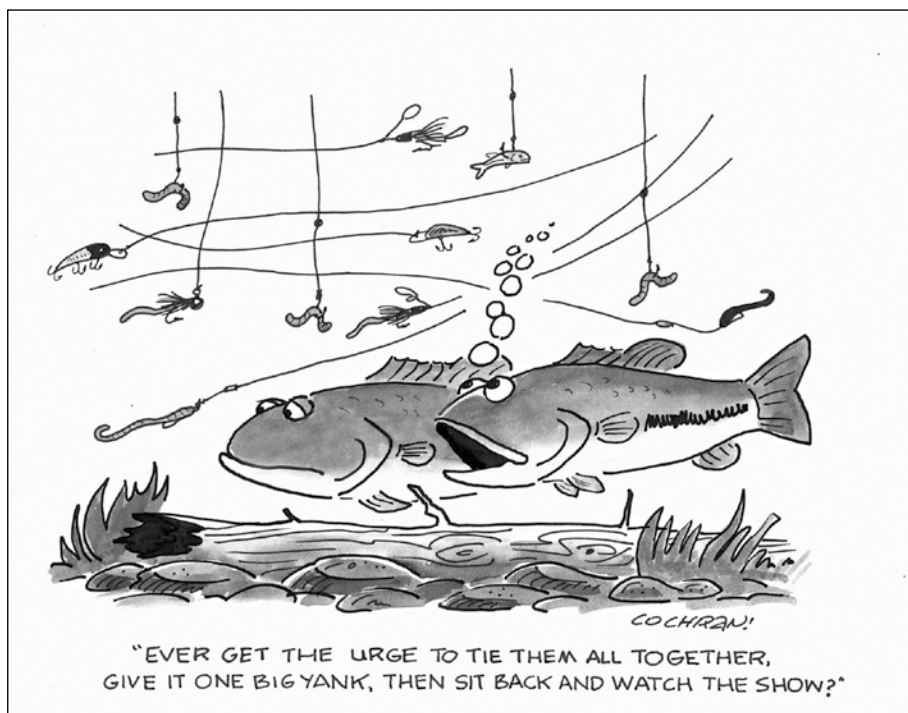
Take, for example, these next few months when fishing the tributaries of Lake Mich-

igan for salmon. While in the process of releasing one of those behemoths, I can hold the fish with one hand and operate the camera with the other (see photo), and if the fish splashes when it leaves, the splash does not hurt the camera one bit. All I have to do is wipe it off. The same is true if I drop the camera in the river, which does happen.

So when you go after those spawning salmon this fall, I suggest you take a camera with you— not your phone—and one that can take punishment. You will find that your experiences will be far more enjoyable when you are concentrating on catching fish and not worrying about dropping your phone.

See you there, in the river, with a camera. Keep a good thought! 

We know Jerry enjoys all aspects of the outdoors. That was proven in his first book, "Tales of The Peshtigo Putzer." His second book, "Photos, Poems, and a Little Bit of Prose" reinforces that truth. Check it out on his website: [jerrykiesowoc.com](http://jerrykiesowoc.com).



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**KYLER CHELMINIAK**

## A Child's First Tattoo

### Something to remember and never regret

I recall looking back up at the glossy white, box-shaped Dodge Caravan that rested on the compacted gravel in Alan's driveway. Its paint was eaten by rust, starting from the lower trim and then sprinkled across the roof and hood like brown flakes. We continued our walk down a steep dirt path that wandered down to Alan's pier. The path was dry and crumbled, lined by a railing made of rope to guide us along the way.

My older brother, Steve, and I walked onto the dock, and after a few steps, I hesitated. It was my first time by the water. I was studying my surroundings. Light brown wood plants set perpendicular to metal poles and brackets created a platform that separated me from the water. The pier was fair in size, definitely wide enough for me to lie across and just about long enough for me to throw a baseball to Steve at the other end.

The water looked like a mirror to the hundreds of acres of pine and evergreen trees surrounding Lost Lake. The woods and I were looking into the water with the same intrigue, and they were still in observance, just as I was. When I looked down, I could clearly see the shallow, sandy bottom, with scattered patches of bright green lily pads along the shore.

Then I noticed an open can of corn next to me. Alan followed shortly and said, "Watch this" as he dumped some kernels on the pier. He dropped one piece of corn into the



*From a youth club in Watertown, Wisconsin, to the 2013 National Guard Junior World Championship on Caddo Lake, Louisiana.*

water. A moment later he dropped another one. And then a school of a dozen of small, dark silhouetted fish swam out from underneath the dock. A couple by themselves at first, until they all united around the corn. One would fiercely attack the corn, suck it in for a moment, and then spit it out only to be left alone for a split second before another one darted out to it consume it entirely. I was captivated!

"Those are some nice bluegills. Look at that biggun!" my dad came up and said. "Biggun?" I thought to myself,

"There are differences in size!?" My mind was transformed. I couldn't stop watching them. I threw one more piece of corn in while my dad was still next to me and immediately one of the "bigguns" vacuumed it up. I itched to give the fish more of what they wanted, but I was hesitant to waste Alan's corn. But then he set me free when he remarked, "Use it all up, Buddy!" I wasn't greedy, throwing handfuls in at a time, just a couple pieces here and there, watching the school of bluegills fire up like a concert crowd engulfing a singer's sweaty t-shirt. These fish responded to me like an audience. I controlled their excitement and their excitement controlled me.

I did not catch one fish that day, but even still I was hooked to the sport for life. That was my first tattoo and its imprint will never leave me; it's embedded. Parents often ponder the question, "How can/How do I get my kid into fishing?" The truth is to take some pressure off. Let creation do the work. Join with them in the exploration of Wisconsin's waters and woods and let them witness the beauty of it. When a child can personally connect with the wonder of the wild, it can have a substantial impact and perhaps be the best tattoo of their life.

*Kyler Chelminiak is a collegiate angler at Bethel University in McKenzie, Tennessee, but still calls Wisconsin land his home. Aside from his devotion to bass fishing, Kyler embraces any and all activities in the outdoors with faith, family and friends.*

**TOM CARPENTER**

## How To Catch Fall Panfish

### Sunfish, crappies and yellow perch ... oh, my!

Even with all the hunting to be done in fall it's hard to let fishing go when beckoned by a blue sky on a warm day and a lake rimmed with trees ablaze in autumn's glory. My favorite target now is panfish. The formula for catching fall sunfish, crappies and yellow perch is clear: know their habits, focus on the right habitat and present a lively bait in natural, slow fashion.

#### Fall Sunfish

Look for early fall sunfish in shallow bays with submerged vegetation; around docks, boathouses, fish cribs and other manmade structures; along shallow reefs, breaklines

and shoals with submerged weeds; and off weedy breaklines.

By late fall the fish start moving to deeper water along points or drop-offs; congregate around the inside turns of shoreline breaks, especially where this structure gets some protection from autumn breezes; head toward deep bays; and generally go wherever the water is warmest and the weeds are still greenest. Think first-ice fish.

Sunnies feed hard now. Slip-bobbering gives you excellent flexibility to probe different depths for the fish. I also like free-lining for bluegills. Simply toss out a bait with no weight or one tiny split shot at most and let

it drop naturally into the fish zone.

Redworms, a half nightcrawler, and waxworms on ice jigs are good fall baits. Minnows may be best, though. Bluegills are meat eaters, and they are hungry and aggressive in fall. Using minnows assures that only good-sized fish will inhale your offering.

#### Fall Crappies

Look for early fall crappies in boat channels and other secluded spots off the main lake (similar to springtime); in shallow bays, preferably with some weed growth; along weedy shoals and points; and near shallow

rock piles and sunken islands, even out on the main lake.

By late fall the fish move out to the edges of deep weedlines and drop down in depth to 12 to 20 feet; suspend out over the deep water just off submerged points and sunken reefs; head toward deep rock piles and sunken islands or humps; roam deep flats; and start to move toward the deep-water holes they'll occupy in winter.

