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**PHIL SCHWEIK**

## Where Did All the Walleyes Go?

### *River System clues lead early summer search*

The spring run is a distant memory and post spawn walleyes are well behind us. As we enter the summer months, where do we find those precious walleyes?

When it comes to summertime walleyes and the river, count on one thing: don't count on anything. Conditions are constantly changing on a river system and the fish are always moving and relocating. Much like a big puzzle requiring placement of the pieces in correct order to complete the project, look for the correct pieces on the water to connect with walleyes.

Putting together the pieces of the puzzle on the river system is not easy and it often takes years even for experienced anglers to find consistent success. But a few basic concepts and suggestions can help even

anglers new to a system find those finicky walleyes.

Walleyes in a river system are constantly on the feed, but where do we start the search? Current flow is my number one factor in a river system when determining fish location. Is it faster or slower than normal and is it higher or lower than normal?

Slow current will have fish more spread out and holding on larger flats in and around several different pieces of structure. Fast current will have fish schooled up tighter behind large, specific pieces of structure, in and along shoreline areas or current breaks, and sometimes even in backwater locations away from the hard push of water requiring more energy.

Water temperature plays an import-

ant role in fish activity and is my second search factor. On the river though, water temperature can be a difficult piece to fit into the puzzle. A significant rise or drop in temperature can drastically interrupt the movement and action of the fish. Warmer and cooler water simultaneously can push fish either shallow or deep. To decipher how the temperature influenced the fish on that particular day means paying your dues in time on the water and simply looking. As a guide with decades of experience on the Wisconsin system near Wausau, I have seen my share of failure, especially as a young angler, but that payment now often puts me on the walleyes quickly. If you're new to the system, literally start looking high and low, and learn.

Finally I use my eyes and my electron-



*Decades of experience fishing the Wisconsin River system near Wausau helps long-time guide and OWO columnist Phil Schweik consistently find walleyes in all conditions.*

ics to study not only my surroundings, but even more so I watch my side imaging and sonar for depth changes and hidden structure that will be prime locations for early to mid-summer walleyes. By using electronics, I not only find, but mark specific locations that look like possible walleye holding areas and then come back and thoroughly fish them. I look for downed timber and structure, sharp contour

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**TOM LUBA**

## Shallow Spring Bass

### *Don't skip the skinny for early action*

A lake I frequent was quite clear, but had both dark and light bottom areas, a mix of silt, sand and rock. In the dark bottom areas, about the only thing you could see were the first emerging weeds of spring. I couldn't see anything on the bottom, but I could certainly set the hook pretty well when a fish bit.

It was the hard bottom areas that really shocked me. They looked so shallow. I couldn't believe any self-respecting bass would be caught, period, in water that skinny. That is until a four-pound large-mouth grabbed my jig by a leaning log and was halfway to the next county before I realized it. I was also pretty lucky that the fish hooked itself with that power run.

Reality has a way of explaining things to you without words. I wasn't a slow child, but it finally hit me: There are a bunch of spring bass that can get pretty darn shallow and you can't always see them, even when the water is really clear. For me, that four-pounder was my first lesson in real shallow bassin'.

I've caught a lot of shallow bass since then, and it never fails to amaze me how, in the clear water, they are able to blend in so well with their surroundings.

On the same lake that provided that first lesson, there have been more. I found one bedding fish under a tree, and the edge of the bed was virtually touching the bank. I also saw two big fish come out of a shore-

line weed area right toward me. When I got close to what I thought was water too shallow to hold any fish, let alone a couple of line-stretchers, I discovered that some of the black bottom water wasn't much deeper; it just looked that way.

Regardless, there are ways to put the ultra-shallow fish odds in your favor. First, be ultra-quiet. The extra caution will eventually pay off.

Second, put objects between you and where the fish might be. I tried to tempt one bass after it saw me. It didn't leave the weed clump it called home, and it wouldn't bite, either. I caught it on the way back by coming up behind the weed clump and tossing the bait over the weeds. It only took



*Big spring bass can occupy really shallow water.*

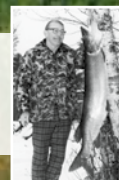
one cast.

Make longer casts. Always carry a setup that you can use for distance. Maybe it's a longer rod, or a step-down in line test. It should help you catch fish you'll otherwise spook.

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**TYLER FLORCZAK**

# Open Water Preparation

## *Invest time now, catch more fish later*

Some hardcore anglers have already found open water to fish this spring. Many of us are patiently waiting for the ice to melt as of late April and dreaming of sunny days on the open water.

Those willing to spend some time now will be prepared and ready to fish when the 2019 season opens on Saturday, May 4. The following are some preparation suggestions.

### Reels

What ever type of reel you use, wornout fishing line should be replaced. "Before I strip the (old) line off of my reels, I always make sure the drag and gears are working properly," explained fishing guide Steve Sedani, owner/operator of Up-Der Guide

Service in Chetek. "Once I take the old line off, I use a damp paper towel to wipe any dust and grime off of the outside. I'll soak my reels in warm water with Dawn dish soap if the reels have a lot of built-up grime."

Sedani suggests that anglers disassemble their reels' components, including the spool, handle, etc. Apply reel lubricant to the reel's shaft and handle and work it in.

There are unlimited fishing line options, but most open water anglers in northwestern Wisconsin use 8-pound or 10-pound test, according to their preference. Some sport shops will spool new line on for a minimal cost.

### Rods

Fishing rods take a beating during the season. During downtime, wipe the rod and handle down with a wet cloth or damp paper towel to remove residue and debris. Cork handles can be cleaned with dish soap to make them look brand-new.

The rod's guides, eyelets and tip are key components that should be checked. Be sure there are no cracks or fractures in guides, insets of the eyelets or at the rod tip. Replace old, worn-out rod tips that no longer hold firmly in place with a high-end glue.

Use Q-tips to check for nicks and wear in the eyelets of fishing rods. Q-tips can get into tough-to-reach areas in the eyelets and can help anglers to feel the slightest nicks and/or fractures in the inset of eyelets.

### Fishing hooks, weights, tackle

Anglers should sort through their tackle box and take inventory of hooks, sinkers, slip bobbers, swivels, leaders, fish hook removers, spreaders and other essential tools.



The open water fishing season is right around the corner, meaning anglers should prepare their fishing rods, reels, gear and boats now. Pictured above are some popular artificial baits that are effective in spring, summer and fall.

Do it now and you'll be ready to catch fish instead of spending time in stores searching for gear when the season opens.

"You'll want to have a good supply of hooks, jig heads, etc.," Sedani said. There are a lot of good deals available prior to opening day, he noted. "Having everything organized will make the fishing easier as the season goes on."

### Lures

Anglers should take inventory of their lures and examine the hooks, lips and bodies on their artificial baits. Sedani soaks

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35



Pictured above are some useful fishing products, such as reel grease, fish hook removers, spreaders and a hook sharpener.

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JOHN LUTHENS

## Obsession

## A season's quest to capture a Brule River trout

The humming of springtime insects danced above a bank of overhung green when the brown trout first rose in the Brule River valley. He was fat tailed and heavy through the belly, his sides golden with spots that sparkled like crimson pennies. When he went back down, there was nothing left but a frayed leader and the fresh start of an obsession

blowing in the breeze.

Miles of rocky spray and sweeping, Brule River pools held countless bigger trout, but I chased a single phantom along the same, 50-yard stretch for three, rain-soaked days in June. Water overflowed into the flats and thunder bounced from the ridge tops. Not even a muskrat could have squeezed be-

tween the river and the top of the old stone bridge below the run.

My trout sucked frogs and crickets in the flooded grass, and I rolled him a single time when he slashed for a look at a wooly bugger that was weighted down with mud. Three days in the mist and rain and only one strike. It was enough to keep feeding the obsession.

A pair of friends splashed into Douglas County to visit for the Fourth of July holidays, both of them with established reputations as trout anglers. For a week we were up before dawn, returning wet and muddy through the alders in the starlit darkness. Dry flies, wet flies, night crawlers and spinners, we landed more trout than fishermen deserve. Our waders got so leaky that we took to smashing through the nettle and thorns in tennis shoes.

We were sunburned, bug-bitten and reeking of trout, but our main target had declined to add his scent to the expedition. We surprised him several times with small, dry mayflies dropped like flakes of dandruff above his lair, and he danced like a lightning bug in the humid, summer night for a good half-minute on one of the go-rounds, but it was the cold truth that my elusive brown had honed his acrobatic escapes into a science.

The last sunlight of September reflected deep into the copper-stained waters of the Brule as I arrived for my last stand. No insects on the water, only the fallen leaves of autumn curling down the run. After a couple of casts, my fly was an ugly thing




A season of Brule River trout fishing closes in golden splendor.

of torn, black hackle that blended with the floating leaves. I wasn't fishing it with any degree of angling wisdom. After a hard-fought season, it was darn near the only fly left in the box.

The brown came up and down in such a rush that he hooked himself, leaping beneath the shadows of the pines, pulling into the current, twisting with heavy tugs to reach his home beneath the bank. I turned him back. I knew his tricks. For an entire season, the bank had been my home, too.

He was a beautiful native splashed in golden hues, and I was admiring him and celebrating the finality to an obsessive quest when a booming splash echoed through the balsams from a darkened pool above.

My trout flopped back into the water and swam off forgotten into a season that had closed around us. I was already making plans to sneak upstream come next spring.

The thing about trout fishing obsession – it never ends. 

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



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MIKE YURK

# Dropping a Line

## Drop shot options for gamefish, pannies

Most people think of the drop shot rig as just a bass bait but there is a lot more to it. The drop shot is rigged with a sinker on the end of the line and somewhere above it is the hook and bait. There are special drop shot hooks and sinkers, but it doesn't have to be that complicated. I just use a regular 2/0 or 3/0 worm hook. At the end of the line I put a swivel snap with a 1/8 or 1/4 ounce bell shaped sinker. I use the snap swivel so I can change sinker weights without having to tie on a new sinker. The worm hook is tied with a Palomer Knot about a foot above the sinker and baited with a plastic worm. It is simple, yet very effective on bass.

The concept of the drop shot rig can work well for other fish. I know from experience, one of the best things about the drop shot rig is it is so productive in deeper water.

### DROPS SHOTS FOR PANFISH

Every spring I take some of my grand-

children fishing for perch. We tie up the boat at a railroad bridge on Lake Mallalieu near my home in Hudson and generally fish in anywhere from 12 to 18 feet of water. In the past, we used light crappie jigs with minnows. But it was tough to get that light of a jig to the bottom and my grandkids had a tough time getting the touch. So I put together a drop shot rig. We use one eighth ounce bell-shaped sinker on the end and above it I tie a small wire number eight long shank hooks at about six and 12 inches above the sinker, baiting them with crappie minnows.

It is a lot easier for kids to get it to the bottom and to keep the bait at the right depth in deeper water. We fish it by vertical jigging and bouncing it a couple inches at a time and caught a bunch of perch.

I also made a drop shot rig with a jig for crappie fishing. On several lakes in northwestern Wisconsin I find crappies in deep water during the summer, which normally I targeted with small two-inch panfish tube

jig. But it does take a while for the jig to drop down through that much water and it is tough to keep it where the fish are.

Like the perch rig, I put a one eighth ounce sinker at the end of the line and eight to 12 inches above the sinker I tie on a crappie jig. I just cast it out, let it sink to the bottom and retrieve it with short lifts of the rod. Although I used only one jig, the next time I will try it with two.

### FOR WALLEYES TOO

The drop shot concept works for walleye too. A buddy of mine fishing a lake in northern Wisconsin with one rod armed with a drop-shot rig for bass, admitting he was too lazy to tie on another bait, he pulled off the plastic worm, hooked on a minnow and cast it out. He started catching walleye with it. I can't wait to try this out for walleye this spring. It makes it easier to fish deeper water and to keep your bait close to the bottom where the walleyes are.

The drop shot rig isn't just for bass fish-



The author's granddaughter Amelia Hein of La Crosse shows why the drop shot rig is so effective on other fish besides bass.

ing anymore. Using drop shots on panfish and walleyes will open a whole new approach to fishing. 🎣

Mike Yurk has been writing about the outdoors for over 50 years. His stories have appeared in numerous newspapers and magazines. He has also published 12 books on the outdoors. He is a retired Army officer living in northwestern Wisconsin where he has found some of the best bass fishing in the country. He can be contacted at [bassinmajor@yahoo.com](mailto:bassinmajor@yahoo.com)

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DAVE DUWE

## Fights of a Lifetime Spring on Lake Michigan

May and early June is an awesome time for early season Brown Trout. We have a great fishing opportunity, Lake Michigan, which extends the whole length of the state. Lake Michigan is the third largest of the Great Lakes by area, behind Lakes Superior and Huron. Its surface area is 22,400 square miles with an average depth of 279 feet and a maximum depth of over 900 feet.

With warm spring rains and discharges from power plants along the shoreline, Brown Trout are drawn to the warm waters and feed aggressively. Brown Trout fishing can be productive from Sturgeon Bay to Racine and Kenosha. Some of my favorite locations are the Sheboygan Power Plant, Milwaukee Harbor and the Oak Creek power plant. Don't overlook the small feeder creeks and tributaries that flow into the lake; they will also add warm water into the system.

Brown Trout will become active near shore in early spring (April-June). Lake Michigan can allow open water action almost all winter long, depending on the severity of the winter. As a rule, I work a depth range of five to 15 feet of water. With fishing in such close proximity to shore, the average angler with a smaller boat has access to this quality fishery. Fishing shallow waters in a small boat enables you to

move with more stealth and avoid spooking shallow trout. Cloudy days have a tendency to be better than sunny ones because it eliminates the shadow a boat can make. This bite is temperature related, so waiting to fish until later in the day can make the bite better.

