



Yahara Fishing Club March 2026 Newsletter

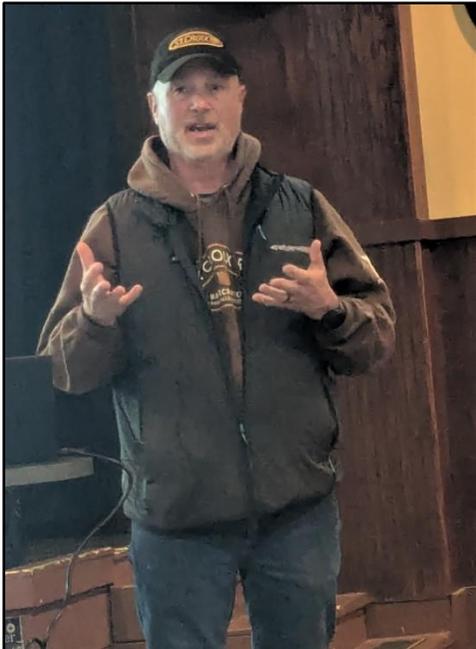
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Fishing Wisconsin River Flowages

By Stan Nichols

The Wisconsin River stretches from the Wisconsin-U.P. border in northeast Wisconsin at Lac Vieux Desert for 490 miles to Wyalusing State Park where it enters the Mississippi River. Along this stretch there are at least 26 dams with flowages behind them and connecting rivers and streams, many with dams and flowages behind them. Also, there is a geological change so that the flowages north of Castle Rock are primarily rock bottom and those below Castle Rock are sand bottom. The river flows freely below the Prairie du Sac dam.



Todd Forcier spent the last 26 years guiding for mixed species of fish on the Central Wisconsin Flowages, primarily Petenwell and Castle Rock. Most of his talk focused on muskies but about 70 percent of his guiding is for walleyes. The muskies are planted fish as there is little marshy habitat in Petenwell and Castle Rock for muskies to spawn.

Todd divides river stretches into three habitat types – below dam discharges, river stretches, and lake stretches.

For below dams look at the discharges. The depth can vary widely across the discharge areas. His basic strategy is to motor up close to the dam and drift back using a trolling motor to slow the drift. A spot lock trolling motor helps to hold position if you find a “hot spot” for fish. Also look for eddies and current seams where fish escape the full force of the current. Where there is a paper mill above the dam there can be a warm water discharge that attracts fish in cold weather. Some dams

have man-made structures at the shore that alters current and attract fish. If you are musky fishing doing a figure eight at the end of a cast is difficult.

Story continued on page 2

TIME TO THINK ABOUT TAKING ON THE MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI

Fishing Hall of Fame guide and accomplished outdoor writer Cap'n Ted Peck will present on fishing the Mississippi River system. Ted is widely respected for his deep knowledge of river fishing and decades of experience. This is a presentation you won't want to miss! Join us at 7 p.m. on March 11 at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes in Madison.

Below discharge areas the current slows, and the habitat resembles the original river. To find fish look for “junk piles” (not literally), areas where there may be rock piles or sunken timber, current seams or diversions. Bridge pilings and flats are another good bet as are inlets of feeder streams or rivers. Fish timbered shorelines especially if there are downed trees in the water. Steep banks usually mean water next to shore is deep and holds fish. Downstream points of islands, especially rocky ones, also provides good habitat. Inlet streams provide cooler water in the summer.

Flowages are essentially lake fishing. When many flowages were constructed, timber on the flooded area was not cut or if cut the logs and brush were not removed. This is what happened on Petenwell Flowage so the bottom is lined with timber which makes it good fish habitat but can be hard on tackle. The walleye run on Petenwell occurs from the last two weeks in March to the first two weeks in April. There are white bass everywhere. Besides habitat areas mentioned above another good place to look for fish is along the old river channel.

Because of a lot of snags Todd likes to vertical jig for walleyes using a jig and minnow, jig and plastic, or jig and nightcrawler. He also uses a slip bobber rig to stay above the timber and drop shot, dead stick, and Lindy rigs depending on conditions. For muskies he uses J-Braid line in 80-pound test and the usual variety of musky lures. A hint: If a musky misses a figure eight, slap the water with the lure and continue figure eighting. As with most river fishing, no matter what you are fishing for or how you are fishing, there is a chance of just about catching anything.

Todd’s contact information is www.forcierfishing.com or (715) 459-2234.

Expo Thanks!

By Jim Pankratz

Thanks to everyone who volunteered at our club booth, the kids’ fishing pond, and for the Expo set-up crew! Also special thanks to all club members who bought and/or sold tickets for our raffle and donated soft plastics for the kids’ pond. We once again had a successful Fishing Expo and raffle fundraiser and we couldn’t have done it without you!



Edgewood High School Fishing Club members pitched in to help staff the Kids’ Fishing Pond



Mary Anne and Larry Reed and Tom Harrington holding down the YFC booth at the Wisconsin Fishing Expo

Notes from the President

By Phil James

I hope everyone got a chance to visit the Fishing Expo this last weekend. After all, where else can you book a trip, hear a seminar to learn the techniques, stock up on the right equipment, and even buy a new boat, all in the same day? The club booth had good traffic and hopefully we will see some new members from that effort. The raffle concluded and tickets were drawn – congratulations to all the winners, which included a number of club members. The Fish Pond booth was also a success, thank you to all who donated plastics and to the Edgewood Fishing Club for helping to staff the booth.

