

FREE

November/December 2017

Vol. 11, Issue 2



On Wisconsin Outdoors



PHOTO BY JEREMIAH JOHNSTON

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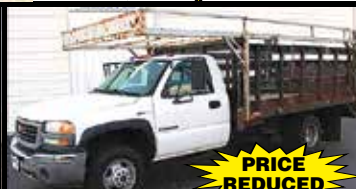
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TOM CARPENTER

Cubs Corner

Attitude & gratitude

My brother and I met at the truck for a much-needed break. Two-and-a-half days and no deer. An unseasonably warm November sun made us drowsy after our sandwiches as we sat and surveyed mid-day's deer-less deer country.

I wanted to take a nap. But it was deer season. Gun season at that. November afternoons at Wisconsin's latitude have a way of fading quickly, and I didn't want to waste an hour.

"We can't sit 'em out; let's walk one up," I said. Larry's always game. I think he was as tired of sitting as I was. The glory of the blue-skied November afternoon would be ours.

Deer hunters like to think we have everything under control. In some ways, we do. You choose the rifle, shotgun or muzzleloader you carry. You invest time studying deer, choosing and maintaining gear, scouting, setting stands, and practicing shooting.

But what's really under our control when we're actually hunting? Not the deer and what they do. Not the conditions. Wind, temperature, barometer and moon combine to act in subtle, fickle ways that dictate whether or not we see game. The only factor really under a hunter's control is your attitude toward the hunt. Every young deer hunter needs to know that.

I find my desire for the hunt waxing instead of waning as the years pass. Maybe it's being closer to the exit from this world than the entrance. Maybe it's realizing that I'm not going to last forever, and a person's days in the whitetail woods really are numbered.



The author and his brother Larry put attitude to work on a sunny afternoon and roused up this 9-point Green County buck. The gratitude is self-evident by the smiles.

Probably, it's some of both.

Attitude can do that: the idea that I've worked hard and done the best I can. Here I am. I'm going to hunt hard and enjoy the time here; maybe something good will happen. Something good surely cannot happen if I'm napping, driving home, walking to camp, daydreaming, getting upset about not seeing deer, or otherwise feeling sorry for myself. Hunting time is too precious to waste.

How can a hunter maintain a positive attitude even in the face of challenge or adversity? With gratitude. Let that young hunter know that if you're healthy enough to be out in the woods hunting, moving under your own power, breathing the fresh air and hoping to shoot a deer, feeling your heart pound as leaves crunch, hooves thump, a white-cupped ear flicks or a tail twitches, that's about as alive as a person can be.

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JOHN CLER

Late Season Afterlife

Ample opportunities follow November gun hunt

There is no doubt that the November gun deer hunt is the most important event of the year for most outdoor enthusiasts in the Badger State. Ask any young couple planning a wedding and they will tell you that most wedding venues are not booked during the opening weekend of the deer hunt. Should a couple choose to book their event during this weekend, we all know that the wedding will probably be lightly attended. Few things are allowed to interfere with the gun hunt here in Wisconsin.

When the sun sets on the final day of the gun season, avid hunters often feel a sense of depression, as it will be nearly a year before they return to the deer woods. Thoughts turn to ice fishing, snow blower maintenance and avoiding shopping malls until after New Year's Day, as hunters head for home with heads hung low. I will be the first to admit that this was my *modus operandi* for many years.

Wisconsin now offers a wide variety of ways to fight off those deer hunting withdrawal symptoms. You can pursue whitetails with archery gear, muzzleloaders and even your favorite deer rifle following Thanksgiving. The deer will be a bit spookier and in different patterns as winter settles over the Badger State, but fun and venison can still be had.

The statewide muzzleloader season runs November 27 through

December 6 in 2017. You may use unused gun buck tags or doe tags for the area you are planning to hunt. Gun buck tags are good statewide, but doe tags are county and land-type (public/private) specific.

There is an Antlerless-Only Holiday Hunt in all or part of 17 Wisconsin counties. This runs from December 24 through January 1. You may use archery gear, crossbows, a muzzleloader or deer rifle during this time frame, but you may harvest ONLY antlerless deer. You must also be authorized to hunt antlerless deer in the area you hunt. These areas offer ample numbers of extra tags that can be purchased on Go Wild. If you have a youngster to hunt with, the Holiday Hunt falls during a school break, offering a great chance for both of you to spend some time together.

The archery/crossbow season began on September 16 and runs through January 7, 2018. There is no longer a closure, but keep in mind that you must wear blaze orange during the gun hunt, muzzleloader season and during the Holiday Hunt. Archers and crossbow hunters may harvest antlerless deer ONLY during the Holiday Hunt when hunting in an area offering this option.

Hunting during later seasons requires a change in tactics, as

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LEE GATZKE

Smoke Pole Bliss

Quality experience, isolation, define muzzle loader season

Fifteen years ago I received a Christmas present that changed my approach to gun hunting for deer. My first reaction to the all-black, matte-finished muzzle loader was, “Am I really gonna hunt with this antiquated thing?” I’d have to wait nearly a year for my first muzzle loader season to answer that.

Early December, almost 12 months later, the time had arrived. A brother made plans for doing a few deer drives with two other smoke polers, and it was “game on.” The four of us took turns driving and posting, and on the last drive of the day, a six-pointer was pushed towards me. He dropped on the spot as the smoke from my shot engulfed the scene. I was very relieved and elated at the outcome since I realized it would be my only shot. It takes me a couple minutes to reload and no deer is going to hang around waiting for me to get a second shot. Making the first shot count is a must since it is likely the only one you’ll get with this equipment. It’s a handicap, but also part of the allure of hunting with a single shot weapon. It’s much like bow-hunting, which places a premium on taking careful aim, knowing this shot is my only chance. Miss, and the deer is gone. Count me in on this muzzle loading hunt for deer; this is a hoot!

Since picking up a muzzle loader, I’ve changed my preference in how I use my one-gun buck tag. In Wisconsin, you need to have an unused gun buck tag to be allowed to shoot a buck during the muzzle loader season. If I shoot




Muzzle loaders come in a variety of models, but they all have one thing in common: you only get one shot.

a buck with the rifle during the rifle season, which runs just before the muzzle loader season, I’ve used up the only buck tag available. Now the only way I can hunt with my smoke pole is to hunt for a doe, assuming I have a gun doe tag available. I personally prefer to shoot a buck with the smoke pole so I’ve changed how I rifle hunt. Now I concentrate on shooting does during the rifle season and will only take a buck if he is a real trophy. That strategy has allowed me to have my gun buck tag available for many muzzle loader hunts.

Other than the allure of hunting with a muzzle loader, the thing that draws me to hunt with one is the quality of the experience. During the muzzle loader season, there are few other hunters in the woods. I can roam the now unpopulated woods freely, on ground that just a week or two prior was heavily hunted by rifle hunters. Usually there is good snow cover during this season, which really helps fig-

uring out where the deer are holing up after the rifle season onslaught. With the scarcity of hunters during the muzzle loader hunt, I find I’m able to investigate the landscape to my heart’s content. It puts the “hunt” back in hunting. Being confined to limited acreage, as is typically the case during rifle season because of running into so many other hunters, I feel constrained by not being able to “peek” over the next ridge. We all know the grass is always greener on the other side. Peeking over the next ridge then usually reveals other hunters, and not wanting to mess up their hunt, it usually limits the way I can hunt. It can be frustrating. Not so, during the muzzle loader season, as I rarely encounter other hunters in the woods.

A few years back, two brothers and I were in camp with our smoke poles. Heavy snow fell and since we had previously planned to leave the day of the snow, we figured we better stay an extra day to wait out the storm. It would also give us another chance to hunt. An extra day hunting always trumps getting stuck in a ditch. It was a good omen. We shot two bucks and a doe on that hunt and relished the extra time we were afforded. 

Lee Gatzke is co-owner of NextBuk Outdoors, producers of tactical hunting videos. In grade school he chased rabbits with his homemade bow and arrows, which lead to a passion for hunting bigger game all over the Midwest and western states. In between hunting seasons Lee is usually scouting for his next buck.

JIM SERVI

Scraping Habit or Coincidence?

Snowfall triggers bucks’ daylight movement

Every fall, big bucks visit scrapes throughout my hunting area, but almost always at night. Daytime visits most likely consist of a quick scent check and then on to the next, without triggering the trail camera. There is one exception. Immediately after a snowfall, bucks tend to visit scrapes during the day. Thinking it was just a coincidence, I didn’t make the connection until the 2016 gun deer season.

Walking into my stand on opening day, a light snow covered the ground. Fresh wolf tracks, made just hours before, sent a shiver through my body. After climbing into the sanctuary of my tree stand, darkness was just beginning to give way to the morning light. Gusts of wind were already forecasting the high winds to come.

This stand is a special place for me and I generally only hunt it this one time of year. Like many young hunters, I went through my share of struggles in my early years, missing bucks that still haunt my memories. This stand was different though. Hunting it since 2009, I didn’t see a lot of deer, but the ones I did were often bucks, and my aim was always true.

Light now filled the entire woods and I found familiarity in the landscape. A gradual, downward slope leading to a thick swamp was my facing view, mostly hardwoods, but sprinkled with hemlocks. On the sugar maple ridge behind me, I saw a flash. Two does had come out of the swamp and disappeared. Suddenly, three more does appeared in front of me, uneasy from the wind. They lingered. I had al-

ready seen more does this morning than the previous two years hunting this location. Trying to stir something up, I hit my grunt call. Suddenly, there was another deer at the base of my tree. A little nub buck was trying to figure out where that noise came from. All morning they came and went, but no bucks. Finally, in the early afternoon, they departed and so did I. My wife’s delicious opening day chili was waiting.

Warm and full, I made my way back out to the stand, taking a different approach, making sure to stay clear of the bedding area to the south. That unknowingly turned out to be a good decision. Settled back in, the wind was still swirling, but the deer activity had slowed. It was now mid-af-

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DENNY MURAWSKA

Non-Scents

Keep quiet and stay downwind


Well all know that deer and most other wild mammals are masters at detecting scents that strike a panic button. Evidently, human stench is one of the scariest. Like most hunters, I give scent control some thought. I take a leisurely bath at least once a week. I abstain from Old Spice cologne or Axe deodorant before the hunt. Topping off my gas tank involves great care not to splash any on my camo clothing, in spite of the fact that breakfast was from the gas station. What is wrong with pepperoni pizza for breakfast and using my sleeve for a napkin?

Hey, there is no way not to stumble into odors. Last time I cleaned and put my hunting clothes in a “scent proof” plastic bag, my wife decided they could use a dose of Febreze. The way I figure it, those masters of marketing have plenty of products guaranteed to eliminate my overwhelming stench. I cannot help wondering though, each time I am tempted to purchase one, if they really work. Stink destroying laundry soap is supposed to be the place to start.

Whoaaaa . . . that stuff is pricey. Is it any better than plain old non-scented soap? Spray on scent blockers are supposed to neutralize human odor. I cannot help but wonder if they really do. My in-depth experience gives me reason to believe they do not. There are scent killer deodorants, body wipes, fabrics, and even chewing gum to keep your mouth fresh as a pine forest.

On top of all this, there are cover scents. Yeah, I spray a bit of doe pee on a drag and pull it around my hunting paths at times. I am told this has a short shelf-life, but I hate to throw away a collection of partially-empty bottles from years gone by. After a while, it doesn't smell like urine at all, more like straight up ammonia. I don't bother with the earth scent or pine potpourri. Pretty sure I could just use pine needles and dirt. You can step on a fresh cow pie as well.