One of the greatest concerns with small craft fishing on Lake Michigan is the wind. The best wind for fishing the west shoreline of Lake Michigan is a west or south wind. This will keep the warmer water near shore and the waves manageable. East wind creates a threefold problem; water clarity, weed and debris, and colder water that gets blown to shore.

**Water Clarity** – Brown Trout don't bite well in muddy or dirty water conditions. This is caused by the wave action beating the shore. Typically, I will fish the cleanest water possible.

**Weed/Debris** – With a wind out of the east, weeds and wood pieces get stirred up and they make trolling crank baits on planer boards a tough proposition.

**Cold Water** – Cold water gets blown in from the colder main lake. The spring preference of Brown Trout for warm water reverses in the summer months when the fish prefer cooler water.

Make no mistake though; the ultra-clear

water can be as bad as really muddy water. Fishing in shallow water, you want some color to the water. This will bring the fish off the rock bottom where they are hiding and make them more active. I try to key on the zone between the clean water and the murky water. This seems to be the action zone for the Brown Trout.

For Spring Brown Trout fishing, I will use a lighter presentation. This is a perfect application of your walleye trolling rods. I use a line counter Abu Garcia 6500 on a 7'6" to 8'6" medium action lightning rod. The reels are spooled with 10-pound Silver Thread or Trilene. The lures of choice are crank baits. You need to experiment with the color patterns for the conditions. My go-to baits are Smithwick Rogues or Bandit walleye crank baits. Using chrome/blue or chrome/black are good choices. These lures will match the smelt baitfish within the system.

With the light line trolling presentation, I like the Church Planer boards. They are simply the best.

For shallow diving crank baits, I will put the lure 100-125 feet behind the board. Deep diving baits can be placed 50 - 85 feet behind the boards. Of course, the longer the distance behind the board the deeper the bait will run. Trout will be found throughout the water column; however the

Nate Duwe with a  
nice Lake Michigan  
Brown Trout



suspended fish are the more active. Trolling speeds of 1.5 - 2 mph will put fish in your boat.

It is very possible to catch trout in excess of 20 pounds. Fishing light line creates a fight of a lifetime. Give Lake Michigan a try. You won't be sorry. 🐟

Dave Duwe is owner of Dave Duwe's Guide Service. He specializes in southeastern Wisconsin lakes, particularly Delavan Lake and Lake Geneva. Contact him at fishgeneva.com or fishdelavanlake.co or 262-728-8063.

WAYNE MORGENTHALER

## To the River Memories of a western Wisconsin angler

As spring is left in our wake, Wisconsin's main river systems leave behind the walleye runs but still provide awesome fishing. Here too on the western side of the state, walleyes and sauger spur anglers to tune up the boat, take to a barge or simply stake claim to a piece of bank along the Mississippi River.

Jumbo perch that beckoned many anglers to fish late ice also send out the call to fish again. Those Mississippi yellow perch will not only bend a light rod in half, they taste great in a frying pan. Years ago and still today, the combination would entice several of us out of the house in the wee

hours and on the road traveling toward a favorite spot called Rush Creek.

The memories seem from yesterday. The fishing area was very small, and the water only three feet deep. We would drill a few holes, fasten a cork over a jig with a minnow, sit back on the bucket and relax. We would jig a second rod armed with a pink ratfink tipped with a waxworm.

We were set up before daylight and the waiting would begin. With the schools coming in from the river in search of spawning sites, like a light switch, the action turned on. When the first perch came out the hole, a wonderful happy feeling

of success came with it. I might only get 5 fish, but they were the 12 to 14-inch dandies.

The perch run didn't, and doesn't stop with ice-out. Moving to open water is a matter of being in the right place at the right time to stay on the schools. Pieces of nightcrawler with a number six hook and a couple of sinkers to keep it on the bottom would simply change the name of the game from hardwater bliss to open water heaven.

Those are forever memories. Here's to making more well into summer. 🐟



Jumbo perch like these caught on the Mississippi River at Alma from Clements Fishing Barge also call the author and his friends from late ice backwater to open water on the big river.

Wayne Morgenthaler has fished southwestern and northwestern Wisconsin for many years. He has written outdoor articles for Midwest News' web site under the name Little Bobber. A retired teacher and coach, Wayne is married with three children.



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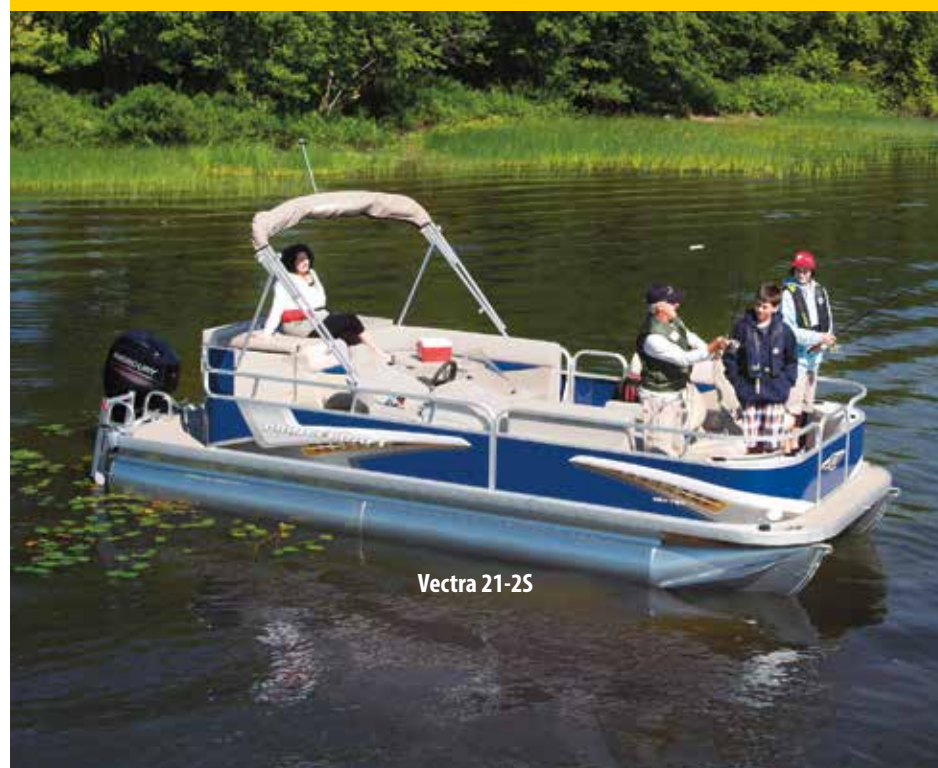
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# Early Fishing, Late Smelting Opportunities welcome anglers

Ashland is ready for early summer with activities, events, flowers, birds singing, spring smelt season and the fishing opener on the first weekend in May.

The „smelt run“ in Chequamegon Bay usually starts around the third week in April shortly after ice-out. However, Mother Nature is moving that date back a bit due to the amount of ice still in the Chequamegon Bay. Smelting is always a fun time with the smell of the clean air of Chequamegon Bay and the awesome site of the many campfires along the shoreline. Smelters light campfires and enjoy the outdoors as they wait for the run to come in.

At times the smelt may start running at 9:00 p.m. or midnight or even later. They are unpredictable little fish approximate-

ly four to five inches in length that only answer to Mother Nature. Smelt were planted in the lake many decades ago and are not a native fish in Lake Superior. Although the run isn't as plentiful as it was many years ago, it still does exist and smelters come from all over to enjoy the sport and camaraderie.

Smelt season usually lasts 12 to 14 days. There is an old tradition that you bite the head off the first smelt brought in. Of course you don't actually eat the head, but you would be the brave smelter for sticking with tradition.

For more information on smelt season in the Ashland Area, including the regulations and licensing for smelting, call us at the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce. We will have a smelt hot line set up during the month of April.



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*Be Seine; Smelt Chequamegon Bay in Ashland*

The Chequamegon Bay Birding & Nature Festival will be held May 16-18 with headquarters at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center. This festival brings three days of birding and nature programs, including field trips at the peak of the spring migration. Check out [www.birdandnaturefest.com](http://www.birdandnaturefest.com).

Happy Spring everyone! 🌸

Call the Ashland Chamber at (715) 682-2500 for more details or connect with [www.visitashland.com](http://www.visitashland.com)

## On The Cover

**OWO Publisher Dick Ellis was crawling in the mud of southeast Wisconsin April 29 attempting to photo a strutting gobbler when these two sandhill cranes landed at 30 yards and demanded equal time.**

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## RON STRESING

## A Shore Bet

*The Arlee strain of rainbow trout*

Starting back in 2001, Wisconsin stocked a new strain of rainbow trout into Lake Michigan. Developed at the Montana State Fish Hatchery in Arlee, these trout are fast growing, stocky, and stay close to shore. The other strains not only range far out into the lake, but seem to do laps around the vast shoreline. Follow up fin clip and creel census data suggested 90% of the Arlee rainbows were caught by on-shore anglers close to where they were stocked. The Arlee was so successful, they now make up one third of the total of rainbow trout stocked, with Ganaraska and Chamber's Creek strains making up the balance. The State of Illinois stocks an even 50/50 split of Arlee and Skamania strains.

Probably the best example of the fast growing nature of the strain was caught in Port Washington back on July 4, 2005. An angler from Cudahy caught a 33 inch, 16.5 pound fish from the break wall. Fin clips showed the fish was from a 2002 plant off Port Washington. That's a growth rate even a chinook salmon would envy.

Wisconsin's Arlee trout fingerlings are divided up and stocked at 17 different harbors, marinas, and river mouths around Lake Michigan. For example, 26,000 Arlee fingerlings were just stocked on March 10, 2019, at the Port Washington Marina. Ports from Sturgeon Bay to Kenosha are stocked on a rotating schedule. Contact the Wisconsin DNR for more details on fin clips and stocking numbers.

My introduction to these football-shaped rainbow trout was on July 4, 2018. I was shore fishing on the South Metro Pier in Oak Creek when one grabbed a night crawler rigged on a slip sinker. The rod with a live bait was set as a dead stick rig, while I was casting a small spoon for brown trout. I'd released a small brown trout earlier that day, when I saw a nice rainbow jump, about 20 yards out. I looked and saw my other rod was doubled over. After a couple of long runs, I beached the fish. As the picture shows, it was shaped more like a brown trout than most typical rainbows from Lake Michigan. I suspect my fish was from the Class of 2016,



Author's Arlee rainbow caught on a dead stick rig

PHOTO BY AUTHOR: RON STRESING

stocked in the McKinley Marina harbor.

Summer breakwall fishermen should try classic blue and silver or green and silver casting spoons, as well as crank baits and jigs. Use glow spoons for low-light conditions. The same 4 inch tube jigs bass fisherman use will produce trout and salmon some days. Also set out a live bait rig on the bottom. Minnows, alewives, night crawlers, and spawn sacks are the most popular choices. A floating jig head or small "floater" of styrofoam will keep your bait from getting lost on the bottom, algae covered, or foraged by round gobies. The classic "cast one and soak one" strategy

employed for Lake Michigan shore fishing always raises your odds for success.

While most rainbows nowadays seem to be caught between eight and 10 miles offshore, you can still tie into one of these fish from the break wall.

Special thanks to Mr. Titus Seilheimer of the UW-Sea Grant Program for the stocking data and background information. Keep up the good work.

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.

## SPOTLIGHT: LACROSSE

## International Friendship Gardens, Riverside Park

La Crosse enjoys thriving relationships with sister cities, business partners, students and people from around the world. To celebrate the success of these partnerships, and build a tribute to the culture and traditions of our worldwide friends, local volunteers have worked together to create the Riverside International Gardens in Riverside Park, located in Downtown La Crosse. The gardens are full of blooming tulips during the spring months.

## Great River Road Overlook &amp; Gazebo

This lookout offers stunning views of the 7,700-acre Lake Onalaska and Great River State Trail, part of 101 miles of interconnecting state trails which runs parallel with Lake Onalaska. After you swing in to the overlook head across the street to Blue Moon and grab some of their famous Friday Night Fish!

## McGilvray/Seven Bridges

Friends of McGilvray Road, Inc. and the The Van Loon Wildlife Area Truss Bridge Group is a unique combination of five rare bowstring arch truss bridges and one low truss bridge which was adopted from Pierce County and spans a beautiful 6 miles through the Van Loon Wildlife Area.

## Veterans Memorial Park &amp; Campground

Looking for family camping on the banks of the La Crosse River with shaded grassy sites and easily accessible from I-90? Or maybe you are looking for a place to jump on the La Crosse River State Bike Trail? Veterans Memorial Park & Campground offers both of those. Of course, you could just sit by the water with your favorite book or maybe a fishing pole and enjoy the sunny spring day

Disclaimer: This is just one perspective on La Crosse County events, businesses and activities. Explore the rest of the site to learn more. 

## Explore Wisconsin



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**DICK ELLIS**

## Memory Maker

### Thirty years of great fishing for Kenosha charter captain

Combine a boatload of experience fishing Lake Michigan from the Port of Kenosha with a new summer dead ahead and a great fishery, and expect history to repeat itself...again and again. Captain John Anderson knows where, when and how to pick the fights with browns, Coho, rainbow, Lakers and chinook from May through October. You have strict captain's orders to relax with friends or co-workers and man the rods.

