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On Wisconsin *Outdoors*



[SPECIAL]
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experience declines as
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Early Season River Bonanza

Are you ready for some action?

It's spring in Wisconsin and that means river fishing season is upon us. Around the end of March or early April, water temperatures are starting to rise and rivers are opening up. As the ice disappears, walleyes, bass, crappies, northern pike and catfish appear.

Fishing in the spring can be fast and furious. Or, you may have to move around and work for your catch. Many anglers will target deep holes in the river system or areas below dams, and those are great locations to start the search. The good thing about places like dams and deeper holes is that they are generally large areas that will hold numerous species of fish.

Current flow is critical this time of the year. I like to start targeting water depths of about 16 to 20 FOW (Feet of Water) right on a current seam. Once on the water I look for a location with the proper depth and slack water adjoining some sort of current break. These locations are usually easy to find by watching the water flow or locating debris that may be sitting on the surface.

When my location is set, I anchor my boat and run slip bobbers off the side of it with no current. I set the slip bobbers about one foot off the bottom and bait them up with a fathead minnow on a plain hook and sinker. I then cast or vertically work lead head jigs on the current side of the boat and work them right on the bottom. The lead head jigs are also tipped with fathead minnows and a slow retrieve is almost essential to get the finicky and



OWO writer and guide Phil Schweik with a good walleye

sluggish early season walleyes to strike.

Early spring brings lots of opportunities to catch a variety of fish. In fact, you may find yourself catching some of your best fish of the season! 🎣

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BY TOM LUBA

Three Shots at Early Season Success

Get the jump on open water opportunities

Early season angling can be infuriating. Yet, being in the right place at the right time can make the day much warmer.

First stop after ice-out should be the closest river that harbors a walleye run. Flows like the Fox at Green Bay, the Wolf in north central Wisconsin, the Wisconsin, the Oconto, the Peshtigo and the Mississippi, among others, qualify.

Walleyes move toward dams to spawn. One exception is the Wolf. Unencumbered by dams, the walleye use a number of shallow, warming marshes upriver from Lake Winnebago.

The simple jig and minnow (weight based on current strength) continues to catch river fish every spring. A lot of fishermen drift areas, vertical jigging to intercept moving fish. Those who anchor still find the legendary three-way Wolf River Rig productive. The general principle is to find current breaks where the fish stop on their journey. For example, on the Fox at DePere, we regularly fished a larger concrete cable stanchion. The fish just got used to stacking in the current break behind the rock.

Standard river approach is to fish the slack side of the river when the fish are moving up and the current side after the spawn, which carries them back home. Wolf

walleye logic was once explained to me quite simply: If you are on the river around April 12, you should be catching walleye.

April, however, offers more than just walleye.

Most people start thinking panfish only when they come in to spawn. In the case of crappie, you could be missing out. The papermouths make shallow movements to feed well before they spawn. As shallow weeds bloom, the food cycle emerges. And the crappie follow.

We found a school of crappie shallow in mid-April one year and I swear it held every fish in the lake. I flipped a shallow slip bobber rig near an emerging weed bed. While I was getting a minnow on rod two, the float on rod one ducked under. From there on, it was fish after fish!

And, when the bite did slack off, switching from a plain hook to a small Slo-Poke jig got it going again. We simply reeled it slowly until it started moving up toward the bobber, then let it slowly wobble back down.

With bass regulations now opened to early catch and release, it provides anglers with an excellent opportunity to take advantage of bass movements. You can't "harvest" bass from most waters, but warming water in April can cause a good tug on your line.



Early season bass fishing can be a bit on the cool side, but finding a hotspot can warm things right up.

One shallow lake close to where I worked was open early for largemouth for several seasons. The lake had numerous stumps and laydowns covering the shoreline and early April sun brought a large number of fish into the warming wood. And they were hungry.

I worked with another fisherman who had never fished a bass jig and pork frog before. After one trip he bought as many jigs as he could find. And caught fish all month.

In April, look for three things for bass. Small lakes, shallow water and good hideouts. Early weed growth can help, but wood can be king. It warms quickly and the bass can bunch up on it. It's my first choice. If there is grass nearby, so much the better, especially when the spawning season commences.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

DAVE DUWE

The Season of Change

From ice to open water panfishing

Early spring is when March comes in like a lion and leaves like a lamb. This is also the time of year when the ice disappears, and open water comes back! This transition turns on the panfish to actively feed as they prepare to spawn. March and April are the time for late ice crappies and shallow water bluegills.

The last ice period in early spring is some of the best fishing and possibly better than first ice. The fish are bigger and are preparing for their spring spawning ritual making them far more aggressive. Pre-dawn and dusk and night are the best times to catch late ice crappies. At these times they are feeding on small minnows and zoo plankton. At night crappies move into more open water where they are notorious for suspending throughout the water column. They will school up in large numbers and wander throughout the lake feeding.

Remember late ice is not always safe ice. It can be thick, but honey combed and very soft. Make sure you are well aware of conditions before you go out, especially in dark or low light conditions.

For schooling crappies, I will try to fish three poles which is the maximum allowed in the state of Wisconsin. Two of the poles are dead sticks and the third is my jigging hand line. Dead sticking is basically letting the pole sit and having the active minnow do all the work. This presentation is similar to summertime slip bobber fishing. I use a small Thill bobber and a small treble hook size #16 with a small split shot. I position one of the dead sticks with bait about one foot off bottom and the other with the bait two to three feet off bottom. This targets a larger area on the water column. Of course, when using a locator, you will be able to see the exact depth and can adjust your presentation accordingly. My jigging rod has a heavier ice jig, like a Lindy Fat Boy in a glow color tipped with spikes or wax worms.

As the ice begins to move away from the shoreline, open water shallow fishing begins. This is when I switch from crappie fishing to blue gills. The early spring active blue gills are in less than three feet of water. I will search for the warmest water



Late ice crappie and shallow water bluegills can make for fast action and great eating.

on the lake. I choose the backs of bays, channels and soft, muddy bottoms. The softer bottom typically provides more vegetation which serves as both food and shelter for the bluegills. For bait I like to use either leaf worms or wax worms. The presentation is a small, fixed spring bobber and a small ice jig. I like the tear drop ice jig which provides a vertical presentation that seems to be preferred by the bluegills. Use the smallest bobber that you can that will keep the bait off bottom. The bobber will rarely go under; watch for the slightest movement or twitch that indicates the fish has bit and set the hook. This time of year is typically some of the clearest water of the year. You'll want to use four-pound test and a rod and reel that enables long casts, so you aren't in a position to spook the fish.

Last year some of the best early spring bluegill fishing was fishing in front of a small stream running into the lake which eroded the ice forty to fifty feet away from shore. The big eight-to-nine-inch bluegills were right on the edge of the ice and accessible to shore anglers.

The transition from hard ice to no ice can be very productive fishing. When bluegills and crappie are in pre-spawn, they are vulnerable to over harvesting so keep only what you need. 🐟

Dave Duwe is the owner and operator of Dave Duwe's Guide Service, specializing in the lakes of Walworth County, Wisconsin.



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RON STRESING

The Lake Trout

Lake Michigan's Comeback Kid

It's easy to take the lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) we catch out of Lake Michigan today for granted. Truth is by about 1950 or so, they were virtually extinct in Lake Michigan. A combination of sea lampreys that entered from the St. Lawrence Seaway and over exploitation by commercial fishing had reduced numbers to that point. A stocking program by the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USF&WS) and a combination of net barriers, trapping and poisoning of sea lamprey larvae restored a viable lake trout population. Annual stocking is still needed, as natural reproduction by the stocked fish was seen as negligible, but we are seeing some natural reproduction and recruitment of lake trout in Lake Michigan.

A few lake trout facts: The 1946 Wisconsin State record laker is from Lake Superior and weighed 42 pounds. Lake trout, along with brook trout, are actually members of the same family of fishes as Arctic char. While Lake Michigan has one strain of lake trout, Lake Superior has two: The common or Lean Lake trout that we have in Lake Michigan, and the Siscowet or "fatty" lake trout.

Lake trout stocked by the USF&WS have clipped fins. Charts



The author looks ahead to the days of naturally reproducing Lake Trout in Lake Michigan.

are available to figure out when the lake trout an angler harvested was stocked into the lake. Lakers are normally stocked over deep water reefs in the open lake, but due to Covid-19 concerns, the 2020 stockings were done from shore. Wisconsin recently restored the season and two-fish limit on lake trout. An angler is now legally

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Septic Rejuvenating Specialists

An established, cost-effective, environmentally-safe alternative

Replacing a failed septic system can cost thousands of dollars and often isn't necessary, according to Mike Donskey, whose wife Marcy owns Septic Rejuvenating Specialists, LLC. In many cases the existing system can be saved with the Terralift process. "A new septic system can cost from \$5,000 to \$20,000, or even more," Mike said. "It can take days to build a new septic system and more time and money to re-landscape the areas ruined during its construction. Terralift

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Septic Rejuvenating Systems has over 20 years of success with their enhanced Terralift process. The company can typically renovate a septic system in a day's time at an average cost of \$1,800 which includes a three- to five-year warranty. Cost and warranty is based on each system's specific condition and situation. References and testimonials are readily available upon request. The company is headquartered in La Farge, Wisconsin, and serves the states of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa.

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Explore Wisconsin



SPOTLIGHT | ALGOMA

Are You Ready for Our Special Spring Battles?

The start to 2021 was a mild one with above average temperatures, only to see below zero thermometer readings in February. Mother Nature has funny ways to shake us up and this might just be one of those ways to get us to shake our way out of the 2020 slump. I'm ready! Ice fishing really picked up last month and now is the time to jump into late winter and early spring fishing mode.

March and April mean Steelhead fishing in the streams and lots of them. It is not uncommon for seasoned anglers to catch and release a limit of fish on a regular basis. Did you ever have the opportunity to have a Steelhead (Rainbow Trout) smack your bait, bend your pole totally in half and scream out drag on your reel as it dances downstream in the rapids? If you haven't, this just has to be near the top of your bucket list. There is nothing more exhilarating than doing battle, one on one, with a 12-pound Steelhead on light tackle.

Lake Michigan shoreline is also a hot area in March and April. Giant Brown and Trophy Lake trout are cruising the shallows, feeding on Gobies and giving anglers opportunities to cash in on some very tasty trout. This is a good time to troll for huge fish, particularly with light tackle with stick baits in 12 to 25 feet of water.

Algoma is open for business and fishing is only one part of what we have to offer. We are looking forward to a wide-open 2021 and our summer line-up of fishing tournaments, festivals, car shows and musical events are booked. We look forward to seeing all of you returning to visit.

Experience for yourself the great fishing 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 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. He has over 40 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.



Angling in the tributary streams to Lake Michigan in the early morning hours should be on everyone's bucket list.

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JERRY KIESOW

Fly-Fishing in Wisconsin

Spring, it's time to go Steelheading – eventually

I wonder what this March and/or April will bring weather-wise? We don't know right now because this piece is being written in January. One thing is almost certain, we will be steelheading sometime, one of these months, and it will be with a fly rod using flies, because that is what we do.

For someone who has never fished for steelies but does tie his/her own flies, I recommend starting out with the six patterns featured in this article – three streamers and three nymphs. The three I recommend are the relatively new Black and White, which has caught salmon and steelheads for me; the reliable Green Butt Skunk, which our daughter uses successfully for smallmouth bass because she likes the name; and the old Mickey Finn, which has caught a lot of fish and not only steelhead.

Start out by tying the Mickey Finn. It is a great fly that catches many species of fish, and only uses three materials – tinsel, yellow, and red deer tail, with thread and a hook, of course.

