



March  
2014

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Club Web site: <http://www.yaharafishingclub.org>

## Climbing the Learning Curve

By Stan Nichols

Green Bay whitefish – year one, no whitefish for me; year two, ten whitefish. The big reason for me to go the third year was to see if I was climbing the learning curve for catching whitefish? The first year was tough. Poor ice conditions prevented us from getting to better areas for fishing. I thought if I could feel a 4-inch perch bite in 60-feet of water in Lake Mendota, whitefish would be a slam-dunk-not. Rod recommendations were a heavy perch rod or light walleye rod. My definition of a light walleye rod was too stiff for whitefish. Both waxworms and minnows were recommended for bait. Ice conditions were much better the second year. We could get to better fishing areas. I bought minnows and waxworms, but I noticed Dean Gordon, the guide, wasn't using minnows. My rods were still too stiff even though I went to lighter rods. Of the fish I caught I only felt the bite of two, the others were just there when I happened to be jigging. Dean looked at my rig and took off all swivels and snaps. He tied the lures directly to the line. The basic rig was a jigging spoon on the bottom, like a number 3 Swedish Pimple, and a small hook or a small jig like a Doobie tied about nine-inches up the line.

After two years of trying, doing some reading, and watching You-Tube videos, where was I on the learning curve? The interesting thing is how much conflicting information there is regarding how to catch a whitefish. Bret Alexander, another whitefish guide recommends using a "slider rig" – the upper hook slides above a barrel swivel, some recommend a treble hook for a slider, others a single hook. Dean likes to tie hooks and spoons directly to the line. Alexander recommends using two or three waxworms on the slider, Dean only one. Alexander expounds the use of Vexilar; Dean doesn't think they are very useful. Any number of bottom spoons was recommended as were jigging Rapalas. Recommended jig colors also varied although gold-cracked ice Pimples had many proponents.

Year three, here we go. We were fishing off

Quarry Point west of Sturgeon Bay about two miles out. Plenty of ice this year. The Ice-Road truckers could probably make a run to Marinette across the Bay. Dean's shacks were set up in 70-to-100 feet of water. I'm armed with a lighter rod, a gold and cracked ice number three Swedish Pimple on the bottom, and a gold tungsten jig on a slider rig- one waxworm on the slider and two on the pimple. I'm fishing in 100-feet of water with Gard and Phil James. Dean came by and gave us jigging lessons and he rigged one of my other rods to his preference, a single red hook about 9-inches up tied directly to the line and a gold Hali for a jigging spoon. Dean's jigging technique is have the jigging spoon just touching the bottom, give it two or three slow lifts of about two to three inches, drop it to the bottom and pause it for two or three seconds. Every once in awhile give it a hard jig and pound the bottom. I tried using my Vexilar but it didn't seem to be telling me much so I turned it off- just burning electrons. When I caught a fish I left the "mashed up" waxworm on the hook and just added another. I figured an experienced waxworm was good and maybe he could teach the new guy how to catch fish.

By lunch on Saturday I had my ten fish and Gard and Phil had five or six each. I thought I climbed to the top of the learning curve. I caught all my fish on the slider rig, none on the jigging spoon.

After lunch, reality set in. I tried Dean's set-up and didn't catch another fish. Come Sunday morning I went back to the shack where I caught the fish on Saturday, tried both rigs, and fished for two hours without a bite. I went searching to see how others were doing and they seemed to be having better luck in shallower water. I found

*Continued next page*

Outings updates pages 3 and 5.

Whitefish, continued.

Gard and Phil. Phil was catching some fish so with a little pleading (not much really they were very welcoming) I squeezed into their shack and caught three more fish, all on Dean's rig. If I had started out in shallower water to begin with I would probably have caught a couple more.

