



Yahara Fishing Club March 2025 Newsletter

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Tips and Taps for River Fishing

By Stan Nichols

I think the least pressured fishing waters in the state are medium-sized rivers. What is a medium-sized river? Too big for trout and too small for a bass boat. There are many in the state including the upper ends of many larger rivers like the Menominee, Wisconsin, St. Croix, Chippewa, Flambeau, and Manitowish. Even the Lower Wisconsin could be considered because it is difficult to fish with a big boat. These rivers can be fished by wading or with a canoe, kayak, float tube or with specialized boats like jet boats or air boats. They hold good populations of smallmouth bass, walleyes, northern pike and some have muskies. Back water areas hold panfish.

Jozef Wojciehoski presented tips for river fishing at the February meeting. He runs a guide service out of Stevens Point and fishes the Wisconsin River, mainly from the Dubay Dam downstream to Stevens Point. In the winter he ice fishes the Big Eau Pleine Flowage. He has a jet drive motor so he can get into shallow water areas and a pontoon boat with a shallow draft that can accommodate larger groups.



Guide Jozef Wojciehoski stressed getting to spots on rivers that often are difficult for large, conventional fishing boats.

Understanding current is a key to river fishing. The current is your friend. It tells you where fish aren't. Fish don't like living in current.

Story continued on page 2

MARCH MEETING: TIME TO START THINKING ABOUT SMALLIES!

Our featured speaker will be smallmouth bass aficionado Bill Schultz, who will talk about the baits and techniques that have helped him catch and release 33,300-plus bronzebacks. Join us at 7 p.m. on March 12 at Bowl-A-Vard (2121 E. Springs Drive, Madison). Kurt Welke will conduct a mini session at 6 p.m. on how to make a great shore lunch. Yum!

Notes from the President on page 4

Spring and summer club outing opportunities start on page 6

It takes too much energy to keep fighting the current so look for slack water, eddies, and current breaks. Although fish will live in slack water they can be very close to current so they can dash out and catch food. Slack water can be a very small area such as on the downstream side of a rock, close to the bottom so the current passes overhead, or an undercut bank. Boat position is critical and will make a difference in the number of fish you catch. With his jet drive motor, Jozef can get into flooded timber and heavy weed beds to fish.

To catch spring walleyes cast one-quarter to three-eighths ounce jigs with a fathead minnow, a golden shiner, or a black-tail chub. If you prefer casting try a hair jig, Rippin' Rap, or Shiver Minnow. If you are a troller, use a #5 or a #7 Flicker Shad. Troll faster upstream and slower downstream. Most fish are caught in 3 to 7 feet of water. In the spring use bright colors, stripes or dots, and use an erratic movement. Again finding the current breaks and getting down to the bottom is key. Most rivers have an obstruction (i.e., a dam) that will congregate walleyes on their spring spawning migration.

Match the hatch for summer walleyes. Start fishing with minnows then switch to nightcrawlers around early to mid-June. Fish in timber or find pockets or deep holes in sloughs or weed beds. Shallow flats with early weed growth can also be good.

Muskies are found in the same place as walleyes. Have good equipment when musky fishing so you can quickly release the fish and always use a figure 8 when casting. Water temperature plays a big role in musky fishing. Muskies don't eat when they spawn so fishing during the spawn (water temperatures 50-55 degrees) is fruitless. As water warms above 55 degrees to about 65 degrees it is a great time to use top water lures. During the summer at 65 to 80 degrees buzz baits and bucktails are good choices. Above 80 degree water temperatures quit fishing for muskies. It is physiologically hard on them. Fall, when water temperatures are 55 down to 40 degrees it is live bait and

bobber time using 8- to 15-inch suckers or use short-line trolling.

For musky lures, Jozef recommends Swimming Dawgs as a swimbait, Dr. Evil as a top water bait, gliders, and a variety of bucktails. He prefers smaller bucktails with a single spinner blade, no larger than a #8.

In the winter he has permanent shacks on the Big Eau Pleine Flowage and fishes for crappies, perch and walleyes. Most crappies and perch are suspended and are caught on small jigs with plastic or grubs. Tip-ups baited with golden shiners or black-tailed chubs are used for walleyes or jigging with Clam Pinheads or Jiggin' Raps.

These are the tips, what about the taps? Jozef and his co-owner Matt Lazarski also own a tackle shop in Stevens Point that has a small tap room attached. So if you are going through Stevens Point and don't have time to fish, stop by and have a brew and some conversation. They have top quality tackle in the tackle shop – AFTCO, Simms, Garmin, and Dakota lithium batteries. Support local businesses.

Taps and Tackle Co. is located at 35c Park Ridge Drive in Stevens Point, phone (715) 341-7400 and (715) 498-8384, and email: jwojo@tapsandtackleco.com



Everyone likes seeing pictures of happy kids! Here are some who won the club's kids raffles for fishing rods and tackle boxes conducted at the Wisconsin Fishing Expo.