Call it a Memory Maker. Call it Memory Maker Charters. Captain Anderson has logged three decades on the big lake chasing gamefish, currently in a 35-foot 2000 Donelle with spacious deck, private washroom, a comfortable heated wheelhouse and the capacity to hold six anglers. With his fellow captains also working from the harbor, Memory Maker Charters accommodates company outings or any larger charter groups looking for consistent action on Lake Michigan.

"My devotion and dedication for my profession will ensure that you and your group will have a memorable and rewarding experience fishing Lake Michigan from the port of Kenosha," Anderson said. "As an owner and operator, I believe comfort and seaworthiness are two of the most important tools a charter boat should offer. As you view photos of the Memory Maker, note the large fishing deck that enables customers to fight fish with ease."

And fight fish you will. Working warmer water early in the season, Memory Maker Charters generally targets a playground shallow to deep, from Kenosha to Wind Point Marina and North Point near the Illinois border. "We will catch browns early in the season before Coho from the end of April and into May," Captain Anderson said. "We'll fish the Root River area, the Kenosha Harbor or anywhere that warm water dumps into the lake."

As summer progresses, the chase moves to deeper water, where lake trout, chinook and Great Lakes rainbows (steel-



Both numbers of fish and size are the client expectation when fishing Lake Michigan out of the Port of Kenosha with Captain John Anderson and Memory Maker Charters.

head) will be mixed into the catch. Seeforellen browns, a long lived gamefish with a reputation as a tenacious fighter, will also be caught most often in late August and early September.


"In southeast Wisconsin, we will definitely have consistent fishing from start to finish, from April until approximately the 20th of October," he said. "The peak will be in May and June for numbers of fish caught, with larger Chinook salmon and Lake trout taken in July and August and the first half of September."

Year after year, the winds over Lake Michigan call Anderson with a promise of great fights, great table fare, and camaraderie. Ultimately, the fish dictate where he will take his guests throughout the season and on any given day to offer the best opportunity for success.

"We know how to find fish on Lake Michigan," he said.



"Right now we will be using fly and dodger combinations and spoons. Over the season, the depths we fish will vary. If the water is clear, we might fish shorelines early or the harbor. Fishing right on the surface is typical now, but we will also fish the water columns at 50 or 60 feet. Offshore, we fish water from 80 to 150 feet."

"Thank you for 23 great years of business," he said to his clientele. "I can offer you a successful fishing experience based on my own knowledge and the knowledge gained by working with other distinguished charter captains." 

Make a Memory this summer or fall. Connect with Captain John Anderson and Memory Maker Charters at 847-746-1684 or info@memorymakercharters.com. For more information, view great photos online from recent charters, and to learn more about the gamefish species you will be chasing, cruise onto the Memory Maker website now at [www.memorymakercharters.com](http://www.memorymakercharters.com).



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SPOTLIGHT | **PORT WASHINGTON****Great fishing for sure...and so much more**

Port Washington, with its touch of New England charm, is nestled on the shore of Lake Michigan, just north of Milwaukee. Whether this is your first visit, or you are returning to a favorite place, you are invited to take some time to see all this harbor town has to offer.

One of the first things you'll see, coming down the hill to the lake, is the art deco lighthouse. Whether you are boating, fishing, walking on the beach or in any of the lakeside parks, this iconic symbol of the community has kept watch at the end of a half-mile long pier, for almost 85 years.

The downtown is lakeside, and walking distance from the marina, which is appreciated by boaters and fishermen. It offers unique dining destinations – many housed in historic storefronts. All are locally owned, and very different in their offerings. Whether you are in the mood for a brewpub, barbeque, Mexican, Italian, deli, supper club fare, or even fresh farm-to-table, you'll find all of these options. Saturdays, in summer and fall, feature a very popular lakeside beer garden, with food and music. Plus, if you are here on a Saturday, you can pick up some fresh food at the downtown farmers' market.

Port doesn't have just the typical, touristy shops. There is a fish market that can smoke, and even ship, your catch for you. Include a stop into the old fashioned meat market. Even if you don't buy anything, it's worth it for the smell of it. The winery not only makes and sells wine, but can help you make your own! A number of stores offer outdoor gear options, whether it be for fishing, biking, or paddling. There are also galleries and boutiques, each offering something unique and different.

The outdoor recreational opportunities are exceptional. Bike, bird, run, or hike on nearby trails. One of the trails is a free, paved recreational trail called the Interurban.

Plan your Lake Michigan vacation with our visitor's resource guide for hotels, bed and breakfasts, shopping, events, farmers markets, lakefront festivals, and more. Make sure to stop by the historic Pebble House Visitor Center for more information. And don't forget your camera; there are breath-taking views everywhere you look. 📷



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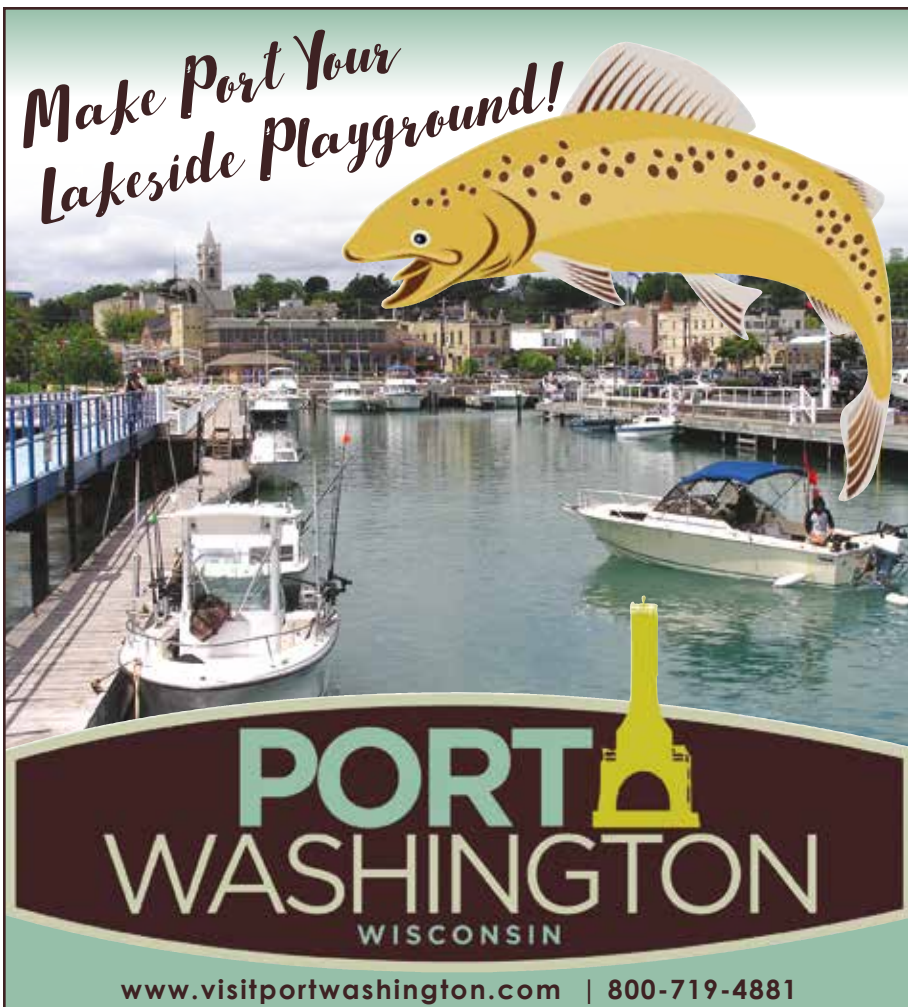
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**CAPT. LEE HAASCH**

# Spring Fishing Algoma

## Browns, Lakers start it, steelhead, kings slam it

As Capt. Trevor unhooked the last line and shoved the bow away from the dock, I powered us away from the dock and pointed the bow towards the harbor entrance. After Mother Nature threw us a curve-ball with near record snow falls this winter and below average temperatures, we found some pretty cold water temperatures this spring on Lake Michigan. The good news: winter has left us and spring has brought some of the best Brown Trout fishing in the shallows of the Lake Michigan shoreline. Some awesome Steelhead fishing can also be found in the tributary streams as the snow run-off has provided ideal conditions through the month of April.

We started to see water temperatures rise into the low 40s around Memorial Day, so it's time to venture out to deeper water, leaving the shoreline of Algoma and hunting for the surface temperature breaks that are starting to set up off shore. Setting up with my favorite Warrior spoons on my planner boards and adding a couple of my best Acme Cleos on my Slide Driver rigs, it didn't take long. "Fish on!" Trevor shouted as he grabbed the outside birds rod. "It's a brute!" he exclaimed as he handed the rod to the customer. Moments later Trevor slid the net under a sleek, torpedo shaped Steelhead. The action was pretty fast; these fish have had a long winter and water temps had started to rise slowly in late April.

What does that mean for the summer anglers? Well, after a little colder winter with above average snowfalls this year, we saw a somewhat delayed start (April instead of March) to the fishing season. This is great news for anglers traveling to the lakeshore this year. I expect to see Brown Trout dominating the catch in May with a good number of Lake Trout backing them up to give anglers some excellent shallow water angling opportunities. Steelhead should be making their return trip to Lake Michigan from the tributaries in late May and will provide anglers with some tail-dancing acrobatics as they feed heavily in June. I also expect to see Kings Salmon on cruising shoreward from the depths in early June and give us a fantastic King and Steelhead bite.

The longer winter had open water anglers chomping at the bit to launch their boats and start trolling. It has taken a while to get here, but the big positive is with the cooler start to spring, I expect to see great fishing to stretch through-out the entire

summer. 2019 looks to be one of those magical summers where the cooler water temps will give us a sustained King Salmon action right through those hot days of August and carry us right into fall. This doesn't happen often, but it is setting up to



Algoma is known for large, mixed bag catches of King Salmon and Steelhead and along with that, happy anglers.

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### Spring Activities in Beautiful Algoma

- COLOR ME ALGOMA RUN/WALK
- ART OF WATER EXHIBITION III
- HOBO RELEASE PARTY – Ahnapee Brewery
- ANNUAL GIRLS NIGHT OUT – Hotel Stebbins
- 17th ANNUAL MAIN STREET CAR SHOW
- GREAT LAKESHORE TRACTOR RALLY
- BREWVINO STEER ROAST – Von Stiehl Winery
- AHNAPEE TRAIL SUMMER SOLSTICE 50



The Algoma area has some of the best shore, pier and boat fishing for King Salmon and Steelhead on Lake Michigan.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37

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BOB SPIERINGS

# Bob's Bear Bait

## Love is in the air

Love is in the air here at Bob's Bear Bait and no it's not Valentine's Day again, it's black bears mating season! With both baiting and mating season now upon us, it's a great time to sit back and let love do its thing. From May through June, you'll commonly see black bears roaming open fields and crossing roads in search of love, with the average boar's home range being 27 square miles. Needless to say they cover a lot of area during these few months, which gives you a great opportunity to make your location known by having a sweet treat ready for him after a long day's work. Use this time to get ahead of the game so once mating season has ended they know exactly where to come back to work on their "dad bod." However, there's no need to fill it up to the top just yet; start off light until July then fill it to the brim.

Don't forget bears may have good noses, but you don't want just one bear to know you got the goods, you want every bear to know. How do you do this? By making your site smell amazing, of course, and no, we're not talking your finest cologne, but rather scents of anise, bacon, blueberry, etcetera. The best way to ensure bears can smell your site from miles away is by dousing a clean rag with the scent of

your choosing, then finding a small sapling that you can bend over while tying the rag to the top. This way even the slightest wind can take the scent miles away.

Remember the scent shouldn't be only placed on the stump; make a 20-yard circle or bigger, spraying trees and brush along the way to attract more bears and make them realize they've arrived in heaven. Be sure not to do this before a heavy rain, as even the best scents wear down after a heavy rainfall. Another great trick is to take an extra-long walk around the site, using your spray scent bottle to spritz the bottoms of your boots every 100 yards on a journey always leading back to your bait site. As soon as a bear stumbles across your scented trail, it'll lead them right in.

Here at Bob's Bear Bait we offer not only the widest variety of bait in the state but also our own scent line. We have a variety of flavors, including our famous Bacon Smear and our Ready to Go Anise Spray. You can order any of our scents online at [bobsbearbait.com](http://bobsbearbait.com) or purchase them in-store at our Phelps, Appleton or Ishpeming locations.

Bob Spierings is an avid hunter and has been in the bear baiting business for 11+ years, building Bob's Bear Bait from the ground up and turning it into one of the most



well-known bait shops in the Midwest.

Bob's Bear Bait carries the largest variety of bear bait in Wisconsin, with multiple locations in Wisconsin and Michigan. We pride ourselves in being your one-stop shop for all your baiting needs including scents, bulk bait, fruit toppings, dry bait, and the list goes on.

Once the season hits, bait sells out fast, so be sure not to wait too long, especially if there's particular bait you absolutely must have. To stay up to date with our latest news and sales, follow us on Facebook and Instagram at Bob's Bear Bait. See a list of our bait selection or locations by checking us out at [bobsbearbait.com](http://bobsbearbait.com). If you wish to consult with Bob directly, email him at [sales@bobsbearbait.com](mailto:sales@bobsbearbait.com) or call (920)419-1238. As always, happy baiting and congrats to all the hunters that draw this year! 🐾

MIKE FOSS

# 2019 Wisconsin Bear Hunt

## Pre-season homework imperative to satisfying field experience

Ever so slowly, the snow melts away and a long hard winter loosens its grip on northern Wisconsin. Spring has finally arrived and even with a white covering still on the ground, sightings of bears are trickling in.