So what is my "take away" from year three? I think the most important thing, as is the case with most fishing, especially ice fishing, is bite detection. Whitefish are extremely light biters. Rods are important. You need a rod flexible enough to detect a bite but with enough backbone to set the hook in 100-feet of water. At the least little quivering of the line or feel of weight, set the hook. I set the hook many times on empty water. I figured that was my big jig stroke. But often it was a fish. I'm not sure the jigging spoon makes a lot of difference. I didn't catch a fish on the spoon. I did hear that some of the group caught fish on jigging Rapalas. The rig we were using was sort of a "drop shot" rig. Instead of a weight on the bottom we used a jigging spoon. I didn't think the Vexilar did me much good. We were fishing in one place, the fish were there or they weren't there, and if they were there, they were on the bottom. I know Charlie Grimm is more of a proponent of the Vexilar and it would probably be more useful if we were switching holes. A final thought is that this rig may work well for perch in the Madison Lakes. The heavier spoon on the bottom keeps the line from fouling on the way down and you have two baits in the water.

Thanks again go to Tom Klein for setting up the trip, to Dean Gordon and Hooked Up Charters for making the outing enjoyable and welcome to the guests from the Rockford Area fishing club who participated.

## March Meeting

Bill Schultz lives in New Berlin, WI and is a contributing writer for [www.lake-link.com](http://www.lake-link.com), [www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com](http://www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com), [www.smallmouths.com](http://www.smallmouths.com) and various outdoor magazines, including On Wisconsin Outdoors and Kayak Angler Magazine, along with appearances on Outdoor Wisconsin. Bill is a smallmouth bass enthusiast and since catching his first in 1994 has caught and released over 17,000 smallies. His focus has been the big waters of Green Bay in Door County, along with rivers and streams throughout Wisconsin. Since 1995, Bill has spent almost 200 days on the waters of Door County, catching thousands of smallies. He is on the Pro Staffs for Mercury Marine, Crestliner Boats, Cedar Lake Sales, Kalin's Lunger Grubs, St. Croix Rod, Wilderness Systems Kayaks, Adventure Technology Paddles and has sponsorships with a variety of other fishing and outdoor companies.

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**OUTINGS UPDATE March 2014** More info on dual club outings page 5 *By Tom Klein*

March 21st, Friday and March 22nd Saturday. You can go one day or both days. The cost this year is \$18.00 for the barge/shuttle boat per day. If you go both days you will have to arrange your own motel and car pooling. For the one day persons, meet at West Towne Mall parking lot near the Sears auto center. Bait available at Captain Hooks in Genoa. I will have a sign up sheet at the March 11th meeting. If there is a late winter storm with hazardous driving or the river is still frozen or the river is at high flood stage (unfishable), the trip will be cancelled. Check out [www.clements-fishing.com](http://www.clements-fishing.com).

April 5th weekend. A quest for trophy Walleye out of Depere. This is another dual club outing with our Beloit Rock Valley Angler friends. This is a flexible outing over possibly 3 weekends in March or April depending on when the ice melts. The target is walleyes on the Fox River with blade baits. More information to come on this at our meeting or with special e-mails when conditions improve. They would like to know our interest and will provide more detail as to motel rates. Etc. Rodney Bondele is the Rock Valley contact for this outing - [tvfishermn@charter.net](mailto:tvfishermn@charter.net). Also Dave McCoy from Rock Valley will likely be at our meeting with more info.

April 11th, a Friday or possibly a week day the following week. A one day outing to the Dells for walleye/sauger. More detail at our April 8th meeting or before. Kevin Tveden/Mike Mohr may be our guides.

April 27th, a Sunday. Jumbo Perch out of Waukegan, Ill. This is an all inclusive charter(tackle, bait provided). Illinois license (you can buy on board) is \$7, limit is 15 Perch. We would meet our charter Captain, Tim, at 11 am for a 5 hour charter. Depending on the number of guests, the cost would range from \$87 (6 persons) to \$170 (3 persons). See [finquest@wi.rr.com](mailto:finquest@wi.rr.com) for more detail on the boat, etc. I will take a poll at the next meeting.

May 16th through the 19th weekend. Big Bay De Noc, a large bay of Green Bay off the North end of Green Bay in MI.

For those who cannot make Big Bay De Noc, I will plan a one day outing for White Bass on the Fox as it enters Lake Winnebago, target date May 16th, a Friday.

Jim Pankratz says there is still time to book your Canada fishing trip to famous Eagle Lake, ON.

