



A P R I L
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Club Web site: <http://www.yaharafishingclub.org>

Great River Walleyes

Notes by Stan Nichols

Spring walleye fishing is coming and may be here by the time you read this article. Great River Guide Service's Terry Frey presented the talk at the March YFC meeting for catching river walleyes, especially in the Mississippi River. Besides guiding Terry has fished walleye tournaments for about 100-mile stretch of river from Winona, Minnesota south.

The main thing to remember is that flow determines walleye location. Walleyes do not like to fight the current so at high flows you will find them along the river's edge, in tributaries, or in backwaters. Under low flow conditions you will find them in the middle of the river. Flow also determines where you will find the fish along wing dams. In high flow you will find them on the shoreward end of wing dams. In low flows you will find them on the points of wing dams. Always look for fish by closing dams. Where do you find flow information? Look on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers web site. What I can't tell you is what readings are considered high or low flow. That takes experience on the river. The Corps web site also tells water temperature.

The Corps recently developed an atlas of detailed maps of the Upper Mississippi. It shows bottom contours, wing dams, closing dams, islands, and tributaries. Copies of all the maps can be ordered from the Corps for \$35.

The second thing to remember about spring walleyes is they move a lot. Terry showed the results of a telemetry study where two female walleyes moved 35 miles upstream, going through two sets of locks during a spring migration. You may have to cover a lot of water to find the fish.

A number of the fishing techniques Terry described are based off the Wolf River or three-way rig with a dropper sinker in front with a leader and lure behind. But Terry had some tweaks to make rigs more effective. Most were based on using more than one lure on the line. In high water he may use a 4-6 oz. weight, a

three-foot lead to the first lure (generally a crankbait) and about 2.5-foot lead to the second crankbait. He uses floating lures- Rapallas, Smithwick Rogues, and Live Target Perch. If he is fishing an unfamiliar area with snags he doesn't use expensive lures. There are a number of variations on this set-up from using double floating jigs, a crankbait and a jig, a crankbait and spinner-rig; you get the idea. A minor variation on this set-up is a Lindy Rig with a spinner-rig or floating jig head.

A couple of other twists are to use a deep-diving crankbait to carry the "presentation" down and a floating crankbait on a lead a couple of feet above.

Jigging is a second technique. Use hair river jigs- the ones that are flattened on the sides. Purple seems to be a good color in the river. Another tip for jig fishing, either with the river jigs or the floating jig heads is to hook on two minnows for bait. A "twist" on using jigs is the Dubuque Rig. It uses a heavy jig on the bottom for weight and a floating jig-head on a lead a couple of feet above the bottom jig.

Terry often uses what he calls long lining as a presentation using a 20 lb-test mainline, a 10 lb-test dropper, and a 15 lb-test, fluorocarbon leader. He "flat lines" these rigs off the boat using different length trolling rods to get a spread and uses a trolling motor to slowly zigzag upstream over sand flats. He tries to keep the line at a 45-degree entry level into the water. He uses a short pole with a spinner or crankbait on to check his speed to see how the lures are working. He uses rod holder but says that you will probably catch more fish by hand holding the rod and pulling it forward and letting it drop back.

Hand lining is a river technique on steroids. You use a spring-loaded reel with a stainless steel line and a one and one-quarter or heavier pound weight. Above the weight is a "shank" where you can attach two lines. On the bottom line run a 10-foot lead and the top line attach a 20-foot lead and add crankbaits. Troll up the river with the line in your hand and when you feel a

Continued on next page

fish, hand line them in with the reel taking up the line. The idea is the fish see the lure on the first lead, and then hit the lure on the second lead.

In real turbid water Terry recommends blade-baits like Cicadas, Sonars, and One-eyes. They give off vibration so the fish can find them. He also recommends baits with rattles and uses scents (I believe he said Bang in crayfish or shad flavors). If nothing else the scents keep the hooks from rusting. For plastics he recommends ringworms and willow cats.

It helps to know navigation signs on the river. If you see a green placard on shore it means it is deep enough for barge traffic near shore. The channel marker are red and green, you get red on the right going upriver. Also look for natural activity. If you see a flock of seagulls feeding it usually means there are dead or crippled shad in the area and it is a good place to fish.