Next is the Green Butt Skunk. It is a little more involved. I use #8 salmon hooks and black thread. For the red tail I use hackle fibers. The bright green butt and black body are chenille. The black is ribbed with silver tinsel. The wing is white hair and it has a black collar, made by wrapping the hackle, twice.

Finally the black and white streamer which is made from silver tinsel, black chenille, black hackle, Pearl Krystal Flash, and black and white Guinea hen feathers. You can read how to tie it in the January/February 2018 issue of On Wisconsin Outdoors.

Tying the nymphs are a bit harder, because they are tied on smaller hooks. The Hot Butt is almost any dark colored



I recommend these six flies to begin with.

nymph with a florescent hot pink butt.

The recipe for the Prince can be found in many books and tied in many sizes. It is basically a trout lure. The one in the photo is a beadhead.

Al's pattern won't be found in any books. It goes like this: Start by slipping an orange beadhead over the crimped down barb of a number six streamer hook. Add two brown biots for the tail and shape the copper wire on the body. Tie in four rubber, orange legs, dub some dark brown dubbing, winding in-between the legs to help hold the legs in position. Tie in the orange wing case (I used the orange portion of a peanut butter granola bar wrapper) and bend



These are the boxes I carry when steelheading in spring. Yes, there are a lot of flies there. (Why else would I have 28 pockets in my vest?)

it over the top of the dubbing then tie it in just behind the bead with a few wraps and whip-finish. I have caught several steelheads by drifting it downstream to the fish.

That's it. Now, tie those and go steelheading – if the weather permits.

See you in the river.

Keep a good thought! 🍷

Jerry enjoys all aspects of the outdoors and shares them through his photos, words, and workshops. He has written two books, "Tales of The Peshtigo Putzer" and "Photos, Poems, and a Little Bit of Prose." They are available at Orange Hat Publishing, Amazon, and his website: www.jerrykiesowoc.com.



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WAYNE MORGENTHALER

Hardwater, Open Water

Spring on to big river perch and small stream trout

Winter is winding down and the ice is turning gray. One day the weather is freezing cold and the next day a T-shirt is plenty warm enough. Spring is approaching and fish, especially big slab crappies, can be found right under the ice come late afternoon.

One of the most effective fishing methods during this time of the year is to use a tip-down with a minnow set at about six to 10 feet. Limit walking around from hole to hole; the fish scare easy. If you are fishing deep lakes for crappies in March, a very consistent way of catching them is to use four-pound test line, a small bobber, a split shot about six inches up from a number 8 or 10 treble hook, and a pink bead above the hook. There's something about that little extra bit color that attracts them.

A great place to fish in early March is the Mississippi River. The perch are in spawning mode and as big as they get. River perch can run from one to two pounds and have gorgeous color. They bite on minnows, waxies, and spikes. You can locate them by paying attention to where other anglers are gathering or find someone who can point you in the right direction to fish. There are many good guides along the river, and they will greatly improve your chances of success.



Jim and Wayne with jumbo perch from the Mississippi

When water conditions allow fishing from a boat, I use eight-pound test and fish the bottom. The current will determine which weight to use to keep it down. I have had good luck with a pink mini-mite 1/32 ounce with weight about a foot above. I remove the plastic tail and attach a minnow or night crawler.

Nature is bursting to life in April and it is an excellent time to do some trout fishing with artificial baits. I like wading up small streams using a number three Panther Martin in yellow or gold. The water can be a little on the cold side so insulated waders



Early trout fishing in Richland County

are a must. Action can be fast and furious, especially if there is a hatch on.

I prefer fishing the afternoons when the sun is warming up the brown, grass-lined banks. My casts are usually towards the ends of pools and along the banks. On larger streams that are not wade-able, keep a low profile with little shadow to prevent spooking fish. I cast upstream and fish the opposite bank where there is current. Trout are extremely sensitive and letting them go correctly helps their survival. With that in mind, I pinch the Panther Martin's barbs to make for an easier release and use a smooth, knot-free landing net.

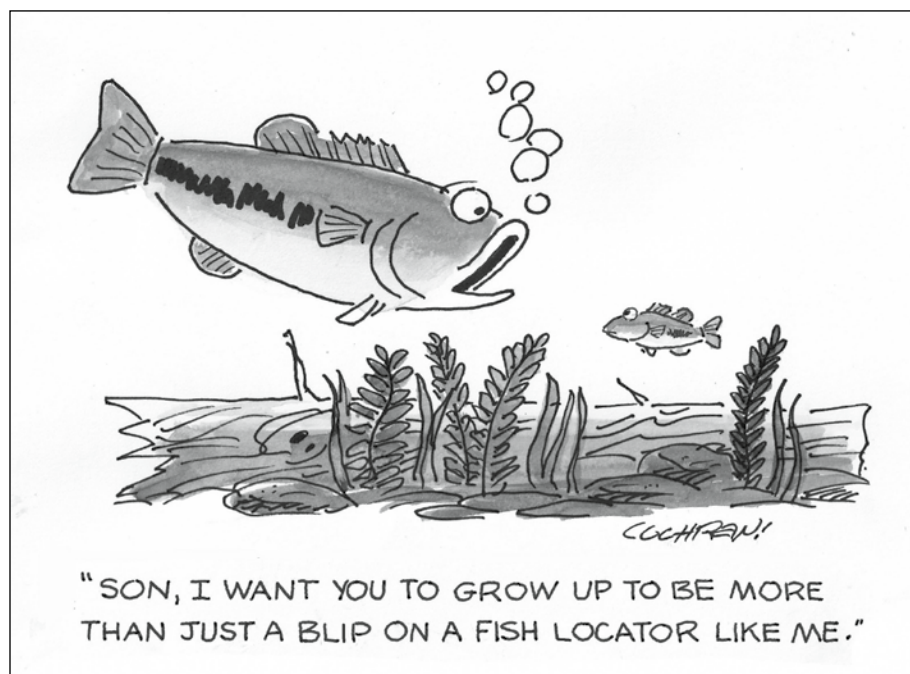
Spring is a wonderful time to enjoy the outdoors. As an added bonus, the fish are biting! 🎣

LUBA, FROM PAGE 2

If April water is still cooler, look for bass staging areas. Points and deeper water near potential spawning areas are good. Any cover on the points or drops can create attractive holding spots till the shallows warm.

Late March and April weather can vary from year to year. But knowing you have options on waters and species can turn the early season into a productive one. Make sure that you check local fishing regs so you are aware of any variations for your preferred waters. 🎣

Tom Luba prefers fishing for largemouth and smallmouth bass. But you don't have to twist his arm to chase down other species.



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DAN MOERICKE

An 'Up Nort' Report

The Old Bait and Switch

Bait and switch is an often illegal, age-old retail sales strategy. Put out a big splashy ad for something that looks good, maybe even too good to be true. Then, once you've got the customer within reach, show them something else. Something with different features, most likely pricier, and with a better profit margin. The old bait and switch has been used for generations.

The past couple ice fishing seasons I've adopted that strategy in my panfishing efforts. Often, panfishing success depends on drilling a lot of holes and covering a lot of water. There are lots of guys "hole hopping" out there, carrying their locator from hole to hole in search of fish. I'm one of them. But I'm the one who carries two rods at all times.

The first rod is my "bait" rod, normally rigged with a small jigging spoon such as a Kastmaster and tipped with a wax worm. If the fish are active and aggressive, that is all I'll need. The big advantage to this set-up is that you can get the lure down to the fish quickly, especially when fishing deep water. Also, the small treble hook increases the percentage of successful

hooksets. It's a little bit bigger bait and offers a lot of flash, which I believe brings fish in from a further distance.

There are days, however, when the customers will come in to look at the jigging spoon, but just won't buy it. That's where the second rod comes in. If I'm marking fish on my locator that refuse to hit the jigging spoon, I can quickly switch to my second rod to hopefully make them an offer they can't refuse.

My second rod - the "switch" - is more of a finesse presentation, typically 2# test line rigged with a small tungsten jig. I'll tip the jig with either PowerBait or Gulp. My absolute favorite PowerBait is the Wishbone. When threaded on the hook and jigged ever so slightly, I believe it strongly resembles a struggling wiggler. The fish can't seem to resist it. I've also had good success using the Gulp 1 Fish Fry.

The one drawback to the switch presentation is, because both the line and the jig are so light, it takes extra time to get the bait down to the fish. I'll sometimes put a sinker a foot or so above the jig to get the bait down faster. Of course, both rods are equipped with




My favorite bait/switch combo.

spring bobbers to detect the slightest of bites.

One more tip. When moving from hole - to - hole, I'll carry the rod's butt end - to - butt end to avoid having them get into a massive tangle. Experience has taught me that. You're welcome.

So, I'd recommend that on your next ice fishing excursion that you have two rods rigged and ready. One for the bait and another for the switch. And get your fish cooker ready.

Just sayin' 

Dan Moericke lives, fishes, and hunts in the Northwoods, occasionally actually catching a fish and tagging a buck. He is fortunate to have an understanding wife and a great group of buddies to share his days afield. On most days, he is able to remember where he parked his vehicle.

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DENNY MURAWSKA

Glide Crankbaits

When other lures fail

As a fish taxidermist, I have some unusual requests at times. Pet goldfish, giant clams, and dinosaur heads for kids are just a few. Well, the other day, I had a former client ask if I would paint some of his fishing lures. Chris Lambert of Washington is a tournament angler, and wanted the paint to be detailed with some taxidermy eyes as well. Sure, but I wondered why such detail was needed in a lure. He explained that these baits were all the rage, and he wanted them done right. "Glide" lures he called them. This did not register in the brain of this writer who is still trying to move forward from the days of plastic worms and the revolutionary Rapala. Fish do not change that much. Or do they?

In the bygone years before catch and release, fish did not build up a memory bank of how many times they had been suckered. Pun intended. You caught them, threw them in a pan, and ate them. Today though, drag a bucktail by a musky or jerk a Suick past a pike, and they may just yawn.

My buddy explained to me that a glide lure has a very unique action that can trigger strikes when other methods fail. Basically, these lures for larger game species are hard-bodied, jointed baits with no lip. Their design causes them to plane horizontally left and right in long, swooping crescents. This is not a mere wobble, it is something that really begs to be eaten. You can fish them by simply reeling them in like a crank bait, but the action is very different. When you see it, you know right away if you were a predatory fish, it would just enrage you. Reel and twitch is of course an option.



A twitch elicits a strong loop to the left or right. This is not a tight motion like "walking the dog." It is more like a planing board that goes in both directions.

Chris fishes the Columbia River much of the time, and is adamant that glide lures make an outstanding search bait. He claims you can pitch them into a spot that seems to hold no smallmouth, and suddenly big fish will rise to the occasion. He told me of many times that a fish will follow the lure, often alongside it, seeming to scrutinize the bait. Sometimes they bump it, without actually chomping down hard. In any event, they do appear to be checking out this easy meal. Chris uses a seven-inch size for big bass, both largemouth and smallmouth. Larger models can be had for pike and musky. I believe they would also be killers on barracuda ambushing sardines in the shallows, and many other saltwater species.

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 the unique Driftless Area he calls home. Owner and operator of Angler's Art Fish Taxidermy at www.aa-taxidermy.com

SPOTLIGHT | BAYFIELD COUNTY

Spring Fishing at its Finest

In March and April the Smelt from Lake Superior start coming into the shallows to get ready for the spawn. This brings a plethora of gamefish into the shallows for anglers to take advantage of. Brown Trout, Splake, Lake Trout, Coho Salmon, and Whitefish all follow these smelt into Chequamegon Bay and the shoreline from Washburn all the way to Port Wing.