In case one is still getting busted by wary old bucks, let's not forget attraction scents. When baiting was not legal in my zone, I tried a product that was supposed to “corn-fuse” deer into believing they were headed for a pile of corn; smelled just like a giant box of buttered popcorn. Then, of course, there is the apple scent that reminds me of a Jolly Rancher hard candy. Nothing at all like real apples. It never hurts to spritz a bit of acorn-scented “rage” inducing feed into a bait pile. Even more high tech is a product that is supposed to “jam” the ability of a buck to scent you.

Yeah, for sure. Maybe a forest fire? In the end, none of it seems to make sense. Or maybe, a bit too much scents. Regardless, here's hoping your shooting this fall doesn't stink up the place. 


Denny Murawski 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.

CARPENTER, from page 3

Another advantage to hunting with an attitude of appreciation and gratitude is that it's the cheapest and most effective deer hunting tool you can use. It comes from within, it's free, and it will do more to take a young hunter toward his or her deer hunting goals better than gadgets or gear ever could.

Thoughts of attitude and gratitude have crossed my mind hundreds, if not thousands, of times while deer hunting, and they were doing so that afternoon as we worked a long-forgotten meadow filled with tall grass and goldenrod. What I wouldn't give for this day back, even if it's a deerless one.

And then it happened. Just like that. A deer jumped up from between us. The whitetail cleared our line of fire and stopped, not thirty yards out, then crumpled after I realized I'd shot. Making my way over, I started shaking as I walked up. Nine points. Prime venison.

Some days, attitude brings more success than just the simple appreciation of a day hunting. Gratitude will carry a young hunter even farther on the rest of life's deer hunting days. 

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

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CLER, from page 3

deer are following different patterns. Food sources are a big draw for deer as they look for extra calories to put on some fat for the winter. A blanket of fresh snow on the ground will make scouting easier and assist you in finding a likely ambush location. Small and slow deer drives can also be an effective tactic.

Access to private land is a bit easier to obtain once the gun season is past. Knocking on a few doors may result in a great

place to chase whitetails at the end of the year. Wisconsin is also blessed with lots of public land. Most hunters assume that deer leave heavily hunted public lands and never return. This is not the case.

Take heart, the end of the gun deer season is just the beginning 

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.

SERVI, from page 4


ternoon. Suddenly, I heard a noise behind me. I slowly turned. Cleaning the snow out of a scrape, all I could see of the buck was his long tines protruding into the hemlock branches above. I got ready, hoping he would continue towards me. Satisfied that his scrape was refreshed, he stepped out from behind the tree, a perfect shot.

Rushing to the spot, I could see it was a good hit. A short tracking job and there he was. The largest buck I had ever seen hunting was now the largest buck I had ever harvested.

Always curious, I backtracked his tracks in the snow. The scrape near me was the last of a half dozen scrapes he cleared out that afternoon, leading back to his bed in the area I avoided, just south of my stand. Little things matter when you are hunting and the route to my stand made all the difference that day. What about the snow? Was it just a coincidence that it had snowed the night before, covering the scrape? Or had he come to clear them out because of the snow? Days later, there was another hot scrape cleared out during the middle of the day after another snowfall.



Author with his biggest buck to date, taken on Opening Day of the 2016 Gun Deer Season.

Trail cam pictures from past years confirmed the same. Maybe it was a coincidence, or maybe there was something to it. Either way, I know where I'll be sitting after the first fresh snow this year. 

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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TOM CARPENTER

Rooster Ruses Revealed

When late season pheasants magically disappear, use a few tricks of your own

When cagey, late-season Wisconsin pheasants put on their magical disappearing acts, respond with some tricks of your own.

In Wisconsin, whitetails are King, and November is the Holy Grail month, between rut bowhunting and our age-old tradition of the deer gun season. But there's another kind of hunting that really comes into its own in November, when crop fields are harvested, grasslands turn tan and wetland cattails freeze up to tawny brown. What is this other pursuit? Ring-necked pheasants.

Pheasant hunting remains good on into December, when a little skiff of snow might brighten up a landscape and send the birds into even thicker cover where they might – just might – allow a hunter and his or her dog to get into range. The hunting is never easy though, especially at this time of year. Even for such a gaudy and good-sized fellow, an experienced ring-necked pheasant rooster doesn't have much trouble evading hunters and dogs.

To feel the pleasant weight of a couple cockbirds in your gamebag, understand these four rooster ruses and respond tactically.

1) Ruse: Skedaddle before the hunt begins.

Ringnecks know exactly what slamming doors, loud whistles and shouting voices mean, and the birds run or fly off before you ever hit cover. You wouldn't make all that racket before or during a deer hunt, why do it when pursuing a paranoid cock pheasant?

Response: Treat pheasants like big game.

Park away from the hunting grounds. Don't slam doors or tailgates, speak only in whispers and approach cover silently. Then hunt with stealth: remove beepers and bells from dogs; teach your dog to re-direct to the softest of whistle toots; use only hand signals to communicate maneuvers with hunting partners.

2) Ruse: Run downwind to escape.

Survivor roosters stay alive by running with the wind, instead of into it. This trick can foil even the best of dogs.



Pheasant hunting comes into its own during the fall.

Response: Circle farther downwind and come back at them.

When you're working into the wind and the trail peters out, that pheasant has circled downwind. Instead of following and hoping, loop way downwind and come back into it, letting your dog quarter the cover.

3) Ruse: Hunker in for the long haul.

As much as he likes running, a rooster that's cornered will just burrow in to the best available cover, sit tight and let you pass.

Response: Circle, kick, wander, lurk and persist.

No pheasant flew. The dog is searching. The bird is here: work until you find him. It's amazing how little cover it takes to conceal a three-pound rooster that doesn't want to be found. They have surprised me from ditch grass mowed to eight inches, the furrows of a plowed field, and a knot of weeds in a fieldside rockpile.

4) Ruse: Forgets he has wings.

A pheasant in the air is a pheasant in trouble. That's why he will do anything he can to stay grounded and use his

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JERRY DAVIS

Try a Real Thanksgiving Turkey

Gregarious birds make hunting exciting

Somewhere along the way, since 1983, fall turkey hunting got a bad rap. Then, in 1989, when Wisconsin held its first autumn season and 1,570 birds were registered, the fall season was so far behind and different from spring hunting, fall never caught up. In many locations across the eastern United States, real turkey hunting is during the fall season. Turkeys are real turkeys about 300 days a year and only during the spring mating season are they likely to gobble at a truck door being slammed or an owl hooting. Oh, they do gobble other times, too, but not like those all-day affairs in April.

Hunters, particularly turkey hunters, are missing a grand opportunity if they don't squeeze fall turkey hunting in between squirrels, pheasants, grouse, waterfowl and deer. Now that most other fall seasons are beyond their peaks, consider gearing up for a trek or two of turkey calling before the December 31 closure. Even without a license or permit, there may still be over-the-counter permits available for the extended season in Zones 1, 2 and 4.

Weather may determine the style of fall turkey hunting. On a cold, blustery, wintery day, an all-day stay in a blind with some reading, eating and drinking materials might make a relaxing, but exciting, encounter. Add a decoy or two to the mix and a camera to watch for photo opportunities.

Warmer weather might send a hunter on a run-and-gun trek with frequent stays on a stool, call in hand or mouth, and from a good sight vantage point. As much as scouting, food is key to fall turkey hunting. The scatter method could be exciting, busting a raft at sunset, off the roost in the morning, or even sneaking up on unsuspecting turkeys and then rushing in before calling them back together.

Ambushing is another approach. Don't consider this unsportsman-like. Most deer hunting is done this way. Even going to the next step and peering out from an elevated stand, one used during the deer season, could work. Be careful here with




Gobbler fights are common in December.

winter's snow and ice on the steps and stand.

Don't overlook tracking as a means of hunting and scouting. With a little practice, tracks in snow can be attributed to hens, young poults and adult gobblers.

Most hunters may already have all the tools necessary for turkey hunting. Calls? Got 'em. Implement to shoot? Bow, muzzleloader, shotgun or crossbow will work. Decoys? Your choice. Camouflage? Same stuff, but make note of blaze orange requirements during any gun deer season, and that includes a cap. As with deer, it is usually movement more than anything else that draws first attention from an animal.

Wisconsin fall turkey hunting is either gender and without regard to age, spur or beard length. Wild turkey meat, particularly the dark meat, can be tough, so the younger the better here. But even the gobblers can be excellent table fare. Some hunters have tried sausage, others grind it all. Some cut very thin strips and make turkey noodle soup.

Make time for fall turkey hunting. You'd be missing a great hunting opportunity if you don't. 

Jerry Davis, a Wisconsin native, retired from university biology teaching and now lives in rural Iowa County. He applies arts and sciences to his writing and enjoying Wisconsin's outdoors. Contact him at sivadjam.mhtc.net.

CAPTAIN TODD LENSING

Rejuvenation on Mississippi Pool 9

New hunter enthusiasm inspires seasoned guide

Summer flew by and the 2017 waterfowl season was upon us. September 16 and 17 marked the weekend of the youth hunt. Throughout the years, I have taken many young people, including my two daughters, on their first duck hunt. It's been a privilege to watch them harvest their first duck. There is debate on both sides of the fence whether the youth hunt is necessary. Some say it takes away from opening weekend, but we will save that conversation for another day.

This year I was able to take out my good friend, Bennett (age 12). I met him about five years ago when his Grandpa Mike started bringing him to Pool 9 fishing. The three of us have spent many hours and long days at bass fishing. This young lad is beyond his years and is very poised, determined, enthusiastic, and a heck of a fisherman.

This year's youth duck hunt started out pretty slow. Saturday was hot, no wind, and

little duck activity. We enjoyed our time in the boat blind and hoped for the best for the next day. Well, Sunday was a whole new day. It was cool and rainy with a stiff north-west wind. From first light I could tell it was going to be a fun day.

Within the first 30 minutes, Bennett had three beautiful wood ducks in the boat and he was all smiles. Next it was time to try getting on some teal, which proved to be a little more challenging. There were a lot of them flying around and he had multiple opportunities. Several shells later, and Bennett finished off his limit of ducks with three blue wings. After over 15 years of guiding, I am not sure if I have ever seen anyone so excited. I hadn't seen anything yet.


We decided to stay for another hour, hoping to get a chance at some geese. A few minutes later, a very high lone goose decided he liked our decoy spread. Since the young hunter was using a 20 gauge,

I let the goose get extremely close before calling the shot. All the while Bennett was sitting next to me trembling. I called the shot, and with all the excitement, I believe he shot over the goose coming straight in.

Not to be defeated, we decided to give it another 30 minutes. When we were almost ready to pack it in, I spotted three geese that were just small dots in the sky. I started calling, hoping Bennett would get another chance. As they got closer, I told him to take his time and pick one goose out. I called the shot and he stood up and focused on the middle goose. A couple shots later and it was on the water. Then the hooting and hollering started and I found myself caught up in the celebration. He was super excited with the limit of ducks, but getting this goose really topped off the day.

I have been very fortunate to be able to have spent so many days and years out on the river. I sometimes get a little compla-



cent, but being involved with kids and the pleasure that goes along with getting a first duck or goose is really something. This hunt made me realize to never take for granted the excitement waterfowling has on an individual person. Thank you, Bennett, for making the youth hunt so much fun! 

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

Bennett's first limit of ducks!



BY TOM CARPENTER

Badger Birds Dark-Eyed Junco



At one time, professional and amateur ornithologists alike believed that four species of junco existed -- the slate-colored, western, pink-sided and white-winged. But where their ranges overlapped, the birds readily interbred, proving that we really have but one species, now called the dark-eyed junco.