For big perch Terry's techniques is to use a Williams Wobbler spoon and tie two single hooks as droppers off the bottom. On the hook closest to the spoon he uses a minnow head and on the bottom hook he uses a live minnow. He will "dead-stick" this over the side of the boat or put it under a slip-bobber. The rocking of the boat or waves will give it action. A second tidbit of information from Terry for perch anglers fishing from Clement's Barge is that there is a wing dam just downstream from the barge that is a good location for perch.

As always safety is a key, especially in the spring and fall cold-water season. Terry wears flotation gear. Ice can be a problem and ice-flows may make boat landings inaccessible after you launch so you could be stuck on the river. There is also the problem with icy boat landings in cold weather. You can slide further down the ramp than you anticipated. If you use a guide, make sure they have a U.S. Coast Guard captain's license. It is required on Federal waters like the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes. Watch out for barges. They can't stop. Terry's phone number is 608-220-6366 or e-mail at captain@ultimateoutdoorsradio.com

WDNR 2013 Fishing Reports

Walleye - Lake Wisconsin/Wisconsin River below Kilbourn Dam, Columbia/Sauk counties

9,000 acre Lake Wisconsin, and 27 river miles to Kilbourn Dam in Wisconsin Dells. A spring 2012 survey below the Wisconsin Dells (Kilbourn) Dam showed an excellent size structure. Of the 1,456 walleyes captured, 5.5% were 28 inches or larger. The average size of fish sampled was 19.6 inches. Upstream from the Prairie du Sac Dam, the minimum length limit on walleye and sauger is 15", but fish from 20" through 28" may not be kept and only one fish over 28" is allowed. There are more than 20 public boat landings on Lake Wisconsin and several on the river upstream to the Kilbourn Dam. There are also three shore fishing areas on the lake (The Grade, Moon Valley, and Memorial Park in Merrimac) and one at the new boat landing in Wisconsin Dells (Newport Park). Newport Park is a new public access site on the Wisconsin River in 2012, and it has excellent amenities. The park has a beach, picnic pavilions, restroom, two-lane boat landing, and an ADA accessible fishing pier.

Smallmouth - Lake Mendota, Dane County

In the shadow of the state capital, lake Mendota is becoming one of the state's smallmouth destinations. Fall 2012 samples captured strong numbers of bass, with average size being 12.5". Crews handled many fish exceeding 18". Locating fish in the 9842 acre lake may sound difficult but find rock and you'll find smallmouth. The east shore is excellent habitat, as are the north shorelines along second point and the University of Wisconsin campus. A restrictive 18" minimum length limit pushes fish out beyond 20" with fish over 5 lbs fairly commonplace. Excellent boat launches exist around the lake with Warner park on the city's east side and Marshall park on the west shore being popular. Smallmouth are not stocked in the big lake but have become well established due to favorable habitat, forage, and harvest regulation.

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Karlette, Colleen & Mike are busy working the Club's booth at the Madison Fishing Expo. Photo thanks to Kevin Tvedten.

Dane County Launch Permit Fees for 2013

Annual resident is now \$25.00

Annual senior, \$18.00

Daily \$8.00

See <https://www.reservedane.com/permits.aspx>

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The Lake Bottoms

Ever wonder what's on the bottom of the Madison lakes? Now you can find out from YFC Member Rick Krueger (alias Rkdiver). Rick is giving a two-hour seminar on Saturday, April 27 from 9-11 a.m. at LaFollette High School. Over the years Rick has found 35 boats on the bottom of the Madison lakes. He will also be talking about side scan sonar and GPS locations. He will show 3D maps he generated using the locator and DrDepth software that are much more accurate than are normally available. Rick is a lake historian and one of the boats he found is a paddle wheeler that was probably originally used for spraying herbicide for weeds and algae in the Madison lakes. If you need an anchor Rick is the man to talk to. He usually finds plenty over the course of a summer. You can contact Rick at rk_diver@hotmail.com

The program is sponsored by the Madison School Community Recreation program (MSCR) and they are charging a \$5 registration fee if you register before April 25 or \$10 at the door. You can preregister or get more information at www.mschr.org

Stan Nichols

Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance Auction

If you are looking for a guided smallmouth trip, rods, reels (both spin and fly), lures, flies, outdoor related items, or something to satisfy your sweet tooth, come to the Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance annual auction on April 16 at the Maple Tree Restaurant in McFarland. The bidding starts at 6:30 but come early for dinner and bring a friend.

Over the past several years the auction has raised over \$18,500 all of which has been used for stream restoration, habitat improvement, fish stocking, and youth education projects. The Smallmouth Alliance is an annual contributor to both our winter and summer kids fishing programs so lets give them our support and pick up some good deals in the process.