In March, anglers will set up in anywhere from 10-40 feet and ice fish for them. Jigging spoons like Kastmasters and Swedish Pimples tipped with a minnow head work great along with tip-ups w/lake shiners. Once the ice melts (which generally happens in late March/early April) anglers will get their boats out and troll these same areas with planer boards. Crankbaits, stickbaits, and spoons all work well. Trolling in front of the many river mouths such as the Sioux, Onion, Flag, and Cranberry can be very effective. The shallows generally warm up the quickest in the spring so the best depths are usually 5-15 feet of water.

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SPOTLIGHT | HAYWARD

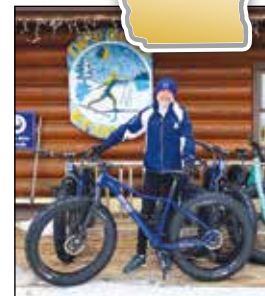
First Adventure on a Winter Fat Bike

As a worker at the Hayward Lakes Visitors & Convention Bureau information desk, I jumped at this opportunity to share my first adventure riding a winter fat bike.

I showed up at New Moon Bike & Ski and a bright young man named Elijah helped me get started. He showed me the bike, adjusted the seat for me, familiarized me with the various thumb levers, and snapped a couple pictures of me with my phone. The bike was a beautiful blue one, with tires as big around as my thighs.

I headed over to Hayward Area Memorial Hospital to try out the Gateway Trails. These five or so miles of trails were designed and built by the Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA) to give new riders an undaunting experience and provide experienced riders a chance to really go fast on a flow-style trail.

The bike trails at the hospital coexist with ski and snowshoe trails, so if you go there, take a minute to study the posted maps. Skiers must stay on ski trails, bikers on bike trails, and hikers and snowshoers on snowshoe trails. On the map below, bike trails are red, ski trails are blue, and snowshoe trails are green. All the trails are laid out brilliantly - no matter which kind of trail you're on or where you are, you almost always feel like



Matt Ostrander is ready to roll on his first fat tire bike adventure.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

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Explore Wisconsin



SPOTLIGHT | HURLEY

Springtime in Hurley

According to the calendar, spring arrives on March 21 every year. In Hurley, however, chances are the ground may still be covered in snow, and ice on the inland lakes is common place. If you're looking to have a unique springtime outdoor activity experience, look no further.

You could find yourself ice fishing on one of the many inland lakes. Always remember to be safe, ask at one of the local bait shops for the "unofficial" fishing report. If you prefer to stay on land, fishing the Montreal River may be exactly what you are looking for.

Snowmobiling continues in Iron County as long as the trails allow. Trail conditions are updated as needed and can be checked on our website www.hurleywi.com. Iron County does allow for ATVs/UTVs to have trail access as long as the temperatures are BELOW 32 degrees. Again, our website is your best resource for information.

Whitecap Mountain Resort will be hosting the Cor PowerSports series Saturday, March 27 and Sunday, March 28. Saturday and Sunday will be cross country racing all day utilizing the entire facility (snow permitting). There will be no hillcross or hillclimb races this season. We are having to use these events to get our minimum required cross country points events in.

Course routing will utilize as much of the Whitecap Resort as possible. Course will be in the four - five mile range. Exact course routing and layout will be finalized approximately two weeks prior to the event.

Whitecap has multiple lodging options available on site. To reserve lodging, go to www.whitecapresort.com or call 715-561-2227. For more event information visit

<https://corpowersports.com/schedule/whitecap/>

As temperatures warm up, the spring thaw fills our rivers and the waterfalls. This is the best time of year to view them. There are 19 waterfalls in and around the Hurley area. Most are located in remote, wild areas unspoiled by crowds. Some can be driven to while others require walking and a little bit of orienteering. All are worth the trip. To request a guide call our office at 715-561-4334.


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/restaurants specialize in fantastic food and friendly service.

Plan a future getaway and participate in a variety of events

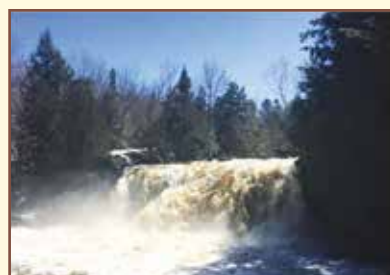
Memorial Day ATV/UTV Rally, Thursday, May 27 through Sunday May 30.

Come to Hurley for the LARGEST parade of ATV/UTVs you have seen. Ride the trails. Participate in the Poker Run and other events. Attempt the INFAMOUS Mud Pit. Registration and details at: www.hurleywi.com

Snake Hunt on the Gile Flowage, Saturday June 19

This annual Northern Pike fishing tournament brings anglers to the Gile Flowage for the chance at cash prizes. Sponsored by the North Pole Tavern. Watch for details on our website 

Join us soon in Hurley! www.hurleywi.com



keep exploring

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Hurley Wisconsin
www.hurleywi.com

STRESING, FROM PAGE 4

allowed two lake trout daily. I personally would like to see the two-fish limit and closed season made permanent. I have a self-imposed limit of two.

While some anglers blame lake trout for the past declines in the alewife forage base, Chinook salmon (which prefer alewives and target them as prey) are more likely to blame. Even Coho salmon are aggressive alewife feeders. I saw a good example of this the other day. We landed a two-and-a-half pound Coho that had just taken an eight-inch adult alewife. The salmon hit a lure - with the tail of an alewife sticking out of its mouth. Eating alewives are one of the reasons for the negligible natural reproduction. An enzyme called thiaminase found in alewives lowers the survival rates and viability of lake trout eggs. The thiamine deficiency complex caused by this is seen as a major reason for the lack of natural reproduction. Alewives also prey on larval stage lake trout. Lake trout tend to have a more diverse diet than salmon, eating more native forage fish like lake shiners, ciscos, and invasive round gobies.

With the combination of a lower alewife population and lake trout foraging on round gobies, etc., fisheries biologists are starting to see some natural reproduction in southern Lake Michigan. Reefs like the man-made reef in 55-feet of water off the Oak Creek power plant are helping provide spawning habitat.

I'm hoping for the day when we land a laker with no fin clips, and naturally spawned in Lake Michigan's waters. 

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

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BECKY YACKLEY

Snapshot Wisconsin Wildlife - Host a Camera!

The Wisconsin DNR has created a program to help manage wildlife and give you opportunities to see and share what you see in the woods and plains of Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin DNR's Snapshot Wisconsin program provides applicants a trail camera to capture images of Wisconsin wildlife. This program has great potential to not only help develop on the ground pictures (literally) of animal activity that can be used to assist in herd management, but there are many ways you can enjoy this program at home, in school, and take part in helping to give an accurate picture of Wisconsin wildlife.

If you head to the web page you can find links to the different parts of the program (see below). You can apply to host a camera in one of 6,000+ survey blocks on private and public land. They will send you a camera and give you free training. This program has already played a role in the elk herd in Wisconsin. More information means more opportunities for hunters as well as wildlife enthusiasts who want to see what's outside in Wisconsin.

Using the data gathered from these trail cameras, there is an online database that can be searched. You can look up species by county, see timelines and graphs, and get an understanding of

what animals are doing in your neck of the woods.

Additionally, you can participate in classifying animals in images on the online crowdsourcing platform. There are currently over 11,000 members and over 28,400 classifications! Aside from playing a role in managing the wildlife in your state, why take part in this program?

As a parent, I think the educational output of Snapshot Wisconsin is the biggest reason to take part! There is a page dedicated to classroom activities, and you don't have to be a teacher or host a camera to take part. You can download flashcards and take part in activities from your own home! Great things to do with your grandkids, siblings, or classmates during the winter months.

Links:

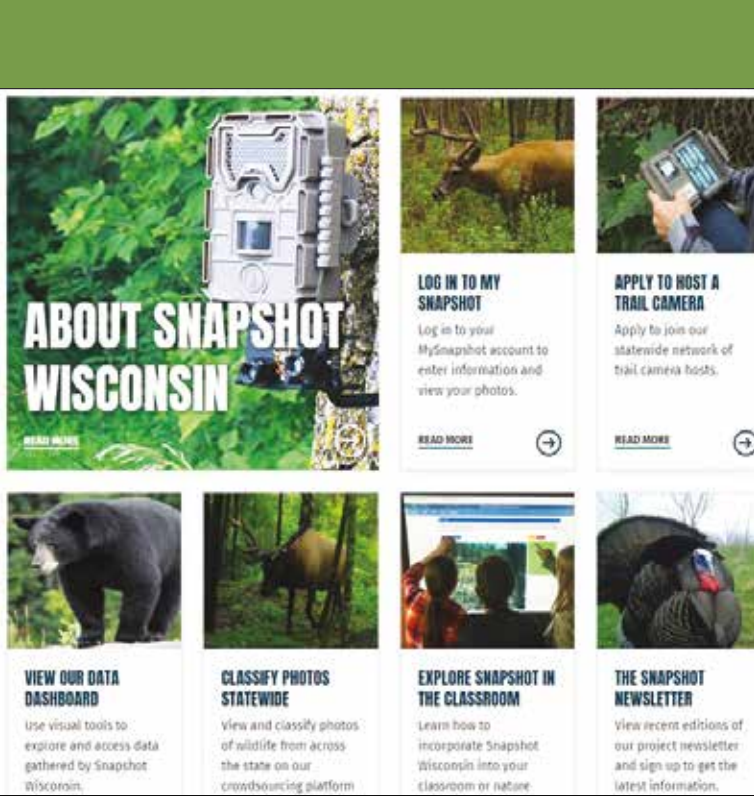
Apply to host a camera: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Research/ApplyHostTrailCamera>

Sign up for the newsletter: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Research/SnapshotWInewsletter>

Help classify images in the crowdsourcing platform: <https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/zooniverse/snapshot-wisconsin>

Classroom tools: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/research/projects/snapshot/intheclassroom.html>

Search the database for your county: <https://widnr-snapshotwisconsin.shinyapps.io/DataDashboard/>



The screenshot shows the Snapshot Wisconsin website interface. At the top, there's a banner with the text "ABOUT SNAPSHOT WISCONSIN" and an image of a trail camera. Below this, there are several tiles with images and text:

- LOG IN TO MY SNAPSHOT**: Log in to your MySnapshot account to enter information and view your photos. (Includes a "READ MORE" link and a right arrow icon.)
- APPLY TO HOST A TRAIL CAMERA**: Apply to join our statewide network of trail camera hosts. (Includes a "READ MORE" link and a right arrow icon.)
- VIEW OUR DATA DASHBOARD**: Use visual tools to explore and access data gathered by Snapshot Wisconsin.
- CLASSIFY PHOTOS STATEWIDE**: View and classify photos of wildlife from across the state on our crowdsourcing platform.
- EXPLORE SNAPSHOT IN THE CLASSROOM**: Learn how to incorporate Snapshot Wisconsin into your classroom or nature.
- THE SNAPSHOT NEWSLETTER**: View recent editions of our project newsletter and sign up to get the latest information.



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BOB SPIERINGS

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And just like that 2020 is over and the 2021 bear baiting season is upon us! We would first like to send out a huge thank you to all our amazing clients that supported us in the difficult times of 2020. You all are the best! As always we will be here throughout the season to provide you with all your bear baiting needs. Something that you might not realize is that certain baits are actually better at certain times of the year. From spring to fall we have it all!

Spring baiting is often overlooked since it's several months before hunting season opens; however, it can greatly increase your odds of harvesting a bear come September. Bears have a phenomenal memory and are known to check out old bait sites they hit up in previous years and prior months. If you have your site set up in spring when they move the most, due to mating season, you'll increase your odds of having more bears visiting once the season officially opens. Spring is the perfect time to put out low quantities and "lighter" baits, like cereals, just enough for a snack without it being over filling, plus it saves you a few extra bucks and a back ache.

Summer is when most hunters start baiting, as the berries start to ripen, making it the ideal time to match what you find in the woods. Raspberry, blueberry or any fruit filling are great products to use during this time.