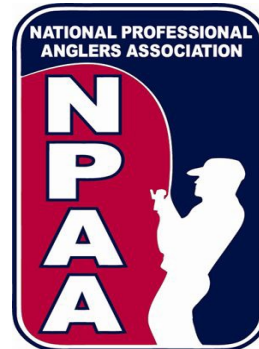
Two outings planned. This lake has abundant walleye, muskie, northern, perch, small mouth, and lake trout. We have a group going the first week of June and another group going July 19-26. There are two resorts to choose from with many options available. You can camp for super cheap. do a housekeeping package or American plan. Both resorts are in the peak of the fishing show season and filling up so don't wait to get more information and book a trip of a lifetime. You can check out their web sites at [www.birchdalelodge.com](http://www.birchdalelodge.com)

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## Opportunity to fish with the Rock Valley Anglers

Hello Yahara Club members,

We have a special opportunity to join forces with our Beloit fishing friends from the Rock Valley Anglers Club on an outing to Big Bay du Noc for some fantastic small mouth fishing this May. Read below for more information but we will be signing people up at our next club meeting March 11 or you can sign-up with me by e-mail or phone before that.

Dave McCoy has been going to Big Bay du Noc for smallies for the last 20 years. Their club (typically 6 people for sure and up to 8) go up two weekends in May. This year it would be May 16-19 and Memorial weekend May 23-26. They go Friday and fish two days there and on their way back on Monday they usually stop and fish the Menominee River for big walleyes. For them it's a 7 hour trip but from Madison it would be 5 hours max or less.

Fishing :

The target fish on Big bay du Noc is smallies which they literally catch hundreds of and say that it's so phenomenal that your arms get sore. This is shallow water fishing of less than 8 feet with the bay being 6 miles across and many boat landings throughout so if it's rough water or a smaller boat you can trailer your boat anywhere. The weather is typically good and not very windy but if that happens you can fish from shore in waders easily and still catch tons of fish. You could also fish Little Bay du Noc or inland lakes too. They would guide us to areas of fishing and the plan with boats would be to send groups out to different locations to find the hot bite and call others to them.

Little Bay du Noc is right next door and is a famous walleye destination but there are tons of walleyes and bigger ones in Big Bay du Noc with little fishing pressure so if people wanted to fish for eyes this can easily be done at either location and they are right in the shallows with the smallies anyway. There are plenty of small inland lakes that are also accessible but again the smallie fishing is so good that they typically don't fish for anything else and also they leave the walleye fishing for Monday on the Menominee River with opportunities of catching 10-13 pound eyes.

Tackle :

They typically fish with tubes (gobi colors shine) and Senkos but also spinner baits, crayfish imitators, and even the Kalin grub catch plenty of fish.

Accommodations:

They stay at the Nahma Inn which they have a great relationship with. He just spoke to them about the possibility of both our clubs coming up

and they are more than willing to accommodate us at a great rate of \$30 a person a night for rooms which includes a continental breakfast and sack lunch. Dinner is extra in the inn. They are also willing to rent the entire place out to us. The only catch is that they only have 14 rooms of which 2 have 2 separate beds while the other 12 rooms have only one bed. They do have 1 roll-a-way bed and will allow us to bring cots or air mattresses to accommodate up to 24 people.

Check out their website but it's a super nice place and Dave says they bend over backwards to make it a great trip and the cost is super cheap.

<http://www.nahmainn.com/>  
Packages:

We can do anything we like. The Beloit group does the two weekends but we can go the whole week, 5 days or whatever amount of days we want. We can send a group up one weekend and then a different group up the next weekend. If we decide to go for a longer trip like 5-7 days the Beloit group would shift their trip to do the same or at least have someone there to guide us and put us on fish.

Licenses:

Nonresident for 72 hours is \$21. Annual restricted (all except trout, salmon, sturgeon) \$34, Full annual \$42

Daily possession: 5 total in any combination but no more than 2 northern pike (wall-eyes, smallmouth, largemouth )

Sounds like a fantastic trip and I'm planning on going for sure at least Memorial Weekend. Hope you can join me and other club members on this great dual outing!

Jim Pankratz  
608-288-9789  
jimannepan@aol.com

### Additional note: Depere Walleye Outings

This is another dual club outing with our Beloit Rock Valley Angler friends. This is a flexible outing over possibly 3 weekends in March or April depending on when the ice melts. The target is walleyes on the Fox River with blade baits. More information to come on this at our meeting or with special e-mails when conditions improve.