Sprightly and energetic little members of the sparrow family, juncos nest in the northern tundra of Canada up into the Arctic, but the birds show up in fields, yards, gardens, parks and woodland edges as fall and winter reach Wisconsin. If you see little charcoal-colored birds hopping and flitting about from your tree stand this deer season, chances are they're juncos.

Look for a slate-gray bird with a dark head, white belly and pink bill. Many delightful color variations occur across junco range, but most juncos traveling through Wisconsin follow that basic pat-

tern. Juncos are usually seen hopping on or flitting very near the ground, usually in loose flocks.

Listen for juncos' high-pitched *clink* and *tick-tick* calls while they feed.

Spread white proso millet, cracked corn, black-oil sunflower, thistle or other seeds on the ground or a low-slung platform. Juncos feed on the ground. They are also happy just picking up grain that spills from hanging feeders. If it snows, spread new feed on top of what fell for the juncos.

Did you know that when a junco flies, its outer tail feathers show white? This is the best way to positively identify juncos versus various other sparrows that might also be found on the ground or low in bushes. 

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

BILL CUNNEA

Sticking with Mick

Old dog making new memories

For most of the year, I've been having bouts of melancholy when thinking about Mick, my 13-year-old field Springer. He's slowed down, has 8 or 9 lipomas, or fatty tumors, and life is wearing upon both of us. I got him as a rescue from American Brittany Rescue seven years ago, whose Illinois branch took in the English Springer Spaniel from a pound downstate. He hadn't hunted before I got him and never had his dew claws removed nor tail docked; but he took to it with eventual enthusiasm and quite some skill.

Wisconsin has an early duck season for a week and Mick and I have gone out twice. The first trip we found the steep banks of the creek were heavily over-grown and the crops were still drying. Two batches of birds came up far ahead of us, either from the noise we made or some glimpse they'd caught of us. No joy, but Mick held up well, and still had some bounce in his step as we walked up the drive to the house. He got half an aspirin and lavish praise.

Today, we made a second trip before the forecast of heavy rains, long absent in the last month. We walked around and angled to the favored spot of some woodies most years. Mick slowed and moved closer to heel as we approached the water.

Inevitably birds flushed, almost straight up, virtually launching from the water. I took the right bird with the right side improved cylinder barrel, with number 6 steel 2 3/4 inch shot and swiveled to the disappearing birds pulling the single trigger for the left side modified choke barrel, with a 3 inch number 4 steel shell. I didn't see the first bird, but watched the second spiral down.

Mick took off and the rest was sound effects because I couldn't see through the underbrush. Splash, splosh, splatter. Silence and then the noise of an old hunting spaniel clambering up a steep bank. I saw the grand old dog trotting down between rows of soybeans with a drake woodie in his mouth. I'd bet my grin could have split my face, I was so happy for him and for me. Mick had

started one more season!

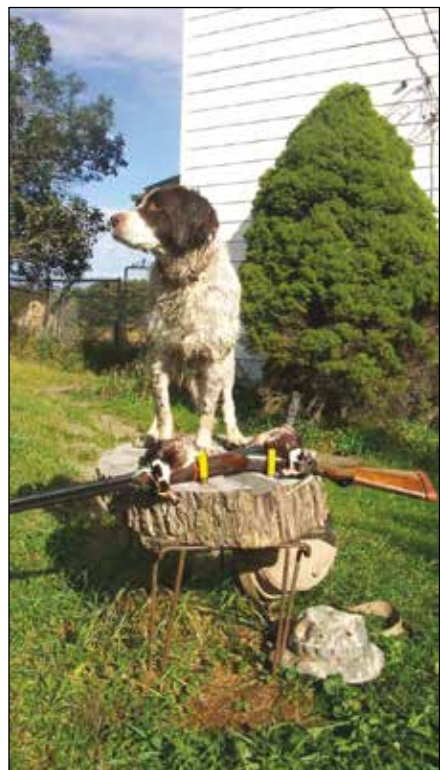
He took a second to drop the bird near me, shook the water off and turned around and went back into the creek, crossed over, and started climbing the (even steeper) opposite bank side. He hunted dead bird for a minute or so and then lifted up his head with another woodie drake. I'd hit the first bird, but hadn't watched it fall as I tracked the rest of the fliers.

If we never get a chance to hunt together again, he gave me some great memories and vivid images to recall. I've tried to do right by him.

I had no idea how lucky I got seven years ago. I'm not sure I've deserved the dogs I've had.

Thanks Mick. 

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



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TYLER FLORCZAK

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Whether an upland bird hunter, a waterfowl fanatic, shed antler hunter or just a dog lover, choosing a new versatile puppy can be a difficult and stressful process.

Because I grew up in northern Wisconsin and our family owned and bred a handful of wirehaired pointing griffons, pointers have always been my preferred hunting dog. Wire haired pointing griffons are gun dogs that are used primarily for hunting ring-necked pheasants and grouse, although we are currently training our new griffon pup, Wrigley, to shed hunt and track wounded whitetail deer.

With my wife and I seeking a new four-legged addition to the family, we selected a breeder that not only maintains a credible reputation for producing healthy pups, but has a proven brood stock. The breeders just happen to be one of our family's lifelong friends, Dave and Julie Carlstrom—owners of De Jac's Pine Kennel, an award-winning breeder's kennel in Bancroft.

Not every person seeking a new dog knows friends or family with connections to breeders with a proven history of producing versatile hunting dogs. Potential buyers will want to do their homework, researching bloodlines, breeders and kennels before purchasing. Next, they need



Pictured above is Wrigley, a 14-week-old wire haired pointing griffon carrying a shed antler during a friendly game of fetch on an October afternoon.

to conclude which breed makes the most sense for them before zeroing in on a kennel to contact. Buyers should also tackle other dilemmas such as their preference of a female versus a male, what areas the dog will likely specialize in (waterfowl hunting, upland hunting, game tracking, shed hunting), and of course, a name.

Here are some tips to follow when selecting a new hunting puppy:

- Look at the lineage—Regardless of the breed, whether a retriever, pointer, bloodhound, etc., the qualities of the parents will tell the owners as much (if not more) as the pup's paperwork. The parents will shed light on what the pup will look like in the future, how good its nose will be and behavior patterns.

- Excellent health is essential—Once the dog breed, seller and litter has been chosen, it is vital to see that the pup has a veterinary certificate that shows it is in good health, is up to date on shots, vaccines and has been wormed.

- Compare the temperaments and characteristics—Take note of specific mannerisms amongst each pup in comparison to the others. Well-socialized pups should present certain qualities when gently held, walked in the

continued on page 12

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TOM MUELLER

Training the Retriever Pup . . . Continued

Puppy training tactics

There's an old saying, "You have to start where you mean to end." Every retriever owner that gets a new pup has a vision of what they want their pup to be. Similar to what we construct, manufacture, or develop, there is a vision of an end product and a plan in place with steps to be taken to make that vision a reality. This holds true for training retrievers. There is a starting point with training steps or lessons along the way to develop the puppy into a non-slip retriever. Every retriever pup, no matter what the pedigree or breeding, is genetically wired to retrieve. Some have a very strong desire. In others it is more reserved and needs to be aroused to bring it to its full potential. Whichever type of pup you have, this is the starting point. Once your pup has somewhat settled into its new environment, this is where your training begins.

The first step is to encourage the retrieve. Retriever pups thoroughly enjoy running out to something that's been thrown. Some are very aggressive in doing this and run out full bore to get an object. Others, early on, are more laid-back and do it more casually. At one point through this initial training they all will go. To encourage the not-so-fiery puppies to go enthusiastically, create enthusiasm by making a lot of chatter and noise with a high sing-songy voice. Use a toy or a ball with a squeaker in it. Puppies and young retrievers love fun and excite-

ment, so make it fun and exciting. At this point, it's about igniting that fiery desire to run out and pick up a thrown object.

The next step is to get the pup to return to you with the object in its mouth. Again, most pups will readily pick up the object and head back to you with some verbal encouragement. Every now and then you get one that decides, "This is my toy. I went and got it and now I'm going to keep it." Another old saying is, "Never chase a dog 'cuz it will chase you." If you have one of those that prefers to own what it retrieves, the first thing to do is run away from it calling it to you with your high sing-songy voice, or use another toy with a squeaker to get its attention. Run away and let the puppy chase you. If it decides to run willy-nilly all over the place and does not come directly to you, attach a very light rope or cord to its collar. If the pup doesn't come directly to you, give it a slight tug and walk away encouraging it to come to you using your high voice and

squeaker.

The third step is to get your pup to bring the object it's retrieving right to you and not drop it. This is easily done by squatting or kneeling or even sitting and letting the pup run right into your open arms. When it gets there just cuddle it in, love it up, and chat it up with your high voice or squeaker and get it all excited. Don't take the object away from it right away. Retrievers retrieve for themselves. Retrieving something and having it in its mouth is a retriever's big reward. Let it enjoy its reward. Also, with puppies and young dogs, less is more. The younger the pup, the shorter the retrieves and the shorter the sessions.

Next issue . . . encouraging the hold. 

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 questions regarding retriever training contact Tom at winddancer.rtrvrs@hotmail.com.

CARPENTER, from page 7


fleet feet for escape.

Response: *Use blockers.*

When hunting with partners, station at least one hunter and preferably more at escape routes, pinch points or ends of coverts to surprise birds and flush them or turn them back. Don't be afraid to hunt a patch of cover a second time even if you saw some birds fly the first time through.

Conclusion


November might be Wisconsin's whitetail month, but it's also our pheasant month. And December is also prime rooster time.

There's nothing better than a long walk through waving grasslands, forgotten meadows, crop stubble, cattail edges and brushy sloughs on the brown-gray November landscape, looking for a resplendent rooster to brighten the sky and make your day. 

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

FLORCZAK, from page 12

yard or played with. Some buyers may look for a pup with a calm temperament where others might desire a hyperactive dog.

- Trust your gut instinct—Spend as much time with the litter as necessary before selecting your pup. After a series of subtle "quizzes," it may come down to the pattern on their coat, the amount of affection one shows or a certain look a seven-week-old pup gives. 


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 accepted into the Boone & Crockett Club and was featured in Field & Stream, Deer and Deer Hunting and North American Whitetail.

County Teasers

Ashland County. November events in Ashland county include the Chick-uamegon Women's 5K/10K Run/Walk & Garland City Women's Expo on Nov. 4, more info found at www.chick-uamegon.com. The Day After Thanksgiving Sales will be on November 24. Small Business Saturday & the Beginning of the "Shop Small . . . Win Big" Promotion will take place on November 25. December events include the Christmas Cash Raffle/ Daily Drawing for Chamber Dollars that runs from December 1 through December 31. On December 2, the Garland City of the North Christmas Parade will take place at 4:30 p.m. on Historic Main Street. Visit www.visitashland.com for additional information.

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Port Washington. Just because the marina closes November 1, don't think that means fishing is done for the year in Port Washington. Thanks to our lakeside parks, there is still great fishing from shore. In fact, you can find fishermen casting a line any day of the year — and successfully! Visit www.visitportwashington.com, for all the activities we have to offer!

Washburn County. With offers year-round lodging for hunting, ice fishing, snowmobiling and many other great winter activities. Whether you're looking for a lake-side cabin or warm hotel to spend the weekend at, you'll want to head to Washburn County for your winter getaway. Fishing reports, trail conditions and nowmobile maps are available on our website or by calling 1-800-367-3306. 