As many of us have experienced, about two weeks before the season opener, your number of bears typically decrease as more of

their natural foods ripen. This is the time which can make or break your entire season. In preparation for winter, bears start to seek out foods high in protein and fats to help put winter weight on fast. This is typically acorns and other nuts and seeds. Stay ahead of the game by providing them with high quality bait filled with nuts, seeds and other foods like oils that are high in proteins or fats.

Of course no matter the season, you should always put out scent every time you bait. Let me say that again. Always put scent out every time you bait. From sprays to smears, scent is your biggest driver to get more bears into your bait site. Not only that, but scent is also an indicator to bears that you baited recently, which encourages them to go check it out sooner than later.

For more great tips this season, stop in and chat with us. We have multiple staff on hand with over 20+ years of combined experience bear hunting and over 13 years in the bear bait business. Bob's Bear Bait carries the largest variety of bear bait in Wisconsin, with multiple locations in Wisconsin and Michigan, including our new location in Birnamwood, Wisconsin. We pride ourselves in being your one-stop shop for all your baiting needs, including scents, bulk bait, fruit toppings, dry bait, the list goes on. From spring to fall we have it all!

Stay up to date with our latest news and sign up for our email newsletter at bobsbearbait.com as well as see our bait selection and locations. Use code OWOMARCH21 for a free bacon smear with an online order of \$48 or more. Be sure to add the bacon smear to your cart to receive the coupon. As always happy baiting and good luck to all the hunters!

Bear hunting in Northern Wisconsin

Wisconsin bear hunting is more and more popular each year. In 2016, over 109,000 hunters applied for 11,250 permits. Obtaining a kill tag is done by accumulating "preference points". Applications are available ONLY online or at any license sale facility. Applications are due December 10 each year, with the drawing held in early-mid February.

Applicants must apply at least once every three years or your preference point total returns to zero. To learn more about Wisconsin's bear hunting laws, visit dnr.wi.gov or call us for details.

Rough It Bear Hunts is located in North Iron County, Zone A. In 2019, the harvest goal was 900 with 1,590 authorizations available, 946 bear were harvested. Our service has over 20 spots which are camera monitored and baited from early May up to and through the hunting season. Guide packages vary depending on need and can include a stay in our rustic cabin located on a private lake with musky, northern and bass fishing.

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HAYWARD, FROM PAGE 10

you're in the middle of the woods. In reality you're never farther than two miles from your vehicle, and never more than 1K from a road.

Bike trails, and especially flow trails, are designed to be ridden at a certain speed. The turns, banks, bumps, and hills all seem to magically help you once you reach a certain velocity.

My first experience on a fat bike was GREAT. If I were to give my top five tips to another newb, I'd say...

Bring a snack, water, a spare tube, and tools you'll need to change a flat.

It's harder work than mountain biking, so wear tech fabrics that still work when they're wet with sweat.

When a sign warns you of a trail crossing, be prepared to come to a complete stop. A skier isn't going to stop on a dime and neither are you.

As someone who spent two summers building single-track trails, I can say PLEASE don't lock your brakes and skid around a turn. If you see something tricky coming up, like a sharp downhill turn, slow down before you get to it.

There's plenty to be alert to, but don't forget to stop, get off your bike, and enjoy the scenery.

See you on the trails! Or at the Hayward Lakes Visitors and Convention Bureau! 🐾

Submitted by Matt Ostrander.



Our trails are waiting for you.

TOM MUELLER

The Fox Valley Retriever Club

The benefits of joining a retriever training club

From time to time these articles mention the Fox Valley Retriever Club. Founded in the Fox Valley/Menasha area in the mid-1960s, it has since become a highly respected retriever training club. Like most retriever training clubs, it was formed by a group of retriever owners interested in helping each other train their dogs for the sport of running field trials. Doing so helped them keep their dogs in shape for hunting.

What sets the Fox Valley Retriever Club apart from others is that it conducts regularly scheduled training sessions during the spring and summer at a minimal membership cost. Weather permitting, two to five training sessions are held weekly from late April or early March until the start of hunting season in September. This gives members the opportunity to train and work their retrievers as their schedule permits.

Since its beginning, the goal of members is to help each other train their retrievers to compete. Most members today train their retrievers to run in hunt tests rather than field trials. A few test their training skills in the field trial game. Whichever sport they choose, by the end of the summer their retrievers are primed and polished and ready for the hunting season. They have confidence that their dog is going to do what it needs to do while in the duck blind, boat or chasin' pheasants in the field.

Fox Valley Retriever Club membership benefits are many. Anyone who gets a retriever pup for hunting is faced with challenges. Membership in the Fox Valley Retriever Club can help meet those challenges by providing access to training areas and a place to shoot live birds or condition pups to gunfire. The club's grounds include access to water for working and retrieving and a place to obtain both dead and live birds for training. Members will also find help for throwing longer and multiple retrieves. Perhaps most importantly, members can make connections to members with years of retrieving training experience to provide guidance.

Even if you don't enter hunt tests, the benefits of training are immeasurable. If you train as if you were intending to compete

in a hunt test, the end result is a retriever that's ready to go when hunting season comes around. 🐾

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 that he has had. For questions or information regarding retriever training or the Fox Valley Retriever Club contact Tom at winddancer.rtrvrs@hotmail.com



End of training season and set up for early goose season



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DICK ELLIS

Wolf Hunt Meets Harvest Goal

Are state population numbers far understated?

Wisconsin hunters took just three days to harvest 216 wolves during the February hunt, reinforcing the belief of thousands of Wisconsin sportsmen that the official stated population of 1195 wolves is significantly below the actual count. The harvest of 216 wolves is 8 percent over the harvest quota of 200 wolves unanimously voted for by the Natural Resources Board on February 15. Heading into the hunt, 119 wolves were allocated for state hunters with permit holders determined through an application/drawing process, and 81 wolves allocated to the Ojibwe Tribes in accordance with their treaty rights within the Ceded Territory.

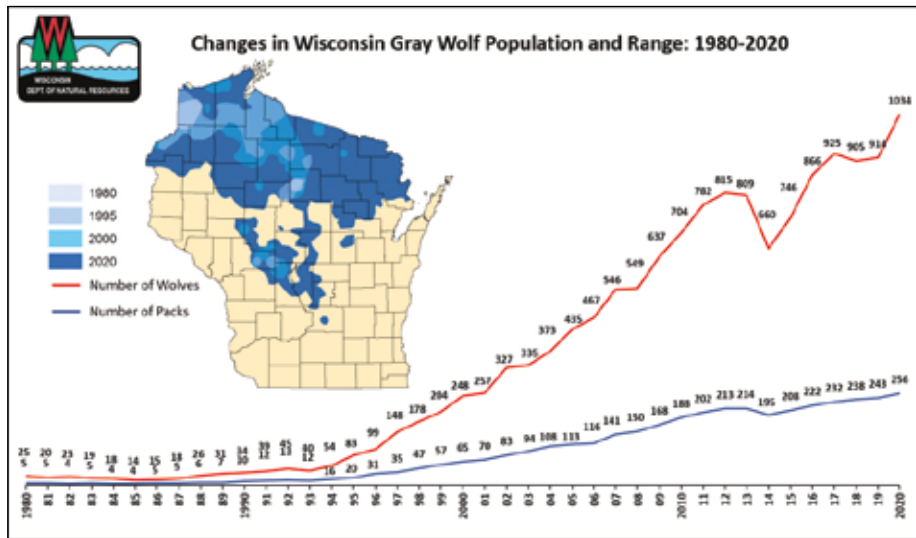
“Putting the season together, we’re looking for a quota that will not result in a significant population change,” said DNR Wildlife Biologist Randy Johnson at a media briefing held Feb 25. “The population models are a big part of that and yet there is also always uncertainty.”

“There’s still a probability that a quota of 200 may reduce the population or it may allow the population to expand. At 216, we’re at a relatively small percentage over total quota. I would say there is low concern at a population level of any significant effect there.”

Following established precedent, the Ojibwe tribes elected not to contribute to harvest numbers despite claiming their allotted quota of 81 wolves. In Wisconsin’s three previous wolf hunts held in 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15, the Ojibwe also claimed their allotment but did not participate in the hunt, contributing 0 wolves to each harvest total. Contacted directly by OWO, a spokesman for the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFW) said that approach remained consistent going into the 2021 hunt.

“As in previous wolf hunting and trapping seasons, Ojibwe tribes opted not to issue permits to individual tribal members,” said Charlie Otto Rasmussen for GLIFW. “For

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34



The 1999 Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan, and 2006/2007 addendum, established a state management goal of 350 wolves. As the above graph shows, that goal was met in 2004. Since then, through a series of legal moves, proper management has been prevented allowing wolf numbers to skyrocket. As of this writing, and taking into account the 216 wolves taken during the 2021 hunt, Wisconsin’s wolf population is still 629 above the recommended Wisconsin Wolf Advisory Committee goal of 350.

1195 (Wisconsin DNR stated wolf population before the 2021 hunt) - 216 (Number of wolves taken during the 2021 hunt) = 979 (Present Wisconsin wolf population).

979 (Present Wisconsin wolf population) - 350 (Wisconsin Wolf Advisory Committee recommended goal) = 629 (Wisconsin wolves above the recommended goal).



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LEE GATZKE

The Gamble

Roll of the dice fails for hunter, young buck

A few years ago the area in Wisconsin I deer hunt faced an outbreak of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD). The outbreak resulted in the fewest deer our hunting group had ever seen or shot since we've hunted there. Although the deer herd is now rebounding it is mostly young deer that we are seeing. Our group has not shot a buck in the meantime. Our hope is that passing on the young deer will make for better hunting in the near future.

Author note: We did do a mercy killing on a buck that hobbled onto our property. Seeing that it was badly wounded, one of our guys finished him off. It was a buck I had history with. More on that later.

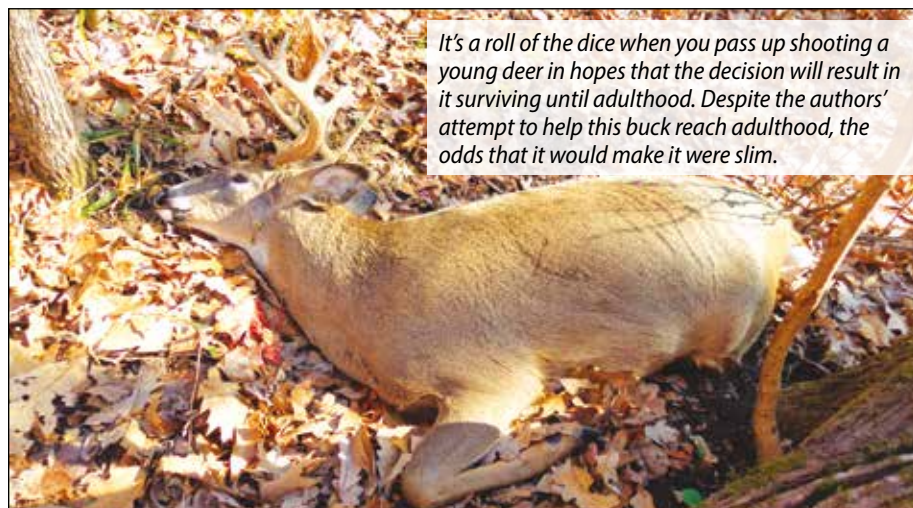
Since I hunt with both bow and gun on this property, I have ample opportunity to observe the deer. I'm seeing that Mother Nature is providing the raw materials (deer) to rebuild the population, but a little help from us in refraining from shooting them for a couple years really makes a difference toward that end. By next year I'm hoping to see enough adult deer to feel comfortable shooting some. Although passing up deer has been entertaining, I'm itching to lay eyes on an adult deer that I'd feel good about shooting.