Crappies are hungry now. Slip-bobbering is effective because you can ply different depths. Vertical jigging is a smart approach, especially if you can keep your boat moving

*continued on page 19*



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**PHIL SCHWEIK**

## Advantage ... Angler

### Playing the wind

Being a fishing guide and tournament angler, consideration of the weather is always a top priority. As I prepare for a fishing trip, the forecast is checked so I know if it will likely be raining, sunny, cloudy and what the temperature will be. In a nutshell: will it be nice or nasty?

And then there is the wind. I hate the wind. I would rather it rain on me all day long than have to battle the wind. When striving for boat control and fighting a strong wind that is pushing up a river that you are trying to fish, wind can make for a very long day.

The wind, on the other hand, can also be your best ally. It can generate current, create seams in the water, contribute to baitfish concentration, and aid in fish position. On any given day the wind can play a major role in how I fish. It determines how I target certain areas, fish location and lure presentation. Learning how to use the wind to your advantage can be the next best thing to having that magical bait in your tackle box.

Learning how fish react to different wind direction and how to read it is your key to success. Contrary to popular belief the windy shoreline is not always the best. Windy shorelines can be good, but when those shoreline areas are pressured by other anglers, where do you go? I like to target offshore points, humps or flats. With this terrain you need to work your way around the structure to target fish holding on both the leading edge (windy side) as well as the back side.

Often, you can find the predator fish right up on top of a flat or hump. Don't get hung up targeting the same location every time you fish, regardless of the wind. Varying wind directions will cause the fish to reposition on any given piece of structure, and they will move without a moment's notice. With time on the water you will learn how wind directions affect different areas of the body of water you fish.

Wind also creates current. Current can be caused by wind pushing across a lake or it can be the formation of a necked-down area between two points of land. Current can also be created by wind pushing over an area of shallower water that extends out to deep water like a point or a shelf. This type of current is not a normal condition, but when the wind blows up, the fish know it and will move in on these areas and concentrate at likely feeding locations.

Wind can also cause seams: slack water areas between two different opposite flows of water. These are not easy to find, but when you come across them, they can be dynamite locations for fish to hold. Predator fish like musky, pike and walleye will hold in these seams with little resistance and watch as the wind pushes food and prey past them on both sides like an underwater buffet.

Mud lines and slicks are another common characteristic of wind that can create tremendous fishing opportunities. When wind pushes over an underwater hump or point, it can cause the bottom to stir up. This ac-



**Katie Trzebiatowski with a very nice musky that she caught while working the windblown side of a rocky shelf.**

tion will then transport bottom sediment in the direction that the wind is pushing, consequently dirtying the water. Fish will hold in the dirty or stained water right alongside the clear water and wait for prey to swim by. With the cover of the darker water, the predator fish can ambush unsuspecting prey without detection.

As much as I hate the wind, it has helped me more times than not. On your next outing take the wind into consideration and use it to your advantage. You may be surprised at what you find. If you catch that drift, you'll also catch more fish.

*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.*

**CARPENTER, from page 18**

along *slowly*. Fall crappies won't chase a bait down, but they do like a little movement.


As for fall crappie baits, it's minnows. I don't know how many times I have fished a spot for bluegills using angle worms or waxies then switched over to minnows and started nailing the crappies that ignored everything else.

#### Fall Perch

Look for early fall yellow perch on the shallow part of submerged points, especially around rocks; in bays with sandy or gravelly bottoms; along rocky shorelines (particularly areas that also receive some sunlight); shallow flats (4 to 8 feet) with scattered weeds; and backwater bays that are protected from autumn breezes.

By late fall the fish move down along the points toward deeper water; go to the steep bases of sunken islands; hang along the deeper edges of shoals and shoreline drop-offs; and drop off the weedy flats into the nearest deep water.

Yellow perch are willing biters now. A slip-sinker can be a smart approach in deeper water. When the fish are shallower, in early fall, slip-bobbering can work well. You can vertically jig, also, moving slowly along to probe for fish.

Small fatheads are just the ticket as bait, and don't be surprised if you pick up a few walleyes, too. A minnow head on a small spoon, vertically presented and jigged slowly, also makes a great approach. 

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

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**CAPTAIN DAVE DUWE**

# Fall Big Bass Bonanza

## Indian summer bass

Just because the days are getting shorter and hunting season is right around the corner doesn't mean that it's time to put away your fishing gear. Fall is one of the best times for trophy bass fishing. The bass are concentrating on shallow water structure, so they are easy to target this time of year.

The key to the big bass bite is a sunny day and two to three warm days after the typical fall temperatures have set in. The reason the big bass are in the shallow cover is to feed on the bait fish that have come up from the weed line. The warmer temperatures drive the bait fish from their scattered weed cover to tight structure. This pattern is water temperature driven, so the best bites will always happen later in the day. Fifty degree water temperature seems to initiate the bass bite.


I like to try the lily pad areas, and if there are any remaining docks on the water, that's also a good place to look. Preferred lily pads are the thicker pad clumps that are still alive and green. I try to pinpoint my flips to subtle holes and cuts in the lily pads. The best depths are typically between two and four feet of water. The higher concentration of fish is in the thicker pads, but I've caught my biggest bass ever in a small section of lily pads in the middle of the bay. It was the perfect ambush point and the only piece of structure in the whole bay. For the dock structure there may not be many choices this late in the season. The lack of docks is okay because, just like the lily pads, sometimes having few choices for cover will concentrate the fish to where you are fishing. The depth isn't as crucial as the lily pad bite. The best isolated docks are those adjacent to deep water.

When arriving at a lake you've never fished before, some early day reconnaissance will aid in finding the best locations to start fishing. I like to take a short cruise around a body of water to find the likely places that harbor the big bass. Some of the best lakes have clearer water. The two lakes that I prefer the most are Delavan Lake in Wisconsin and Lake Minnetonka in Minnesota.



**Steve Hauge of All Terrain Tackle with a nice fall largemouth bass.**

The presentation for these shallow water lunkers is flipping a bass jig. My jig of choice is a 3/8-ounce All Terrain Rattling A.T. jig in a black and blue color with a Kahlin grub trailer. Because we are flipping, heavy equipment needs to be used. A 7-foot heavy action rod and a bait caster reel spooled with 60-pound braided line works well. The heavy gear allows you to get large fish away from cover in a hurry, equaling greater success.

Although you may be busting out your camouflage this time of year, watch the weather forecast for a break in the cool temperatures and grab your fishing poles for some awesome bass opportunities. Remember, it's a long winter and this may be your last shot for open water fishing for several months. 

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



*Uncle Josh pork frog and other pork baits are coming to an end after almost 100 years.*

**MIKE YURK**

## Bassology

### Farewell to pork

One of the great baits of the Twentieth Century is disappearing. Uncle Josh Pork Frog, as well as their other pork baits, a mainstay for bass fishermen for almost 100 years, will be gone by the end of this year.

The Uncle Josh pork frog was born in Wisconsin, continuing as a Badger State business into the Twenty First Century. After World War I, two young men, Urban Schreiner and Allen P. Jones, made an annual summer trip camping and bass fishing at Jordan Lake near Oxford, Wisconsin. Their routine was to fish artificial baits in the morning and capture frogs in the afternoon, fishing with them the rest of the day.

In 1920 they found few frogs and their fishing suffered. After giving it some thought, they went into town and bought some pork fat at a butcher shop. Back at their camp they cut up chunks of the pork fat, carving them into something looking like a frog. When they went fishing in the afternoon, they found their pork frogs worked well. They had discovered a new bait.

#### The Birth of The Uncle Josh Bait Company

Allen's family owned a dairy farm where they also raised pigs for pork sau-

sage they marketed throughout the country. Allen and Urban had all the pig skins they needed to make more baits. After continuing to experiment with their new baits, they began to sell them commercially in 1922, and The Uncle Josh Bait Company in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, was born.

The Uncle Josh pork frog was an instant success. Initially, the pork frogs and strips were only offered in green and white, packaged in bottles with salt brine. After World War II came better dyes, and they offered more colors and different pork baits.

