



## Yahara Fishing Club April 2024 Newsletter

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### Ice Out – What’s Next?

*By Stan Nichols*

At the March YFC meeting, local guide Noah Humfeld presented a seasonal breakdown of what fish to target and how to catch them in the Madison chain until the ice forms next fall.

With bass fishing open all year now, at least for catch and release fishing, Noah recommends targeting bass from ice out into May. For largemouth bass find the warmest water and fish with a lipless crankbait, swimbait, blade bait, jigs, or spinnerbaits. Pick a sunny day to fish. Most fish will be in five to twelve feet of water. One place he recommended is Upper Mud Lake. Look for green weeds.

Early smallmouth bass are harder to catch. Fish rock bars, sand flats, or sand to rock transition areas. Use Ned rigs, drop shots, or tubes and fish them ultra slow. Drag them right along the bottom.

May is walleye month. The most productive technique, but more work, is to troll stick baits with trolling boards at night in shallow water (3 to 6 feet deep). Look for sand flats or shallow rocks. Look for areas of water temperature changes and watch the wind. Stealth is the key as water is usually clear this time of year and

you are fishing in shallow waters.

Walleyes can be caught by casting this time of year but retrieve very slowly – twitch, twitch, pause. The pause should be 10 seconds or more.



*Guide Noah Humfeld has a favorite lure for early season bass – read the rest of the article on page 2 to find out what it is!*

### SHOOT FOR THE MOON

At our April 10th meeting, professional guide Adam Oberfoell will discuss understanding lunar phases for better fishing. He can also tell you about catching big muskies on Madison-area lakes! The meeting starts at 7 but arrive at 6 p.m. for a mini session by Stan Nichols, on how to make and use quick and easy poppers and bluegill flies.

Notes from the President start on page 2  
Spring club outing opportunities on page 4

Walleyes can also be caught during the day but look for them in 15 to 30 feet of water. Use crawler harnesses or stick baits, cover a lot of water, and use your electronics. Troll the top half of the water column; troll at 1.5 to 2 miles per hour, and keep the boat away from the lures. Let out the line about two times the water depth you want to fish.

For skinny water walleyes in May, try shallow water sand flats and bays where the vegetation is starting to grow. Use small crankbaits. The best bite seems to be from morning to mid-day. The bite can really be hit or miss. Monona Bay and Squaw Bay are two recommended areas to try.

June and July are catch everything months and drop shot is the catch everything technique. Plastics work but one-half nightcrawler or a minnow works better. Fish weed edges, rock structure, and main lake points. Place the drop-shot hook about 15 inches above the weight. Depending on depth Noah uses a one-sixteenth to one-quarter ounce weight.

Mid- to late June is the start of musky fishing. Noah doesn't start musky fishing until the water is at least 65 degrees or warmer. He usually doesn't fish muskies when water temperatures are over 80 degrees. But when water temperatures drop back to around 65 degrees in late August it is prime musky fishing time. Topwater baits are his favorite. If the weather is hot, two days after a cold front can be really good. Musky fishing is good because many of the pelagic fish are returning to shallow water structure. This concentrates prey fish that have been spread out all summer.

Fall fishing – don't bother fishing during fall turnover. This usually occurs when water temperatures are around 50 degrees. After turnover it is walleye time again. Fish steep breaks, deep weed lines, and deep structure. Use live bait – chubs or small suckers, but jigging blade baits also works. Usually fish in 15 to 25 feet of water. The bite window is often short and remember you are again fishing in clear water conditions. Early mornings are very productive and the bite changes daily. Some days fishing is fast and furious, other days

nothing. Many times you will catch smallmouth bass at the same time and location.

Casting at night, either from a boat or from shore, is also productive in the fall. Look for weed edges, over the tops of weeds, or around current areas. The water is clear so often you can see fish with a headlamp, but don't shine the light in their eyes. Spinnerbaits, jerk baits, and blade baits all work, but remember from above – use a slow presentation. The Tenney Locks, the Yahara River, and the railroad trestle on Lake Waubesa are good areas to try. On overcast days use similar techniques.

Noah can be reached at (608) 210-9350 and [info@Madisonangling.com](mailto:info@Madisonangling.com). He also has a YouTube presence at [Madisonangling](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...). He is usually willing to give advice or you may want to book an angling trip.