## Notes from the Prez

As I am writing this message for the YFC March newsletter, it is the end of February, and spring has yet to appear on the horizon. We've had a lot of winter this winter! It's been wonderful for the ice fishermen among us, but we could all use a good thaw. The recent Club auction, and the Fishing Expo, certainly have helped to buoy my spirits (and as usual marked the arrival of some new additions to my stash of fishing tackle, much to the consternation of my wife who wonders, not without good cause, why I need anything more, and where there's room to keep the additional items). But it's fun to try new equipment and to contemplate all the additional fish I'll be catching with the added gear.

We have some very good speakers lined up for the next three Club meetings, and that will help get me through to the opening of the open-water fishing season. We'll be educated on fishing for smallmouth bass, walleyes, and muskies. There are Club outings in the works (example: Clement's Fishing Barge sometime next month), and I'm determined to get out, perhaps in just a couple of weeks, for spring walleye fishing on our southern Wisconsin rivers.

There is one benefit I see to the winter dragging on a bit longer. It gives me a bit more time to work on some projects for the Yahara Fishing Club. The YFC Board of Directors has started work on several tasks, including the development of a Mission Statement to help us identify and accomplish the objectives which are most important to our Club and our members. Another important task is the development of a set of criteria to guide the Club and its Board, as a charitable organization, in making financial contributions to groups in the community. We want our dollars to have the greatest possible impact as we try to support and enhance interest in the sport of fishing, and opportunities for people in the area to enjoy this sport which is the focus of the Club. The Board will also be studying the Club's out-dated and inadequate By-Laws (adopted many years ago), to make sure that the Club's operations are well-organized and consistent from year-to-year. In addition, the Club is engaged in discussions with the Beloit-Rockford area fishing club to explore ways in which the two organizations might collaborate in order to encourage interest in membership in the two Clubs, and to expand opportunities for members of both clubs to participate in

outings and to hear knowledgeable speakers. However, let me assure everyone that the YFC Board appreciates that as these efforts go forward, it will be important that we keep the membership informed, and that we get input from the members. Our Club activities have long been characterized by a low-key, friendly, and welcoming atmosphere; we want to keep things that way.

We have a new Club Treasurer, Colleen Marsden, and I want to be sure she has a smooth transition into that important office. I want to publicly thank Dennis Puser for the exceptional work he has done in that position for the past few years; we should all be grateful for his considerable commitment of time and his capable efforts doing that job. Colleen will be a fine successor. We have a terrific group of members who consistently volunteer their time and energies to doing the things which make our Club successful and relevant. We all owe a debt of gratitude to those people. But it is also important that we find new members for our Club, and that we find ways to get more members, new and old, to volunteer so that we do not rely too heavily on a limited number of members. We'll be working on that, too!

In the meantime, I'll be trying to figure out what type of line to spool onto my new bait caster, and how to fit my new gear into the existing mix of rods and reels, all the while waiting for the arrival of spring!

Gard

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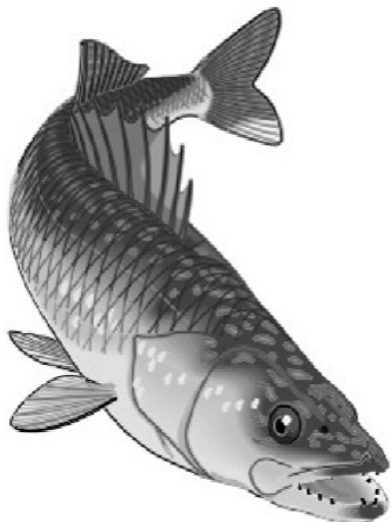
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The next meeting is on Tuesday, March 11th, at the Lakeside VFW Hall (John Nolen Rr. & Lakeside St.)  
The Board Of Directors meet at 6:00 pm, The General Membership meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

**Speaker: Bill Schultz**

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### March Events

March 11th - Regular Club meeting - Speaker Bill Schultz. See note on page 2.  
March 21st, Friday and March 22nd Saturday - Clements Barge. See page 3.

### April Events

April 8th - Regular Club meeting. Jeff Bennett, Walleye Guide, will discuss early season river fishing and lake fishing in the Lake Wisconsin area for walleyes.  
All during April - many club outings. See page 3.

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

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