There is more information on the Smallmouth Alliance website that has a partial list of items to be auctioned (<http://wisconsinismallmouth.com/wordpress/?p>).

Stan Nichols

FOR SALE

Minn Kota Power Drive bow mount trolling motor. 55 lbs of thrust and an Excusive Maximizer built in. The foot control is included along with a weedless wedge prop. \$200.

Hummingbird Piranha Max 20 Fish Finder. Black and white display. Transducer was mounted on the above trolling motor. \$25.

If you are interested, contact Duffy Kopf: 608-576-2700 or ljkopf@tds.net

Anyone Wanna Edit a Newsletter?

I've been creating the newsletter for six years, now with Stan Nichols as a backup. I am willing to continue, but if anyone else would like to take over, let me know. We currently create it with Adobe InDesign, and I'd be glad to train someone.

Tom Raschke, Editor



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PERCH // BY JIM KUSUDA

SCHOOLING ←

Perch in the Frozen Basin

There are few things more enjoyable than spending a day out on the ice, finding and catching nice perch. Going out with a few fishing partners can help make the day a success for all. Teamwork will be required and everyone will get some good exercise in the

process. The prize can be a tasty dinner of fried perch fillets, which is on the top of the list for many ice anglers.

So now that we are ready to go, where do the perch roam during the winter? Here on the Yahara chain of lakes, we have the larger lakes Mendota (more than 80



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“The game begins as each player goes from hole to hole, looking for fish with their sonar units. When you see a school of fish, call out to your buddies, “I’ve got some over here!” Their duty is to rush over to the one who is fishing intently and check other holes in the area.”

feet deep) and Monona (more than 70 feet deep). The lower two lakes, Waubesa and Kegonsa, are in the 30-plus foot depth range. Because Waubesa and Kegonsa are smaller, shallower lakes with a bowl shaped center basin, they are easy to fish for ice perch. They also freeze over more quickly and provide good early-season action with moderate winter conditions.

I like to get over deep water and drill a hole, watch the Vexilar three-color flasher for a few minutes and then travel 50 or 100 yards. Drill and look, drop your lure and fish for a bit, trying to get an idea if there are any schools of perch in that area of the lake. When you finally find some fish, drop down on them, keeping your lure visually above them on the screen. Hopefully they are active perch, and that some will rise to your presentation and hit. If it's a nice one, keep trying for others until the flasher is blank. Continuing to fish this spot will not maximize your time over the schools of perch.

Now the work begins. I suggest drilling a set of holes, about 20 feet apart in rows that are 20 feet apart. This grid can be considered exploratory in nature, and may be only 5 by 5 or 25 holes. Fish here for a while to see if schools are present by walking around with the Vexilar Ice-Ducer hanging directly from your flasher. This allows you to swing it under the ice to get a look around the area. If it is confirmed that schools are being marked, drill the area out. I mean increase the grid to the size of a football field, with holes drilled between the existing rows to give you lots of access. We are talking about hundreds of holes here and everyone should help out with this monster task. Shed the Ice Armor outerwear and begin drilling as many holes as you can.

OK, the field is set. The game begins as each player goes from hole to hole, looking for fish with their sonar units. When you see a school of fish, call out to your buddies, “I’ve got some over here!” Their duty is to rush over to the one who is fishing intently and check other holes in the area. If the Vexilar lights up, let the others know and quickly start fishing. As the school is leaving, it often will turn from red and orange to green. Swinging the Ice-Ducer can pick up a

suggested direction to move and check. To be productive, you will have to move quickly to catch the perch, unhook it, check the maggots and fire the lure back down to the fish before they leave. This is where the hanger rig really can shine.

The hanger, or Mendota, rig is used to present a very small, lightweight jig in deep water efficiently. It has a swivel on each end of a thin metal rod, with a leader that is tied just shorter than it. It is a sinker that shoots down like an arrow, and does not allow the jig to get tangled because it falls directly below the rig as soon as the depth is set. The Jason Mitchell Elite Meat Stick rods have the correct action to balance with the rig, so the loaded position will signal the visual change of a light perch bite. It requires concentration to watch for the light, half-inch jiggling motions to stop, indicating that a sky high hook set is immediately necessary.