*Editor's Note: What bait is Noah displaying on page 1? A Strike King Red Eye Shad, which he says is deadly for early season bass. He also likes Rippin' Raps for the same purpose.*

## **Notes from the President**

*By Phil James*

We had a good time on the outing last week to Nekoosa, and with spring here there are others coming up. Check out the list and see what you can attend. We have two more indoor meetings, with interesting speakers for each thanks to Tom Wilke, and mini-sessions before each meeting. Make sure you take advantage. Then we will be into our summer on-the-water meetings and a chance to get everyone out on the lakes. Our summer Kids Fishing Day will be here before we know it, and see also the opportunity to help out Greg Karch with a couple of his local kids fishing education events (page 3). Lots of other things will be going on as well. In addition to the rivers, catch and release for stream trout is open now, and the season opener of May 4th is not far off. If you have never done it before, now is the time to go down to the Lake Wingra dam and watch the muskies try to jump the dam. It is very cool to see the big fish that gather there. As the season gets underway, remember to enter your

fish in the club contest. Remember with the new rules, you can enter any fish caught anywhere and it will be placed in the appropriate category. It doesn't have to be huge, we like to hear about all your catches, and sometimes a category doesn't receive many entries and you might just win! Finally, REMEMBER THAT AS OF MONDAY, APRIL 1, YOU NEED A NEW 2024 LICENSE. See you on the water!



*From the Facebook page: Robert Murphy with a nice northern caught on the March 30 outing at Nekoosa.*

## **Nekoosa Outing Report**

***By Phil James***

Seven of us went on the club outing to Nekoosa to fish the Wisconsin River above Lake Petenwell on Saturday. A cold front had come through, and the water temperature had dropped several degrees, so fishing was slow, but a few nice fish were caught as well as a number of shorts. Matt Camp had the best fish of the day at 24 inches. The “day after” reports from area guides indicated we should have spent more time on shallow mud flats. Live and learn – it was a good day to be out and get to know some club members better.



*Can you say, “Slot”? Matt Camp with his 24-inch walleye caught on the March 30 outing at Nekoosa.*

## **Greg Karch is Looking for Helpers for Events in the Madison Area**

Greg’s Learn2FishWithUs organization will be hosting two events in the Madison area and could use some helpers. Contact him if you can help with either event:

Date: June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Location: Carriage Hills Estates Park, 50 N Musket Ridge Dr, Sun Prairie, WI 53590

Time: 8:45 AM to 11 AM Fishing Basics seminar followed by fishing

Date: July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Location: Tenney Park, 1414 E Johnson St, Madison, WI 53703

Time: 12:45 PM to 4 PM Take youth fishing. Education will be done the day before.

Contact Greg at [greg.karch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:greg.karch@sbcglobal.net) or 920-213-0373. A background check will be required.

## **Club Outings**

**Canada:** We have a few club members that are interested in going to Eagle Lake, Ontario during late summer or early fall again. Please contact me ASAP if you're interested in going and I can get you in touch with the other club members and help organize this trip for you. Last year several club members caught their personal best walleye or muskie, maybe this year it's your turn.

**Madison area shore fishing:** April brings in warmer weather and lots of panfish to the shallows. Let's get some club members together to hit some of our known shore fishing spots and use area fishing reports to catch bluegill, crappies and more. Check or invite club members on our Facebook page and also look for more opportunities in upcoming emails.

**Clement's Fishing Barge, Genoa:** The weather heated up but then cooled down along with the fishing in March so we postponed our outing. We have some great weather coming up to hit the Mississippi River on Clement's Fishing Barge. The forecast looks great for a less busy time on Thursday or Friday, 4/4-4/5. The weather this weekend and beyond looks to be in the 60's so anytime in the next week or two would be the time to go. Perch and walleye will be the primary fish but you could literally catch anything on the river! Cost is \$25 for adults and only \$5 for kids 5-15 years old. This is a great shore fishing opportunity to fish in a prime location that would normally need a boat to get to.

**River fishing:** Let's hit Lake Wisconsin, the Wisconsin River someplace else, the Fox River in De Pere or the Mississippi River. Get out on the water before the May 4th opener to catch walleyes, northerns and more! We will be taking votes and planning during our club meeting with outings planned rolling out on a special club email. April is time to hit the rivers!

## **Port Washington Coho and Steelhead**

**charter fishing:** June 7 and 13th are dates we have reserved with Captain John of Iverson Sportfishing. Fill your coolers with coho and steelhead and maybe even tangle with a lake or brown trout. Contact me ASAP as these spots will fill quickly. We will have six spots available on each date with the trip rate costing just under \$100. Yes, you need a Great Lakes trout stamp along with your regular license to fish. We currently have six people wanting to go between the two dates so hurry before all the spots fill up!