For those interested in Wisconsin's bear hunting opportunities, there are changes in the wind, detailed in the 2019 Revised Wisconsin Black Bear Management Plan. To review the plan online, connect with *On Wisconsin Outdoors*' website at [www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com](http://www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com). Click on Hunting Wisconsin. Click on Bear Hunting.

It's a must-read, spotlighting one of Wisconsin's most successful stories in big game management for hunters, guides, houndsmen, or any outdoor enthusiast interested in keeping informed on one of this state's greatest big game animals, the black bear. Do yourself a favor; take some time and read the new Management Plan.

As I read the revised plan and reflected on the data and details, it brought back great memories of an independent, four-year, black bear study at my bear camp and surrounding camps searching for secrets that hibernating, denned

black bears might reveal relating to human health issues. Could, for example, the study of black bears showing no muscle atrophy after months of hibernation eventually assist bed-ridden patients with atrophy, or astronauts after extended future space flight?

Looking back, I didn't realize at the time the great impact the study would have on me. The knowledge I gained made me a better outdoorsman running, at that time, a successful black bear guide service. Research and ongoing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

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DAN MOERICKE

## An 'Up Nort' Report

### Time to bear down

A few weeks ago the postcard showed up in my mailbox. After 13 years of applying, this year I received a bear kill tag for Zone B. Now there are decisions to be made. I've never really had anything against bears, except when they destroy my wife's bird feeders. To that end, I never had any real desire to kill one. Then, about 13 years ago, my wife tells me that it might be nice to have a bear rug. So, being the good husband, I start applying for a tag. For full disclosure, the past two years I only put in for preference points in anticipation of impending retirement and more available time. Both are imminent and thus, the postcard.

Having places to hunt is not an issue. The Nicolet National Forest has lots of bears and over 600,000 acres. I'm familiar with a bunch of it. I've got several places in mind.

There are just a couple of problems.

First, I know little to nothing about baiting/hunting bears. Oh sure, I've read articles and watched some videos, but that's about it. Fortunately, I have several friends with some bear hunting experience under their belts who can help guide me through the process. I've been told that the whole baiting process is a lot of work and it would be nice to have a couple buddies to share the load.

The bigger problem, however, is that in all honesty I still don't have any real desire to shoot a bear. Even though I've had 13 years to try and get excited about it, no fuse has been lit. No burning desire exists. Whitetail buck? Heck, yeah! Elk? You bet! Black bear? Not so much. Add to that the fact that my wife has backpedaled on the bear rug idea since she found out the cost.

The good news is that the Wisconsin DNR gives guys in my position a nice way out. If I decide that I don't want to hunt, I can transfer my tag to someone who does. The only requirement is that the transferee must be one of the following:

A minor under the age of 18 at the time of transfer.

Person with disabilities who holds a valid Class A, B, C, or D disabled permit issued by the DNR.

An ACTIVE Duty Military member.

A Purple Heart Recipient.

The only additional qualifier is that the person cannot have previously been transferred a Class A Bear approval.

So, I've got a few months yet to muster up a desire to shoot a bear and, if not, I'll transfer my tag to someone who would appreciate it. I'll let you know. Guess the time has come to bear down. Just sayin'. 🐻

Dan Moericke fishes and hunts in the Northwoods, occasionally actually catching a fish and tagging a buck. He had a cane pole put into his hands at the age of three and has relished every hook set since. He is fortunate to have an understanding wife and a group of buddies to share his days afield. On most days, he is able to remember where he parked his vehicle.



Bears are common around my cabin.

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**JERRY DAVIS**

# The Draw of the Morel

## Spring search, table fare lures many

Large numbers of outdoors enthusiasts gather morels - far more than most folks realize, unless they have been beaten to their favorite haunt when the season "opens." We may not notice all the morel-picking excitement because many pickers are secretive about their passion.

So what's the attraction to gathering mushrooms, besides a fondness for flavor? This mystery is compounded by the fact that up to 25 percent of humans are allergic to morels and get sick when eating them. Perhaps the main attraction is that that the "Mushroom Season" comes at a time when some outdoor activity seasons, such as turkey hunting and icefishing, are coming to an end. Mushroom gathering is a great spring activity, particularly after a


long, difficult winter, like that of 2018 - 19.

Morels come in a variety of shapes, sizes and colors. They can be light, dark, tan, brown, almost black or yellow. Sometime all of the aforementioned colors appear in a single morel. There are odd shapes and growth forms, including double morels - double on top, double on the stalk. Some morels are pointed, others rounded off on top. Some have grown as a clump of six or up to a dozen. Some grow entwined in moss (this is a finding hint), or a clump growing out of the end of a decaying birch log.

Occasionally morels are found among garlic mustard, even though the mustard is said to interfere with tree root-fungus connections, which morels possess. Other

possible locations are orchards, prairies, around oaks, near dead poplars (gathering hints) and occasionally on shed antlers, turkey feathers, ginseng plants and even lost objects.

Many factors contribute to the popularity of morel gathering, not the least of which is that it is nearly impossible to grow morels in any quantity; mushrooms have to be found, not cultured.

Don't miss out on all the excitement, unusual finds, insect bites and prickly ash scratches. If you haven't already done so, start gathering morels this spring. 

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



These men found a "boatload" of May morel mushrooms.



This morel grew through a gnawed hickory nut shell.

## Explore Wisconsin



**SPOTLIGHT | FERRYVILLE**  
**FROM SHERRY QUAMME**

# Action on Wisconsin's Mississippi Coast

Spring 2019! Finally! Ferryville, WI is a community of 182 folks who love being on the WI Great River Road National Scenic Byway (Hwy 35) and being a "coastal" village on the iconic Mississippi River. We host people from all over the world and...from our area too. We invite you and your friends to check us out.

What will you do here? For starters, River View Park is in the center of Ferryville and a great spot to see the Mississippi River. May 11 is International Bird Migration Day. Ferryville hosts a hike on Sugar Creek Bluff with Mississippi Valley Conservancy and Mayo Health System. 7:30 am - hospitality, home-made breakfast breads, Kickapoo Coffee I (Driftless Morning) at Village Hall - 170 Pine Street - then head up to Sugar Creek Bluff with the expert guides and see the many species of birds making their way north on the Mississippi River Flyway. This is the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge, home to so many birds and wildlife not usually seen or heard elsewhere.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37



[visitferryville.com](http://visitferryville.com)

**MAY-JUNE 2019**

**May 11**  
**Spring Bird Migration Hike**

**May 17-18**  
**Rummage Along the River**

**June 12**  
**Chautauqua Summer Series,**  
**Ferryville Community Center**



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### **Wednesdays**

Famous Fish Fry

### **Thursdays**

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For the entire month of July  
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 Sporting Clays: \$0.25 per clay  
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\*Shooting Specials not valid on member, customer, or corporate outings or events.

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Saturday: 8am - 2pm

Sunday: 8am - 4pm

## Trading Post Hours

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Friday: 8am - 7pm

Saturday & Sunday: 8am - 4pm

\*Shooting ceases every Saturday at 2pm



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## Explore Wisconsin



### SPOTLIGHT: MARINETTE

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Give me a land of gentle hills. Give me a green land where the trees are fresh and the air is clean. Give me streams that are swift flowing and far from the noises of man, where the music of water playing on the rocks is the only sound to my ear. Give me a cabin, nestled on the banks of a lake that draws its clear blueness from hidden springs of the earth. Give me kind neighbors, good companionship.

Let there be fish in this vacationland, fighting rainbow trout, tasty pan fish, lunging northern and walleye. Let there be a town, friendly and hospitable where I can enjoy the latest movie, stock up with foods and supplies and savor a flavorful meal.

Now that you've written your order for a vacationland, look no further to find it because all roads lead to Marinette County 140 Years of Adventure!

**COUNTY PARKS:** Marinette County operates 22 county park properties: 11 scenic "large parks" with 6 of them offering well-kept, beautifully wooded campgrounds, 4 small day use/wayside parks, 6 boat landings, and a youth camp. Come hike, picnic, whitewater-raft, fish, or just relax and enjoy the beautiful scenery. Secure your campsite online today at [www.therealnorth.com](http://www.therealnorth.com)

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- Veterans Park Falls – Crivitz, WI: Located on Thunder River.
- McClintock Falls in McClintock Park – Goodman, WI:
- Carney Rapids – Goodman, WI.
- Strong Falls in Goodman Park – Goodman, WI.
- Four Foot Falls – Goodman, WI.
- Eighteen Foot Falls – Dunbar, WI: About 1 mile from Twelve Foot Falls.
- Twelve Foot Falls – Dunbar, WI: Located on the Pike River.
- Eight Foot Falls – Amberg & Pembine, WI: Located just down the river from Twelve Foot Falls.
- Horseshoe Falls – Dunbar, WI.
- Daves Falls – Dunbar, WI: A beautiful County Park on the Pike River.
- Bulls Falls – Amberg, WI: Located on the Pike River.
- Smalley Falls – Pembine & Niagara, WI.
- Long Slide Falls – Pembine & Niagara, WI.
- Pier's Gorge – Niagara, WI: Located on the Menominee River.
- Quivver Falls – Pembine, WI: The newest mapped waterfall! 







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TOM CARPENTER

## Cubs Corner

### May Magic and Memories

When are they all grown up and no longer under our care and tutelage?

When my youngest boy Noah finished his sophomore year of college last May, it was time to reward both hard-working boy and tuition-paying (half-way there!) dad with a spring turkey hunting trip.

Mid-May is one of my favorite times to hunt turkeys and when we arrived at our Green County hunting grounds late in the afternoon on a warm season day, the first thing we heard upon exiting the vehicle was a gobble. Then another. And another.

We snuck across a brook and though a grassy-brushy old pasture to get into position, worked that gobbler good, and he was maybe five yards away from topping a rise and being dead when he decided better and sleuthed away.

No matter. We had an evening to listen for gobblers high on a ridge and watch the sunset. Greening woods, green fields and aromatic turned-earth on the farmer's fields surrounded us. And a weather forecast promising clear, sunny days for the foreseeable future would allow us to wander for days in comfort.

So we slept with the windows and doors open to May breezes. Rose up at 4:05 a.m. daily to be in position before shooting light. Worked hard and hunted until noon, returning to our lodging to cook brunch and nap until late afternoon, when we would return to the woods for a couple hours.

There was no pressure to kill a bird. It would happen. Or it wouldn't.

On the fourth morning, the birds were particularly gobbly. We did a little too much chasing those gobblers though, and by 8 a.m. or so decided to just sit still and wait. Noah and I backed up against separate oaks, about 10 yards apart, him facing a small meadow and me looking down a wooded hillside behind him.

One turkey gobbled at a set of my yelps at maybe 9:30 a.m., but not another peep. After a long while, I crawled over to see how the boy was doing. "Let's stay," he whispered. "It's a good spot. It's



Noah Carpenter with the talkative Tom that ultimately moved in quietly.

really nice out." Simple but insightful words indeed.

After inching back and settling into the buttresses of my old oak, I was just reaching for a call when BOOM! Jumping up and fearing the worst, I saw the best: my college athlete boy popping up and quickly heading toward a big, flopping turkey in the meadow.

Somehow I beat him to the bird, grabbed it and couldn't believe our luck. It had to be the bird that talked to us an hour before and then spent his merry old silent time moseying over. Father and son's little conference had been quiet enough and ended just in time.

Noah said after I left that he felt good about his decision, got re-settled, looked one way for awhile then glanced back and there was the bird in full strut, having just pirouetted into the meadow.

Sometimes it's better to be lucky than good. My boy made his decision and our luck had turned for the better. It's not easy shooting a surprise gobbler like that. As I took pictures of the young man with a boyish smile on his face and a big, vanquished gobbler next to him, I thought "Thank you lucky stars, up there above us right now in the heavens, beyond these blue skies, for May days and magic and forever memories like these."



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

JOHN CLER

## Paying Wonderful Dues

### Investing ample field time often necessary to tag gobbler

The sound of a thundering gobble splitting the half-light of a spring dawn is what gets Wisconsin turkey hunters rolling out of bed in the middle of the night. We all relish that sound and the possibility that the gobbler will fly down, answer all of our calls as he approaches in full strut, searching for the hen we are imitating. This happens often enough to keep us hitting the "on" button of the coffee maker well before dawn, but the reality is that most birds are taken after the sun is up. I am not suggesting that turkey hunters sleep in, but instead will make the case for spending all parts of the day pursuing that gobbler that flew down at dawn and went directly away from your ambush site.

Gobblers have a busy schedule to keep during spring mornings. Breeding hens is, of course, the first order of business. If there are hens within sight or hearing distance of a roosted gobbler, the hens will often fly down and lure him off in which ever direction suits their fancy. Following any breeding activity a gobbler may be forced to defend his spot in the gobbler pecking order and pick a fight with another bird or two. These activities will leave the tom hungry and anxious for a quick snack before continuing with the rest of the daily schedule. The point is, that once breeding, fighting and food are checked off the list, gobblers will be searching for another hen or two.

Once the gobbling and other turkey noises have subsided, it is not the time to head back to camp for breakfast. It is time to go trolling for a gobbler. This entails walking quietly through the woods and periodically setting up at the base of a tree and calling softly. Should you get an answering gobble – get the gun up. Toms will often approach quickly. They will sometimes not respond, but begin heading your way, so you should plan on staying at each location for at least half an hour, sitting still and calling periodically. Gobblers are continually looking for hens, making trolling an effective tactic all day long.

Spring days are long. Plan on taking enough food and water to keep you alert for the time you will be spending outdoors.



The author bagged this Wisconsin gobbler one hour before dark on the last day of the first season in 2018.