Saturday's winner Carter and his Dad (photo credit: Tom Harrington)



Everleigh, Sunday's first-place winner, with her Dad (photo credit: Gerald King)



Sunday's winner of a tackle box (photo credit: Tom Raschke)

From the club's Facebook page:



Notes from the President

By Phil James

Spring is almost here and it is time to start getting our boats and gear ready for the new season. Some of you will remember that in the fall I was asking around about someone to re-carpet my boat, which was showing its age. I ended up at Erickson Brothers Upholstery in Prairie du Sac. Chase and Kenyon have over a decade of experience but have set up their own shop relatively recently. They did a great job on my boat and were very accommodating and patient as there were other things I wanted to take care of or improve while things were accessible. We replaced the livewell drain shutoff because the old system just never worked well, then replaced the livewell drain port which no longer sealed, then the recirculation pump which had become brittle with age.

Each step required ordering new parts and waiting, but they took it all in stride. I will admit that seeing your boat stripped down to the bare hull is a little scary, but they put

everything back together flawlessly, with all my rod holder, cleats, downrigger bases, and other doohickeys back exactly where they were, and anything they found that wasn't stainless steel was swapped out for it. And they did everything for a fair and reasonable price. Now I just have to finish the other improvements I want and get out and enjoy my "new" boat. If you need work done on your boat (or car!) you should give them a call.

*** Remember You Need a New Fishing License by the End of the Month! ***

There Is a New Way to Submit Fishing Contest Entries

The club is in the slow process of improving our website usefulness and functionality, and one feature is now ready – from now on your club fishing contest entries should be submitted online! To submit an entry, go to the Members Only section of the website and find the link for submitting an entry. Click on the link and you will be taken to a form which you fill out online and submit. The form instructions will also provide you with an email address where you should send a picture of your fish. The information submitted will be automatically entered into a spreadsheet which will be viewable by Paul Zoch, to keep track of your entries and to create a permanent record.

If you do not have access to a computer you may enter fish by mailing the information and picture to Paul Zoch as you always have. All others should submit entries online.

Important: If you have already submitted any entries for 2025, you should resubmit them online so that they get entered into the spreadsheet.

Also Important: If you posted a picture on Facebook and wrote "please enter it in the contest," that is NOT AND NEVER HAS BEEN a proper entry, and you should enter your fish using the online form if you want it to be included.

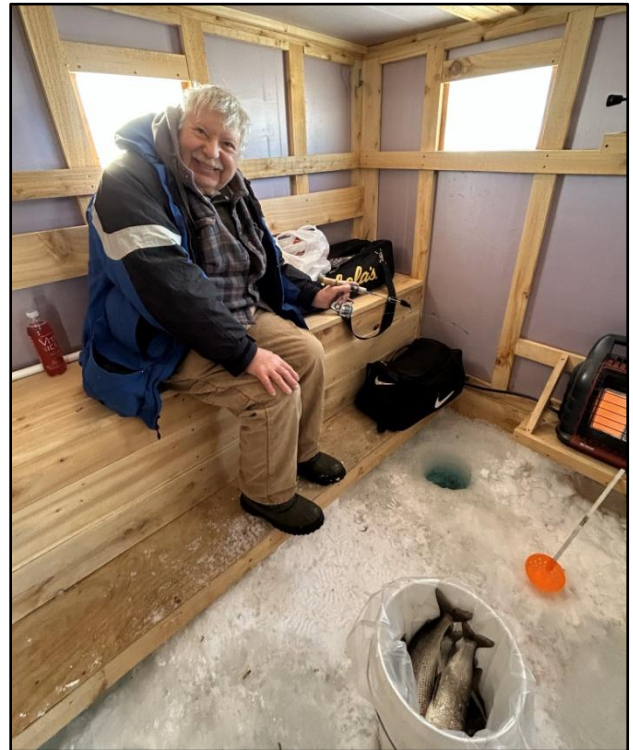
We Fought the Whitefish and the Whitefish Won!

By Jim Pankratz

... or maybe it was the weather, our bait choice or our jigging cadence? Finally, after two years of being unable to get out on the ice in the deep waters of Sturgeon Bay, a group of 26 of us were disappointed once again when 45 mph winds hit the day before our outing, canceling it yet another time! But we didn't give up that easy and small groups of us went back after the ice healed on three separate trips, only to be humbled by the whitefish's wrath. Tough fishing with high pressure, cold weather, low pressure and always changing weather ruled the day. No limits were caught but enough to get a taste of why this outing is so special and plenty of fun was had!



Of course, Jim nevertheless managed to land this brute – just shy of 25 inches!





Expo Thanks

A GIANT THANK YOU to all who participated in selling raffle tickets, buying raffle tickets, donating raffle prizes, donating soft plastics for our kids booth, working in both booths, and working at the Wisconsin Fishing Expo! Your support helped us have a very successful fundraiser and we couldn't have done it without you!

Thank you for your efforts to support our club!

– Jim Pankratz

Club Outings

The rivers are calling!