**Big Bay de Noc:** Stay with us at the Nahma Inn as we go after pre-spawn smallmouth, hopefully catch lots of them and get you a 20 inch-plus fish! This is one of our best trips of the year and one you won't want to miss. The water temperature dictates the spawn and this could be an early year. The main club date will be set for May 17-19 but anytime in May is possible for you and other club members. Currently we have several members going at different times during the month so chances are there is a time that will work for you!

Sign up for any of these outings through our club email ([yaharafishingclub@gmail.com](mailto:yaharafishingclub@gmail.com)), at a meeting or by contacting me by phone or text.

Jim Pankratz 608-709-6442



**INDOOR FISHING TACKLE SWAP & SALE**  
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The advertisement features a fishing rod on the left and a fishing net on the right, both in a simple line-art style. The text is centered and uses a mix of bold black and red fonts.

## **Mini Sessions Are Back in April and May**

We have some upcoming mini sessions scheduled, so get these on your calendar. At 6 p.m. before our April 10 meeting, Stan Nichols will discuss how to make and use quick and

easy poppers and bluegill flies. At 6 p.m. prior to our May 8 meeting, Don Golembiewski will present on fly fishing for bluegills and/or bass. Thanks, Stan and Don! And if you have a few tips you'd like to share with club members on one of your favorite techniques, contact Ken Terrill (608-358-0453, [ken.terill3011@gmail.com](mailto:ken.terill3011@gmail.com)) and set up a future mini session!

*Two photos from the Facebook page shown below – a bit of a trout theme going in recent weeks!*



### **One Last Reminder ... 2024 Membership Renewals**

OK, I promise this is the last time I'll nag some of you via the newsletter. About 25 percent of 2023 members still haven't renewed for 2024, but there's still time. Bring your payment to the April 10 meeting and look for Treasurer Doug Galloway (if you have cash and need change) or Membership Coordinator John Pribek. Same prices as recent years – \$35 for individuals, \$45 for families, \$10 for students. We have a significantly expanded club fishing contest this year, with lots of opportunities to win a category (and some cash), but you can't enter a fish unless you are a paid-up member when it is caught. Thanks and good luck on the water! – *John Pribek*

## Club Sponsors

A variety of businesses in the Madison area help sponsor activities of the Yahara Fishing Club, including printing of the newsletter. They also supply goods and services to the angling public. If you are in the Madison area and need something for your fishing trip, please give our sponsors a try.



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## ***The April 10th meeting is at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes***

***Professional guide Adam Oberfoell will discuss understanding lunar phases for better fishing. He also specializes in muskies, so here's your chance to get your musky fishing questions answered! The meeting starts at 7 p.m., but arrive at 6 for a mini session by Stan Nichols, on how to make and use quick and easy poppers and bluegill flies.***

### **Calendar of Upcoming Events**

**Wednesday, April 10th, 7 p.m.:** Monthly meeting at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes (see above). Mini session starts at 6 p.m. We also will be taking votes and planning club outings during this meeting, with resulting planned outings rolled out via email.

**Early to mid-May:** Club outing for pre-spawn smallmouth on Big Bay de Noc. Club members are going up at various times. See details on page 4.

**Wednesday, May 8th, 7 p.m.:** Monthly meeting at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes. Speaker will be Zach Feiner, fisheries ecologist currently working as a research scientist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and UW-Madison Center for Limnology. Zach will speak on climate change's effects on Wisconsin lakes and fishing. Don't miss this timely topic! Mini session starts at 6 p.m. (see page 5).

**June 7th and 13th:** Dates reserved for Port Washington Coho and Steelhead charter fishing (see page 4).

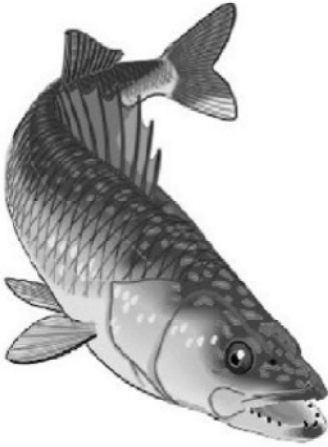
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Yahara Fishing Club  
P.O. Box 259803  
Madison, Wi 53725



Check out our web page at: [www.yaharafishingclub.org](http://www.yaharafishingclub.org)

**Yahara Fishing Club Membership Form**  
**P.O. Box 259803**  
**Madison, WI 53725**

Annual Dues are from January 1 to December 31. Please print. \*\*\* ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Name \*\*\*

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If Family or Youth, Additional Names

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