Plan on taking a nap (or two) during midday. Stretch out in the dry leaves in a shaded location and pull your hat over your eyes. Just a few minutes of rest will go a long way in keeping you focused.

Mornings can't be beat for turkey activity, but the last few hours of the day should not be overlooked. Birds want a crop full of food before roosting for the night. Feeding activity begins in earnest about two or three hours before dark. This is often accompanied by gobbling activity and a willingness for toms to respond to calling. If you have located ground with lots of scratched up areas in the leaves, this is a great spot to set up. The locations contains food for turkeys. Plan on sitting in a likely evening ambush for at least an hour.

Like gobblers, turkey hunters have busy schedules. Jobs, family commitments and other responsibilities all interfere with our ability to pursue spring turkeys. Turkeys don't burrow or hide in caves, so if you are out in the woods, even for a part of the day, you have a chance of bagging a tom. Spring and spring turkey hunting go by quickly. Take advantage of any time that you can spend in the spring woods. 🦃

John Cler is a retired high school principal and science teacher. He hunts, traps and fishes the fields and streams near his home in Richland County.



GARY GREENE

# Memories from an Old Hunter

## Collecting waterfowl leg bands

As a waterfowl hunter, I know that we spend countless dollars and hours attempting to become as camouflaged as possible to the eyes of our prey. In contrast, when hunters retrieve metal leg bands from our harvests, we attach them to our lanyards and wear them so other waterfowl hunters know that we have a history of being successful.

Contrasting to our great attempts to hide from waterfowl, we visibly wear these reflecting, silver, metal bands around our necks. If the sun is shining, an untrained human eye can spot those from across the wetland. There appears to be a flaw in this logic.

We get all excited when retrieving a bird with a leg band. Numerous hunters on TV shows display lanyards with 20-30 bands. My 32-year-old son Nate has not yet shot a banded bird and I only have three bands during 55 hunting years. All three of my bands were found on legs of Canada geese harvested near Horicon marsh. For those of you that don't know what leg bands are, they are round metal bands with bird identification numbers that when reported to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service relays quite a bit of information about that bird. That information includes type of bird, the sex, where it was banded, how old it is and how far it migrated when it was

harvested.

Recently, as I was looking at my bands on my lanyard, I was wondering whatever happened to the appreciation certificates I received for reporting the bands. I searched my files where I thought I had stored them but I haven't seen them in many years. They were nowhere to be found. So for a second time I attempted to retrieve those certificates.

I easily found the information on two of the bands on the USFWS website, where I made copies of my certificates. Both Canadas were first-year geese banded in July in Ontario, Canada. Both geese were too young to fly at the time of banding. One was harvested on 09/30/2001 and the second was taken on 09/29/2013. Both geese were very unremarkable.

Then I typed in my numbers off my oldest band and it would not register. On the site I found a phone number I could contact with questions and I anticipated a series of recorded questions and numbers, but I actually got to speak directly with a human being. She couldn't have been more cooperative as I explained my situation. I heard her type in my band numbers as she checked the old files. She found my band number and relayed the following information. The Canada goose was banded on January 24,



My three goose bands and two certificates.

1972 in Ware, Illinois, and I harvested the bird on October 23, 1993, in Wisconsin. That goose was an amazing 21 years old.

I only have three bands, but I cherish them and will pass them on to Nate as family heirlooms. 🌿

Gary Greene is a life-time bird hunter and was a pheasant hunting guide for many years. Gary and his veterinarian wife, Chris and their four labs live in East Troy. You can contact him at [ganggreene2002@yahoo.com](mailto:ganggreene2002@yahoo.com)

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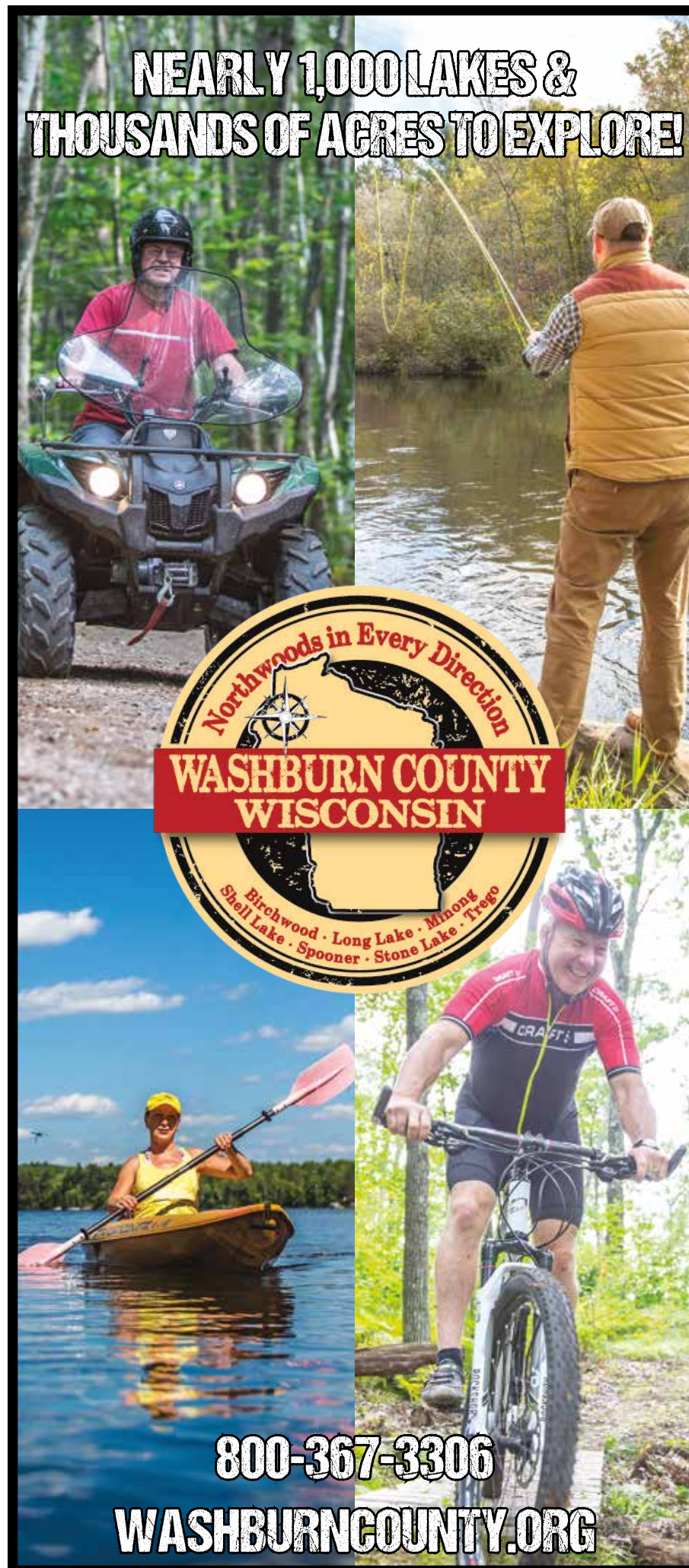
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## Explore Wisconsin



### SPOTLIGHT | WASHBURN COUNTY

## Totogatic Campground, Minong

The Totogatic Park is a camping gem tucked away on the gorgeous shores of the Minong Flowage in Northwest Wisconsin. The park offers 75 campsites on a vast 1,600 acres of county land. Managed by Washburn County Forestry, this public campground offers spacious, shaded campsites with options for electric and water hookups. The park offers showers, a beautiful sandy beach, easy access to boating areas, a playground, and basketball and volleyball courts.

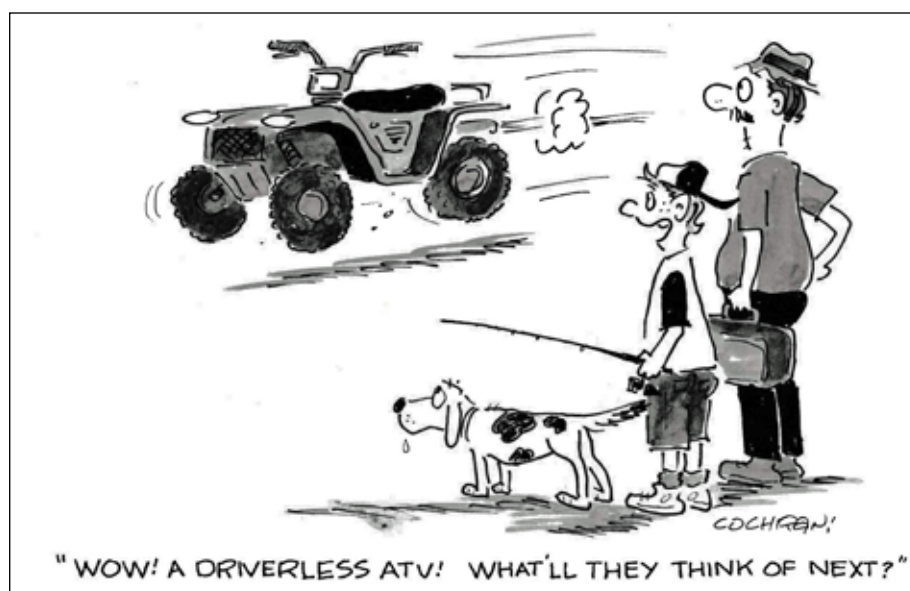
The majority of the campsites have direct shore access, making water activities the primary draw. You'd be hard-pressed to find a better variety of scenic, lake-front campsites to enjoy some family time in Northwest Wisconsin.

While on the Minong Flowage, you can cast a line and take advantage of one of the best fishing lakes in the area. The flowage has a variety of Panfish, Bass, Walleye and Northern Pike. The lake itself is 1,587 acres and is located in Douglas and Washburn Counties with a maximum depth of 21 feet. Visitors have access to the lake from multiple public boat landings and some of the restaurants even offer boat-in access if you want to get out of the afternoon sun and enjoy a bite to eat.

When visiting the Totogatic Park, you'll want to stop by the neighboring communities of Minong and Spooner for great spots to eat, drink, and shop. To plan your trip, visit [washburncounty.org](http://washburncounty.org).



Photo credit: Washburn County Tourism/Washburn County Forestry





# 4 Places to Spend the 4th in La Crosse County

Ready to beat the heat this Fourth of July? These four spots feature all you'll need—food, drinks, water and plenty of fun.



**Lake Neshonoc** - Pack a lunch and put on your swimsuit! Neshonoc Swarthout Beach is a great family destination for the holiday. With a picnic shelter, a boat landing and of course, a beach, you'll be able to stay cool and keep the kiddos occupied. Interested in extending your stay? The nearby Neshonoc Lakeside Camping Resort is the perfect place to set up camp or rent a boat.

**Riverside Park** - Fourth of July is an exciting time of year in La Crosse. Not only is the Mississippi River overflowing with boaters, but the sky is also illuminated by the area's best fireworks display. Head down to Riverside Park with your blanket and family to enjoy the show, but be sure to come early, this is a popular event! It's also the week that La Crosse celebrates Riverfest, so the park is full of vendors, attractions, games and music. You'll find plenty of activities for all ages, all day long.

**French Island** - When you think of the 4th, do you think of adult beverages and boat cruises? If that's your idea of a holiday, head to French Island's river-themed bars for a guaranteed good time. Places like River Rats, Tom Sawyer's, Huck Finn's and Castaways cater to water traffic and feature delicious food and drink. Dock right next door and slip on your flip flops to join in the fun. Remember to always drive safely.

**Black River** - If you want a different water scene to explore, try out a few spots along the Black River. Head to Island Outdoors and rent kayaks or canoes for a day of paddling and fun. If relaxing in the shade with a tropical drink in your hand is more your style, try Shenanigan's Tiki Bar or Moxie's, both featuring some of the best Black River views in La Crosse.



Everyone knows La Crosse has one of the nation's premier Oktoberfest festivals. Well, on top of that we also have Holmen's Kornfest, West Salem's June Dairy Days, and Celebrate Onalaska... the festivals go on and on. What can we say? **WE'RE FESTIVE.**

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LEE GATZKE

## Gaining an Edge

### Deer rely on food and cover that edge areas provide

In my experience, and many pairs of worn out boots has confirmed this, deer spend a lot of their time in “edge” cover. I define edge cover as the place where one habitat meets another, such as a tag alder woods that butts up to a sedge or cattail marsh. There is a distinct change in plant life diversity along the boundary of where the two meet. Many times the plant life mixes in with one type of cover (tag alders) to the other (cattail marsh). In this “transition” will be found a mixture of tag alders, cattails and a host of other plant life that only occurs in the transition area because of the conditions found there. This edge and transition environment is an important element in the lives of deer because of the variety of plants and browse available that is a nutritional necessity for them.

Some edges are an abrupt change with no transition at all, like a clear cut forest next to a mature woods or a river cutting through a swamp. Clear cuts and rivers create a break in the forest canopy and allow sunlight to reach the ground and understory. In this scenario a wide variety of plant life and browse flourishes which attracts deer to feed there. Whether you’re hunting a vast tract of timber or an agricultural landscape, edge cover provides plant variety



*Author removes unwanted invasives and garbage trees to create an edge environment*

and nutrition that deer are attracted to. Edges and transitions often provide excellent cover as well and deer tend to bed there and travel along them as a result.

Natural catastrophes such as floods, fires, and tornadoes create edge environments that remain for years and are good places to find deer activity once the land has begun to recover. Agricultural lands also provide a lot of edge cover and allow a lot of sunlight to reach the forest floor along the boundaries of woodlands and crop fields. The highest

variety of plants and browse are found in these places and once the crops are harvested, the deer rely on this important food source for survival.