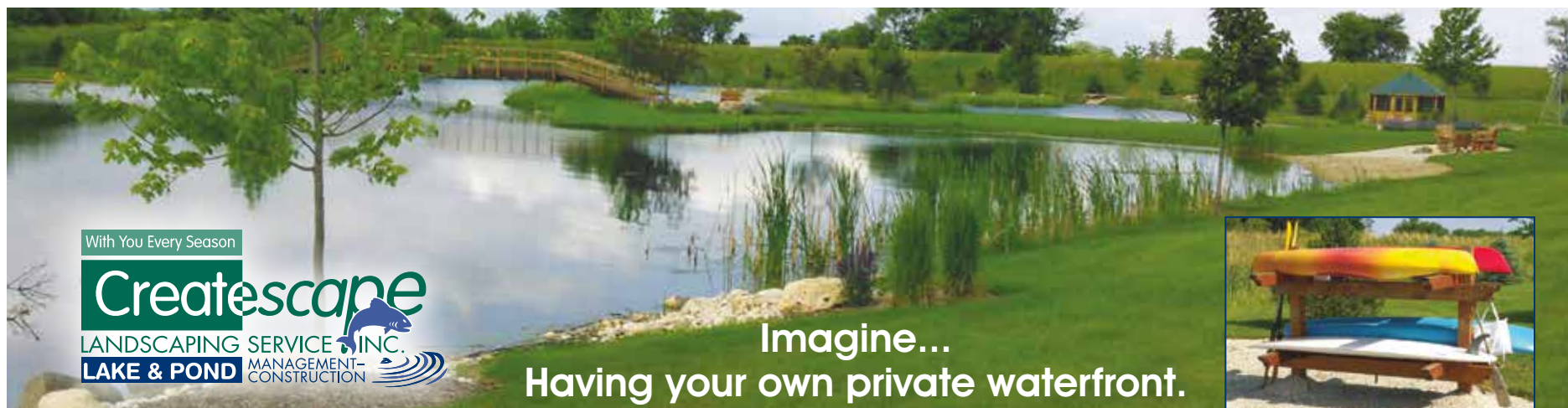
Growing up in the 1950s and '60s every fisherman I knew had a couple jars of Uncle Josh pork frogs or strips rolling around the bottom of their tackle box. Most fishermen paired their pork baits with other lures such as spoons and spinners.

When the pig and jig made a big splash in bass fishing, a new group of fishermen discovered Uncle Josh pork frogs. They also discovered if you used scents, the scents would hold longer on pork frogs than on plastic baits.

In 2002 the Uncle Josh Bait Company was sold by the Jones family. The name

*continued on page 29*






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JOHN LUTHENS

# October Cathedral

## Trout fishing the autumn rivers of Lake Superior's southern shore

The October wind echoes like a vaulted cathedral. Pine branches whip above and leaves fall golden upon the pathways below. It is a solemn and varied call that is heard differently in certain minds and souls. To some, the rattling of antlers and the whistle of waterfowl wings carries through the wooded halls. For others, a grouse drum pounds through the birches and brambles.

Personally, my outdoor denomination believes that the ring of the cathedral bells sounds like the autumn mist rising from a northern river and the splash of a mighty trout. If I had to choose, Ashland, Bayfield and Douglas counties along the southern shore of Lake Superior would call me to worship every time.

Many tributaries remain open to autumn fishing in the north until well after the last of the jack-o-lantern pumpkins have frosted over. Rivers with storied names like Cranberry, White, and Brule beckon the heartiest of trout devotees. They course through wild country, backtracking remotely into pine-shaded valleys and blackberry meadows that remain oblivious to the passage of time.

While spring and summer excel for pleasant fishing, late October in the Superior country offers the sheer unpredictability of not knowing how a northern fishing pilgrimage




*John Nigl, friend of the author, with an October brown trout caught along the Lake Superior reaches of the Bois Brule River.*

will shake out. The weather can be bluebird skies above on a given stretch, sunlight reflecting from the water and dazzling into hardwood leaves of flaming red and orange. The next bend could just as easily bring wind howling through the white pines, with snowflakes fast becoming more than a distant rumor.

The fish are unpredictable as unruly children in an actual church—a mixed bag of steelhead, brown trout and coho

salmon. They can be difficult to chase and finicky to catch, heeding to a varied assortment of buck tail spinners, spawn sacs and flies, but they invariably have two things in common: the bells of October call them from Lake Superior to spawn, and they are all wild and full of fighting vinegar. A fisherman who isn't prepared to chase a hooked steelhead through a quarter-mile of rapids may as well give it up and go grouse hunting instead.

The setting may be awe-inspiring, but the finest aspect of any hallowed ground is the people. My cathedral of northern rivers is no different. An outdoor theatre is meant to be shared, and pictures can't properly capture the scene. Old friends issue from the tangles of fishing trails to take a final crack at the changing of seasons. New bonds are formed, and if a particular bank hole is missing a friend, it is like seeing an empty pew that has always been filled with the same comfortable presence.

In a simple hymn, isn't that what any good October cathedral is really about? 

*John Luthens is a freelance writer from Grafton, Wisconsin. His first novel, Taconite Creek, is available on Amazon or at [cablepublishing.com](http://cablepublishing.com), or by contacting the author at [luthens@hotmail.com](mailto:luthens@hotmail.com).*

TOM LUBA

# Backtrack For Success

## Transitioning fall river smallmouth

Throughout most of the open water fishing season, shallow dams and riffles hold a lot of river smallmouth. Dams funnel food, and the slower current at the beginning of riffles stacks smallies in those areas commonly called "pushes." Find the right ones and you can tap into a pretty good school of fish.

Once mid to late September scrolls across the calendar the water temperature starts to drop. Sixty degrees is the signal for bass to head for wintering areas. That means deep water. To stay on fish as the fall progresses, you'll need to follow them back from the warm weather shallows to their deep water residences.

This movement doesn't happen all at once. As they move and continue to feed, smallies are quite receptive to moving baits. Brown crawfish, chartreuse/lime or fire tiger patterns in deep diving crankbaits can work wonders before the water drops below 50 degrees. Find shallower feeding flats near

deeper water and start there. Make sure you're bumping bottom and occasionally let your bait stop cold when you bounce off a rock, as smallies like to follow lures. When you drop one back in their face, the odds are extremely good they'll take a whack at it.

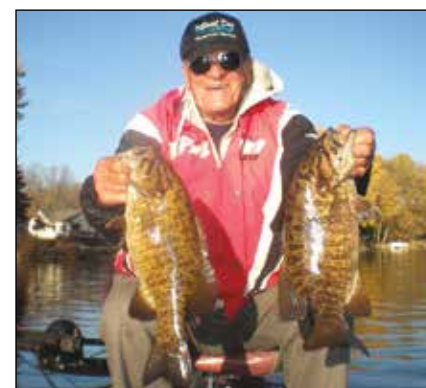
Hit 48 degrees and it's time to switch to jig-type baits. Tubes are a good bet, and you can still catch some fish on cranks. But overall you should do better bottom-bumping at this time. Crawfish, watermelon, green pumpkin, and chartreuse are all good colors. Toss in a peanut butter and jelly for variety. When you switch to jigs, remember that rivers are notorious for hang-ups, so go as light as you can. One-eighth or lighter can still get you to bottom in 15 feet of water. Go heavier and you'll hate yourself in the morning.

Grubs and hair jigs also work well. If you do use tubes, consider both Texas rigged and open hook jigs. Texas rigs will snag less, but you'll get different actions on the open

hook head. The bass may prefer one action over the other depending on which side of the rock they got up on.


Regarding water, fish can be very active at 48 degrees and they're still quite catchable at 40 to 43 degrees. Once you get below 43, usually in late October or early November, it's definitely time to slow down. Remember, an eight-degree water change in late October can be akin to landing on another planet as far as the bass are concerned. But when you are at the lower 40-degree temperatures, using the current to assist your retrieve can still catch a lot of fish.