Which brings me back to the mercy killing I mentioned earlier. I was bow hunting the Thursday before the gun season opener. At dusk I heard the unmistakable sounds of a deer shuffling through the frozen oak leaves. Before long a buck appeared and came my way. Arriving at the tree I was perched in, he stopped to inspect some bungee cords I'd left at the base of the tree. From my vantage point 15-feet above him, I could see he was what I judged to be a two-year-old, 10-point with a damaged G-2 tine. Too young, I told myself as I watched him walk away.

My thinking was that I'd done my part to help him have a chance at making it to adulthood and he'd be a buck I'd look forward to seeing in upcoming years. The next day found me in the same tree looking for his father. Again, late in the afternoon, the same buck showed and browsed to within five yards of my stand. If this buck could just stick around I could give him a pass through the gun season, upping the odds considerably he would live another year.

Deer don't spend their entire lives on a couple hundred acre farm and so it was that the 10-point I'd been seeing wouldn't stay put on this property. Opening day of gun season he'd cross paths with a neighbor who didn't share my reasoning for letting him pass.

Unless you control the deer harvest on a large piece of land, it is a gamble to expect that one person or one group of a half dozen hunters on a couple hundred acres can determine which deer survive to adulthood by passing on them during the hunting season. Our hunting group roll the dice each time we pass a deer. My neighbor likes venison too. Despite the odds being against the deer we pass making it to adulthood, I'm not about to give up trying. Not too different than a gambler riding out a losing streak. 🍀



It's a roll of the dice when you pass up shooting a young deer in hopes that the decision will result in it surviving until adulthood. Despite the authors' attempt to help this buck reach adulthood, the odds that it would make it were slim.

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The Donahue Edge

Market trend awareness, real-world racing experience, customer service excellence

A passion for power sports and racing runs deep in the Donahue family DNA. That passion, and the ability to foresee emerging markets, are some of the main reasons for Donahue Super Sports success. “You have to be able to adapt in order to survive in the power sports business,” Bobby Donahue, the company’s president and World Champion snowmobile racer said. “My mom and dad started in 1966 as Bob’s Yamaha City. They sold BSAs for people looking for bigger bikes and Yamahas for people who wanted smaller motorcycles.”

Taking on Yamaha motorcycles was not a sure bet, but one that would pay off for Bobby’s parents, Bob Senior and Alice. BSA was a major player in the industry at the time and Yamaha was virtually unknown in America. Within 10 years, BSA had died while Yamaha continued to thrive. “BSA didn’t know how to adapt to market changes,” Bobby noted, and, unlike Yamaha, wasn’t noted for reliability. “We made money fixing BSAs and selling Yamahas.”

Donahues’ expanded their product horizons as Bob Senior recognized the young snowmobile industry’s potential as an exciting new winter family activity. In 1968 he began selling Moto-Ski snowmobiles and soon found a market. Another gamble paid off and the dealership now had a year-long line of products for each of Wisconsin’s four seasons.

An old marketing adage contends that “competition improves the breed” and so it has at Donahue Super Sports. Bob Senior raced scrambles and hill climbs and worked with legendary NASCAR and snowmobile racer Dick Trickle. A great part of Trickle’s success was due to Bob Senior, who built and prepared Trickle’s snowmobiles. During his early teens, Bobby followed in his father’s footsteps by competing in motorcycle hill climbs and scrambles.

Bobby started racing snowmobiles with his dad and Dick Trickle in 1974. After a shaky start that often ended in first turn-crashes, Bobby eventually found his way around a race track - and then some. He soon began racking up wins. So many that while still in his teens, he along with Trickle received sponsorship from Yamaha. He continued his winning ways, which culminated in 1988 when he won the Formula 1 World Championship.

As Bobby’s racing career was progressing, Donahue’s product line was expanding to include ATVs, side-by-sides, watercraft and three-wheeled motorcycles. The Donahues, Bob Senior, Bobby and brothers Troy and Terry, have found notable success selling ATVs. “That’s a sport with wide appeal,” Bobby said. Some motorsports appeal to certain markets, Baby Boomers and motorcycles, for instance. “The Baby Boomer generation grew up and enjoyed mechanical things, machinery, engines and gears, cars and motorcycles. Millennials are more electronically motivated. They are also very social and group-oriented. They like to associate with each other, like families do. ATVs are a group pastime and even more so now with the availability of side-by-sides. There’s many places they can be used and there is an increasing number of places to ride them. Many municipalities allow them to be driven on their roads and Wisconsin has miles of public trails throughout the state.”

No matter what the product, customers can be assured that Donahue’s know how to service them. “We were founded on customer service and our mechanical knowledge is unsurpassed,” Bobby said. “We know how products are built, engineered and function and we’ve kept pace as they’ve become more complex.”

Real-world racing experience, market trend awareness and a foundation built on customer service excellence gives Donahues an important edge that few of their competitors can match. 

For more information about Donahue Super Sports, see their ad on page 19.



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LYNX

ski-doo

JOHN CLER

Wisconsin Spring Turkeys

Taking advantage of multiple hunt opportunities

The reintroduction of wild turkeys to the Badger State is a wildlife management success story with no equal. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources negotiated a trade with their Missouri counterpart. We sent ruffed grouse to Missouri in exchange for just over three hundred wild turkeys. The turkeys were released in southwestern Wisconsin, where the population grew and was used to supply stock for the rest of the state. The first modern turkey hunt of these birds took place in 1983 in southwestern Wisconsin.

Those first hunts were five days in length, with hunting hours ending at noon. There were only three hunting periods in late April and early May. There were a limited number of tags available, insuring that most hunters did not get a tag each year.

My how times have changed! Turkeys can now be hunted all across the Badger State, during six week-long seasons that allow hunting from first light until dark. Turkey hunters may also purchase additional tags that may enable them to harvest a good number of birds during those spring seasons.

Success during the spring turkey hunt begins in the late fall. Applications for the spring permit lottery are due by December 10 each year. You will be asked to choose from one of seven hunting zones (1 - 7) and one of six hunting periods (A - F). There are options for several alternative zone and period choices. If all goes well you may receive your first choice, or you may be issued a permit authorization for one of your alternate choices. You are informed of your authorization by post card or may see drawing results via your Go Wild account accessed through the Department of Natural Resources website in late December.

The multiple zones and seasons are in place to



Jerry Lynch, of Richland Center, had two permits for Period D and was able to harvest two nice gobblers within 45 minutes.

help spread the hunting pressure across the state and throughout the spring hunting periods. This has worked well, but has also resulted in excess tags that are not spoken for in most of the turkey zones. The exception is Zone Six, where all the tag authorizations have been assigned for 2021.

The "left over tags" are available on-line beginning in mid-March. Sales begin at 10 AM each day, with tags being

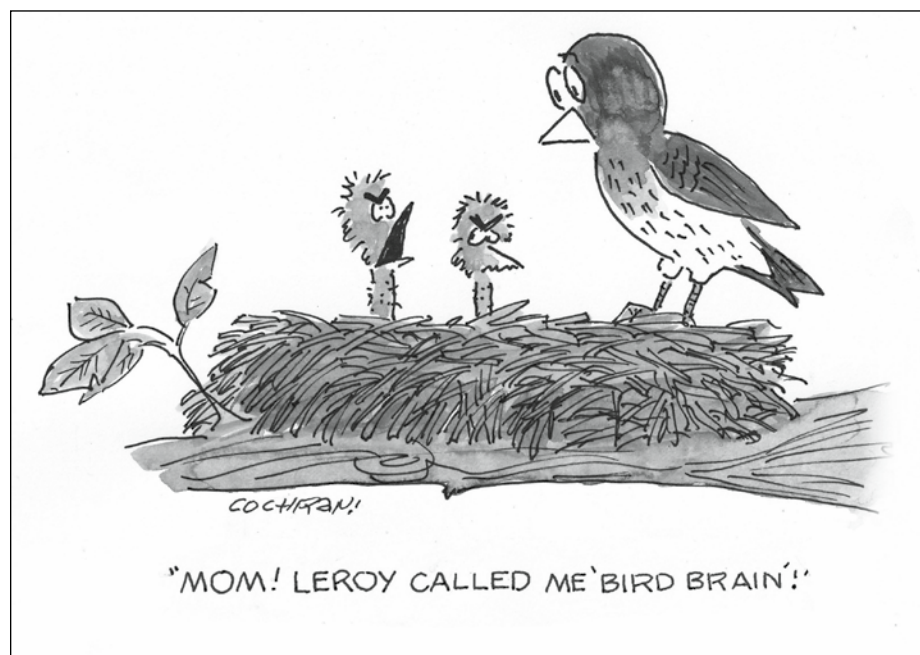
offered for only one zone each day during the first week. You may purchase one permit each day. Permits cost ten dollars each. Check the Department of Natural Resources website for the number of these permits that are available for each zone and period. You will notice that a couple of zones have permits available for Period C. These generally sell out quickly. Those for later seasons may not sell out by the end of that period.

There is no limit on how many permits you may purchase. You may buy permits for multiple periods or multiple permits for the same period, as availability allows. You may choose to hunt in multiple zones as well. If you shoot a bird on a permit you purchased previously, you may purchase another and continue hunting that day for another turkey, if permits are still available. Ambitious hunters may be able to hunt during five of the six spring turkey periods and harvest multiple birds during some periods.

The permits for the later periods often go unused. The full foliage, insects and summer-like conditions often have hunters finding other activities to occupy their time. This is often a missed opportunity. There can be hot action, with hens nesting while gobblers are still on the move seeking companionship. Soft, quiet calls are often the key to success during these periods. Trees in full foliage can also help a hunter get closer to a gobbling bird than would be possible early in the season.

The opportunities to hunt wild turkeys in Wisconsin are greater than in any other state in the nation. Spring comes but once a year. Take full advantage of what the Badger State has to offer. 🦃

John Cler is a retired high school principal and science teacher. He hunts, traps and fishes and is involved in various conservation efforts from his home in Richland Center.



On The Cover

Bayfield County hunter Jim Johannes with the only buck he has taken since 2006. "What was once a quality hunting experience is now an exercise in futility," he said, pointing to an explosion of wolf numbers.



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TOM CARPENTER

Getting Ready

A spring turkey hunter's checklist

As March's winter dregs loosen their gray, windy and often ugly grip on the land, my thoughts turn to the glory of fine April and May mornings in Wisconsin's turkey country. Daydreaming is surely part of the anticipation. But so is getting ready. Turkey hunting is a detail game, and now is the time to knock items off this checklist.

Review Turkey Calls

Check out your turkey calls and tune them up. Use some fine steel wool to clean old chalk off box call lids and rims, and re-chalk fresh. Condition pots and pegs with a little Brillo. Inventory mouth calls and buy new as needed now before they get picked over at sporting goods stores or suppliers and make sure you have backups.

Pack Vest

Get your turkey hunting vest packed and ready. Where will you put the following? Turkey calls of different styles. Locator calls (owl, crow, otherwise). Seat or seat cushion. Branch clippers and mini

saw. Portable makeshift blind material. Binoculars. Mini first aid kit. Water bottle. License. Face covering. Gloves. A corner for snacks.

Consider Clothes and Boots

Are you set on camouflage gear for various situations: Warm? Cold? Wet? Are your boots greased up and ready for action? Got muck-style or rubber boots ready for rainy days and dewy mornings? Make all repairs or purchases now.

Prep Shotgun

Is your shotgun cleaned and ready to go? If you use it for other hunting, make sure a full or turkey choke tube is in! I once shot a tom at 30 yards, and he was peppered everywhere . . . which made me now check my choke: I shot him with an improved cylinder tube. Not recommended! Take your firearm out and cycle a few loads to make sure it's shooting straight.