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NEW BERLIN, WI



MIKE FOSS

Bear Camp by the Numbers

23 hunters, 100% shot opportunity, 20 bears down

With hunters beginning to arrive for the start of the 2017 Wisconsin bear season, unseasonably warm temperatures weighed heavy on the mind of Northern Wisconsin Outfitters (NWO) owner Robert Haas. Hot, humid, still weather with temperatures in the nineties can quickly shut down active baits and turn bears nocturnal. Tag holders taking time off of work to travel from all over Wisconsin to hunt Bayfield County would have no choice but to hunt.

Haas' concerns would prove unwarranted. Twenty-three Wisconsin hunters would take their stands spread over 35 square miles of Bayfield County. Within days, bears would begin to fall, and hunters would eventually experience 100% shot opportunity. Some would choose not to shoot due to the size of the bear, and some would miss. But as of October 2, 19 NWO hunters would have filled their tags. Although each tagged bear is a true trophy and a memory for all of our hunters, a handful of stories seem most worthy of retelling, here in On Wisconsin Outdoors, and for years to come around Wisconsin campfires.

"Bed Maker" is a huge boar estimated at 500 pounds. He earned his nickname because of his habit captured time and again on NWO bait trail cameras of spreading leaves and grass on the bait before sleeping right on it.

On stand for hours over the secluded bait frequented by Bed Maker, the hunter slowly stood and stretched 19 feet above on his ambush in a huge spruce, at exactly the same time the monster he was hunting stepped into view.

Heart pounding with the unexpected adrenalin shot, the hunter sat again but hurried to shoot with the now alerted mammoth broadside but ready to bolt. The shot was a clean miss, except for this; a camera mounted on the rifle captured the true trophy, the great shot opportunity, and a moment lost from here until eternity. The photo will serve as a forever reminder of what might have been for a



Tank, a monster bear estimated at 600 pounds by experts at Northern Wisconsin Outfitters, eluded hunters for the 5th straight year in 2017, but made plenty of appearances on the bait for the camera...when the hunter wasn't there.

hunter that waited eight years for a tag. And a reminder, too, for a hunter who simply wanted to stretch, that Murphy's Law is alive and well in the forests of Bayfield County.

At about the same time, hunter Brad Baryenbruch of Spring Green, Wisconsin, sits on stand waiting and hoping to meet one of the largest bears captured on trail camera by Northern Wisconsin Outfitters this year. "Tank" is estimated at 600 pounds and is showing up almost every night on the bait at dusk, and sometimes earlier.

"It was a true cat and mouse game," Baryenbruch said. "One day I couldn't hunt Tank because the wind was wrong and he showed up on camera at 6:30 in the evening and well before shooting hours ended. The nights that I could hunt the wind was perfect and I would quietly exit the stand at dark only for that smart monster to show up minutes after I left. That bear has more lives than a cat. They don't get that old or big by being stupid."

Baryenbruch hunted the taunting bear for four days before work responsibilities called him home with plans to return to camp in two weeks and pick up the hunt.

Tank continued to hit the bait located on private property, but before the hunter could return, the landowner that had graciously given NWO permission to place the stand now asked that the stand be removed as his sons prepared to bow deer hunt. Tank will be safe for another year, but Robert Haas has an even better understanding on how to fasten a tag to the wily bear next year.

Although Baryenbruch is apparently out of luck in 2017, that luck changes when another landowner makes a similar request to remove a bear stand as the archery season approaches. After removing the stand and viewing the trail cam pictures at home, Robert Haas is hit with the bitter sweet reality that Bed Maker is back during daylight hours. He places a passionate plea to the landowner for more time on the property, and receives the hoped for response:

"Get that bear," reads the message.

He makes an equally passionate plea to Baryenbruch to hasten his return to camp.


"Brad, my trail camera tells me Bed Maker is back, and another big bear is also coming in during shooting hours," he said. "But we only have a few days to

hunt."

Both bears are cautious and edgy. Bed Maker often chases the intruder bear from the bait. Both bears now habitually step into the clearing and immediately look up to check the treestand to see if a hunter waits in ambush. Such is the bear hunt, and the often sixth sense personalities of the largest survivors.

With five hours of travel time behind him, Baryenbruch is secure in the giant spruce on September 24 with thoughts of Tank intruding on his thoughts. With light fading along with his optimism, a glance at the watch verifies only minutes of legal shooting time remaining. Another scan of the bait shows a dark spot that wasn't there before, or are the low-light conditions playing havoc on his eyes? He remembers a Haas warning that a big bear will often poke his head out and quickly depart from the scene if anything seems amiss.

The big bear steps from the cover and immediately looks to the stand. Baryenbruch is ready with the crosshairs on the shoulder and finishes it before the bear can react. Recovered 30 yards from the hit, the bear is not Bed Maker. But at 300 pounds, the sow is likely the largest ever taken by a hunter with Northern Wisconsin Outfitters. Tooth extraction will verify that she is most certainly the oldest.

Special thanks to helpers and assistants at Northern Wisconsin Outfitters in 2017; Jason Hooks, Rick Zwiers, Mark Shuh, Brian Bolssen, Ron Parsons, Randy Amble, Alan Augsburg, Mike Hart, Tom Hart, Mike Marx, Heston Amble and Michael Haas. 

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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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.

On The Cover

Peter Zienty took this 10 point rutting buck with a bow in Bayfield County.



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GARY GREENE

(Foggy) Memories from an Old Hunter

Where's my hunting gear?

I am highly capable of losing all of my hunting accessories. For many years, I have been pursuing pheasants wearing unmatched gloves. I lose gloves in the field, in my truck and in my home. I always blamed my first wife, but she hasn't been in the picture for many years and I'm trying to figure out how she still loses my stuff.

During an Arkansas duck trip, hunting partners Jessie and Bryan Jablonski were teasing me about my non-matching pairs of hunting socks. "Hey, maybe my feet have specific preferences!" I told them.

It's not just the gloves and socks, but since I have increased my waterfowl hunting, my lost items have escalated tenfold. I have misplaced so many pocket knives that I buy one from the counter every time I check out at the local Martin's hardware store.

It's uncanny how every time my son Nate and I hit the water for ducks, I lose something. It's a given that we drop a few shells in the dark water as they join the eggs, apples, bananas and beef sticks that previously vanished at sea.

Two of my pheasant hunting labs are also part time duck dogs and I have taught them the basics, but not hand signals for blind retrieves. Consequently, we use the: "Throw

the stone near the duck technique." Most times, I lose the stone bag, and we end up throwing shotgun shells. They work well, but the retrieves become quite expensive.

I've lost my favorite personalized stocking cap and T-shirt, face paint, duck calls, dog collars, water bottles, parts off shotguns and a yellow, unbreakable, six egg container. Once, I placed a dead goose in the fence row next to me and when we placed the next geese in the same spot, the first goose was gone.


I've lost three camouflage coffee thermoses with the most recent being in early October of 2016. Two months later in December, I was on my knees on our pier and started taking gear out of our skiff. Suddenly from the deep, a foot in front of my face, my thermos rose out of the water. It was like the sunken body that always comes back to haunt the killer.

Upon returning home after an eight-hour Horicon goose hunting trip, my mind is always elsewhere, if anywhere. With little sleep and lots of traveling, I am fatigued as I unload the truck and clean the gun and the birds. I was getting out of my hunting clothes when I noticed that I didn't have my lanyard with my three cherished goose bands. It

took my entire hunting career to collect those three bands and I panicked as I searched inside the truck. I finally concluded the lanyard was dropped in the cut wheat fields of Brownsville. I was really feeling down as I called Nate and relayed: "Those goose bands are like family heirlooms and can't be replaced."

Lastly, I went into the garage to hang up my hunting clothes and on the hook where my lanyard was supposed to be hanging, was my hanging lanyard. Evidently, as soon as I got home, I must have hung it up in its proper place.

It's tough getting so old and tired that you aren't sure if your stuff is really lost or unknowingly, never lost, but just not found.

Recently, I was enjoying the view of our lake from the hot tub, when I looked up and saw a half dozen turkey vultures circling lowly over my head. I was hoping they hadn't found what they were searching for! 

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.

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KYLE CICHANOFSKY

Hunter's Choice

Decision to take predator ends deer hunt

As hunters, we devote large amounts of time and effort towards one thing: putting meat in the freezer. We wake up before the birds get out into the woods. We work on the weekends before hunting season while others relax and play. We break our backs for an opportunity of a lifetime. People may think we're crazy, but to us, it's just part of our lives.

As I get older, I have a better understanding of hunting's rituals and traditions. I hope to demonstrate that in the following paragraphs.

One mid-November, my Dad, Grandpa and I had been hunting all week long. I was physically and mentally drained. For four days in a row, I had been getting up at 3:30 am and going to bed at 10 pm. The events that followed were worth the lack of sleep.

One morning, I had already spotted three deer in front of me, a doe and two fawns. I watched them as they passed, hoping a buck would follow. None did. Another couple hours passed with no signs of life. Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a streak of white. I turned to see a fawn sprinting through the woods. She let out a piercing yelp for help and continued running till she was out of sight.




Kyle's first ever coyote.

Before I could assess the situation, I saw another flash of white to my right. I couldn't believe my eyes – it was a coyote in hot pursuit of the fawn! I quickly shouldered my rifle and let out a yelp, like the fawn had made earlier. The coyote momentarily stopped and I pulled the trigger. Immediately, another coyote raced past the one

I had just shot. The animal was running too fast for a clean shot. I did not want to wound it, so I didn't shoot.

I looked back to where I had originally shot the first coyote and there it lay. I had no idea what had just happened, it all went by so fast. I reloaded my gun and carefully set it back down. I felt my phone buzzing against my leg; it was my dad. I told him what had happened. He was pleased that I didn't let the coyotes kill another deer. There were not many deer left in our area that season; it was a blessing to be able to save another fawn.

Around lunchtime, Grandpa decided to call it a day. As we walked back to the truck with the coyote I had shot, the day's events clicked in my head. As hunters, we have a special privilege that many other people do not. We see things other people won't ever see or be a part of. That day, I witnessed the circle of life and I was part of that circle. 

Kyle (Chicky) Cichanofsky is an 8th grader at Bay View Middle School and has a fishing group with his friends called WiscoFishCo. Visit Chicky's youtube channel, Instagram page, or Facebook page at WiscoFishCo. Chicky's column is sponsored by Defender Baits Company.

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ITEM 69667/68740 shown

61876036

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POWDER-FREE NITRILE GLOVES PACK OF 100

Customer Rating ★★★★★

\$5.99 ~~\$7.99~~ **SAVE 55%**

• 5 mil thickness

ITEM 61363, 68497, 61360, 68498, 61359, 68496 shown

61876636

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 3/1/18*

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29 PIECE TITANIUM DRILL BIT SET

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7 AMP ELECTRIC POLE SAW 9.5" BAR

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MULTIPURPOSE WORKBENCH WITH LIGHT

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COMPARE TO KOBALT MODEL: SFW1250TC

ITEM 91006/62678/62977 shown

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ITEM 61840/61297 63476/61258 shown

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VEHICLE POSITIONING DOLLY

Customer Rating ★★★★★

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7 PIECE PLIERS SET

Customer Rating ★★★★★

\$8.99 ~~\$9.99~~ **SAVE 74%**

COMPARE TO HUSKY MODEL: T1018

ITEM 69355/62599/62847/62600 shown

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Customer Rating ★★★★★

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STUART WILKERSON

Concealed Carry

Women comprise an increasing share of the concealed carry market

One size rarely fits all, especially when it comes to concealed carry handguns for women. Oh, and some of the worst advice about gun purchases come from boyfriends and husbands, according to Marie Govas, co-owner and wife of Shorty Govas of Shorty's Shooting Sports in West Allis. "These guys think they're experts on guns, and, in a lot of cases, they've never even shot one," Marie said.