This is the time for an action-less bait, like a Zoom 4-inch Centipede or a 5-inch Trigger X minnow. Watermelon, green pumpkin, and baitfish are all good color patterns. Just drop your weight until it's light enough to let the bait drift along bottom. The pickups can be extremely light, but the action can be pretty hot. And the fish can be bigger later in the season. Rig these Texas style. I



*Don Gerz with two hefty October river lunkers taken on a 4-inch watermelon seed Zoom Centipede.*

like fluorocarbon line because it sinks and is fairly abrasion resistant. These baits catch fish in warmer water, too, especially after fronts.

This smallmouth movement to deeper water wintering holes happens on the St. Croix, the Red Cedar, the lower Chippewa, the Wolf and a number of other state rivers. By tracking the bass back, you just might discover fall's secret mother lode. 

*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.*



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DENNY MURAWSKA

# Wisconsin Prairies: Land Of The Lost

## A trip back in time

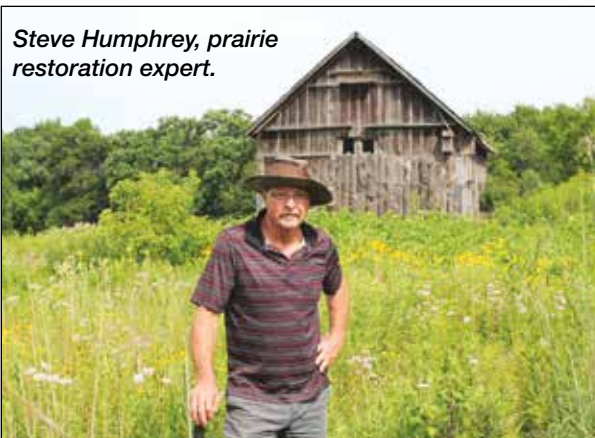
Eons ago, as glaciers pushed through Wisconsin from the north they bypassed a unique area in our state as well as parts of Minnesota and Iowa now known as the Driftless Area. The geology and topography are unique, as are some of the species present. Paleolithic man mined rare spear point materials here just after the ice sheet melted. Mastodons and other *megafauna* still roamed what was a savannah.

As heavily wooded as the surrounding hills are now, such was not always the case. Lightning strikes and Native Americans of the Ho-Chunk tribe regularly burned large areas here. At the turn of the century, government surveys show that much of what is now heavily wooded forest was a very open savannah with a fire-resistant oak tree here and there. As Europeans settled here, many invasive species moved in with them, changing the land forever.

True prairie ecosystems were once favored by grazing elk and buffalo. Here, plant life existed in great collections of biodiversity. Hundreds of plant species comprised a tapestry of forms and colors now only rarely seen in our state. This was the realm of tall grasses like the big bluestem. Lupine, white indigo, prairie thistle and rattlesnake weed were all part of nature's mix. Some creatures, like the rare Karner blue butterfly depended on some of these plants. Thanks to wild lupine, the larval Karner's only food, this insect can still be found in the Black River Falls area.

Because of the onslaught of invasive species that came with Europeans, virgin prairies are now gone. The plants can

Steve Humphrey, prairie restoration expert.



Clustered poppy mallow, a colorful native.

still be found here and there, and even propagated, but the face of the land is forever changed. Still, there are those individuals who dedicate much effort to restoring at least patches of some of the original splendor of the prairie.

Steven Humphrey, who lives in a rustic home near the town of Alma Center, is an example of the passion some have for restoring and nurturing the lost ecosystem. For 25 years he has managed a diverse open area by introducing seeds of native plants and using controlled burns to foster a large acreage of what might be as close to the way things used to be as one is going to see these days. On a walk he conducted for the Friends of the Black River, I witnessed many plants I had never seen before. Steven points these out, knowing the name of each and every one. It remains an ongoing lifetime's work and a constantly changing masterpiece.

So many hunters spend great amounts of time and money to create food plots; however, there are those who also restore areas to patches of native prairie plants. It is an involved task, which takes years of removing invasive species, planting true native forms and arduous upkeep. Still, giving back to nature in this way can be rewarding beyond words.

Prairie Moon Nursery (in Minnesota) 866.417.8156 is an excellent resource for seeds and advice. [OWO](#)

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.

JERRY DAVIS

# Digging Wild Ginseng Legally

## Rules limit harvesting these golden roots

It is the potential money that makes a heart-stopper out of a four-pronged Panax quinquefolium plant decorated with golden, five-parted compound leaves and a small fist of crimson fruits. For diggers, called harvesters, thoughts should begin before the September 1 season opening. Because there is no digging permitted on most public lands, including parks, wildlife areas and state forests, diggers need to scout for healthy populations on private land and evaluate whether it will pay for them to return later. Of course, the digger must ask and receive permission to return to dig when the season opens.

### Trespassing to Dig Ginseng is Illegal

A digging license is required before any digging can commence. One can't dig to see

if the exercise is worthwhile and then purchase a license. Doing so will likely get the digger in trouble with a warden, cause the loss of his cache, and may get the ginseng buyer (dealer) in trouble to the point of losing his buying license, now and maybe forever. Resident licenses cost \$15.75. Nonresidents pay \$30.75 for the two-month, annual license.

Here is a brief description to go along with a photograph of mature plants. Even though ginseng is a perennial plant, only the root system carries over year to year. The root is the valuable part of the plant and is weighed and sold to a buyer at a price per pound, green or dry.

- Mature plants may be one to three feet tall and have a single stem that terminate

with a cluster of fruit. The root is relatively short, resembles a gnarled carrot with side branch roots, and has a neck region with scars where the stems of previous years were attached.

- Generally, each compound leaf has five leaflets. Young plants may have one or more leaves with three leaflets, or there may be five leaflets on each leaf.

Not all plants can legally be dug. Plants must have at least three compound leaves (prongs). The plants' stems and leaves must be kept with the plant until it is taken home or the roots sold. All the seeds, usually two per fruit, must be planted in the vicinity of the parent plant. Wild ginseng seed cannot be sold.

While ginseng grows in many forest hab-



A three-prong plant shows ginseng's autumn gold and crimson fruits, two characters diggers use to identify ginseng in woodland understory.

itats, most commonly it is a shade-tolerant plant growing in rich soil and on hillsides and in valleys. Maple, oak, basswood, elm and ash are common dominant trees in ginseng forests. The more open a woods is, as long as it has a closed canopy the more likely ginseng may be present.

Until the plant gestalt is recognized, diggers describe seeing a particular yellow of the changing ginseng leaves and the pres-

continued on page 29



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DICK ELLIS

# The Gift

## Ballot offers peaceful protection of the Constitution

*Reader Note: This editorial is solely the opinion of the OWO publisher*

On the campaign trail, Donald Trump had taken the stick to the beehive again. The “Second Amendment people may have other ideas” the candidate had said in a few word prediction that Americans won’t forfeit their right to gun ownership even by order of a Clinton-nominated Supreme Court.

The media had swarmed over it as a threat of violence. On the contrary, I found Trump’s words insightful. Trump was acknowledging my own second amendment advocacy and pre-election commitment to help protect our Constitution and freedoms as we are obligated to protect it.

This election is a call to arms. We are loaded, however, with the greatest gift handed us as Americans; the right to remove or elect leadership non-violently, with the ballot.

Trump’s latest confrontation with the media was also a reminder of the late Charlton Heston’s speech to the National Press Club that remains pinned on my office wall.

“Today, I want to talk to you about guns; why we have them, why the Bill of Rights guarantees that we have them, and why my right to have a gun is more important than your right to rail against it in the press,” Heston said. “It is time that our youth found out that the politically correct doctrine of today has misled them. And when they reach legal age, if they do not break our laws they have a right to choose to own a gun to defend themselves and their loved ones or to engage in any lawful purpose they desire without apology or explanation to anyone, ever.”

“This is their first freedom. If you say that it’s outdated, then you haven’t read your own headlines. If you say guns create only carnage, I would answer that you know better. Declining morals, disintegrating families, vacillation of political leadership, an eroding criminal justice system and social morals that blur right from



*The second amendment guarantees Americans the right to keep and bear arms. Your vote peacefully protects the Constitution and Bill of Rights.*

wrong are more to blame than any legally owned firearms.”