Moving from hole to hole, the perch-jerkers try to stay on top of the moving school. I have found that perch schools can move in unpredictable, random patterns. On occasion they will split up and regroup, other times they will apparently vanish into thin air. Often perch are sprinting through the area in a flash, and sometimes, yes sometimes the school will come in to the grid and just stay there, in an apparent feeding frenzy.

Catching basin perch can be exasperating, exhausting and humiliating. It can also be exciting, thrilling and victorious. Ice fishing is always somewhat unpredictable, what this strategy can do is tip the odds for success in your favor. The sweetest sound in the world can be your reel pulling drag with the hook set of a jumbo basin perch. Nothing beats a fun outing with a few friends, earning your catch by working together to catch them efficiently. The perch are out there waiting, schooling in the frozen basin. ➔

Jim Kusuda
“Mendota Jim” of Madison, Wis., works the Yahara chain of lakes: Mendota, Monona, Waubesa and Kegonsa. Perch fishing is his passion when they are found in clear ice water more than 60 feet deep.

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Dane County Invites Public Comment on Aquatic Plant Management: March 20 and April 16

Dane County Office of Lakes and Watersheds Invites Public Comment at Two Aquatic Plant Management Public Informational Meetings: March 20 and April 16, 2013 The Dane County Office of Lakes and Watersheds is updating aquatic plant management plans for waters across the county where county staff use mechanical harvesters to provide navigational access and improved water flow. The county's existing plans must be updated to reflect plant surveys conducted during the summers of 2011 and 2012.

For each of the meetings below, county staff and other aquatic plant experts will present information about recent plant survey results, review the goals and recommendations of current aquatic plant management plans (all available at <http://danewaters.com/management/AquaticPlantManagement.aspx>), and invite public comment on ideas for changes to existing plan goals and objectives, and observations about 2012 harvesting.

April 16
7-9 p.m.
McFarland Municipal Center -- Training Room
5915 Milwaukee Street
McFarland, WI

For information and discussion about:
Lake Waubesa
Lake Kegonsa
Yahara River
Upper Mud Lake
Lower Mud Lake
Jenni and Kyle Ponds
Verona Quarry

A similar meeting focused on Lake Wingra was held in December 2012.

After each meeting, county staff will post (at <http://danewaters.com/management/AquaticPlantManagement.aspx>) the presentation slides from the meeting. Public comment can also be provided to lakes@countyofdane.com through April 19.

Aquatic plant management plans provide an inventory of existing plants in a lake or stream, and describe how native plants will be protected for their role as the foundation of healthy ecosystems, while nuisance non-native species will be controlled and recreational access will be provided. These plans are required by the Department of Natural Resources in order for them to permit aquatic plant harvesting programs under NR 109 Wis. Admin. Code.

These plans are approved by the Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.



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Outings Update for April 2013

Reelfoot lake, TN outing is primed and the 14 guys are ready for action. We will be headed south to warmer climes on Sunday April 7th.

There is strong interest for the Walleye outing on Green Bay so it will be on Friday through Sunday May 17th through the 19th.

Some want to fish all 3 days, some only Saturday and Sunday, some only Saturday. We have a mix of boaters and non boaters. Sign up roster will be finalized at the May 14th meeting to insure all attendees will have a boating partner. There will be a preliminary sign up at the April meeting and on the YFC Yahoo site. Motels will be a challenge, some are already fully booked for that weekend, but I'll continue checking out options

June, July, and August will be meetings on the water. If there is interest in a Salmon Charter in June or July, we will do that. We will take a poll at the May meeting.

Please feel free to contact me w/ any questions or suggestions,

Tom Klein, tom_klein@dishmail.net, cell 608-225-4968

Yahara Fishing Club Membership Form P.O. Box 3271 Madison, WI 53704

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The next meeting is on Tuesday, April 9th, at the Lakeside VFW Hall (John Nolen Rr. & Lakeside St.)
The Board Of Directors meet at 5:45 pm, The General Membership meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

Speaker: Jim Sime from Trout Unlimited

Calendar of Upcoming Events

April Events

April 7 -10 Reelfoot Lake, TN.

April 9, regular club meeting. Jim Sime, from Trout Unlimited, will talk on trout fishing in the driftless area.

May Events

May 14, regular club meeting.

Joe Puccio will speak on Panfishing The Madison Chain (Open Water).

The Yahara Fishing Club's doors are open to **EVERYONE**, so invite a friend to the meeting!

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Check out our web page at:
www.yaharafishingclub.org



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