Women are becoming increasingly interested in firearms for sporting and self-defense purposes, Marie said, and a Harvard-Northeastern study concurs. According to a 2016 online GQ article referencing the study, "... nearly half of gun owners whose gun collection consists of a single handgun are women—and according to the NRA, the number of women who registered for classes on how to use a pistol nearly doubled between 2011 and 2014." I can provide some additional anecdotal evidence to this study. In June of 2017 I took a concealed carry course at Shorty's: about a third of the participants were women.

Considering that the vast majority of violence against women comes from men, it is little wonder that more and more women view firearms as the most effective deterrent to male violence. Of course, before

anyone, whether male or female, needs to use any kind of a weapon for self-defense purposes, they had better know how to use it.

"You should practice enough with your pistol that it is an extension of your hand," Marie said. "This may not be the best analogy, but a woman should be as familiar with her pistol in her hand as she is with her lipstick. In an emergency, you shouldn't be thinking twice about where the safety, slide release or magazine release is located."

An absolutely imperative component to firearms familiarity is carrying a firearm you are comfortable shooting. The best choice for the first time concealed carry owner, whether male or female, is a .22 rimfire caliber pistol, according to Shorty. "They're very effective and because they have little recoil, they're easy to control. A larger caliber gun might be nowhere near as controllable. It's hard to shoot a follow-up shot when you're still recovering from the recoil of the first shot. You can shoot a .22 a lot for little cost, and shot placement is the most important part of being able to defend yourself. Shot placement takes practice. The more you shoot, the better you get, and the more able you are to protect yourself when the time comes. And, if you're introducing some-

one to the shooting sports, a .22, because it is so easy to shoot, is the best place to start."


Concealability can be an issue for women and there are many ways to conceal a handgun; some work better than others, be they an inside-the-waistband holster or ankle or shoulder holster. None are perfect, and all can be potentially fatal if the user is unfamiliar with their function. Marie cites the case of a Wisconsin woman who died after shooting herself while attempting to adjust her brassier holster.

One of the most functional and accessible means to hide a concealed pistol is a purse holster. Shorty's Shooting Sports recently began carrying a line that securely holds most compact size pistols and provides quick access to them. As an added bonus, the purse has enough room for keys, makeup, cellphone, wallets, check book and everything else that is commonly carried in a purse.


Is it perfect? No, but what is? Purses are common targets for grab and run thieves, but that can be avoided with a small dose



of common sense. "You need to be aware of your surroundings and don't do dumb things, like leave your purse visible in an unlocked car," Shorty said. He also has some more sage advice along these lines: "Take the damn earbuds out when you're jogging!" You can't truly be aware of your surroundings if you can't hear what's around you, he explained. Earbuds make you an easy target for someone bent on robbing or doing you harm.

For more information on concealed carry accessories and virtually everything else related to firearms, visit Shorty's Shooting Sports at 2192 S. 60 St., in West Allis or their web site at shortysshootingsports.com 

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




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Presents Firearms Info from Ron Stresing

RON STRESING

Wisconsin's Late Season Small Game

Looking ahead to good gunning, good hunting

The rabbit let me walk past and then bolted for a frozen cattail swamp on the right. I swung on him with my 16 gauge and rolled him. The public land I was hunting in Dodge County was deserted now, and I had the place to myself. The crowds that pounded the place during the opening weeks of the pheasant season were long gone by December. A week before, I had hunted squirrels in a woods on the same land and bagged a young gray squirrel. Again, the hunting grounds were deserted. A flock of crows was wintering nearby. I could have come back in January with my crow decoys and calls had I wanted, but decided not to after a temperature drop.

Let's face it, after the nine-day Wisconsin Gun Deer season, most hunters give up. They may get out once or twice for pheasants or rabbit hunting in the snow, but I'd guess 80% or so are done for the year. The public hunting areas that were "standing room only" are now empty. Small game like rabbits, squirrels, grouse

and pheasants still have to forage in the cold for food. The snow knocks down cover, allows easy access, and aids tracking of small game for hunters who don't own dogs. Game tends to concentrate around food sources.

Rabbits and Snowshoe Hares: Cottontail rabbits are available on about any public hunting land in the southern half of Wisconsin. Hunt brush piles, fence lines, fallen timber and grassy areas and cover near old agriculture fields. Snowshoes are "Up North" dwellers who favor pine or cedar swamps. Use fresh tracks and droppings to locate either species. Rabbits tend not to be very durable, and a couple size 6 pellets will tumble them. I suggest carrying light loads for jumping brush piles and stouter loads for long, open cornfield shots.

Squirrels: Look for fresh tracks, cut nutshells or corn cobs near mast or den trees. Squirrels will often take advantage of a break in cold weather to feed heavily



on a warmer day. Be as stealthy as possible, as surviving bushytails are wary and have been hunted steadily since September. Early morning is usually the best time.

Pheasants: Pheasants will move into the heaviest cover as close to a food source as possible. Look for tracks in the snow near old agricultural fields, groves of small trees, hedges, ditches and frozen cattail swamps. Birds will tend to stay out of the wind, so hunt more protected areas.

Grouse: Wisconsin's wide-spread grouse population allows for lots of time to pursue the tasty birds. Hunt mixed hardwoods and key on the food sources. Scout for tracks and signs of feeding grouse. Winter grouse tend to roost in evergreen trees and feed on young growth trees like aspen. Tree buds make up 90% of a grouse's winter diet. Be sure to consult the 2017 Small Game Hunting Regulations to see if you are hunting Zone A or B for grouse.

Pigeons: Feral (wild) barn pigeons are unprotected under Wisconsin game law. No closed season on "Barn Ptarmigan" and most farmers are glad to have them gone. Check with local dairy farmers.

Please make sure to consult the 2017 Small Game Hunting Regulations, as closing dates vary. [OW](#)

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.

STUART WILKE

In the Shadows

SKB - quietly building quality shotguns for over a century

Until you saw their advertisements in *On Wisconsin Outdoors*, you had probably never heard of SKB shotguns. While that may have been the case, if you're a firearm enthusiast, you are, in all likelihood, aware of their products. You just may not know it.

Chances are, you have heard of Browning, Weatherby or Ithaca and BSA. All well-respected firearm companies and all, at one time or another, have contracted with SKB to build parts and some of these companies' best shotguns. If you're a really tuned-in shotgun aficionado, you'll know that SKB briefly marketed shotguns in the 1970s under their own name.

SKB is no newcomer to building high quality shotguns. In fact, they are one of the oldest names in quality shotguns having begun manufacturing them in 1855. "SKB" are the initials of Shigyo Sakaba, SaKaBa Arms (SKB) Compa-

ny, who founded company in the mid-1800s. He was contracted at that time by a Japanese feudal lord to supervise the development and production of guns for the Mito clan, which was based in an area northeast of Tokyo.

Fast forward to the early 1960s and SKB was now manufacturing a complete line of premier grade competition and field shotguns. Their reputation soon came to the attention of major firearms manufacturers looking to bring high quality, yet affordable, shotguns to the market. One of the first of these was Britain's BSA, long known for their manufacture of extremely high quality commercial and military firearms. BSA's factory was left in ruins by the Luftwaffe during World War II and the company no longer had the means to produce the high quality shotguns for which it was famous. Truly, it is a testament to SKB that one of Britain's premier firearm manufacturers deemed them worthy

enough to market them under the BSA name.

As more and more manufacturers sought to bring high quality, reasonably priced shotguns to market under their own brand names, the more sought after SKB became as their source. Combining old-world craftsmanship with modern materials and state-of-the art manufacturing techniques, SKB found great success throughout the world market. SKBs were exported to Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the Mid East, Russia, and Brazil, among other markets, by a number of importers. In 1987, G.U. Inc., became the sole U.S. importer of SKB shotguns.

SKB thrived until the world economy tanked in 2008. As disposable income dried up along with jobs, so did the market for SKB shotguns. As the Great Recession continued with no sign of abating, SKB shuttered its doors after

continued on page 24

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WILKERSON, from page 23

more than a century and a half of making highly respected shotguns.


In 2010, G.U. Inc., under the leadership of Rob Johansen, bought the company's remaining assets and tried mightily to resurrect SKB from the dead and resume production. Try as he might, he could not find a manufacturer capable of reproducing original SKB shotguns at an affordable price, while retaining their legendary quality.

After several years of attempting to bring the SKB line back to production, Rob ultimately realized that his efforts had come to naught, but he did retain one highly valuable asset – the SKB name. The goal now was to find a manufacturer that could live up to it.

Rob found his answer in Turkey, specifically at two of the country's best shotgun manufacturers: Akus and Akdas. The two firms have a long history of producing quality products for both the US and European markets, including the Kimber Marias and Valier series and the Smith & Wesson Elite, which won the 2008 Field & Stream award for Shotgun of the Year.

Today's SKB shotgun lineup includes semi-automatic, side by side, single barrel trap, and over & under models. They are meeting with great success throughout the country, particularly in youth skeet and trap competitions. SKBs are especially sought after because they provide shooters with models featuring adjustable length of pull and combs at reasonable prices.

"Our focus is to produce high quality, competition shotguns that are designed with a modern day style which include enhanced performance features, at a price that the average competitive shooter can afford," Rob said.

His company is doing just that. For more information about SKB shotguns, see them in person at Midwestern Shooters' Supply in Campbellsport or visit the SKB website at www.skbshotguns.com. 

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

Eliminate the Guesswork

Midwestern Shooters Supply's pistol range can help you decide which pistol to buy

Purchasing a handgun is a major decision and often not an easy one, particularly for novices. There's lots of bad advice out there and everyone has an opinion regarding the best caliber, action and manufacturer, to name just a few of the issues confronting a new shooter. No matter if you're a first time shooter or an experienced one, it's always advisable, if you have the opportunity, to first shoot any handgun you are considering purchasing.

Midwestern Shooters Supply in Lomira can provide that opportunity with their on-site indoor pistol range. The five-lane, 25-yard range is clean, well-lit and ventilated, supervised and reasonably priced. If you're a novice, a Midwestern Shooters Supply associate will be happy to accompany you and demonstrate the correct, and safe way, to make your first shooting experience a good one.

Help and guidance is especially important when determining which handgun best suits your needs. Happily, Midwestern has over 60 rental pistols available to shoot, ranging from .22 caliber rimfire up to .44 magnum. Single and double action revolvers and semiautomatic pistols are




Before you buy, shoot the handguns your thinking of purchasing at a facility like the indoor pistol range at Midwestern Shooters Supply in Lomira.

available to shoot from a variety of manufacturers, including Smith & Wesson, Ruger and Glock. Rather than rely on internet commandoes regarding the age old question – Which is better, the Glock or 1911? – decide for yourself by shooting both. Might the recoil of the .44 magnum you're thinking about buying be more than you can handle?

Shoot one and find out.

Practice makes perfect and nowhere is this more true than handgun marksmanship and concealed carry. If the primary purpose of your handgun is self-defense, its use and operation had better be second nature. That only comes with practice and lots of it. Midwestern Shooters Supply range time is reasonably priced and less expensive if you share a lane with a friend. Annual memberships are available and the range is so popular that reservations are highly recommended. Tuesday evenings are Lady's Night and features half-price lane fees as well as shooting instruction, if so desired. At all times, targets and ammunition are available for sale. Ear protection and shooting glasses can be rented at a very low cost.

Whether you're a new or experienced handgun shooter, Midwestern Shooters Supply Indoor Range will meet your needs at a reasonable cost. 