Swamps and marshlands are other common environments that contain edge and transition cover and are common in this state, especially on public hunting grounds. Most of my public land hunting occurs in or near wetlands.

Creating edge cover is a possibility for those who have access to private land. My property has some overgrown pasture that is covered in invasives and junk trees, along with an occasional fruit tree that has somehow survived. By removing the invasives and junk trees it will help the fruit trees survive by eliminating competition for sun, nutrients, and water. This will also create an edge by clearing the former pastures’ unwanted growth back to the established line of hardwood trees. Natural or hand made, edge and transition areas offer needed food and cover that deer cherish. 🍷

Lee Gatzke is co-owner of Next Buk Outdoors, producers of tactical hunting videos. In between hunting seasons Lee is usually scouting for his next buck.

## Explore Wisconsin



SPOTLIGHT | HAYWARD | AREA FROM CHELSEA WISNER

## Never too late for ATV trail introduction

I have a secret. I’ve lived in Hayward, Wisconsin, for my whole life and I have never been out on the ATV trails. I don’t know how I missed that wonderful opportunity, but now at 20 years old, I finally went flying through the woods in a side-by-side with Donny Mrotek. And it was so awesome. The trails were winding and built for speed. Who could resist?

It was a great day out in the sun with some of the members of the Hayward Power Sports team. There were a variety of toys out in the field, from an ATV to a couple of side-by-sides. Harry from Hayward Power Sports and I spent most of our time in a four-seat, side-by-side, cruising down the dirt trail. The sun was warm, but the breeze kept us cool; it was a perfect afternoon to be driving around. I get a lot of people asking for ATV maps in the Information Center and I’ve been happy to give them out,

but now I’ll do it with a much better understanding of the obsession. It’s thrilling to be out there, the trees whipping by and the radio playing Brad Paisley loudly. It felt like summer wrapped up in a 130 horsepower engine.

The trails themselves are an excellent example of community. Donny drove me out to a spot where the single-track mountain bike trail and the American Birkebeiner trail coincide with the ATV trail. Donny explained that all though the three sports were so different in style, they were able to coalesce and share the trail. This demonstrates the true sportsmanship and camaraderie that the Hayward area is filled to the brim with. It may have been my first time out on the trails, but it certainly won’t be my last. 🍷

Visit [www.atvhayward.com](http://www.atvhayward.com) for ATV information in Sawyer County.



*Lifelong Hayward resident Chelsea Wisner meets the area ATV trails for the first time... and she'll be back soon.*



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JARROD ERDODY

## A Work in Progress

### Inviting more deer, bigger bucks paying off

The old doe approached, checking each of three scrapes along the cut bean field edge until she was 25 yards to my left. What little air currents there were this early November morning were in my face. With her fawns in tow, she veered ninety degrees into the woods and slowly walked down the ridge towards her bedding area.

It was an encouraging site. I love pre-rut scrape hunting in late October and early November. It provides a window of opportunity for daylight movement of mature bucks as they mark their territories and check for the first willing mates of fall. Little did I know that window was about to swing wide open.

Western Wisconsin is home to some of the country's best whitetail hunting. The challenging, rugged bluff country combined with fertile farmland allows bucks to grow old and big. I was hunting my good friend's farm, a management project now in its third season.

The previous owner seemingly did everything he could to keep deer off this farm. There was little bedding cover due to the continual presence of cattle and horses. Over-hunting and a "brown it's down" philosophy meant lots of work and patience if it was to become a consistent producer of mature bucks.

For the first two seasons, we hunted very sparingly. They were mostly recon missions to learn the farm and assess the situation. Trail cameras told a story of few deer. But in these past few seasons, we've steadily watched deer become more and more comfortable calling the farm home. The understory has recovered a lot, providing secure bedding cover. Established sanctuaries and a conservative approach has allowed deer to put a few years on them.

I was soaking up the early morning sun, content if this

*The author's buck weighed 235 pounds dressed and grossed just over 169 inches P&Y.*



was nothing more than an escape from my computer work. Suddenly a grunt brought me to attention. It had come from the west, out in the field where the doe and fawns had appeared just ten minutes ago. I leaned forward in my XOP so I could clear the oak in front of me and immediately saw a rack. I raised my Vortex binocs for a closer look. What I saw left no doubt I needed to ready

my bow and go into kill mode.

The buck was prowling for the doe that had just come through. Nose to the ground, coming quickly, he left me no time to stand. One hundred, seventy-five, fifty yards... the buck closed in. I was convinced he was going to break into the woods at the scrape where the doe had just entered the woods and make getting a shot difficult.

Maybe the lack of readiness he smelled in her trail kept him from following directly, maybe not. For whatever reason, the buck held his line about 10 yards inside the field edge until he was about 20 yards to my left. The still air left no room for error so I began my left-handed draw sideways and slow, to minimize movement and sound. The buck began to cut the corner and swing out in front of me.

As I reached full draw and tilted the bow vertically to my anchor, the mature buck's sixth sense kicked in and he stopped broadside at 25 yards, looking my way to see what had caught his attention. It was too late. My Slick Trick was on its way and already disappearing right on the crease, just above the heart. I knew I had him. The big 10 loped off across the cut beans but did not make it out of the field.

My friend and I are enjoying this journey of building a quality hunting property. I'm grateful to him for being given the opportunity to reap this reward. The four-year-old, 169" 10 weighed 290 pounds and dressed out at 235. We toasted to a plan coming together here in the great state of Wisconsin. 🍷

Jarrold Erdody is a father of three and co-owner of NextBuck Outdoors where he makes instructional hunting videos. He also operates Erdody Studios, which specializes in building custom websites for sports and outdoor related companies.



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There are 19 waterfalls in and around the Hurley area, most are located in remote, wild areas unspoiled by the crowds. Some can be driven to while others require walking and a little bit of orienteering to get to. All are worth the trip. To request a guide, call our office 715-561-4334.

Iron County has over 170,000 acres of county land, much that is accessible through back roads and old logging trails. Adventurers can explore the land and camp anywhere along the lands for free, up to two weeks. Detailed Sportsman's Maps are available to guide you through our forests for the best adventures.

The Gile Flowage is home to walleye, smallmouth bass, muskie, crappie, northern pike, blue gill and perch. This 3,300 acre body of water offers four public boat launches for boats, pontoons, kayaks and paddle boards. If the flowage is too busy, check out one of the 154 lakes that have public access. And there are approximately 136 miles of trout streams to fish.

After a day of adventure be sure to stop at any of the local establishments. A variety of cuisine is available from fresh homemade pastas and pizzas to prime rib or a fresh hand-packed burger; the locally owned bars and restaurants spe-

cialize in fantastic food and friendly service.

Plan a getaway and enjoy our local heritage


**Iron County Historical Museum**

The former courthouse is home to three floors of iconic history of our mining and logging heritage. Open Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, volunteers are always available to provide a tour or explore on your own.

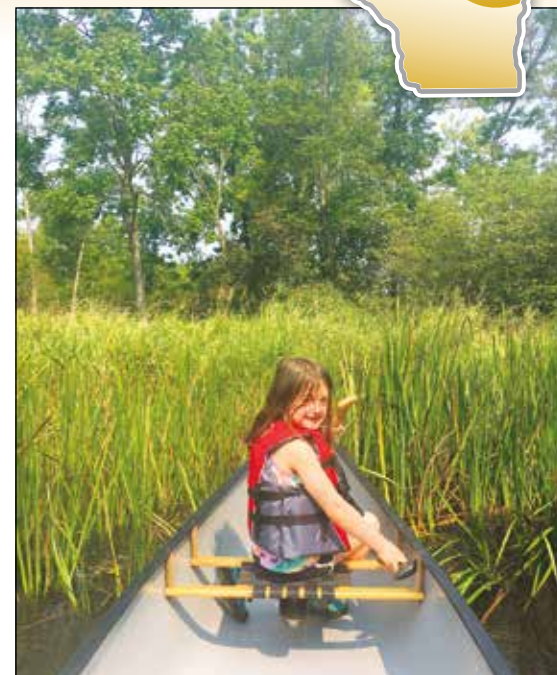
Heritage Days, Saturday July 27 through Sunday August 11.

Iron County spotlights its rich heritage of mining and logging with two weeks of events throughout the county. Kicking off the festivities with the Heritage Days Parade, the festival includes the Iron County Fair, Paavo Nurmi Marathon and many other events.

Festival Italiano, Saturday August 31

A trip to Hurley for the last hoorah of summer won't disappoint! The day is filled with food vendors lining Silver Street, games, craft vendors, and music throughout the day. An afternoon performance by Marty's Goldenaires gets the crowd ready for the evening street dance featuring IV Play from Mankato Minnesota. 

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### PRO MAGNUM 24K GOLD

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### RED EYED SHAD LIPLESS CRANKBAIT

This lure helped Kevin VanDam win his 3rd Bassmaster's Classic in 2012. He used gold, but there are a variety of colors available. The namesake 3-D red eye is what really stands out with this bait, but they also produce some great action and have high quality finish. Free floating rattles gives it a little something extra. Comes in 1/4, 1/2, and 3/4-ounce sizes. (\$7.99)

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### MR. CRAPPIE SLAB DADDY SUPPER SUPER FINESSE JIGS

Top lure is 1/16 ounce and bottom lure is 1/18 ounce. Can be casted or ideal for slow trolling. Variety of color patterns including parrot head, dizzy lizzy, pink pearl, and several more. Found at a variety of local sporting stores or online. (\$2.99)

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### REBEL CRICKHOPPER POPPER

Here is a fun bait that could catch a variety of species, including some nice panfish and bass, as the summer begins to warm. Combines a grasshopper with the classic popper, producing a loud splash that will catch the attraction of aggressive fish. Two realistic color patterns – fire tiger and yellow/black back. (\$5.99)

[rebellures.com](http://rebellures.com)



TOM CARPENTER

## Badger Birds Belted Kingfisher

Wisconsin's creeks, streams, river backwaters, lakeshores, ponds and marshes all offer the kingfisher what it needs: shallow water. These handsome, crested birds perch on limbs or power wires over water, or hover above their prey, then drop beak-first into the drink to impale a minnow, crayfish, tadpole, frog or other unlucky victim. The kingfisher then returns to a limb to eat its meal. Relatively clean, clear water is essential for these sight feeders to locate their prey.

**Look** for a bird a little bigger than a robin, with a blue-gray back, creamy white throat and chest, and a long, black, dagger-like bill. In a bird-world exception, the female kingfisher is more brightly colored than the male, adding rusty-colored flanks and a rust-colored chest band. Both males and females sport disheveled crests on their heads.

**Listen** for the kingfisher's distinctive call, a squawky rattle.

**Watch** for the kingfisher's unique nesting setup. A pair works together to excavate a tunnel one to eight feet long in the mud of a stream or ditch bank.

**Observe** a kingfisher dispatch its prey by pounding it silly on a branch. When trout fishing is slow on a stream, kingfishers have provided me with many hours of entertainment. But kingfishers take few young trout, which are exceptionally good hidiers.

Did you know that a kingfisher's nesting tunnel goes up? This helps keep the nest chamber from flooding if the water level rises above the entrance hole. If the water does get that high in a summertime flood, the bird will go through the water to reach the entrance. 🐦

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

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](mailto:jimservi10@gmail.com).



DENNY MURAWSKA

## Our Natural Heritage.

### *The snows of winters past*

I don't believe anyone in Wisconsin can argue that this last winter was a brute. Too much snow, too much cold, spring flooding. Who needs it, eh? Well, we do, as do the creatures who live here. Both game and non-game species benefit from some snowpack. While we can all bemoan the bad roads, and shoveling the white stuff, it is absolutely essential to preserve the health of many species. It provides a stable, insulated environment with lack of wind and high humidity. Take this away, and there is trouble for many. Plants and animals alike, including hibernating bears, depend on this. Take it away, and some might say this was a blessing. It is not.

Some reptiles and amphibians can survive total freezing of their bodies. If a warm snap interrupts this death-like sleep, animals may animate, only to be decimated by fluctuating temperature drops. Prey species like voles and shrews rely on their tunnels under the snow for stability. Birds of prey that depend on these food resources will be impacted. I have seen grouse dive into snowbanks if they feel threatened, and it is a wondrous sight to behold. Deer are so well insulated

that they can be covered with snow and it will not melt. It will insulate. In fact, Eskimos in icy igloos can start a fire inside and remain with only light clothing due to the insulating properties of snow. Even survival manuals tell how to build a snow enclosure for protection.

Some will argue that deep snow can make deer more vulnerable to predators. True enough. Wolves and coyotes love a crust on the snow over which they can easily run down hoofed mammals. Nature can be cruel, but it is not our place to try to improve it. Animals like the snowshoe hare and weasels turn white for camouflage in snowy environs. Take this away, and they stick out like a sore thumb.

Scientists call this zone of leaf litter and dirt under snow the subnival zone. While temperatures above the snow might be thirty below zero, underneath it can be thirty two degrees or even above this freezing mark. Many small invertebrates which are food sources for larger forms of wildlife remain in this zone through winter. Ever see a large butterfly in March? It is probably a Mourning Cloak. The winged, adult forms of this

insect seeks out cracks under bark and go into a state of cryopreservation, only to emerge when they can catch the first warming rays of sun in early spring. Most likely they are the first butterflies you see each year, dark with yellow margins on their wings.