Mississippi Backwaters

In mid to late March ice out on the Mississippi backwaters means jumbo perch! We are planning a trip to possibly Trempealeau or La Crosse to hunt down the biggest perch of the year! This will be a day outing for sure and possibly a multiday outing with enough interest. The last two weeks of March are likely for this outing.

Clements Fishing Barge

March is “river time” and anything is possible on the river! This is a great outing for kids and adults and no boat is needed as you will get a ride across the river to the barge where you can fish all day. Cost is \$25 per adult and \$5 for

kids 15 and under. Anything is possible on the river and March/April is good time for perch, walleyes and more! The barge is scheduled to open March 8th assuming the ice is all gone.

De Pere Fox River Walleye Run

Want to experience the craziness of the spring walleye run in De Pere? All those boats are there for a reason and that's for a chance at a giant Green Bay walleye! Typically this is late March. Sign up for your chance at Green Bay gold!

Nekoosa Wisconsin River Walleye Run

The walleye run on the Wisconsin River into Lake Petenwell can be just as fun as De Pere but with a lot less people.

Big Bay De Noc

It's NEVER too early to think about catching giant pre-spawn smallies in the UP. This is definitely one of our best outings by far! Join us this year for your chance to catch a 20-inch smallmouth as well as a Yooper beer and great food at the Nahma Inn! This outing will likely be in mid May but depending on the weather could still work later in the month. We will have several groups going so there are plenty of opportunities to join us.

Port Washington Salmon Charter

Head out on Lake Michigan with Captain John Iverson of Iverson SportFishing on June 5, 12 or 20th. This is a great time to catch the best tasting coho salmon and more! Each 5 hour charter is for six people. Due to popularity and for ensuring that we have full crews we are requiring that you pay the full \$92 ahead of time.

Sturgeon Bay Salmon Charter

Head out on Lake Michigan and beautiful Door County with Captain Dean Gordon of Hooked Up Sport Fishing Charters on July 10th or August 9th. This will be a 5 hour charter for six people. Start lifting weights now so you're in

shape to hold onto the rod while a 20-plus pound king salmon screams line off the reel!

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

We're a fishing club, let's go fishing together!

Jim Pankratz (608) 709-6442

It's Only March – Renew Your Membership for 2025

Since some of you are already catching big fish this year, remember, you can't enter a fish in our expanded fishing contest unless you are a paid-up member at the time the lunger is caught. So if you haven't had a chance to renew your club membership yet, bring your checkbook or cash to the March 12 meeting. You can provide your payment to membership coordinator Paul Meyer. If you have cash and need change, treasurer Doug Galloway can help. Same prices as recent years – \$35 for individuals, \$45 for families, \$10 for students. Thanks!

For you lifelong learners, don't forget Muskie School!



A screenshot of a Facebook post by Duffy Kopf, dated Feb 19. The post promotes the 22nd Annual Intermediate & Advanced Muskie School, held on March 22, 2025, in Waunakee, WI. The registration link is www.muskieschool.com. The post features a promotional graphic with a blue background and orange text that reads: "Over 25 classes to choose from including Poolside Lure Demonstrations". Below this, it lists featured instructors: Noah Humfeld & Michael Hanson, and Jeff Hanson & Leif Spilde. The bottom of the post shows a photo of two men in a poolside setting, one holding a fishing rod.

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 March 12th meeting is at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes

Our featured speaker, Bill Schultz, will give his presentation titled, “Smallie Success with the Ned Rig and Other Top Lures.” These baits have helped Bill catch and release nearly 10,000 smallies just since 2012. The main meeting starts at 7 p.m. At 6 p.m., Kurt Welke will conduct a mini session on how to make a great shore lunch.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Wednesday, March 12th, 7 p.m.: Monthly meeting at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes (see above).
Don't forget about the mini session starting at 6 p.m.!

Saturday, March 22nd: The 22nd annual Capital City Chapter of Muskies, Inc.
Advanced and Intermediate Muskie School at Waunakee High School. See page 7.

Last two weeks of March: Likely time for Mississippi backwaters outings for jumbo perch. See pages 6 and 7 for information on this and other outings.

Wednesday, April 9th, 7 p.m.: Monthly meeting at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes.

Mid May: It's never too early to start thinking about chasing pre-spawn smallies on Big Bay de Noc! See page 7. Put to use some of the baits and presentations talked about by Bill Schultz.

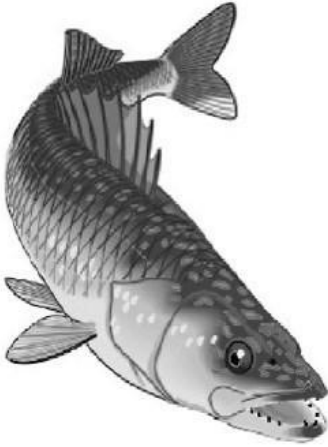
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Yahara Fishing Club
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Madison, Wi 53725



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

Yahara Fishing Club Membership Form
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Annual Dues are from January 1 to December 31. Please print. *** ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

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