Declining morals, in fact, that we have allowed to infiltrate our political leadership to the point that lies and misconduct are commonplace and elected and appointed officials feel comfortable enough with the complacency of the voter that they spew their deceit in the light of day, without embarrassment or humiliation. Recent scandals beginning with leadership at the VA, IRS, and DOJ offer further evidence that the inner circle in Washington believes its more worthy than you, the 320 million American citizens that they work for. They are King George, or the Noblemen in Braveheart. You are something less. Did you know that when the FBI interviewed Clinton in July, she was not administered a sworn oath, the discussion was not recorded or transcribed, and that Director James Comey was not even in the room? And where is that watchdog media?

Judicial activism which ignores existing law disregards judicial oaths to defend the Constitution and seeks to establish from the bench rulings based on personal or political consideration remains our greatest threat to freedom. Trump has publically released a closely scrutinized list of 11

*continued on page 32*

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JIM SERVI

# The National Park In Our Backyard

## Discovering Isle Royale

Most outdoor enthusiasts are in awe of America's National Park System. In fact, people travel from around the world to see our grand spectacles, and many American families make the pilgrimage to Yellowstone or the Grand Canyon at least once in their life. Yet, Isle Royale National Park is one of the most impressive National Parks in the park system and lies right in our backyard in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. But it is the least visited of all National Parks in the Lower 48 States. Over 200 square miles of undeveloped wilderness and 450 islands surround the 45-mile-long and 9-mile-wide main island of Isle Royale.

Going to school at Michigan Tech in Houghton, it was only a short boat ride away, yet my good friend Kevin Staus and I never took the voyage. Perhaps we took it for granted like many do with national treasures in their own backyard. Before we knew it, graduation was at hand and real life began. Eleven years later, we finally made the trip.

Our goal was to hike across the entire island. It was almost 50 miles from Rock Harbor on the east to Windigo on the far west tip. Our limited schedule and coordination with the return boat gave us four days. Both of us spend a fair amount of time outdoors and consider ourselves in good shape; however, hiking with a 50-pound pack is not for the faint of heart.

Although we were planning on hiking, there are many ways to enjoy the island. Many take day trips. There are comfortable lodges with all the amenities at both main harbors and outdoor shelters for those that don't want to tent it. Some do day hikes and return to the lodges, others go out for a couple days before returning, and a few crazy souls are set on making it across the island.

Getting out to Isle Royale takes some coordination but is not too difficult. The *Ranger III* routinely leaves out of Houghton, Michigan; the *Isle Royale Queen IV* leaves out of Copper Harbor, Michigan; and both the *Voyageur II* and *Sea Hunter* leave out

of Grand Portage, Minnesota. The return schedule is equally as flexible, and all of the ferries make stops at several locations on the island.

As we hiked we passed lake after lake without a sign of development. The east side of the island is dominated by large conifers and thick underbrush, while the west side has more upland and deciduous mix. Every hiker we came across was on the lookout for moose. The first day we saw one bolt into the thick brush. The second day we followed tracks from one of the two remaining wolves on the island down our trail with no moose sightings. Finally, on the third day we saw a cow feeding across the lake as we filled our water bottles. Shortly after that, we were passing a beaver pond and heard the loud splashing over what could only be a moose. A nice bull greeted us and happily ate on the other side of the beaver pond. A short while later an elusive pine marten was watching us pass by on the trail. The wildlife sightings certainly helped pass the time and made us temporarily forget about our ach-



*This bull moose was spotted across a beaver pond by the author and his friend Kevin Staus during a recent trip to Isle Royale National Park.*

ing muscles.

On the fourth day of our journey heavy rains made the hiking treacherous, but we had passed the point of no return. We pushed through to Windigo. Our goal was accomplished and after 11 years, our Isle Royale adventure was complete. It was worth the wait, but it will not be another 11 years before we return. It is just too magical to stay away. *WO*

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

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**YURK, from page 20**


was changed to Hard and Soft Fishing and remained in Fort Atkinson.

**The End of Pork Baits**

After 93 years, Hard and Soft Fishing discontinued making pork frogs, strips and other pork baits in December of 2015. They had survived the emergence of plastic baits but finally succumbed to a lack of quality pig skins.

I talked to Chris Wilson of Hard and Soft Fishing. He told me the company just couldn't get the pork products they needed. He explained that although a lot of pigs are butchered every year, they are primarily younger animals and do not have the quality pork fat and skins they needed to continue to make the baits.

Hard and Soft Fishing has been selling out their inventory of Uncle Josh pork baits. According to Wilson, they do not have much left and will be done at the end of the year. The company had developed other products, so they will continue to remain in business at Fort Atkinson.

I noticed in the last few years it was tougher to find those bottles of Uncle Josh baits. About twelve years ago I found them on sale at a bait shop and bought a bunch of them. When I finally use the last bottle, an era will have passed. 


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

**DAVIS, from page 24**

ence of a few to dozens of crimson fruits, which identify the plant.

Like gathering morels, it often helps to see the plant by walking up the slopes instead of down. If a single plant is identified, mark it and walk the area thoroughly before returning to dig the plant. That way a digger can return to the first plant and burn the image in his mind.

Gear is minimal. Many diggers use large screwdrivers so they can carefully unearth the root without cutting or breaking it. Buyers pay less for broken roots or root pieces. Diggers carry bags to transport the roots, stems and leaves of the dug plants.

Seeds must stay in the forest and must be planted. Start by picking up a DNR pamphlet of Wild Ginseng Regulations and Guidelines for Sustainable Harvest. First admire the plant in its natural habitat and then decide if it's something you really want to dig and sell. 

*Jerry Davis, a Wisconsin native, retired from university teaching and now lives in Iowa County. He applies arts and sciences to writing and enjoying Wisconsin's outdoors. Contact him at [sivadjam@mhtc.net](mailto:sivadjam@mhtc.net).*

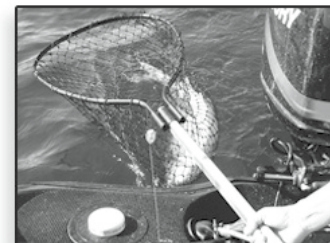


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**BEN GRUBER**

## Overnight Excursions With Children Simplified

### Family camping in central Wisconsin

It can sometimes feel overwhelming planning and executing our outdoor adventures. I'm as guilty as the next person when it comes to researching destinations, planning the menu, gathering (and buying) equipment, over-packing and generally turning said adventure into a real chore—at the same time creating high expectations for the outcome. That's why it was a refreshing change when we took our first camping trip since our daughter was born, just a few miles from home.

My brother called me and suggested we meet for some family camping. He'd heard good things about Dexter County Park, south of Pittsville in Wood County. I had plenty of time to plan; I just didn't. The morning we were supposed to leave I dug out our trusty four-man tent, a few sleeping bags, tossed the canoe and a few poles in the truck, grabbed a cooler and headed 23 miles to the campground. Feeling proud of myself for packing so quickly and enjoying the quiet, I suddenly realized what I had forgotten. So I made a quick U-turn and returned to the farm for my daughter. It was the silence that clued me in. For those of you keeping track, I'm kidding about forgetting Addy. She was not about to be left behind!

Dexter County Park is 1,200 acres of land on 300-acre Lake Dexter. Lake Dexter is fed by the little Yellow River and is a multi-species fishery easily navigated by canoe or rowboat, even for an inexperienced paddler. Ninety-six individual campsites are nicely spaced out in multiple loops



*Addy proudly shows off her weekend accommodations. Luxury camper not required.*

providing solitude with many mature trees for great shade and hammock-hanging.


We arrived and found our campsite, and I was immediately impressed with the park. Wood County does an excellent job with their parks: impressive facilities, nice beach, comfortable wooded campsites, quiet and spacious campground, wonderful playgrounds, both paved and non-paved trails, and very nice accessible fishing docks. Sometimes we tend to overlook those treasures close to home, but I won't make that mistake again.

By the time her mom arrived from work Addy had a few

bluegills hanging from a stringer and had already discovered the beach. The beach has restrooms and picnic tables nearby, and the swimming area is roped off with a gently sloping sandy bottom. A paved path leads you there from the campground within easy walking distance. At the right time of year it looks like you can pick many meals of raspberries on your way there!