Tune Bow

Bowhunting for turkeys is becoming

ever more popular. Get the bow out, tune it up good, unlimber yourself, and start tossing arrows to get ready. Are you set with the heads you will actually use while hunting? Be sure to pull one out and shoot that one occasionally to make sure it's hitting where your practice heads are.

Review Your Blind

I like the flexibility of being able to move my setup on a shifty old tom. But there are plenty of situations in turkey hunting each spring where waiting it out in a blind is the ticket to tagging a bird. I never go anywhere without a big comfortable blind packed in the truck (and stools). It's worth a quick unpack and setup now to make sure you have all the stakes and guide string needed and to make any quick repairs.

Scout It Out

Preseason is the time to get out and do some reconnaissance on your current spots if you don't know them like the back of your hand. Don't disturb any wintering

turkeys. If the birds are elsewhere, get out and evaluate various spots for setups. I'll walk around, explore every dip and rise and swale of the land, imagine hunting scenarios, and pick out actual trees for setups.

Find a New Place to Hunt

Get out and locate/secure an extra couple spots to mark on your turkey hunting map or onX. Explore some areas of public ground that have always intrigued you. Make a landowner contact or two; turkey hunting permission is fairly easy to come by if you can juggle away from landowner's other hunting guests and their times.

As Tom Petty sang: "Waiting is the hardest part." With spring turkey season on the horizon, now is the time to work on your checklist. 🦃

Native son Tom Carpenter is eagerly awaiting his 28th spring turkey hunting campaign with Wisconsin, as always, an anchor on the tour.

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TYLER FLORCZAK

Dealing with the Loss of a Four-Legged Friend

Accident leaves family with memories of young hunting dog

Flashbacks of pheasant flushes, shed antler hunting, blood trailing deer and training for her Natural Ability test are ingrained in my head. Our outdoor adventures together, combined with umpteen family trips, daily walks and nighttime cuddles, are warming. Yet they serve as painful reminders that our four-legged family member is no longer with us. Priceless memories like these alleviate some of the heartache.

Our family said goodbye to Wrigley, a three-year-old, wire-haired pointing griffon, in August. She was struck by a vehicle in a freak accident that occurred directly across the road from our home. To make matters worse, my wife, Jena, our newborn son, Trajan, and 12-year old dog, Stella, watched it all unfold. There are no guarantees in life and things can change in an instant.



Swimming and water training were just some of the many activities Wrigley enjoyed.

My wife's schedule allowed her to stay home that day with our three-month old baby and the dogs. At the tail end of their morning walk—mind you, both dogs were secured to the stroller with their leashes for the entire walk—our bird hunting dog Wrigley spotted a rabbit feeding near our shed, located on the lot directly across the street from our home.

Wrigley's instincts kicked in as the rabbit grazed on dandelion shoots. In an instant, she exploded toward the rabbit and quickly reached the end of her leash. Snap! A plastic clip on the leash broke and Wrigley raced off after the bunny which escaped around the shed and darted beneath a pile of downed trees.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

Explore Wisconsin



SPOTLIGHT | ANTIGO • LANGLADE COUNTY

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Enjoy discovering endless choices of winter activities, events, and FUN in Langlade County! Your whole family will enjoy an abundance of indoor and outdoor activities while embracing the relaxing, stress-free pace of the Northwoods.

Langlade County has six groomed cross-country ski trails to explore. With fresh air, wildlife, and beautiful views this is a wonderful way to get some exercise and spend time with friends and family.

Strap on your snowshoes, then get out and enjoy the exhilaration of a jaunt in the snow on one of our three marked packed trails or explore in the back-country enjoying 130,000 acres of county forest lands or 50-miles of Langlade County Ice Age Trail.

Langlade County provides miles for everyone to enjoy snowmobiling. What better way to spend your time during the winter than taking advantage of over 500 miles of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27



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One of the most thrilling fishing experiences an angler could have is spring fish runs in Marinette County. Just as the chilly water temperatures of the bay of Green Bay and lower Menominee and Peshtigo rivers inch above freezing, the spring spawning season begins.

Of the most notable is the walleye run, where the fish are stacked in abundance in the lower Menominee and Peshtigo Rivers. Fish from the shoreline, your boat or the Hattie Street Bridge platform and reel in a trophy walleye. Check local regulations or visit a local charter to help you navigate the fish-filled waters and make the catch of your dreams!

Shortly after the walleye, sturgeon make their run through Marinette County waters. While they cannot be fished during this time, the view of these prehistoric giants is an incredible site. Enjoy a birds eye view of these marvelous five to six foot creatures from atop the waters of the Peshtigo River from the new Peshtigo fish viewing platform. 

For more information or to request a Marinette County visitors guide, visit therealnorth.com.

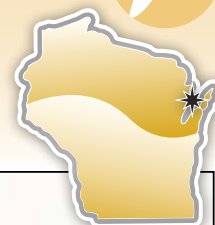
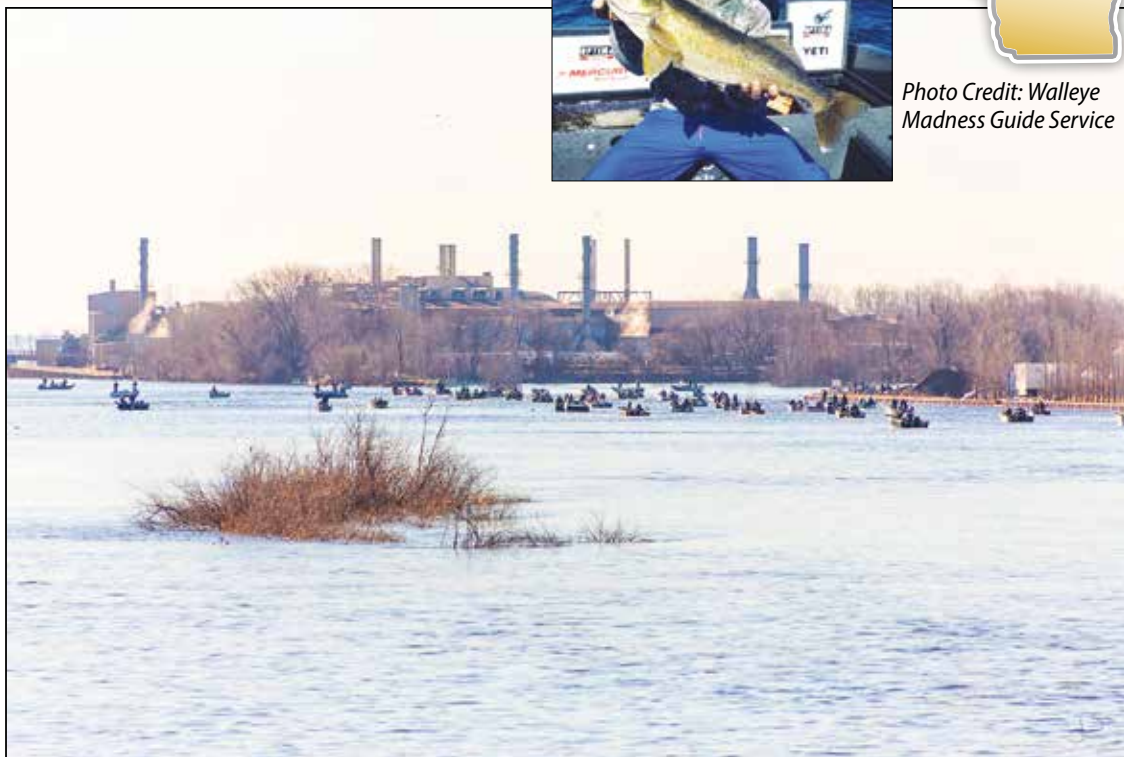
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Photo Credit: Walleye
Madness Guide Service



Catch'em in Marinette County

The Real North

Trophy Walleye Fishing

April Walleye Run
Menominee & Peshtigo Rivers
Bay of Green Bay

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the real north
MARINETTE COUNTY

Photo: Storm Surge Bait Co., LLC

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SPOTLIGHT | SPOONER • WASHBURN COUNTY

Explore Wisconsin



Spring Back to Life with Us in Wisconsin's Great Northwest



It's time to shed those bulky winter jackets, lace up your hiking boots, and venture out to take a crisp breath of fresh air and witness the Northwoods wildlife and vegetation spring back to life.

The temperatures are rising, and the snow is starting to melt here in Spooner making the opportunities to enjoy silent sports outside abundant. Located right in town, Spooner's City Park boasts paved and unpaved trails for hiking and biking enthusiasts, baseball fields, two miles of outdoor workout stations, a disc golf course, and a great pavilion to take a break in.

Located just south of Spooner, Hunt Hill Audubon Sanctuary is an ideal place to wander through the property's forests, meadows, and bogs on their 13 miles of hiking trails ranging in difficulty and distance. These gorgeous trails provide ample opportunities to spot Northwoods birds and other woodland creatures in their natural habitat, as well as striking panoramic views of four glacial lakes. The Sanctuary also offers additional programs such as "Maple Madness" on Friday, March 26, and "Spring Silliness" on Friday, April 2..

Another fantastic place to check out this spring is Wisconsin's Moving National Park, the Namekagon River. The 99.5 mile Namekagon is designated as a "scenic river" signifying an outstanding national example of high water quality, rich wildlife habitat, and a premier recreation location with limited development along its banks. The best way to navigate the river is still by canoe or kayak and features many primitive campsites along its shores that you can pull your vessel up to, set up camp, and sleep under the stars. 🌲

Whether you want to get out hiking, biking, camping, canoeing, or kayaking, Spooner is the place for you to be this spring. For more information on dining, lodging, shopping, events, and recreation, visit us at www.spoonerchamber.org.



You'll run out of time before you run out of things to see and do in Spooner

WASHBURN COUNTY TOURISM/JAMES NETZ

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Explore Wisconsin



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TOM CARPENTER

Cubs Corner
Songs of spring

With spring's arrival comes the return of migrating birds to our varied and wonderful Wisconsin landscape. It's a progression of sound like no other in the outdoor world.

First come the Canada geese, pulling in spring in March with their nighttime honking and cackling overhead. Then come the ducks – divers, mallards, then wigeons and gadwalls, and finally the wood ducks and teal with their squeals and high-pitched quacks. Wild turkeys, which have been here all winter, join the audio show, with big toms booming their thrilling gobbles across hills, woods and farms.

And don't forget about songbirds – from the robin's lilt to the different warblers' trills, the bluebird's melody, the yellowthroat's tune, and countless other songs.

It's a concert unmatched. Take a young naturalist out to almost any wildlife area, woodlot, prairie, marsh, or state or county park, and listen to the symphony together. Early morning is best – from a half-hour before dawn to an hour or so after.

A fun activity is to keep two lists of birds – one of the species you see, another of the species you hear. Many good web sites offer free and accurate instruction on identifying bird songs. One especially good one is The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology at www.allaboutbirds.org.

A common question kids ask when listening to birds is, "Why are they singing?" The stock answer is, "To attract a mate." But that's not quite fully true.

Although most birds' songs are pretty to hear, they are really made to warn other birds to stay away. The first purpose of bird song is to establish, hold and defend territory. The message: "This is my neck of the woods (or field or marsh), stay out, and if you encroach, there's going to be a fight." This is true for the wild turkey's gobble, the pheasant's cackle, the duck's quack and the beautiful songs that colorful songbirds make.

Most male songbirds set up territories, then mate with the females that take up residence there. If a male bird can establish and hold some prime territory, females come. Song lets other birds know what's his.

Bird song issues a warning to other comers: "This area is mine. If you come into this territory, be prepared to fight." Think about gobblers fighting, drake mallards chasing each other around, male cardinals going at it in a thicket, or bluebirds chasing about. If song can keep a bird out of a fight by scaring rivals away, all the better for him.