For more information, visit their store at 191 Church Street in Lomira or website at mwshooters.com



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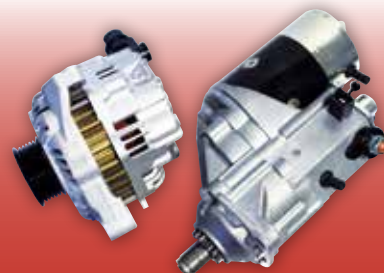
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CHRIS REHLINGER

Make Pike What's for Dinner

No bones, no problem

After years of fishing for pike, the family became strategic at eating northern with a majority of the bones still in the deep fried pieces. Delicious table fare, but tedious removing all of the bones; my wife despised the picking and the children made a mad dash for the boneless tail portions.

The discussion of cleaning pike came up at a resort tavern following a day of fishing. With the exception of yellow perch, cold water northern pike is my favorite eating fish hands down, better than even the walleye in both the texture and taste categories.

That evening, I was taught how to debone pike by a gentleman named Bob. His method produced awesome, boneless table fare in a very reasonable amount of time. I have taught numerous other anglers this method for a reasonable price; one can of ice cold beer or maybe two.

After practicing this technique, I have adjusted the method to include both an electric fillet knife and a regular four-inch fillet knife.

Start with the pike laying horizontal back-side down on the cleaning table and remove the two pelvic fins located at the lower mid-section of the fish. Make a cut from the pelvic fin hole to the middle of the pectoral fins.



Next make a typical fillet motion with the electric knife starting after the gills and following the center spine of the pike all the way through its tail.



Remove the scaled skin with two long fillets remaining.



I will fillet all the fish we caught that day and have a pile of skinless fillets at the end. Now you can either remain standing to finish cleaning or get comfortable in your chair at a table.

Take each fillet with the former skin-side down and cut the tail off vertical near the anus. This piece of meat has no bones. Cut the remainder of the fillet into three or four sections.

First cut of the body pieces is to remove the rib cage.

Once the rib cage is removed follow one side of the y-bone down with your knife angled.



continued on page 30

Marinette County



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BY CAPT. LEE HAASCH

King of Streams

Monster salmon, trout await

There was a chill in the air as we sat on the tailgate of the truck and wiggled into our waders. The breeze was a familiar north easterly from nearby Lake Michigan piercing through the trees. Slight cloud cover and light hazy fog over the water was keeping the darkness near black, giving us just enough time to slide down to one of Tyler's favorite holes to attack a few Brown Trout and Salmon.

As we zig-zagged down the trail to the stream, the sky was just starting to lighten a bit. Tyler reminded me that if we play this just right, we could double up on some salmon with our first couple drifts of his custom hand-tied spawn sacs with bright orange beads. As we neared the stream, I snuck slowly towards the bank and readied my first cast just as Tyler had instructed.

I flipped the sac right where he told me and in seconds the pool erupted, not once, but twice. Tyler had mirrored my cast only a few yards downstream and knowing the pool, he had a feeling that several large, late kings rested along the bank. A double. Game on.

I'm used to doubles in the dark on the boat, but 15 yards apart on a 30-foot wide section of tributary stream is quite interesting. My 6'6" medium action Ugly Stik Elite was bent almost in half and my Abu Garcia Revo SX was peel-

ing out 10 lb test line and I hung on to battle this monster of muscle for what seemed like an eternity. In reality the battle lasted about 20 minutes. What a thrill. A double on 20 lb monster kings and the day had just started.


Battling monster salmon and trout in the fall are common occurrences on the Ahnapee River out of Algoma. This tributary is packed with jumbo salmon and trout and it doesn't just end when ice time rolls around. The ice fishing on the Ahnapee is just as exciting. Imagine a 12 lb steelhead tearing 50 yards of line on your three-foot rod and reel combo, not once, but several times, before coming to the hole and hitting the ice.

If you are not sure where to go or what kind of equipment and bait you need, Habitual Guide Service can "hook you up". I always believe that the first time or two tackling something new, you can spend an awful long time learning on your own, or you can have someone show you how and duplicating from there on is easy. You can check them out on Facebook or on the web at: www.habitualguide.com or call Tyler Yunk at: 920-255-7865.




For current fishing reports or information on charter fishing in the Algoma area, check out my report page at www.FishAlgoma.com. You can even sign up for periodic newsletters and fishing reports.



Tyler used a 13' Raven rod and a Colville center pin reel to skillfully bring this buck Steelhead to capture followed by release. We may see this fish again thru the ice, in the stream in spring, or next summer in Lake Michigan.

From Capt. Lee and the crew aboard the GRAND ILLUSION 2 – we are looking forward to seeing all of you on the water this spring. Good luck and good fishing! 

Lee Haasch is an Algoma charter captain with 40+ years of Great Lakes fishing experience. He's been writing and giving seminars for 25+ years. Contact: fishalgoma.com or 888-966-3474.



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JERRY KIESOW

Fly Fishing in Wisconsin

Salmon, steelhead fall to new fly

As a writer, I am always reading other people's stories – it's a "trying to learn as I go" thing. As a fly fisherman, I am always reading about new fly patterns. If they look good to me (and if they are easy enough for me to tie), I tie up a few and give them a cast or six (some work and some don't). Both pursuits brought me to this fly.

I found this in *American Angler*. It is called the "Salt & Pepper One-Feather Streamer." The "salt & pepper" I understand – it's all about the color. The author explains the one-feather, but he uses two, so I can't go with that explanation.

Anyway, after tying it according to his recipe, I modified it a tad, so it would be easier for me to tie. A few days later I headed for the river to see if the salmon were in. Once there, I tied my version of the fly to the tippet and walked to the river.

The water level was low, but a few fish were in. I cast to those that were working their way upstream and to those that were resting in the holes before they moved on. To my delight, the fly caught fish – both salmon and smallmouth bass. Bass? Yes, and that was a surprise for this time of the year. I was pleased. So pleased that I decided I would share my version with you. You can compare it with the original some other time.

The Salt and Pepper Streamer

Hook: #4 salmon hook

Thread: 6/0 UNI Thread

Tag: Round silver tinsel

Body: Medium black chenille

Rib: Round silver tinsel

Body hackle: Black (soft, not stiff)

Collar: Black and white guinea hen body feather

Over-wing: A few strands of copper Krystal Flash

Here are the modifications I made: I substituted round tinsel for the tag, the original used pearl Diamond Braid; chenille for the body, instead of the original dubbing; and I completely eliminated the wing, which was a part of the Guinea hen body feather – and the reason it is called "One-Feather."

The caution here, when tying, is to be sure you leave enough of the tinsel for rib-




The Salt and Pepper flies, as modified by the author.

bing the body later, after you have created the tag, and be sure you attach the hackle and chenille before you move the thread forward.

That's it! By the time you read this there should be a few Cohos still in the rivers joined by Steelheads and Browns. So tie it and go fish! And let me know if it works this late in the season where you are. I will know if it does for me.

See you in the river.

P.S. I also tied the same fly using orange thread. By doing so it becomes the tag, a layer of rib, and the head. On the rib, I overlaid the thread with orange Krystal Flash, which I also used for the over-wing. Why? Because I have read that orange attracts fish. Guess what? It does. 

We know Jerry enjoys all aspects of the outdoors (not only fly fishing). That was proven in his first book: "Tales of The Peshtigo Putzer" (which is now out of print and is a collector's item [but Jerry still has a few]) and is reinforced in his second book: "Photos, Poems, and a Little Bit of Prose" (another outdoor book) Check them out on his website: www.jerrykiesowoc.com. They make great gifts.

JOHN LUTHENS

Some Things Never Change

Trout and memories in the driftless reaches of Lacrosse

Twenty-five years ago, I was enrolled in college at UW-Lacrosse with final exams rising in front of my eyes as rampantly as trout on a heavy mayfly hatch. I was living on cold pizza, stale beer and borrowed time and, to the detriment of study groups, professors and a neglected apartment; I found myself wandering like a bum for days at a crack along the high bluffs, deep coulees, and endless miles of driftless area trout streams.

Some days, the sun sunk into pastures of green and the air along the spring creeks was alive with fresh-cut hay and tasseled corn. Other days, storm clouds in the sky sunk low over forested bluffs and blanketed the banks in swirling mist, until it became impossible to tell where sky ended and water began. If I could bottle up those days like a rare wine and toss out my fermented college grades, I'd contemplate sealing the cork and preserving myself forever in the trout valleys of Lacrosse.


But time isn't a bottle. Time is an unstoppable glacier, scraping up an array of jobs and obligations along its concrete path. The ice-age left the sweeping cuts of the driftless trout preserved and hidden. My glory days, on the other hand, were stubbornly pushed into the future and melted into an ever-changing world.

Fast forward and my wife and I walk through the streets of Lacrosse and along the Mississippi River. The mighty river hasn't changed, still rolling deep beneath the blue-spanned bridge and around the sandy islands. The city has grown, but not in a high-rise, industrial way. Statues and flowers and fountains have overtaken the memory of college haunts.

Staying at a charming hotel and eating in the fantastic downtown restaurants of Lacrosse is worlds removed from hot-plate Ramen noodles and a lumpy mattress in a dorm room. The city thrums with modern vibrancies, even as I watch the hazy bluffs and deepened draws in the distance. They beckon me like long-forgotten classmates.

It's the last weekend of trout season; leaves are burning in autumn color on the bluff slopes. I'm cutting it close, like I used to cut classes, but I've remembered to pack fly rod and waders. My wife heads one way to go shopping, and I scurry fast into the golden hills. Time is ticking. Homework is long overdue.

A stream flows in a pasture valley, scant miles from Lacrosse proper where I used to hitch trout rides from campus. White picket fence, a small church, chalky waters cutting beneath deep banks of clay; big brown trout water that always carried luck in its rushing pools. It was still there. I waded in. It felt like I'd never left.

Only a handful of magical lands and waters have the power to hold firm to the past. Long ago, I studied in the driftless classrooms and trout streams of Lacrosse, and they never failed to welcome a wayward student back into the fold. Casting gently upon the first pool, I knew right away that some things never change. 

John Luthens travels Wisconsin, visiting favorite trout waters and exploring back road country often from the family cabin, near the Bois Brule River in Douglas County. Fishing the Winnebago system is a favorite pastime. He chronicles his outdoor journeys from his home in Grafton, where he resides with his wife and two children. Connect at Luthens@hotmail.com

JOHN LUTHENS

"If You Go" - Exploring the adventures of La Crosse

Tucked along the adventure-swept backwaters of the Mississippi River in southwestern Wisconsin, La Crosse has long been suited as an ideal base camp for travelers looking to discover unique stories of their own. Rugged hills, towering rock formations and sweeping forests rise at the feet of a vibrant river city that still retains the small-town charm and history of days gone by.

Miles of artesian trout streams swirl in the surrounding driftless coulees, pristine, wild and untouched by glacial erosion. Amish farms, orchards, and gravel-lane produce stands hide beneath leafy canopies that shade from vibrant green in the springtime to fiery red in autumn.

continued on page 39

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WAYNE MORGENTHALER

The Hardwater “Debait”

Preparation key to early ice fishing success

Selecting and finding bait for ice fishing used to be a dilemma for me. I soon learned that the more diverse the selection I had to offer the fish, the better my chances were that one would be a winner. Since Mother Nature provides most of my live bait, the question then became where to find the delectable morsels that fish craved. Now I know.