With a toddler calling the shots for the day, we just wandered back and forth between catching bluegills from shore, eating s'mores, wading at the beach and napping. We cruised around the lake in the canoes and watched eagles working on their suntan.

A few small motor boats shared the lake, but the size and depth appears to limit larger motorboats to bigger lakes nearby. On our list of things to do was visit the Lake Dexter drive-in for ice cream. They have good food, great ice cream and quick and friendly service. There is also a gas station nearby with bait. Either one is an easy canoe paddle from the campsite or a good bike ride.


Moral of the story: we needn't limit our outdoors outings to those that require lots of legwork, planning and driving. Grab a few essentials and explore opportunities close to home. Enjoy time outside with your family! 

*Ben Gruber lives on a hobby farm in central Wisconsin. He has a passion for enjoying all Wisconsin outdoors has to offer with his family and introducing kids to the great outdoors. He is Vice President of Kids and Mentors Outdoors, or KAMO.*



**CLER, from page 10**

ameter line. Again, use a torch to burn the cut ends. Use an overhand knot to form a loop, being sure to leave two inches of rope beyond the knot. Place the loop under the safety line and simply pass the knot around the safety line and through the loop three times, keeping the knot toward the center of the wraps made earlier. Pull on the overhand knot to tighten. The hitch should slide up and down the safety rope when pushed or pulled but should tighten and stop when the overhand knot is pulled.

The safety line should be attached to the tree above where the head of a standing hunter would be. The bottom end should be tied to the bottom end of the ladder to keep excess slack out of the line. The Prusik hitch is left near the ladder's bottom. When getting to the stand, the hunter simply attaches his or her safety harness (using a carabiner) to the loop in the Prusik hitch. The hunter pushes the hitch up the line while ascending and pulls it down when descending. Should a fall occur, the Prusik hitch will tighten and use friction to stop the fall. 

*John Cler is a retired principal and science teacher residing in Richland County. He and his wife, Vickie, have two grown daughters, three grandchildren and a black lab that keep them on the move.*



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## ELLIS, from page 27


candidates from which he would nominate for the Supreme Court. Each is a constitutionalist committed to render rulings from existing law, not to creating law.

Clinton nominees will push the balance of the Supreme Court currently deadlocked to the radical extreme. We can outlast any party's presidential term, and remove Trump after four years if warranted. Our Constitutional Republic, though, will not outlast a radical Supreme Court majority appointed for a lifetime.

The war on freedom is here. The means to fight it, even if our gun ownership someday soon translates into making each of us "felons" with the stroke of our lawmakers'

pen, is already here too. But we won't be turning in our guns. Ever.

"The answer has been here all along," wrote Heston, who marched for Civil Rights with Dr. Martin Luther King. "You simply...disobey. Peaceably, yes. Respectfully, of course. Non-violently, absolutely. But when told how to think or what to say or how to behave, we don't. We disobey social protocol that stifles and stigmatizes personal freedom. I learned the awesome power of disobedience from Dr. King...who learned it from Gandhi, and Thoreau and Jesus, and every great man who led those in right against those in might."

The tyrant is at the door, as surely as it was 240 years ago. November 8, use the gift. 

## MOERICKE, from page 15

beer, one more deer hunt, one more round of golf.

I guess when God calls "last cast," there aren't any bonus casts. R.I.P., Gary.

As a guy just completing his 60th lap around the sun, Gary's passing is a brutally sharp reminder that every day is a gift and each new day is an opportunity. Make sure to appreciate your time in the woods and

on the water. There will come a day for each one of us when the last cast really will be. Until then, keep your line tight, your drag loose, your beer cold, and savor every minute of it. 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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KRIS NEILSON

# Manitowish Waters

## The original “up north” experience

When I moved to Madison from Indiana, I had to learn what “up north” meant. My adventures into the northwoods started and stopped in Oneida County for years before discovering that Highway 51 kept going north to serene and pristine outdoor adventures in Vilas County.

One cold day in March made for core-burning snowshoeing at Powell Marsh. Our group blazed trail through deep virgin snow. There were no sounds to listen to except the wind, the wildlife and our own labored breathing. Later, we travelled through a snowstorm to have dinner. We pulled into the vacant parking lot of Blue Bayou Inn on Manitowish Lake. I was surprised they were open and blown away by the welcome, the service, the menu and the perfectly prepared meal as we were the only diners in the restaurant. Other than New Orleans, it had the best Creole/Cajun fare I’ve ever had.

Many years and life experiences later I returned to Manitowish Waters in Octo-

ber 2015. I gave myself a birthday present of a Cast n’ Blast day with friend Logan McKenzie and guided by Jeff Van Remortel of WDH Guide Service. At 4 o’clock in the morning I wasn’t aware of my surroundings, but I do remember how bright the stars were as we made our way to set up and wait for the ducks. There were no city lights to dull them. The stars were as white as I’d ever seen.

This past June I took the opportunity to enjoy what has become the true shining star of Manitowish Waters: the beautiful new bike trails. I took my Trek road bike along the well-marked trails accented with giant pots of red geraniums and smooth wooden bridges with no detail missed. It was one of the most enjoyable trail rides I’ve experienced in northern Wisconsin. The trails are paved with room to share and pass with ease. And if you happen to get a flat tire with no spare on hand while taking a side trip through Boulder Junction, rest assured that the owner and staff at Coontail Sports

are at your service. Twenty miles away from my origination they located my whereabouts, took me back to their shop, fixed and cleaned my bike, and then drove me back to their Manitowish Waters location. Their service and attitudes were a rarity, except in this area where the people are as natural as their surroundings.

I returned to Manitowish Waters the following weekend to take part in Solstice Festival. It features a century, half century, and 29-mile Cranberry ride. One highlight was the Bartlings rest stop featuring Ocean Spray beverages and close to Cranberry Square, a small shop on the Vilas Cranberry Company Farm with delicious tasting samples and a wide selection of gifts and décor.

This charming and fresh new place for my adventures deserved another visit. This time I was going to put it to the Harry test. My handsome golden retriever mix and I stayed overnight at The Lodge at Manitowish Waters. The modern facilities and amenities were extraordinary. The rates were unbe-



Harry enjoying the dog-friendly sights and activities of Manitowish Waters.

lievably affordable, and Harry was well-behaved. After a walk to the North Lakeland Discovery Center, we headed to Ye Olde Shillelagh for lunch. To put the final touch on an already topnotch visit, I savored their famous Rueben sandwich while chatting with the owners on the patio with Harry restlessly flirting with everyone.

Celebrate autumn in Manitowish Waters by attending their Cran-A-Rama Festival

*continued on page 39*



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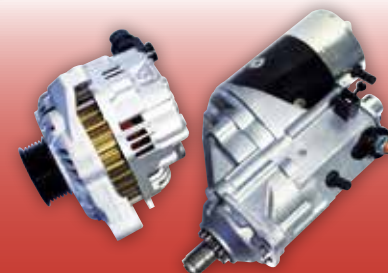
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CHRIS REHLINGER

# Science Fair Projects

## Outdoor ideas help students and staff

The last three years I have seen and heard presentations of many good elementary school science fair projects. I also saw some of the past originals from way back like, which brand popcorn pops the most kernels; which candles burn faster, white or different colors; which type of soda fizzes the most.

These types of projects are fine and do teach the kids many valuable things regarding science. The kids do the experiments, gather several different types of data, make many interesting and creative displays, then prepare and practice a speech that gives them an opportunity to test their skills of public speaking and oral presentation. But when you have young sportsmen in the house (either boys or girls), why not gear the project toward something that produces data that they can actually use? Data that will stay with them for many years and may possibly spark other outdoor curiosities. Maybe gently steer the project scope toward something involving the outdoors that also interests one or both of the parents.

My oldest son did three consecutive years of the spring science fair projects and did a really good job each time. He took second place each year and the competition was tough.