Rabbits love a tall layer of snow. They can walk atop it and nibble at stems and twigs normally beyond their reach. Animals and plant life cannot be separated. Not only does a good snowpack give protection from wildfires, a slow spring melt is almost as good as drip irrigation for plants. Without snow, many plants freeze and just burn out. Of course, there is no ignoring that some folks thrive on winter snow for sport. So, each year, don't cry and whine about it. Embrace it for what it is: an integral part of Wisconsin and other northern ecosystems that is life-affirming and indispensable. 🌿

Denny Murawska has been publishing his works since high school. His outdoor columns have appeared in The Week news for many years, as well as Wishigan Midwest Outdoors, and the wacky UP magazine. His church is the pine cathedral gracing our unique Driftless Area he calls home. Owner and operator of Angler's Art Fish Taxidermy at [www.aa-taxidermy.com](http://www.aa-taxidermy.com)

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## Fox Valley Retriever Club

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**TOM MUELLER**

# A Foundation for Success

## *Training the young waterfowl retriever*

Last fall I received an email from a Fox Valley Retriever Club member that joined earlier that spring. It was a reply to an email I sent to check on how his retriever was doing. I knew his training had been somewhat sporadic. He replied he only took her duck hunting once and said it did not go well. He told me he'd been mostly hunting pheasants since. Having previously heard stories about young, high energy retrievers on their first hunt, he did not need to explain. The dog at that time was 11 months old. In a perfect world an 11-month old retriever going on its first duck hunt should be trained well enough to handle that excitement.

Of course, it's not a perfect world. In subsequent emails he did tell me what went wrong on that first hunt. In turn I gave him lessons and drills for him and his dog to work on as his time permitted over the winter. He's going to rejoin the club, which should make his training go smoother and easier and make his next hunting season less frustrating

and more successful.

Most Fox Valley Retriever Club members are interested in training their retriever for waterfowl hunting. I would be willing to bet that most of those new retriever owners have never put any thought into what a waterfowl retriever should know and what skills it should have. I won't argue that getting their pup to retrieve and getting it obedience trained are the top priorities on their training "to do list." But what other skills should be on that list? Is there even a list of skills that a trained waterfowl retriever should know? I've never seen an actual list so we're going to start one.

First and foremost a young retriever should deliver a bird or dummy to hand. Believe it or not, most novice trainers inadvertently teach their pups and young dogs to drop the dummy. Taking steps to encourage a puppy to hold onto a dummy goes a long way toward the goal of delivering to hand. Secondly, obedience is of paramount importance for a working retriever. A waterfowl dog must



*An asset for any waterfowl hunter is a retriever that holds onto and delivers the bird to hand and sits patiently and quietly in the blind.*

be solid on obedience. Next on the list, and this goes along with obedience, a waterfowl dog must be steady. This means when the calls are blown and the guns are fired the dog sits where it was placed and doesn't "break" for a retrieve until sent. This must be drilled repeatedly.

With being trained to be steady the duck hunting retriever learns patience and to be quiet. Nothing is more

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 33**

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## MUELLER, FROM PAGE 32

annoying than a duck dog that bounces all over the blind or a duck boat whining and crying. Also, by learning steadiness, the dog becomes better at marking the fall so there is less time hunting for a dead bird. The dog moves right out to the area where the duck fell and finds the bird with little or no hunting.

Other skills to add to your retriever training list are retrieving through decoys both on land and water, water retrieves, conditioning it to being in and hunting from a boat or a blind, and of course, gun-fire. Teaching these skills to your hunting retriever takes a consistent amount of time and effort. It's best to start with training your pup to hold onto a dummy and obedience. When pretty proficient at that, one by one, teach and work on the others. Once you've gone through the list, practice, practice, practice! 🐾

Tom has been avidly training retrievers since the early 1980s. His passion has evolved into helping others train their retrievers through the Fox Valley Retriever Club so they can achieve the satisfaction with their dogs that he has had. For questions regarding retriever training or the Fox Valley Retriever Club contact Tom at winddancer.rtrvs@hotmail.com




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## MJ GUNSMITHING

# Shotgun Fitting

There are three specific measurements that are most important in any shotgun. The measurements are drop at comb, drop at heel and length of pull. Research and experimentation have shown that these three measurements can greatly affect shotgun shooting success.

Too many people pick up a shotgun and struggle. They immediately blame the gun and think they need to buy something new. In all reality, all that is needed is a little bit of fitting to the gun to help them succeed.

Length of Pull is the distance from the middle of the recoil pad to the trigger. A stock that is too long may catch under the arm pit or drag on the lower shoulder. It will feel uncomfortable and awkward and can markedly delay the fast execution of a shot. On the other hand, a stock that is too short may deliver more recoil to the shoulder and cheek.

Since most shotguns have no rear sights, unlike rifles, the shotgunner sights along a plane from breech to barrel muzzle to target. In effect, the shooter's eye is the rear sight. The amount of drop at the comb is extremely important in its effect on good or poor shooting. The comb is where you place the stock against your cheek, often referred to as the "cheek-kweld." Should the comb be too low, the shooter's eye will be too low when the gun is properly cheeked, and the gun will throw the charge below the mark. If the comb stands too high, the impact of the charge will consistently be above the target. In addition, the shooter must place his cheek against the comb of the stock at the same spot and in the same manner on each successive shot. Otherwise, the shooter will be erratic, sometimes shooting under his target and sometimes over.

The drop at heel measurement is just as important to good hunting as is drop at the comb. Drop at heel is the distance from the top of the barrel or rib to the top edge of the buttstock. Drop at heel contributes a great deal to proper gun alignment and, if excessive, will cause the recoil to be more noticeable. A 1 5/8 inch drop at the comb and a 2 1/2 inch drop at the heel will prove correct for at least 95 percent of shooters. 🏆

If you think that you need to be fitted to a shotgun, bring it into MJ Gunsmithing and we will help you out.

## LUBA, FROM PAGE 2

Try a smaller lure. Bass can see quite well and normally feed by sight. I've caught them on a one-inch Falls Minnow panfish jig (though not intentionally). That jig is certainly difficult to see in the water. Baits like Strike King's Bitsy Jigs are great for this type of finesse spring bassing. They are smaller, and they land much lighter.

Always make sure you have a throwback lure rigged to zip right back if you miss a bite. A different look works; just size it to

the conditions.

Remember, when the bass are ultra shallow, they are anxious, geared to spawn and want to get back to the safety of cover and deeper water as soon as possible. Be as motion- and noise-free as possible. You might be amazed at what comes out of that skinny spring water. 🏆

Tom Luba is a freelance writer and bass fishing fan from New London, Wisconsin. Tom fishes as much as he can and never tires of setting the hook.

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STUART WILKE

## Concealed Carry

### Automatic knives are legal, practical, collectible alternative

Shorty's Shooting Sports in West Allis has greatly expanded its line of automatic and spring assisted knives. What began last year with a small selection of good quality automatics, has expanded to include introductory, excellent and very high quality collectible knives.

"A lot of people are uncomfortable carrying a concealed carry firearm, or don't perceive the need for one on an every day basis," Mike "Shorty" Govas, owner of Shorty's Sporting Goods noted. "An automatic knife is something that you can find a use for practically every day, like cutting open boxes. A good auto can be a life saver: in the event of a car accident, it can be quickly opened and used to cut yourself- or someone else - free from a seatbelt. Some of our knives have glass breakers on them. If you're trapped in a car, breaking the glass may be your only way out. A good knife is also a viable self-defense tool."

As mentioned, Shorty's sells a variety of automatic and spring assisted knives. And, yes, automatic - also known as "switchblade" - knives are legal in Wisconsin and have been for several years. Among automatic knives are those that have blades that spring from the front of the handle, hence the term "Out-the-Front" (OTF) to describe them, and side openers. Side openers are just that: the blade springs from the side of the handle. Classic Italian stilettos are probably the side folder that most people are familiar with.



*Shorty has greatly expanded his line of spring assisted and automatic knives. They come in a variety of blade styles, platforms and price points. Some examples are, from left to right, the Kershaw spring assisted side opener; Pro-Tech automatic side opener; and the Cobrattec out-the-front automatic.*

On a side note - no pun intended - while many consider the Italian stiletto to be the coolest looking of automatic knives, they are, unfortunately, among the least practical. Their locking mechanisms are not the strongest and their blades not always of the best steel. Despite these issues, they remain

highly desirable. Like many highly desirable products, there are many cheap imitations of famous-maker Italian switchblades sold by unscrupulous sellers on websites and elsewhere. Buyer beware.

The third type of automatic knife are those that are "spring assisted." Some years ago, clever entrepreneurs found a way around goofy, 1950s' era switchblade laws. A switchblade was generally defined as a spring-operated knife that was activated by a button on the handle. Well, what would happen if instead of a button on a handle, you put a peg on the blade which, with a gentle nudge, sprung open the blade? Eureka! You'd have a perfectly legal "switchblade" that opened just as fast, if not faster, than the switchblades of yore. Kershaws are among the best of these, and are available at Shorty's.

Are any of the various types of automatic knives - OTFs, side openers, or spring assisted - better than another? Probably not. An OTF may be more susceptible to collecting lint in its action if carried in a pocket. That problem is solved by occasionally taking the knife apart and cleaning it. You could also argue that an OTF can be brought into play quicker because you can wrap your entire hand around it and activate the blade. With a spring assisted or side opener, the hand needs to make room for the blade to spring from the side of the handle.

Among the very best of automatic knives

are those made in America by Pro-Tech. Pro-Tech employs CNC machining, wire EDM, laser cutting, and other high-tech processes in the manufacture of their knives. Most knife components are made inside the Pro-Tech facility from bars of aluminum, billets of hand forged Damascus, sheets of steel and titanium, etc., and sharpened, inspected, assembled and packaged in-house by highly skilled employees.

"You can really feel the quality of a Pro-Tech," Shorty said. "If you want a really good automatic, one that will last for generations and is of heirloom quality, get a Pro-Tech." He added that they are also very collectible. Shorty sells Pro-Tech OTFs and side openers in a variety of sizes, materials and prices points, ranging from about \$125 to \$500.

If you're looking for an every day, good quality work knife, Shorty carries the CobraTec line of OTFs. CobraTec knives are double action, so the blade is opened and retracted by the same switch. CobraTec knives have smooth mechanisms and quality blades. They are extremely affordable, ranging in price from about \$75 to \$150, and carry a life-time warranty.

Shorty has a variety of quality knives for sale at his West Allis shop. Check them out.



Stuart Wilke is an *On Wisconsin Outdoors* editor and long-time contributor. He can be reached at [mail.onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:mail.onwisconsinoutdoors.com).

#### FLORCZAK, FROM PAGE 3

them in hot water and uses a wire brush to remove rust and other debris. He also makes certain that hooks are sharp.

Regardless of the species you'll be targeting, it's always nice to have plenty of artificial baits, including shallow running baits, slow-sinking baits and deep divers, spinner baits, Rapalas and lures that have been successful in the past. Separate them by purpose in snap-lock plastic containers. Be systematic and consider color-coordinating them to suit your preference.

Before starting the fishing season, make sure your gear includes a reliable net, a stringer and polarized sunglasses.

Spend a couple extra hours now preparing for the open water season. It can pay dividends once the ice melts and the fish start biting. 🐟

Tyler Florczak is a sports and outdoors editor for the Chetek Alert newspaper. He is a writer, photographer and videographer. His 182" whitetail buck harvested in 2015 was accepted into the Boone & Crockett Club and featured in several outdoor magazines.

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## Summer Sporting Clays

### *Practice now, fewer misses during fall seasons*

With the September early waterfowl and small game seasons right around the corner, now is the time to get in some Sporting Clays practice. No other clay target game gives you the variety of shots as a round of sporting clays does. Honing those wing shooting skills now will pay off in heavier game bags this fall.

Sporting clays got its start in England around 1900. English shooters needed a way to duplicate the same shots they encountered during driven hunts, waterfowl, or "walk-up" shooting. The various angles of a round of sporties did the job. Sporting clays arrived in the US around 1980, and the rest is history.

A typical round of sporting clays consists of 50 targets, mostly thrown in pairs. A "true pair" is a pair of targets thrown at the same time. A "report pair" has the second target thrown after the first one has been fired at. The "report" of the gun signals the release of the second target. Targets simulate everything from crossing birds to springing teal and running rabbits. The trick is to lean to "move, mount and shoot" in one fluid motion. Courses often change up target presentations during league shooting to stay challenging.

Shotguns and loads: Probably 75% of shooters use over/under shotguns. An open choke for the first shot, and a slighter tighter choke for follow up shots is a fairly

common set up. Semi-auto shotguns offer less choke selection, but absorb more recoil. Gun fit is critical for sporting clays. When engaging fast pairs of targets, everything needs to line up!

SKB makes some excellent dedicated sporties guns with adjustable stocks. The 90TSS over/under and RS300 semi-auto for example. I actually had the chance to try a 90TSS at the gun club during a gun testing event. I was very impressed. The RS300 Sporting model has a hybrid gas system that greatly reduces recoil. If I were going to shoot sporting clays in a league, I honestly think I would upgrade to a dedicated sporties gun.

For ammunition, most shooters use 1 ounce or 1 1/8 ounce loads of 8 shot. I suggest leaving the high velocity or handicap trap loads at home. This is one time those low cost shells, loaded with soft shot, will work just fine.