Spring is nearly upon us, time to get boats and equipment out and geared up. There will be some great outings coming up. The Mississippi is great in the spring, either from boats, shore, or the fishing floats, as is the Wisconsin. Walleye and perch will be running, followed by white bass, trout in the streams, and the coho in Lake Michigan. And if you haven't yet joined the club for trophy and numbers of smallmouth in Big Bay de Noc in May, it is not to be missed. It is always a challenge to fit in everything that spring offers, but clear as much time as you can and get out there.

Deadline for Dues

The March meeting is your last chance to renew your membership and avoid an interruption of services. Non-renewed members will be removed from the club newsletter list and from the members only Facebook page, and will not receive the new password to the club's website. Bring your checkbook to the meeting on Wednesday, March 11th. If you can't make the meeting, get your renewal mailed off to the club P.O. box (last page of this newsletter), or use Venmo on the website by clicking on the Contribution link on the home page.

New Board Member

The addition of Brian Wagner to the Board of Directors means we have all board positions filled for the first time in several years. Thank you Brian for stepping up!

Upcoming Speakers and a Mini Session

March 11th: Cap'n Ted Peck – 2020 Fishing Hall of Fame inductee, award-winning writer and guide. Cap'n Ted Peck will present on fishing the Mississippi River system. Spring is prime time on the Mississippi, so take good notes and learn all you can from Cap'n Ted.

April 8th: Matthew Crawford – From the Mississippi River to the Lake Winnebago system, he shares advanced tips and secrets to help you catch more fish on many of Wisconsin's waterways.

Also on April 8th, starting at 6 p.m., Phil James will offer a mini session prior to our regular club meeting, titled "Fluorocarbon: Is It All It's Cracked Up To Be?" Come to see what testing shows compared to manufacturers' claims.

May 13th: Patrick Durkin – Patrick Durkin of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, is an award-winning outdoor writer, freelance newspaper columnist, and general outdoors reporter.

Club Outings

Early Ice Out Mississippi River Backwaters

Nothing beats jumbo perch and lots of bluegills on the backwaters of the Mississippi River. We will fish in the La Crosse area, which is 2 hours from Madison. There is some interest in doing a two-day trip on this but you can fish one or two days. Mid to late March is the likely time for this outing and as soon as the ice is out we will go after some of the biggest perch of the year!

Clements Fishing Barge

Opening day on the Barge is March 12th assuming all the ice is gone. Let's see how it goes and try to head there in late March. You can catch anything on the river but early time is great for perch and walleyes. Cost is \$25 for age 16 and up and just \$5 for kids 6-15.

2026 Walleye Run

With the ice gone and the rivers flowing the walleyes will start to make their run. De Pere, Nekoosa and the Mississippi all will have opportunities. This will likely happen in late March or early April and will depend on water temperature.

Port Washington Salmon Charter

It's never too early to lock in our dates for chasing coho, browns, steelhead, lakers and king salmon. We will likely have two to three charters going the first two weeks of June for cohos and a chance to go the last two weeks of August for kings. Sign up now with interest and dates will be set by our March club meeting. The rate is \$550 for six people and Captain John Iverson will give a bonus two hours for a 7-hour charter. A \$50 deposit will be required per person.

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

And Speaking of Outings ...

Once again club members had a great time at the Charlie Grimm Memorial Whitefish Outing in Sturgeon Bay. We'll let the pictures tell the story!





Of Course Muskies Are Fun Too, So ...

 **Duffy Kopf**
Feb 23 · 🌐

Sign up by March 8th to be eligible for a \$200, \$100 or \$50 gift card. 25 different classes with 11 new ones. If you would like to try fly fishing for muskie, sign up for Dan Small's class.



Capital City Muskie School
March 28th at Waunakee HS
Go to: muskieschool.com

CAPITAL CITY MUSKIE SCHOOL

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 11th meeting is at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes

Fishing Hall of Fame guide and accomplished outdoor writer Cap'n Ted Peck will present on fishing the Mississippi River system. Join us at 7 p.m. on March 11 at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes (2121 E. Springs Drive, Madison).

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Wednesday, March 11th, 7 p.m.: Monthly meeting at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes (see above).

Mid to Late March: Mississippi River Backwaters Outing, La Crosse area – see page 4 for information on this and other outings.

Saturday, March 28th, 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.: 23rd Annual Intermediate and Advanced Muskie School at Waunakee High School. Go to muskieschool.com

Wednesday, April 8th, 7 p.m.: Monthly meeting at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes. Mini session starts at 6 p.m.

Wednesday, April 8th, 7 p.m.: Rock Valley Anglers Musky Night – Jeff Van Remortel, holder of the Wisconsin Live Release Musky record (56 inches) will present tips and stories. Free event at the Hoffman House, 7750 State Street, Rockford, IL

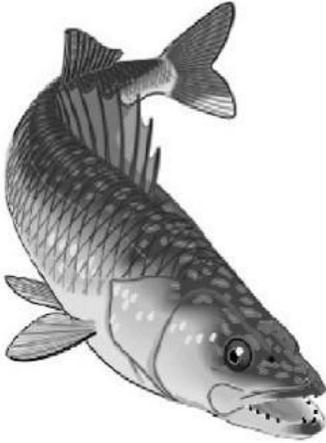
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Yahara Fishing Club
P.O. Box 259803
Madison, Wi 53725



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

Yahara Fishing Club Membership Form
P.O. Box 259803
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Annual Dues are from January 1 to December 31. Please print. *** ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Name ***

If Family or Youth, Additional Names

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