The first year his project was "Fishing Line Strengths." In this experiment he compared three different four-pound test ice fishing lines. He used a small De-Liar fish scale I found in my grandfather's tackle box and three different lines that I had used in the past that were sitting in a box in the garage. His project hypothesis was dead on since it confirmed that the line I had been using the last few years was the toughest. Makes a dad feel good that the line he uses actually carries a little merit and passes the rigors of a 12 year-old scholar.


The second year his project was "Different Chokes in My Remington Shotgun." With this experiment he used the three chokes that came with his 20-gauge shotgun. He shot the same type of shell through each choke: modified, full, and



From the experiment, "Different Chokes in My Remington Shotgun."

improved cylinder. Through this experiment he determined how his number two duck loads patterned differently using each choke three times. This time the boy was spot on again: the improved cylinder works best at shooting ducks and geese. I think he learned this the hard way even before the project. He had a few early misses at some easy shots and was switching chokes regularly. This new data stuck with him and carried confidence into the next waterfowl season that fall.

His final attempt at possibly finishing first was the experiment, "Who Makes the Best Gobbler Stopper?" He bought three different brands of turkey shells and determined after three shots of each (along with a sore shoulder) which company made the best turkey load for his particular shotgun. His data even influenced one of the events judges to switch brands. The kid might have an advertising future in the outdoor marketplace.

Now I am ready for the next son to try some other experiments. The subjects have not come to mind yet. Maybe I just need something with my fishing or hunting equipment to malfunction to figure out some new themes. Two sons' projects can only mean one thing: practice makes better. 

*Wisconsinite Chris Rehlinger is a native of Neosho but has called Lake Wisconsin home for the last 18 years with his wife, Lori, and sons Maxwell and Lucas. He works in the engineering/construction management field but always has something regarding fishing or hunting on his mind.*

SUZETTE CURTIS

# Recipes By Suzette

## Fall birds

Obviously, I love to cook. What may not be obvious is that I love to find out how other people cook as well. I like to "talk cooking" with people to scope out their specialties and any hints they are willing to share. New dishes and experiments are always encouraged at my house, so I am forever updating my own menu selections. Following are a few new additions to my repertoire with credit given as requested. Enjoy!

### Kick Ass Coot by Paul Williams

Coot, cleaned with all fat removed \*  
Potatoes  
Carrots  
Celery  
Onions  
Slacker Mama Seasoning \*\*

Place all ingredients in deep baking dish and bake at 350° for about 3 hours until meat starts to fall apart. Or place all in slow cooker and cook 4 - 6 hours on low.

\*Removing all fat from the bird takes away the "mud" taste according to Paul. He uses the breasts, legs, hearts and gizzards in this recipe.

\*\*Slacker Mama Seasoning is a Cajun seasoning, but if you don't want the hot taste, simply replace with salt and pepper.

### Grilled Dove Breast Skewers

8 boneless, skinless dove breasts (halved)  
8 strips bacon, cut in half  
Pearl onions  
2 sweet red peppers cut into chunks  
¼ cup unsalted butter  
½ cup brown sugar  
3 T. white wine  
4 skewers

If using wooden skewers, soak them in water for 30 minutes; drain and set aside.

Combine butter, brown sugar and wine in small saucepan. Heat on medium to medium-low until butter melts and sugar dissolves, stirring regularly. Remove from heat.

Wrap each dove breast with ½ slice bacon. Thread prepared skewers with bacon-wrapped dove breasts, onions and peppers, alternating as you

go. Plan to use four dove breasts per skewer.

Place skewers on preheated grill and baste with marinade. Grill 8 to 10 minutes and turn once for another 8 to 10 minutes, basting regularly. Skewers are done when meat is no longer pink and bacon has become crisp.

Remove skewers from heat and serve with remaining marinade.


### Pheasant With Tomato Cream

4 boneless, skinless pheasant breasts  
3 T. olive oil  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
½ cup chicken stock  
¼ cup sun-dried tomatoes, packed in oil, chopped  
2 T. dried basil  
1/2 cup heavy cream

In large saucepan, heat olive oil over medium-high heat until it sizzles. Add pheasant breasts and sear on both sides until browned. Add garlic and sauté for 30 seconds. Add chicken stock, tomatoes and basil; scrape up any browned pieces from bottom of pan.

Slowly add cream, stirring constantly for 2 to 3 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and continue stirring until sauce has thickened slightly and pheasant is cooked through about 5 to 10 minutes more.

I love this with a light-flavored rice like jasmine or basmati.

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



STUART WILKERSON

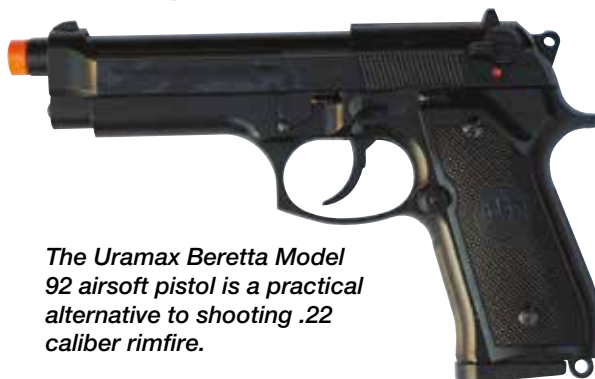
# An Inexpensive Alternative To .22 Rimfire Ammunition

## How to beat the ammo scalpers

If you're still having trouble finding .22 rimfire ammunition, there is an alternative to buying it from online scalpers. Something along the lines of a Umarex Elite Force Beretta Model 92 FS pistol, as featured in this article, for instance. The Umarex Beretta is a licensed facsimile of the Beretta 92 FS, which is the current-issue pistol of the United States armed forces. The Umarex 92 is a very realistic-looking copy of the real thing, with the exception of the orange muzzle cover.

Like its inspiration, the Umarex is a single and double action semiautomatic pistol. Other similarities are size and weight, white dot sights, and many of the markings on the frame. Unlike the Beretta, which shoots a 9 mm bullet and has a magazine capacity of 15 rounds, the Umarex magazine holds twenty 6 mm plastic BBs. Umarex BBs are propelled by green gas and can reach velocities of up to 390 feet per second, which can penetrate an aluminum can at a short distance.

Target shooting with a 9mm pistol is generally done at 15 or 25 yards. Airsoft pistol target shooting range is usually seven yards. Considering the disparity in distances, can the airsoft be a fun and useful pistol training alternative? Yes and yes. The Umarex is a blowback design, meaning the slide moves back and forth like the real Beretta, creating a



*The Umarex Beretta Model 92 airsoft pistol is a practical alternative to shooting .22 caliber rimfire.*


true semblance of recoil. The Umarex feels like a Beretta and the controls, such as the safety and magazine release, are similar. Shooting at seven yards can be comparable to shooting at 15 or 25 yards if the Umarex target is appropriately scaled down.

Unlike electric powered airsoft guns, the Umarex does create some noise. Green gas air guns make about as much noise as a spring-operated steel BB or pellet gun. You can hear the noise, but it is by no means excessive and shouldn't disturb other members of the household when shot in the basement.

Good as it is, the Umarex Elite Force Beretta could benefit from some improvements. The safety, for instance, is

stiff and you have to be certain that it is properly engaged. In addition, the owner's manual leaves something to be desired. For example, directions as to how to properly load the magazine with green gas are confusing at best. Were it not for the worldwide web, I'd still be loading it incorrectly and wasting gas. Visually examining the Umarex would lead one to conclude that the slide was removable for cleaning. In fact, it is, but you'd never know that from the manual, which makes no mention of this feature, let alone how to accomplish it. Again, thank you Internet posters.

If you buy .22 ammunition from a .22 rimfire scalper, it will run you about 20 cents a round, or more, for a box of 50 rounds. One thousand good quality plastic BBs for an airsoft gun cost just over \$10, or \$0.01 a round. One 10.5-ounce can of green gas at about \$20 should be enough to fire at least all 1000 rounds.

Even if you've managed to accumulate thousands of rounds of .22 ammunition, an airsoft gun like the Umarex Elite Force Beretta is a lot of fun and a great introduction to the shooting sports. Perhaps best of all, it can be shot in the comfort of your own home. 