During the fall season, I head out to the meadows or along fence rows and look for golden rod weeds. This weed has a large bulb in the middle of its stem. Inside the bulbs, white worms can often be found. Remove the bulbs and put them in a bread bag. While watching the Packers, or some other leisure time activity, cut the bulbs in half and remove the worms. Place them in a small container. Store the container in a

freezer until you need the worms. When using the worms for bait, make sure to use very small ice fishing lures. I usually put three worms on at a time.

Red worms are another good ice fishing bait. The horse manure I get in the spring or fall for my vegetable gardens will contain very small red worms. I fill half of a five-gallon bucket with horse manure and put green plant matter on top of the manure for composting purposes. The bucket will need a lid with holes in it to ensure that the worms can breathe and composting occurs.

I will also add vegetable scraps on top of the manure as worm feed. The contents of the bucket need to be moist. If the material inside the bucket becomes too dry, the worms will die. The worms will keep

reproducing all winter as long as they are kept at a temperature of at least 65 degrees.

When fishing with red worms, there are a couple of techniques that will help ensure fish on the end of the line. Hook the worm on the end of the hook and let it dangle. This looks like the fish can easily pull the bait off, but here comes the key part: most of the time you are fishing near the bottom for panfish. Once you sense the bite, immediately drop the bait so it lies on the bottom of the lake. Count to three and set the hook. When the worm lies on the lake bottom, fish will not feel any resistance and will take off with the bait. Hooking the fish will take some practice, but once you get the hang of it, your fish retrieval will go way up. Make sure to keep the worms warm by keeping them in your jacket pocket.

Wax worms are an excellent bait for all types of panfish. Raising them is another fun adventure, but I never saw where it was

worth the time. You can go on the internet and look up the recipe for raising them. I did it one year. When they ate through my containers and were all over the basement, I decided they were not worth the investment. When fishing with them, put the hook through the body, then re-hook the worm starting with the brown end. Sometimes it helps to put two or three wax-worms on the hook. Start with one worm and always make sure that the end of your hook is covered. Check your hook every few minutes to make sure the fish has not pulled the worm to expose the hook.

Have a wonderful ice fishing season and make sure the ice is safe. Don't forget to take a friend along.

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

REHLINGER, from page 27

Now rotate this same piece and follow the other side of the y-bone down same as the other.

The final three pieces are shown, including the y-bone piece and the two boneless pieces.

Finally, fish pieces with the y-bones remaining once your pike is filleted and deboned also makes for delicious table fare. Double grind in the meat grinder bones and all. For one pound of ground pike, mix one cup of finely chopped celery, one cup of finely chopped onion, and one cup of finely cut red pepper in a metal bowl. Add one egg, one cup of flour, one cup of favorite fish batter, and just enough water to make the concoction stay together. Using a one-inch diameter spring-loaded melon baller, retrieve chunks from the bowl and drop them into the deep fryer until lightly brown.

Do not be afraid to change your fishing target to northern pike for the table. The city of Kenosha in Wisconsin actually got its name from the Native American word for northern pike; “Ke-no-shay.”

Wisconsinite Chris Rehlinger is a native of Neosho but has called Lake Wisconsin home since 1998 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.



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Nearly 1,000 lakes decorate Washburn County's landscape. During the winter months, the lakes offer incredible ice fishing opportunities. Washburn County is known for abundant Walleye, Northern, and Panfish. Multiple bait and tackle stores are available throughout the county to get you all set up to hit the ice. In addition, some even rent ice fishing equipment! Lakefront cabins are a great way to access the lake and many are open during the winter months. Be sure to check out the fishing & outdoor report on washburncounty.org for up to date fishing information.



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DAVE DUWE

Hardwater Primer

Early ice bluegill, northern pike tactics


To most ice fishers, the first ice that occurs on the lake is the best time to catch fish. First ice means to me blue gills and northern pike in the shallows. The shallow weedy bays that always freeze first provide great opportunity for early ice action. During the early ice, the weeds in the shallow bay will still be alive, providing food, shelter and oxygen for the fish. Choose weed flats that vary in depth from four to eight feet of water. With clear ice, finding holes in the weeds is fairly simple; snow cover obviously makes that more difficult. The holes in the weeds provide ambush points for the fish to attack the bait.

My favorite fish to target during ice fishing are bluegills. In most lakes, they tend to stay in the shallow weeds all ice season long. When fishing the shallows, my favorite method is using a long pole, 42 to 48 inches with very light action. The pole's reel is spooled with one pound test that runs through the entire center of the

pole. The basic presentation is usually an ice jig tipped with wax worms or spikes. I like to use small tear drop shaped jigs, the natural fall of the jig is similar to the forage that the bluegills are feeding on. The color of the jig is always critical, depending on the lake you are fishing and the mood of the fish. For most lakes, I prefer dark colors, like purple or black, but it is necessary to have a color assortment as the mood of the fish can change. With the long pole and the shallow water, you are able to fish multiple holes or hole hop. When hole-hopping, I will fish each hole for two to three minutes and then move on looking for active fish.

When northern pike fishing on early ice, my presentation is tip ups. The two baits I use for the pike are smelt, a dead bait, or golden shiners, a live bait. When fishing the smelt, I like a horizontal presentation about one foot off bottom. In clear water, I will always use a monofilament leader in 17 pound test. The leader

length I use is 18 inches attached to my Dacron tip up line by a small snap swivel. When the northern pike hits the tip up, the top spindle of the tip up will be spinning like mad. I usually wait until the spinning stops before gently lifting up the tip up and setting the hook. When using monofilament, you need to be gentle when bringing the fish in.

In Wisconsin you are allowed three lines when ice fishing. Typically, I put two tip ups out and fish with the long pole for my third. This way I am targeting multiple species at the same time. As a rule, in early ice season, mornings and late afternoon seem to provide the best bluegill action. For northern pike, the time of day doesn't appear to be as important. With first ice, the most critical factor is safety. I won't venture out on less than four inches of ice. From personal experience, the water is very cold when your boot goes through even in shallow water. 



Jeremy Cratsenburg, with a first ice pike, Delavan Wisconsin

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

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You may never use minnows again

The Wolf, Fox, Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers provide the state's best late fall walleye and sauger fishing. When lakes are beginning to glaze over with ice, Wisconsin rivers are still open for fishing.

Historically, the Wolf River Rig with a minnow has been one of the most productive baits for nearly a century. As a kid in the 1950s and '60s, I remember it as the only rig my grandfather used for fishing on the Wolf River. In the last few decades, however, a jig and minnow has probably replaced the Wolf River Rig as the most productive bait for walleyes in both rivers and lakes.

For the past 20 years, I have regularly used a three-quarter or one-ounce char-

treuse jig with a minnow for most of my Mississippi River fishing. But times are changing for fishermen on Wisconsin's rivers. Plastic baits are now on the move and in some cases replacing live bait. For die hard walleye and sauger fishermen, this is hard to believe. Even I was a skeptic, but over the last couple of years, I find myself using plastic baits more and more on the Mississippi and catching lots of fish with them.

There are any number of plastic baits that work. Match a three-inch curly tail with a 1/4 or 3/8 ounce jig and just cast it out. Use either a steady or bouncing retrieve or vertical jig it on the bottom. White, chartreuse and pink have been favorite colors for many fishermen. The ring worm is a popular choice for walleye and

sauger river fishing. The four inch worms come in over 20 colors. My favorites are chartreuse orange, chartreuse pepper, purple or black with a chartreuse tail, and electric blue. Again, I match them with a 1/4 or 3/8 ounce jig. My favorite method of fishing ring worms is drifting while vertical jigging, keeping the bait close to the bottom for best results.

Prescott Bait Company has recently introduced six varieties of plastic baits that are becoming very prevalent among river fishers. They are my favorite plastic baits and are made especially for fishing the Mississippi River and tested on Pool Three and Four. Prescott markets them as "Ringer Paddle Tails," "Ringer Worms," "G Tails," "3 Inch Flukes," "3 3/4 Inch Flukes" and "Curly Tail Flukes." I primarily carry



Plastic baits like this one from Prescott Bait Company are taking lots of walleyes and saugers on Wisconsin's river in late fall fishing.

the 3 Inch Flukes and the Curly Tail Flukes in my tackle box.

Oyster, smoke glitter and purple fleck with a purple jig and green chartreuse with a chartreuse jig are my preferred colors.

continued on page 39

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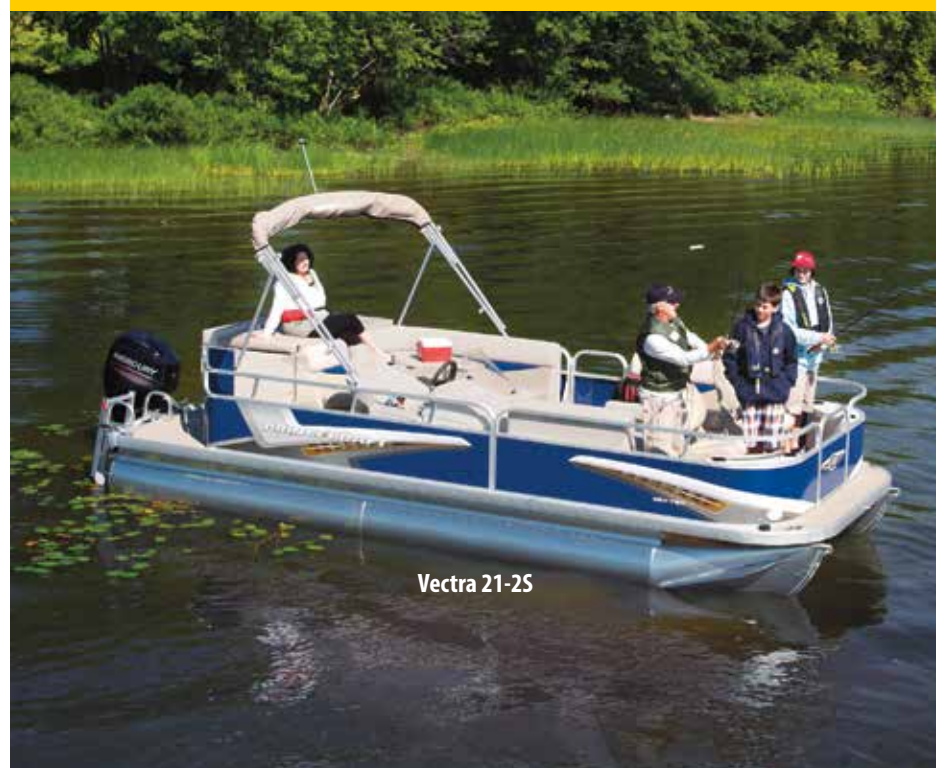
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PHIL SCHWEIK

Tricks of the Trade

Shallow water success


Using a variety of techniques, I have found quite a bit of success fishing the Wisconsin River system. Most of my methods are conventional, but I do employ a few tricks and out-of-the ordinary tactics. Some may seem contradictory, but trust me, they can - and will - produce results.

During the fall season, I often fish in very shallow water. When the water temperatures are in the upper 30 to low 40 degrees range, I fish one to two feet deep. This may seem extreme, but consider this: Wisconsin River system water is dark, an almost root beer color. If you incorporate a full day of sunlight, where is your warmest water going to be? Combine that with rocks or wood along a shoreline or mid-lake hump, and you have yourself a great recipe for fish location.

Fish will migrate to the warmest water available in the fall. This not only helps their metabolism, but it turns what would have been non-responsive fish into active feeding fish. Rocks and wood in shallow water will absorb daytime sunlight, warming the surrounding water and making it a prime destination for fish. The key to fishing these areas is to target them late in the afternoon, well after the sun has beat down on them all day. Targeting these areas early in the morning or even mid-day will not be nearly as productive.