Sporties are available all over the state, a couple of my favorite places to shoot are Wern Valley and McMiller Sportsman's Center. One of the biggest summer sporting clays shoots is sponsored by Safari

Club International. The SCI event will be held August 10 at The Highlands in Cascade, WI. Safari Club International does a lot of good pro-hunting and pro-shooting work. One example would be the \$178,000 used to build state-of-the-art shotgun, rifle and archery ranges at the Long Lake Boy Scout Camp. The SCI also lobby for your right to hunt on both a state and national level. Even if the furthest "safari" you will ever take is to Horicon Marsh, they still can use your support. I've personally shot the course at The Highlands, and it's world class. For more information of the shoot, contact SCI or The Highlands at 902-528-8848

So dust off the shotgun you hunt with, and invest in a round or two of sporting clays. Yes, for informal practice with friends, your favorite hunting shotgun will be just fine. The time to swing on feathered targets will be here before you know it! 🦅

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.



## Sporting Clays Classic

**Tuesday, June 18**

**Wern Valley Sportsmen's Club**

S36 W29657 Wern Way, Waukesha, 53189

*This event benefits children and adults with disabilities who attend ARCh Camp Pow Wow!*

### Participants will enjoy:

- 50-target sporting clays course
- Awards
- Silent auction
- Post-shoot appetizers
- Raffles
- Cocktails
- Lunch - Catered by Roberts' Specialty Meats

**Register by: Tuesday, June 11**

✉ archoffice@archchangeslives.org  
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Association for the Rights of Citizens with handicaps  
[www.archchangeslives.org/arch-clays-classic](http://www.archchangeslives.org/arch-clays-classic)



### SCHWEIK, FROM PAGE 2

changes or ledges and pockets, all of which are very good starting points when searching out possible walleye holding locations.

My standard tackle on a river system consists of a 6'10" to 7' 2" medium-light Elk River Rod and medium spinning reel spooled with 8# test monofilament. For lures I use a 1/16th to 1/4 ounce lead head jig with a fathead minnow or a plastic tail or a small to medium crankbait like a Rapala or Flicker Shad.

Brighter colors in the stained river water including yellow, orange, chartreuse, and white are most often my choice. When run-

ning crankbaits, firetiger, blue and orange, and chartreuse and silver provide the lure plenty of flash necessary to grab the attention of hungry walleyes.

When launching on a river system, remember these three things: current, temperature, and structure. Put these three factors to work for you, follow a few guidelines, and you may be coming home with the best catch of your life. 🐟

Phil is the owner of Hooksetters Guide Service in central Wisconsin and Hookset Adventures in Eagle River, which keeps him on the water 200 days a year. He can be reached at [pschweik@dwave.net](mailto:pschweik@dwave.net), [hooksetters.biz](mailto:hooksetters.biz), 715-693-5843 or on Facebook at Phil Schweik.





Capt. Lee shows off a 22 pound Lake Trout captured on a recent spring outing.

#### HAASCH, FROM PAGE 15

be one of those special fishing seasons, and Algoma is the port for not only numbers of fish, but big fish too.

Experience for yourself the great fishery that Lake Michigan has to offer. And if you want BIG fish, check out Algoma. For charter information or fishing reports visit my website at: [www.FishAlgoma.com](http://www.FishAlgoma.com) or call 1-888-966-3474.

From Capt. Lee and the crew aboard the Grand Illusion 2, good luck and good fishing! 🎣

Capt. Lee Haasch is a charter captain out of Algoma, WI. He has over 45 years of Great Lakes angling experience and has been instructing anglers for over 30 years with education seminars and timely freelance articles in outdoor publications.

#### FERRYVILLE, FROM PAGE 18

**May 17 – 18 is Rummage** Along the River 70 Mile Garage Sale. Unique chance to shop and buy “manly” things like boats, motors, boots, fishing gear, hunting gear, clothes, kids toys, animal mounts that other people do not want any more, antiques, Christmas in May items, on & on. Stoddard, Genoa, Bad Axe, Victory, De Soto, Ferryville, Lynxville, Seneca and Mt. Sterling are the villages who partner to do this. It is a blast.

**Sportsman's Bar & Grill** - Ferryville is under new ownership. Jerry Bekkum opened the Sportsman's on April 1 and it is a fabulous spot to have some down time and great food. Welcome Jerry and his team to Ferryville. Long time favorites – Wooden Nickel Saloon and Swing Inn always have the welcome mat out too and at the Swing Inn – you just might get a chance to say “hi” to resident ghost “Blue Moon”. She has been active again and we are not sure what she is up to.

The Ferryville Boat Launch is back in operation after high water for several days. Now back to normal. Time to get the fishing gear and your favorite boat out and headed to fishing on the Mississippi River. Stop at Cheapo Depot for bait and....supplies. Welcome all. 🎣



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## FOSS, FROM PAGE 16

education are immensely important toward a successful field experience for any hunter, and so we look ahead to September.

For those of you in 2019 who have received or plan on receiving that precious Wisconsin bear harvest tag, plan your hunt now; don't wait until the season is looming. Take time, read the rules and regulations, and watch videos introducing the intelligent, extraordinary animal you will be pursuing. In-depth research is just as important for hunters who are depending on a black bear guide service to eventually provide you with a realistic, ethical opportunity to fill that tag as it is for the solo hunter.

Where to start? Word of mouth, internet searches, and direct calls to multiple guide services will hasten the learning curve, especially for beginners, and reveal possible red flags. Ask questions, and of highest importance, request a reference list. A request for the names and contact numbers of a few clients from the recent past, including hunting clients that were not successful, is not only appropriate, it's imperative.

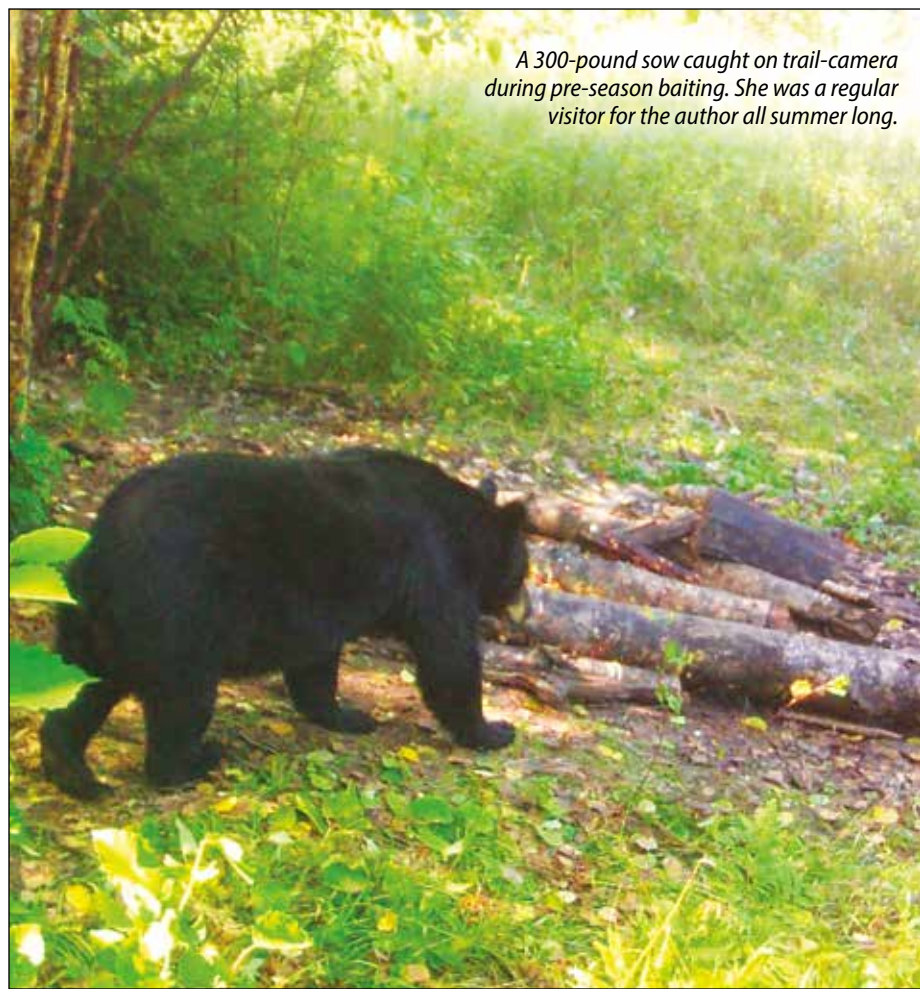
If a professional guide claiming expertise in his promotional material cannot or will

not give you a reference list, I suggest politely ending the conversation and continuing the search elsewhere. After-all, the wait for the harvest tag averages eight years, and the season is gone too soon.

Another research question that should be addressed is when the guide begins pre-season baiting. Any station that has been baited for two months or more, which is necessary to bring bears coming habitually by September, will have well-defined trails entering the bait area. If you're satisfied with their answer, inquire about making a preseason trip to personally help bait and observe. If the answer is "no," that's another red flag. Ask too about trail camera evidence, in particular shots captured within two weeks of the season opener. A reputable guide will share photos or videos; it helps build preseason excitement for both guide and hunter.

I hope this helps. And remember, it's not the size of the animal, it is the experience of the hunt. Good hunting. 🍀

Mike Foss was born and raised in Washburn, Wisconsin (Bayfield County) and spent many years as an accomplished bear and deer guide before retiring. Foss has written an OWO column for 10 years.



*A 300-pound sow caught on trail-camera during pre-season baiting. She was a regular visitor for the author all summer long.*



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## Explore Wisconsin



# Summer Fun in Northwest Wisconsin

If you're looking for summer fun, look no further than Northwest Wisconsin! We're a top-notch destination for outdoor enthusiasts starting with a new season of fishing on rivers and creeks mighty and small, thousands of inland lakes, and of course, one Great (we call it Superior) lake. Or, leave the rod behind if you choose and simply relax and boat, kayak, or canoe on the water of your choice.

ATV and UTV trails, fat tire biking, hiking and beautiful camping facilities await you. So does some of the coolest events in the Midwest... by the scores. Let's start by marking your calendars with these two: May 16-18, experience the Chequamegon Bay Birding & Nature Festival on the south shore of Lake Superior at the peak of the spring migration in Ashland. On June 15, participate or watch and enjoy the inline marathon and ALMT half-marathon on beautiful Madeline Island. Golf anyone? We have more great courses than you could shake a club at.

When outdoor fun makes you hungry, find yourself at one of Northwest Wisconsin's super clubs and enjoy a unique dining experience. Brandy old-fashioned, relish trays, cheese curds, fish fries and steaks are some of the area's specialties. Wisconsin's Gemutlichkeit will shine through when you visit a beautiful trailside or lakeside lodging facility. Whether you like rustic cabins, quaint cottages, full-service resorts, or something out of the ordinary you'll find a place to stay tailored to every budget and need.

**Connect with us individually to see what world class events are coming up in May and June. We will see you...right here!**

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Order a print version of our Outdoor & Trail Guide or the Northwest Wisconsin ATV/UTV Corridor Map by calling 715-416-3256 or view the publications online at [northwest-wisconsin.com](http://northwest-wisconsin.com). We look forward to hosting you this summer!



## SUZETTE CURTIS

## Recipes with Suzette

### Brown Butter Magic



One of my newest kitchen tricks is cooking with brown butters. Butter takes on sort of a nutty flavor when it slowly browns, and the taste is truly delicious. We have been craving fish in our household lately, so I thought I'd share the Perch recipe I made last week along with a couple of our other favorites. Enjoy!

#### Brown Butter Perch

1 pound Perch Fillets	½ teaspoon Black Pepper
1 cup All Purpose Flour**	½ teaspoon Cayenne Pepper
1 teaspoon Salt	½ teaspoon Paprika
1 teaspoon Garlic Powder	3 T Butter
½ teaspoon Onion Powder	

In a shallow bowl, mix together flour and all spices. Press Perch fillets into flour mixture until fully coated; set aside.

In a large skillet over medium temperature, heat butter until it begins to foam and take on a caramel brown color. Place coated fish fillets in skillet and cook 2 to 3 minutes per side until a light golden color.

Serve fish on platter drizzled with any remaining brown butter from pan.

\*\*I used All Purpose Gluten Free flour, and it turned out great!

#### Boiled Trout

2 pounds Trout Fillets	
2 quarts Water	1 teaspoon Salt
1 Carrot, chopped	½ teaspoon Peppercorns
1 Onion, chopped	½ teaspoon Parsley
1 Bay Leaf	¼ teaspoon Thyme

Place Trout in Dutch Oven and add remaining ingredients. Bring to boil, reduce heat to gentle boil and cook 15 to 20 minutes breaking up fillets into bite-sized pieces. Remove fish and serve with melted butter.

#### Coconut Whitefish

1 ½ lb Whitefish Fillets	½ teaspoon Salt
2 Ripe Tomatoes, skinned & chopped	½ teaspoon Oregano
1 Large Onion, sliced	¼ teaspoon Pepper
1 Red Pepper, sliced	3 T Butter
1 clove Garlic, mined	1 can Coconut Cream

Preheat oven to 350°. Place half of tomatoes, onion and red pepper in bottom of greased baking dish. Lay fish fillets atop vegetables and sprinkle with garlic, salt, pepper and oregano. Place remaining vegetables over fish and top with thin slices of butter. Bake, uncovered 30 minutes. Remove from oven and pour coconut cream over all. Return to oven and bake an additional 15 minutes before serving.

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. Contact her at [recipesbysuzette@onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:recipesbysuzette@onwisconsinoutdoors.com).

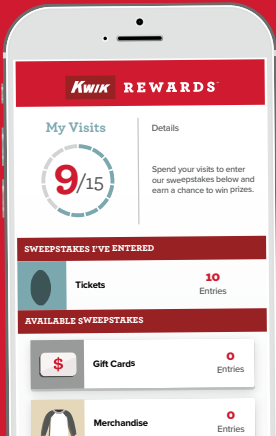




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