*Stuart Wilkerson is a longtime OWO contributor, award-winning Wisconsin journalist, and firearms expert specializing in historical firearms and collecting.*



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STUART WILKERSON

## Concealed Carry

### Smith & Wesson J-Frame Airweight Model 637



Smith and Wesson's Airweight Model 637 is one of the most popular concealed carry revolvers made.

Smith & Wesson has learned a thing or two about concealed carry pistols since their Model 1 debuted in 1857. The little 7-shot revolver was the first .22 caliber rimfire manufactured and was later followed by a .32 caliber rimfire version. While not chambered for particularly potent ammunition, the single action Model 1, with its tip-up barrel and cylinder, loaded much quicker than its cap and ball contemporaries. Model 1 rimfires were also much more likely to fire in the rain and snow, since the powder and bullet were contained in a case and not exposed to the elements like the percussion revolvers of the time. Fast to load, compact and reliable, the Model 1 was very popular among Civil War soldiers on both sides of the conflict.

Today, Smith & Wesson's smallest revolv-

ers, the J-Frames, are among the company's most popular products. Like their Model 1 ancestors, J-Frames are light, compact, concealable and reliable. They're also still made in .22 rimfire. J-Frames in .38 Special and .357 magnum have found a big following for concealed carry and home defense purposes.

The J-Frame Airweight Model 637 featured in this article is one of Smith & Wesson's bestselling revolvers. Reasonably priced with an MSRP of \$470, the little single and double action revolver weighs just 15 ounces unloaded and a tad over a pound with all five chambers filled with .38 Special rounds. Weight is kept to a minimum by virtue of an aluminum frame. Barrel and cylinder are stainless steel and is a close match in color and texture to the aluminum frame. Stocks are made of rubber and

provide a good grip and more control compared to wood stocks. Sights are fixed and, while not target grade, are well regulated. The 637 shoots at or close enough to point of aim at 15 yards with most ammunition, including high-powered +P rounds.

Smith & Wesson offers several models of the Airweight, including double action only and single and double action shrouded hammer variations. The 637 has an exposed hammer, and it could be argued that DA-only, which does not have an exposed hammer, and the shrouded hammer models would be better for concealed carry purposes.

While it certainly is possible that the exposed hammer could snag while removing a 637 from a pocket, it would not be a deal breaker, in my opinion. Being frugal, I

would lean toward the 637 simply because it is less expensive than its shrouded hammer and DA-only cousins. If I had a little extra money, I would get the shrouded hammer model, but snags with the 637 can be minimized by the use of a holster designed for concealed carry use.

Shooting a 637 is an acquired taste. On the plus side, the double action pull, about 14 pounds, is smooth. In single action mode the trigger is light, creep-free, almost target pistol-like. Stocks are small and leave a couple of fingers hanging, but that's the price you pay for a highly concealable revolver

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## County Teasers

### Explore Wisconsin

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


Sparta, the "Bicycling Capital of America," is awesome this time of year. Motorcycling, horseback riding, kayaking, hunting, fishing and of course—biking. Full fall color is coming. Sign up for a ride. Sparta—a choice destination in western Wisconsin. **Click on Monroe County.**

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to nearly 1,000 lakes and over 145,000 acres of forest land. While you're here, take a trip over to the Spooner Fish Hatchery, the world's largest musky fish hatchery, to see how Wisconsin's lakes are stocked. **Click on Washburn County.**

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*Presents Firearms Info from Ron Stresing*

**RON STRESING**

## What Makes A Good Waterfowl Hunting Shotgun?

### Some expert advice

No shotgun takes a harder pounding than the ones that end up in a boat or blind in pursuit of ducks and geese. Cold, wet weather stiffens up actions and they get abused bouncing around in boats. They are exposed to snow, rain, fog, cattail swamps, and muddy cornfields. I've had shotguns fall in the mud, knocked out of the boat, and dunked in swamp water. We expect these guns to handle any ammunition from 2 3/4-inch light loads to heavy 3- or 3 1/2-inch magnum loads without a hiccup. Besides perfect functioning and reliability, we want the shotgun to fit and look good. Below are a few suggestions of what to look for when buying or upgrading to a new waterfowl shotgun.

**Go synthetic.** I like French or Turkish walnut stocks. They take a beating from the exposure and moisture. The finish can crack and the wood can swell and warp. Once the wood warps, cracking is sure to follow. The Smith & Wesson pump gun I have waterfowl hunted with for the last 35 years



SKB IS300 CAMO shotgun

has a lovely French walnut stock. Moisture, dents and wear have taken a toll, especially around the checkering and butt stock. The bluing on the receiver is mostly gone, as well as other "wear points" on the gun. It's no surprise that most militaries around the world now use weapons with durable plastic stocks. Synthetic stocks are impervious to snow, rain, mud, and minor impacts that dent and nick wood. Another benefit of a synthetic stock is the camo patterns they are available in. A camo finish on the barrel and receiver will also protect the metal better than bluing.

**Pump vs. semi-auto.** This is an interesting and much-debated question. The new crop of modern semi-autos is more reliable than guns that were on the market even five years ago. Inertia-operated actions are a big reason for this, giving recoil reduction and positive feeding and ejection of shells.

While they may require more frequent cleanings, pumps also need regular cleanings to avoid cycling problems. Pump shotguns can also have issues when the operator "short strokes" and fails to cycle the action smoothly. While it comes down to personal choice, you almost have to hand the advantage to the semi-auto guns. Another advantage of the semi-auto is it's easy to shoot sporting clays with: just drop in the proper choke tube.

Look for a solid vent rib and an easily visible bead. Over-bored barrels with a bore diameter a few thousandths larger than a standard bore are a big plus. Heavy shot charges tend to pattern much better out of over-bored barrels, as they allow for less deformation and a better "flow" of the shot. Simply, rounder pellets tend to fly straighter and pattern better.

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g5outdoors.com



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sigoptics.com

#### STRESING, from page 38

Some manufacturers offer chrome-lined chambers or barrels. Chrome plating makes for less powder fouling, corrosion, and means more positive functioning. It's no coincidence most modern military small arms also have chrome-lined chambers and barrels.

My advice is: do your homework, compare all the features and then shoulder a few guns. Take your time and remember you will probably be wearing more than just a light shirt when using the shotgun. With an unloaded shotgun, pick a spot on the wall in a safe direction. Quickly and smoothly mount the gun and see where the bead lines up in relation to where you are looking. If the shotgun is not pointing in the general vicinity of the spot you picked, try a few more times. If you cannot get things to line up, you may need to look at a different gun. Youth stocked shotguns are often a perfect fit for the ladies.

Today's shotgun buyer has a wider variety of models and brands to choose from than ever before. Competition between brands can make for decent prices, too. Shop around, and with any luck you'll find your perfect waterfowl gun. 

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.

#### NEILSON, from page 33

on October 1 from 9:00 – 3:00 PM with an arts and craft fair, "Taste of Harvest"; a cooking contest; pontoon rides; fall color tours and more. For details go to ManitowishWaters.org or call 715.543.8488.

Kris Neilson owns *Miss Guided Adventures* and works for *Visit Eau Claire*. She lives in the Chippewa Valley with her dog, Harry, and enjoys a wide variety of outdoor adventures throughout Wisconsin.

#### WILKERSON, from page 36

with a 1.9-inch barrel. A K-Frame Smith & Wesson would be easier to handle, but even with a short barrel, not nearly as concealable.

What the 637 is not is a plinker for an afternoon of shoot-

ing fun. Muzzle flip is akin to an elephant raising its trunk to spout water and recoil is pretty animated with .38 Special rounds. Shot with +P rounds, the 637 feels like a small hand grenade going off in your hands. Hold on tight!

With practice, the 637 can be tamed and has all of the attributes needed for a good concealed carry pistol. Accurate,

dependable, simple and reasonably priced, the 637 is definitely worth examining. 

Stuart Wilkerson is a longtime OWO contributor, award-winning Wisconsin journalist, and firearms expert specializing in historical firearms and collecting.



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