A trick I like to employ is running crankbaits instead of live bait in shallow water locations. I do this because I can work the crankbaits across shallow locations without getting snagged up like I normally would by running a live bait rig or a jig and minnow combination. The crankbaits

glide effortlessly across and over shallow rocks and wood and will attract shallow water fish without spooking them. I may not catch as many fish as I normally would by running live bait, but the fish are generally larger and more aggressive.

As winter approaches and water temperatures begin to drop, don't completely give up on your deep water haunts, but do try some shallow water locations. I think you will be pleasantly surprised. 

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

TOM LUBA

The Eyes have It

Catch more bass with these jigs

When I started fishing jigs, my first thoughts were to buy a mold, make my own and save money. This was especially true when the "living rubber" craze hit. I bought a banana jig mold for bass baits and soon discovered that the head's jig hook eye opening invited a whole slew of foul-ups with existing weed growth. This was not good - Wisconsin's number one home for largemouth bass is existing weed growth.

I forgot about that mold, until a friend with the same weed-born frustrations made his own. His mold featured a head with the hook eye coming right out the front of the jig. This eliminated the line/weed problem. It used a Z bend plastic worm hook.

After bumming jig heads from him, my old banana mold re-surfaced and I wondered if I could modify it to do the same job. Using a Dremel tool, I was able to make a cut in the metal and use a similar worm hook. That was 30 years ago and I've been catching bass on mine ever since.

Innovative commercially made jigs are always hitting the market, thanks to new head ideas and materials, from glittery silicone skirts to super-sharp modern hooks. Through it all, I've settled on three bass jigs that I never leave home without. Between retailers and catalogs like Lure Parts Online and Barlow's Tackle, you can find ver-

sions of these as plain jig heads that can be paired with skirts or finished products.

The more in-line models have the eye coming out the front of the head and are often referred to as "grass jigs." Commercially, these usually have a 30 degree hook eye bend and are often the most effective in weeds. I use black, blue and green pumpkin colors, 1/4 ounce - and heavier - based on water depth.


The second jig on my short list is what anglers refer to as a "swim jig." The eye bend here is also 28-30 degrees. I often use lighter jigs for swimming - usually minnow or bluegill colors - of about 1/4 ounce, so they don't sink as fast. You can run them from near the surface to deeper water. They are very effective over the tops of the submerged weeds and occasionally dropped into holes in the weeds.

Many anglers favor the heavier football head jig to crawl over bottom, but I find myself getting too many snags. So I swap that out of the top three in favor of the newer "swing" head jig.

The swing head jig is a football head that has the hook attached to a wire molded out the back of the head. The eye for tying the line comes out the front. The hook, usually a super-wide gap style, swings free and adds a lot of action to a plastic craw or creature bait trailer rigged Tex-



as style. Reeling slowly over bottom creates a fish-calling action and doesn't get anywhere near as many snags as a football head, especially on rivers.

You don't need a ton of jigs to catch bass, just the ones that work best for the conditions and structure you fish the most. If you want to go with more, you could add Shaky and Wacky head jigs to your arsenal. But the idea here is not to go crazy, just catch bass. Use the coming winter to research the jig spectrum and find the baits that will work for you. 

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.



AN 'UP NORT' REPORT BY DAN MOERICKE



DAN MOERICKE

An 'Up Nort' Report

Every picture tells a story . . . don't it?

While listening to the radio the other day, the above refrain from an old Rod Stewart song got me thinking. Picking up my phone, I scrolled back through some of the hundreds of photos that are stored there. Many of the pictures were pretty self-explanatory . . . people holding fish, people holding babies, dogs being dogs, scenery, etc. However, there were a few pictures in there that truly had a story to go along with them.

In a lot of cases, the story was pretty concise and confined to a specific place and time. Other times, the stories were more convoluted and the route taken to arrive at the precise moment the photo was taken had more than a few plot twists.

As I scrolled through the volumes of

photos, with Rod's lyrics running through my brain, I kept coming back to one particular photo. It's a photo of my grandson Peter holding a night crawler. And it got me to thinking about the story behind that image. Obviously, the short version is that my son Steve had the boy out in the boat on a fishing trip and Peter was entertaining himself with the bait.

But, there's more to it. I think that just maybe, as we get older, we get a little more philosophical about life. Maybe we try harder to look for answers to questions that we didn't know we had and can't even really articulate.

Anyway, as I looked at that picture of Peter happily hoisting that night crawler, I thought back to one of my earliest memo-

ries of walking behind my Dad as he rototilled our large garden. He'd give me an old coffee can, tell me to walk behind him, and to pick up any worms I could find in the freshly turned soil. Those worms would be put to use on the trout streams of central Wisconsin and on Pelican Lake, where the "jumbo" perch roamed.

On nights after a hard rain, the assignment changed . . . grab a flashlight and a coffee can and head off to the local high school track to stockpile as many crawlers as possible. There was an old refrigerator in our garage dedicated solely to keeping bait alive. (Disclaimer: there may have been a beer or two in there as well.)

Our kids were raised with minnows, crawlers, leeches and worms occupying



A legacy of fishing continues.

space in our home, camper, and garage. To my wife's dismay, the butter tray in the refrigerator still routinely houses a container of leeches.

continued on page 38

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"2017 Great Outdoors" Facebook Photo Contest

LILY RIVER FOODS

Lily River Foods & On Wisconsin Outdoors magazine are pleased to announce **Kaitlyn Haglund** as our first place winner of our "Great Outdoors" photo contest with her photo 'The Perfect Cast'.

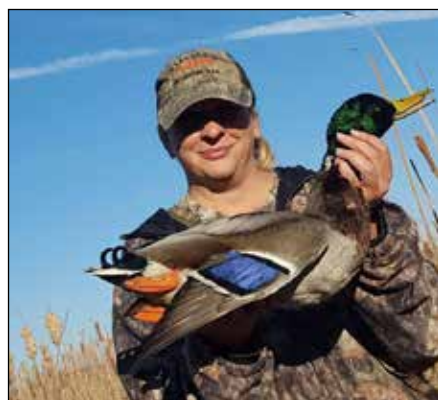
Kaitlyn is 19 years old and from Ellsworth, WI where she is currently attending UWEC for nursing in hopes of becoming an OB nurse upon graduation.

She has always had a love of the outdoors especially fishing. "Fishing is a hobby of mine, I love to fish for basically anything. Walleye, Bass and Trout are my favorites" said Kaitlyn.

She got into photography from her mom who would let her borrow her camera on occasion. "I enjoyed taking pictures and being able to capture things I thought were beautiful and to do so from a different perspective than other people" she stated. Her inspiration behind 'The Perfect Cast', taken in El Paso, Wisconsin on the Rush River, was of her brother Carson, who wanted to brush up on his fly fishing – something he hadn't done for a couple of years. "I had recently received a new camera as a gift and this picture was taken on the second day I had it" she said.


Kaitlyn will receive a \$100 Kwik Trip gift card, along with a bag of Lily River & Grandma's Homestyle Breeding.

Second place winner was **Amy Bomberg** - 'First time Jumping Ducks' taken in Hartland, WI and 3rd place went to **Tyler Bell** - 'Urban Fishing' taken at Lake Michigan, Milwaukee Harbor.



MOERICKE, from page 37

And so, when I look at that picture of Peter standing in my Dad's old fishing boat happily holding a crawler, it truly tells me a story. It tells me that for at least four generations and nearly 100 years the Moericke boys have been picking up crawlers and crayfish and grasshoppers and whatever

else might catch a fish. Hopefully, that legacy will get passed on to Peter's kids someday. Anyway, that's my story and I'm sticking to 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.

SUZETTE CURTIS

Recipes By Suzette Chili Season

I do believe that one of the reasons my husband married me was due to my chili making ability. The chili in our home is prepared differently almost every time I make it, so I love to find new recipes, try new ingredients, and discover the "secrets" that others share with me about their own favorite chili. Venison is the main ingredient in each of these recipes. Enjoy!

Beer Chili

2 T olive oil	1 tsp salt
2 lbs Venison, cubed	1 can black beans, rinsed & drained
4 cloves garlic, minced	1 can diced tomatoes
1 large sweet onion, diced	1 4oz can chopped green chilis
1 red pepper, diced	1 bottle beer
2 T chili powder	2 T cornmeal
1 tsp ground cumin	¼ cup water

Heat olive oil in large cooking pot. Add venison, garlic, onion, and pepper and sauté until meat is browned and onions become translucent. Sprinkle seasonings over meat and vegetable mixture and cook while stirring about 1 minute. Add beans, tomatoes, green chilis, and beer. Bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for at least 1 hour.

Mix cornmeal with water and slowly pour into pot while stirring. Cover and simmer for another 20 minutes before serving.

Wine With Your Chili


2 T olive oil	2 tsp chili powder
2 lbs venison, ground	1 can cannellini beans
1 large onion, diced	1 can red kidney beans
1 cup celery, diced	Dash or two of your favorite hot sauce
3 cans stewed tomatoes	2 cups of your favorite red wine (divided)

Heat oil in large pot over medium high heat and cook venison, onion, and celery until meat is browned. Add stewed tomatoes, chili powder, beans, hot sauce and 1 cup wine. Reduce heat to simmer; cover and cook for at least one hour before serving.

That remaining cup of wine? Pour it into a wine glass to enjoy before dinner.

Garlic Pepper Chili

2 T olive oil	2 T chili powder
2 lbs venison, ground or cubed	1 tsp cayenne pepper
3 bell peppers (any color), diced	1 T cumin
3 chili peppers, diced	1 tsp salt
4 onions, diced	1 large can crushed tomatoes
8 cloves garlic, finely chopped	2 cans red kidney beans with juice

Heat oil in large pot; brown venison, onion and peppers over medium heat. Add garlic and sauté 30 to 60 seconds stirring constantly. Add remaining ingredients; reduce heat to low; cover and simmer for one hour stirring occasionally. 

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.



Find great scenery, great fishing and great family vacations in Lacrosse.

LUTHENS, from page 29

Park trails and walkways offer a self-guided tour of the city, with flower gardens, historic statues and fountains dominating green spaces along the river walk and a wide variety of unique caf  s, restaurants and cozy, corner pubs rising along the paved streets.

Accommodations in the La Crosse area are as diverse as the city's history, ranging from scenic bed-and-breakfast cabins in the bluffs and pristine, trout-stream cab-

ins, to the elegant luxury of the Charmant Hotel – a renovated candy factory with rich maple flooring and cobbled brick, not to mention chocolates under a glass case in the lower lobby and a roof-top terrace bar overlooking the Mississippi River.

For more information on hatching an adventure in the La Crosse area, visit the La Crosse County Convention and Visitors Bureau at www.explorelacrosse.com.

Connect with the Charmant Hotel at www.thecharmanthotel.com.


YURK, from page 33

Generally I use 3/8" jigs in either a drop shot style or round head jigs.

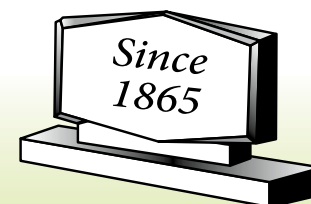
Fishing these baits is easy: simply drift with the current, using the trolling motor when needed, keeping the bait an inch or two off the bottom of the river. While I am drifting, I lightly pop the jig and occasionally let the jig drop to the bottom to make sure I am staying within the strike zone.

All of these plastic baits are used without minnows. Some river fishers have told

me they use plastics exclusively and never buy minnows.

Plastic baits are becoming the new frontier in fall season river fishing for walleye and sauger. Never leave the landing without a selection of plastic baits. You will become a believer. 

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



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