In the end, bird song does attract mates, but only as a by-product of establishing and keeping territory, and scaring competing birds away from a conflict. Females like a nice, calm and safe place in which to nest.

Get up and get out one morning this spring. Take your young naturalist on a bird-listening expedition out to someplace wild. Listen to the songs of spring. Admission is free, and the lessons learned will last a lifetime. 🐦

Native son Tom Carpenter writes about nature, conservation and the outdoors.

Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | **ASHLAND**

A Superior, Four-Season Experience

Ashland is home to all sorts of outdoor recreation! The Chequamegon Bay is our front yard and we await the breakup of ice and the annual running of the smelt.

The smelt run in Ashland is always full of fun and frolicking on the shores of the greatest of the Great Lakes. Our back yard is home to Copper Falls State Park, open year round with fabulous walking and hiking trails, and groomed cross-country ski trails.

Ashland's Historic Main Street is the backdrop to our self-guided Mural Walk. You'll see close to 20 murals painted on the outside of buildings. It's our outdoors history book.

Ashland is affordable! March and April are great times to come and spend a long weekend away from the busy life of the city. We have every kind of lodging available from a mom and pop to full-service and even a waterpark. Aside from fast-food, our restaurants are ALL locally owned and operated so each has a unique flavor and fare! www.visitashland.com



Inland or on our big water, Ashland's spring beauty is extraordinary

ANTIGO, FROM PAGE 23

beautifully groomed trails? Whether you prefer winding trails through deep green cedar forests or open fields under the clear sky, there are sights and opportunities everywhere on our trails.

Almost any lake in Langlade County can make an ice fishing trip successful. Sit on the frozen lake for some alone time or bring the whole family to enjoy perfect "hard water" fishing.

Fat tire biking is the perfect winter activity to get the adrenaline pumping. Enjoy the beauty of Langlade County on a two wheel bike ride. Go ahead, get outside, and cruise our trails.

Come to Langlade County and experience our special brand of hospitality only found in the Northwoods!

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Explore Wisconsin



SPOTLIGHT | FERRYVILLE

An All American Road Hwy 35 is tourism gem found nowhere else

The Wisconsin Great River Road National Scenic Byway received word from the Federal Highway Administration National Scenic Byways Program that their application to become an All American Road National Scenic Byway was approved! Wisconsin is one of 15 All American Road designations approved by FHWA and announced February 17, 2021. In order to reach the "All American Road" status, the drive must be a tourism attraction unto itself. It must have multiple intrinsic qualities and one-of-a-kind features that can be found nowhere else. It is higher than a National Scenic Byway designation.

This is a huge boost for Ferryville businesses and all of the other 32 communities of the Wisconsin Great River Road. In this time of "Covid-Careful" cautions, the great outdoors is the place to be and the Mississippi River Coast has this in spades! Fishing has been huge with the swing into Spring 2021. The airboats headed out from the Ferryville Boat Launch to transport people to ice fishing spots now moves to airboats headed to the best fishing holes on the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge.

Sugar Creek Bluff has been cleared for hiking so the trails are better than ever. Take North Buck Creek Road off Hwy 35 to the crest of the bluff and park, hike, check for birds, spring flowers and more mushrooms in May.

Remember, you are welcomed like a local when you stop into the great places of this now All American Road. This is your place to call home. 🍷



A Place for All Seasons



visitferryville.com

SPRING 2021

May 8th

International Spring Bird Migration Hike

May 14th and 15th

Rummage Along the River

June 9th

Chautauqua Summer Series

Explore Wisconsin



SPOTLIGHT | LACROSSE

Silent Sports in the La Crosse Region

Get ready to earn your hot coco! This winter, enjoy outdoor recreation from ice fishing to skiing, and warm up with a local beer and bite to eat. When you're ready, you are sure to enjoy your winter adventures in the La Crosse Region.

Hiking & Fat Tire Biking

Fabulous bluffs and vistas and miles and miles of trails to hike and fat-tire-bike are a La Crosse Region speciality. Grandad Bluff, a La Crosse gem, built miles of new trails this year, making it a great starting point if you haven't hiked the area before.

Ice Fishing

Ice fishing is next to none in the La Crosse Region and due to the safety aspects of it, has hit quite a boom this season. As Lake Onalaska and the many waterways freeze over, you can catch a wide range of fish, including bluegill, bass and walleye. The pan-fishing is some of the best all year. Before you hit the ice, make sure to check up on safety tips and prepare accordingly. Need some new equipment? Check out Island Outdoors.

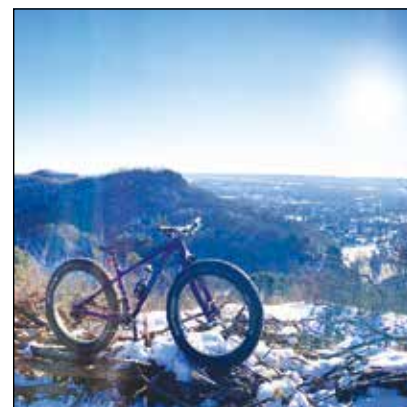
Snow Shoeing & Ice Skating

If snowshoeing is your forte, Lytle's Landing is a nice and peaceful destination to explore. Not to worry if you don't have snowshoes, The region has multiple locations to rent from. If you prefer the ice over snow, there are some legendary spots to ice skate, such as the famous Riverside Park ice park. New this year are ice skating paths on Lake Koshong. Skaters can enjoy a long journey along the lake, smooth and shoveled for enjoyment by local volunteers.

Downhill Ski & Snowboarding



Amy Bryant | Lake Onalaska - Onalaska, WI



Josh Blum | Hixon Forest - La Crosse, WI

Mt. La Crosse is a regional favorite in the area and with the latest snows we have had, it is a must stop. Their hours and safety practices have changed to accommodate visitors' safety, so it is a great place to enjoy the outdoors. For more details, you can visit Mtlacrosse.com. Oh! And when you need a quick break or are wrapping up your day of fun, swing into the St. Bernard Room in the lodge. Known for their old fashions and hot chocolates, it is a unique atmosphere enjoyed by all ages - kids will love to check out all the St. Bernard dog artwork that hangs frame-to-frame on the walls. 🍷

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Photo Courtesy of: Colin Stouffer



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Presents Firearms Info from Ron Stresing

RON STRESING

High School Trapshooting Leagues

Safety, fun and marksmanship...with 33,000 student athletes competing

What started in 2000 as a way to address declining membership at a Minnesota gun club has grown into one of the safest and fastest growing of all high school sports. Research showed the average age of a clay target shooter was 57, and recruitment of younger shooters was almost non-existent. Members of the Plymouth, Minnesota, Gun Club invited area high schools to compete in a spring trap league. The inaugural 2008 season boasted three teams with a total membership of 30 student trap shooters. To say that the sport has grown since then would be an understatement: The 2020 season had 1,042 teams in several states with 32,810 student athletes competing. As of this writing, Wisconsin high schools have 87 teams competing, down from 110 state-wide due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic also eliminated 2020 state tournaments.

Spring leagues start in early April and run nine weeks, with the State Tournament set in June. Teams compete in conferences based on their number of members. As with regular league trapshooting, teams of five shooters compete, with total birds broken determining the winner. Trapshooting is also Title IX compliant, as both boys and girls can compete on an equal footing. I watched several teams practicing at Boxhorn Gun Club and the girls who compete are amazing shots! Parents generally supply the students with shotguns and ammunition.

The idea of high school students and firearms makes some people's heads explode. The truth is, high school trapshooting has an amazing safety record. Over 30,000 shooters competing in 330,000 events have fired over 20 million shots over the years without a single injury or mishap. Participants have to hold a valid hunter safety certificate or have earned the league's Student Athlete Firearm Education (SAFE) Certificate by passing the safety course. Trapshooting in general is already safer than activities like swimming, mountain biking or even tennis.

So what does the future hold for high school trapshooting and

clay target leagues? In 2020, 5-Stand and Sporting Clays were added as additional shooting disciplines. If I had to guess, I'd say it's here to stay and will continue to grow. Trapshooting and other clay target sports are activities you can participate in over a lifetime.

I think a Wisconsin State High School Clay Target Shooting League spokesman said it best: "It's important for people to know that anyone can participate. It doesn't matter who you are, or your abilities. The league's priorities are safety, fun, and marksmanship - in that order."

For information on starting a trapshooting team at your local high school, contact the Wisconsin State High School Clay Target League at www.wiclaytarget.com

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





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Wrigley, a wire-haired pointing griffon, loved outdoor activities like upland bird hunting, shed hunting and ice fishing. Pictured above, Wrigley poses for a photo with her owner, Tyler Florczak, after a successful pheasant hunt at a game farm south of Chetek in December 2018.

FLORCZAK, FROM PAGE 23

Seconds later a neighbor with a history of speeding on our road, approached from behind as my wife, son and Stella watched Wrigley attempt to catch the rabbit.

In a blink of the eye, Wrigley shot out of the overgrown area behind the shed as she attempted to return to the family walk.

Unfortunately, as soon as Wrigley burst from the underbrush in the ditch, she was met head on by the vehicle that approached a walking family at a high rate of speed. A couple of split seconds is all it took.

The driver didn't bother to stop and headed home, although he later acknowledged he knew he struck and killed our dog. He left the scene as my wife, son and Stella stared at our poor dog laying lifeless in the road.

A piece of our hearts is now gone. Wrigley will longer be going on pheasant hunts, ice fishing trips or rides to town for a Dairy Queen treat.

It's difficult dealing with the loss of a pet. You smile through the tears and try to dwell on the good times together. This serves as a reminder to set aside time to make lasting memories with your dog, spend more time together outdoors and love more.

That's what Wrigley would want.

Note: Wrigley was featured in the November/December 2017 issue of OWO in an article titled "Wrigley's Fields—Select Your Puppy for Bird and Shed Hunting, Blood Trailing." 🐾

Tyler Florczak is the sports and outdoor editor for The Chetek Alert newspaper. He lives on the Chetek Chain of Lakes with his wife, son and 12-year-old dog Stella. His outdoor passions include bowhunting, musky fishing, ice fishing, shed hunting and spending time on the pontoon with his family.

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STUART WILKE

Shorty's Shooting Sports

Pondering the possibilities of another firearms panic

Seriously. Who didn't see this was coming? Yet another gun-buying, ammunition-hoarding panic is upon us. Like its predecessors, this one was precipitated at least partially by fears that a new administration would outlaw certain types of firearms. Previously, those fears proved unfounded. This time, they may be warranted. With the stroke of a pen, for instance, our new president can outlaw the importation of foreign made semi-automatic rifles and high capacity magazines. An act of congress would not be necessary.

So, if you succumbed to putting off buying a firearm and/or ammunition until recently, well, you're not alone. Gun sales increased by 60 percent from 2019 to 2020. As is so often the case when people take up a new pastime, they did so without a lot of knowledge or expertise. Firearms are no exception, according to Mike "Shorty" Govas, owner of Shorty's Shooting Sports in West Allis. "You'd be amazed what some people think," Shorty said. "Now would be a good time to get the facts straight."

Common misconceptions abound as to what constitutes legal open carry of firearms and concealed carry. "Open carry or the possession of a concealed carry permit doesn't mean you have a license to take a gun anywhere you want," Shorty said. For instance, while the open carrying of a pistol is legal in Wisconsin, it isn't legal to have an uncased firearm



sitting on your vehicle's dashboard or passenger seat. If a place of business has a sign stating "no firearms allowed on the premises," or words to that effect, it doesn't mean you can because you're visibly carrying it or have a concealed carry permit.

You can't, in fact, and if you do, you can be arrested and fined, Shorty noted.

Shorty highly recommends that first-time gun owners make their purchases from a dealer willing to spend time teaching them how to use and operate it. He and his staff are known for providing this type of support. He also offers concealed carry classes which teaches where, why, when and how to legally conceal or open-carry a firearm. Shorty strongly suggests new owners take a firearms training course. Some technical schools offer such classes.

How long the present firearms buying frenzy will last is anyone's guess. The 2012 version lasted over a year and the ammunition shortage, especially .22 rimfire, more than two years.

If you're hoarding ammunition to resell at a profit, well, this is a family publication. Suffice to say, you know what you can do to yourself. If you bought in the past for some future time, well, that time has come. Covid may have shut much of the world down, but it doesn't really impact outdoor sports, like hunting and target shooting. Grab the shotgun and enjoy the looming gobbler season. If you never learned to hunt turkey (or squirrel, deer, coyote, etc.), learn how on the world-wide web. There's more to the internet than movie streaming services and conspiracy theories.

If you're just getting involved in the shooting sports, all is not lost. Pellet, BB and airsoft guns sales have so far been spared from panic buying. Many of them look, handle and operate like their real-life counterparts and can be safely shot indoors- and ammunition is still available! Shorty does not presently carry air pistols and rifles.

Here are some other suggestions: Firearm history is fascinating and there are many books, videos, and DVDs on the topic that you can learn from. Field strip, clean and lubricate your guns. Upgrade your favorite gun. The ability to do so is one of the best features of the AR-15 platform. The variety of available optics, furniture, triggers, magazines, etc., is mind-boggling and believe it or not, there are still some for sale. As of this writing, Shorty had a number of new and used AR-15s available.

Finally, take heart. This gun-buying frenzy shall too pass.

We hope. 🍀

Contact Stuart at submissions@onwisconsinoutdoors.com

TOM CARPENTER

Badger Birds

Red Crossbill

At first glance you might pity the poor red crossbill. Its offset beak looks unnatural, perhaps injured, and painful. But it is none of those things. Rather, nature has armed the crossbill with an effective and unique tool for wrestling the cone from a pine tree, prying off the scales, and slipping a tongue in to pull out a seed. Try that with a straight beak sometime! Crossbills often come from the Canadian boreal forest to visit Wisconsin in wintertime.

FIND crossbills in their favorite habitat: coniferous forests. Most any conifers will do, but spruce, hemlock, fir and white pines are favorites. This makes northern Wisconsin, and some areas of central Wisconsin, the best habitat.

LOOK for washed-red male birds, a little smaller than cardinals. Females are olive-green with yellow rumps. Both males and females have dark gray to black wings.



LISTEN for the crossbill's chip-chip-chip chee-chee-chee song.

ATTRACT crossbills with black oil sunflower seed. Crossbills are adept at plucking seed from hanging feeders, but the birds will also readily visit tray feeders.

ENJOY crossbills while you have them, for they are ever nomadic in winter in their search for seeds to eat.

Did you know that there is a white-winged crossbill? To make the distinction from a red crossbill, simply look for two broad, white wing bars to identify a whitewing. 🍀

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

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JACOB QUIGLEY

Kayaking Wisconsin

Brule River brings challenging rapids, calm reprieves

Late last summer, my finance Kace and I kayaked the Brule River during our stay in Bayfield near the Apostle Islands. Our journey would begin at Stone's Bridge Landing and end at Winnebougou Landing, typically a five-hour trip. This was Kace's first time riding rapids. The nine-mile stretch has a good variety of challenges as well as calm stretches in between for relaxation and tranquility. We took this route on the recommendation of Brule River Canoe Rental. I've learned from experience to always talk with local experts, if possible, when embarking on a new river. They can be a wealth of useful information.

We began our journey on a serene, foggy morning. Water levels were lower than usual for a Wisconsin summer and the current was slow. We had to paddle quite a bit to make headway down this stretch. White spruce trees arched over our heads as we traveled downstream.


The scenery stayed the same for the first two hours of our trip as the fog began to give way and the sun began to shine through.

After several hours, signs of civilization began to appear. One of the first were the rustic cabins of Cedar Island Estate, known as President Calvin Coolidge's "Western White House" because of the time he spent there trout fishing. As we reached this landmark, the current began to pick up immensely. We soon hit some fun in the form of Class I rapids eventually followed by calmer waters. The ride provided a respite from paddling as we were carried down river and under Cedar Island Road.

Approximately one-half mile later, we came to the Class II rapids I was looking forward to. These rapids were the most challenging that Kace had yet to experience and I admit that I was a little nervous. I needn't have worried; she handled them like a pro. The rapids came to an end

and the waterway opened up to Suckered Lake. The current became faster as the waterway narrowed and we were shot through Little Twin Rapids into Big Lake. The name of the lake says it all; it's a very long and wide stretch and a very good place to catch some summer sun.

As we approached the mouth of the Brule River from Big Lake, the river again narrowed. This last stretch was very windy as we meandered our way towards the end of a great trip. We returned to our car which Brule River Canoe Rentals had conveniently parked for us.

If you're looking to get into some exciting waterways with rapids, I highly recommend this area for kayaking and canoeing. It offers a large variety of challenges as well as calm paddling in between. Kace and I will definitely be back to experience the challenges that await. 

Connect with Brule River Canoe Rental at 715-372-4983 or brulrivercanoe rental.com.

ELLIS, FROM PAGE 16

Ojibwe leaders and wildlife managers, the best use of tribal wolf quota declarations is to keep live animals, live wolves on the landscape, performing their important role in maintaining healthy ecosystems."

"Statewide wolf hunting seasons are not an effective approach to addressing local livestock depredations. Hunting wolves is not necessary to protect humans. This past season is an example of poor wildlife management, made worse by the state's inability to control the kill."

On Wisconsin Outdoors' Publishers respectfully disagree. A total harvest goal of 200, almost precisely hit, was the priority and should be the post-season focus. After four consecutive non-contributing harvest seasons by the Ojibwe, future management goals should acknowledge and accept that 0 will be a constant regardless of harvest allotment claims by the tribes. State harvest goals should be set higher accordingly; this after all is a game management issue.

From extensive personal field experience in the north country, years of discussion with trappers, avid hunters and wildlife experts, and ongoing scrutiny of Wisconsin wolf management, other related subjects need to be addressed. Problems include apparent inaccurate pack and overall population counts and proper correlating harvest goals; and wolf predation of whitetail deer particularly in the high wolf population territories of Wisconsin that have negatively affected both deer hunting participation and the overall economy.

A state recovery plan initiated in 1989 set a goal of reclassifying the wolf from state endangered to threatened once the population remained at 80 or more wolves for three consecutive years. The 1999 Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan and plan addendum in 2006/07 delisted the wolf from state-threatened to a non-listed species when the population reached 250 and set a management goal of



A wolf pack that includes at least 9 animals is caught on trail camera in Northern Bayfield County October 19, 2020.

350 animals outside of tribal reservation lands.

The real story following the 2021 harvest season is that the Wisconsin wolf population is approximately 630 animals over the recommended management goal if we accept the state pre-hunt population count of just under 1200 animals. Common sense, though, and the post-season harvest number of 216 wolves taken by Wisconsin hunters in just three days provide anecdotal evidence that the wolf population is probably much higher than 1200 animals. Expert trappers and hunters utilized and trusted as sources of expertise for decades by this outdoor columnist place the population conservatively at 2000 animals.

As efficient as the Wisconsin hunter is, hunters even using dogs would not be able to take more than 18 percent of the Wisconsin population in less than three days if 1200 accurately reflected real numbers, especially knowing that the wolf is a wary and elusive prey. They also point to population counts ignoring non-traditional wolf territory south of highway 64, and missing packs and lone animals


both on southern terrain and in traditional count areas north. They provided OWO trail cam evidence as evidence

Many Wisconsin deer hunters believe the population is much higher based on increased sightings of wolves and sign, and decreased sighting and harvesting of deer in direct correlation. Many label the sighting of deer as rare or even non-existent.

"I have hunted northern Bayfield County for 58 years," James M. Johannes emailed OWO February 28. "I know the area I hunt very well and I have witnessed and understand the cyclical impact that winter, forestry, bear, coyote and bobcats have on the deer herd. There have, however, been two noteworthy changes over the years in the area I hunt. The first is pulping activity which has been extensive and should have been great for the deer herd. The second is the secular explosion of the wolf population which I know from trail cam pictures is at least twice the latest DNR estimate in our area."

"The fact that it is nearly impossible to find a deer, or any sign of deer, in our heavily pulped area attests to the overwhelming impact the wolves have had on deer. What was once a quality hunting experience is now an exercise in futility. If this continues it will be nearly impossible to interest future generations of hunters in partaking in the once great tradition of quality big woods public deer hunting in Wisconsin."

OWO Bear expert and columnist Mike Foss misses quality deer hunting in northern Wisconsin. He labels the decline in the deer hunting experience directly related to the increase in wolves, devastating. The conflict, he said, between those who make management decisions and the hunting public is coming to a head.

"It's growing to a boiling point but it's a good thing that it is moving toward that," he said. "People need answers. They want truthful answers. And they deserve it. We're losing our tradition of hunting in Wisconsin." 

SUZETTE CURTIS

Recipes with Suzette

Soups on!

During the past year, more people have been cooking at home and trying new recipes to share with their families. Our family is no exception. When asked what he would like me to prepare for dinner, my husband's answer is almost always some kind of soup. The beauty of a really great soup is that, with just one pot, the cleanup is minimal. Serve with a loaf of crusty bread and some herb infused olive oil for dipping, and you have a full meal. Enjoy!

Turkey & Lentil Soup

Turkey carcass with attached meat	¼ teaspoon pepper
8 cups water	¼ teaspoon marjoram
1 onion, coarsely chopped	¼ teaspoon thyme
1 clove garlic, minced	¾ cup dried lentils
1 T parsley	4 carrots, sliced (about 1 cup)
2 teaspoons salt	1 stalk celery, sliced (about ½ cup)

Place turkey carcass (cut up to fit if necessary) into Dutch oven or soup pot; cover with water and add onion, garlic, parsley, salt, pepper, marjoram and thyme. Bring to boil; reduce heat and cover; simmer for 1 to ½ hours until meat is very tender. Strain broth and set aside. Remove meat from carcass and discard carcass and remaining solids.

Return broth and meat to pot. Add remaining ingredients and again bring to boil. Reduce heat and cover; simmer for at least 30 minutes until lentils are tender. Add additional salt and pepper to taste.

Serve in bowls with a dollop of sour cream or plain greek yogurt.

Fish Soup

3 lbs. firm whitefish, cut into bite sized pieces	2 bay leaves
3 T butter	½ teaspoon pepper
2 onions, chopped	2 teaspoons parsley
1 clove garlic, minced	2 teaspoons salt
1 ½ lbs. red potatoes, cut into chunks	1 teaspoon thyme
10 cups water	½ teaspoon marjoram

Melt butter in large soup pot or Dutch oven. Sauté onions until tender; add garlic and potatoes and sauté for 30 to 45 seconds more. Add remaining ingredients (except fish) and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium low; add fish; cover and cook 25 to 35 minutes until both potatoes and fish are tender. Remove bay leaves before serving.

Venison Vegetable Soup

1 pound ground venison	2 cups beef or vegetable broth
2 T olive oil	3 cups water
2 cans diced tomatoes with juice	2 teaspoons salt
2 onions, chopped	1 teaspoon pepper
2 stalks celery, chopped	2 teaspoons parsley
2 cups zucchini, shredded	1 cup ditalini pasta, uncooked

Heat olive oil in large soup pot or Dutch oven. Add ground venison and brown completely. Stir in remaining ingredients except pasta. Bring to a boil; reduce heat, cover and simmer for 45 minutes. Add pasta and again bring to a boil. Boil, uncovered, about 10 minutes more or until pasta is soft.

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.

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