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

Trout Fishing Wisconsin Streams Using Spinning Gear and Bait

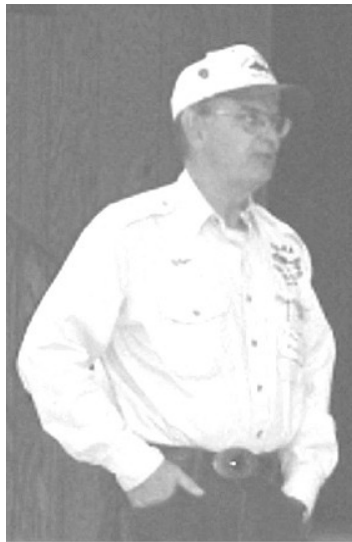
By Stan Nichols

Since I gave this presentation at the April meeting I can write it in the first person. Wisconsin has an abundance of trout streams. The first question is where to fish? A place to start looking for a location is in the Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations booklet. Pick up two or three copies of this booklet when you buy your Inland Waters Trout Stamp. I usually need one in each of my vehicles just to make sure I can find a copy when I need it. This booklet outlines all the trout streams in the state and gives you regulations for fishing each stream.

If you want more details request the Wisconsin Trout Streams and Wisconsin Trout Streams Maps books from the DNR (Publication numbers PUB-FH-806-2002 and PUB-FH-806m-2003). This combination of books not only shows the location of trout streams by county but also gives information on the types of trout in the streams and the different stream classifications (more on that later).

The problem with the above publications is they don't give details on how to get to the streams so your DeLorme Atlas or some of the county tourist information maps are useful guides on how to find the streams.

The DNR fish stocking report is available on the DNR WEB site (<http://dnr.wi.gov/fish.documents/2009catchabletrout.pdf>). Another good resource is some county reports put out by local fish managers. For instance, Kurt Welke has the "Trout Management in Dane County" report. There is a new publication that I don't have a copy of but is available at Fontana that describes all the streams in the state where there has been habitat improvement work. A final method is to talk to the local fish manager.



Generally I fish streams along the Highway 18-151 corridor. These are streams in western Dane, Iowa, and Grant Counties .

Streams and stream stretches are classified as Class I, II, or III and non-trout waters. This classification helps pick out a location to fish. Class I streams are generally smaller with smaller trout. I prefer Class II streams that are generally mid-stretches of streams that have some natural reproduction, good carry-over of stocked trout, and can produce fish of larger than average size. Class III streams need annual stocking and have little or no carry-over of trout. There can be some carry-over in Class III streams and even in some non-trout waters so there is some potential for trophy trout in these streams.

Most streams have a smaller, shallower headwaters, a slower deeper mid-stretch, and a flatter, deeper, slower bottom stretch so any stream may have Class I, II, III and non-trout water areas.

The 18-151 corridor streams to the south are generally larger, deeper, and slower and those to the north are steeper, smaller, shallower, and faster.

Access to good fishing water is generally not a problem in Wisconsin. Many streams have access leased for public fishing and many are on DNR or other public property. Navigable stream law in Wisconsin allows you access by wading in any navigable stream if you can gain legal access to it. You can also go on shore to go around obstructions to navigation. I am sure every trout stream in the state is navigable. Finally it is always good to ask permission if you are in doubt about access.

Continued next page

So how do you pick a specific location to fish? I don't like to fish real clear water so I pick a fishing location based on water level. In low water conditions I might pick a stream that is south of Highway 18-151 that tend to be deeper and slower or I might pick the lower stretched of other streams. Under higher water conditions I might fish streams north of Highway 18-151 or upper stretches of other streams. In real high water conditions I might fish waters below dams like below Blackhawk Lake or Governor Dodge Park. I also like to fish streams that go between bridges rather than along roads. There is less fishing pressure.

Stealth is often a quality easily overlooked when fishing and especially trout fishing. You are generally fishing shallow water. Much of the danger for a trout comes from above- herons, kingfishers, mink, and otter to name a few. So I like to stay away from the bank as far as possible, I don't wade much in the stream unless I have to, I try not to "plop" the bait in the water and I try not to cast a shadow on the water. Don't wear bright clothing, I like to wear camo. Personally I like an opening day that is clear, crisp, and the water is low. With all the anglers tramping up and down the bank it sends the trout into deep hiding. When the opening day "circus" is over, trout fishing is better later in the season.

As far as timing of when to go fishing, low light conditions are best but not absolutely critical. I think it helps to be the first person on the stream or at least not have other anglers directly ahead of you. The absolute best time for bait fishing is probably at the beginning of a rain when the stream starts to rise.

I have two general rules for picking the location on a stream to fish: 1) I like to fish areas where you can't see the bottom and 2) if you aren't loosing tackle you are probably fishing the wrong areas. There are the classic riffle and hole areas to fish. I like to fish

what I call "skuzzy holes", areas where a lot of debris has collected on the water surface; current breaks, down trees and rocks, overhead cover-undercut banks, inlet streams or springs, stream bends and mud lines. In streams where restoration occurred look for "lunker structures". A couple of years after installation they may be hard to recognize and they can be hard to get bait under but the effort is worthwhile.

So far much of the information I described is about trout in general. I've caught trout on flies, spinning gear, and on bait but I aimed this talk at bait and spin fishing because I can think of a number of reasons for not fly-fishing. Fly-fishing in many streams can be frustrating because they are small and brushy. You care constantly getting hung-up in brush or weeds while casting. Getting flies in areas where big fish are can be difficult or impossible. Windy weather conditions and high, muddy water are not good for fly-fishing. You don't need all the gear and mystique involved with fly-fishing to have fun catching trout. For me personally I can't remember catching a large trout (20+ inches) on a fly in the inland streams of Wisconsin and there is still some mystery of sending a fat, juicy nightcrawler in some trout-hiding hole.

Spinning gear is useful because you can cover water more quickly and you can use it with live bait or lures. Fly rods allow a more precise presentation and are useful for keeping you away from the bank. With the proper fly rod you can fish live bait or flies. I usually use 6-8 pound monofilament line on spinning equipment. Lighter line quickly leads to frustration because it breaks too easily on snags. I am not too particular on hooks, but if the fish a biting lightly I'll go to a smaller hook size. I don't use split shot except in particular applications.


There are two things to remember when selecting a lure: 1) most large trout feed on minnows and 2)

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Trout Fishing, continued

don't use anything you are afraid to loose. Panther Martins, Mepps, and Rooster Tails are good selections of commercially available spinners. Getting back to rule #2 above, I make my own variation of Panther Martin equivalents using parts from Netcraft or other suppliers. I find a small, red twister tail adds attraction to the spinner. Small Rapalas are good minnow imitation but also easily snagged so I use a jig head and small, plastic shad tail. Some larger flies like Woolly Buggers, Clousers, and leeches with bead or cone heads are heavy enough to cast on spinning gear. I have used casting bubbles with flies underneath in lakes, but generally not in streams.

For bait I am a fan of nightcrawlers, either whole or halves depending how the fish are biting, how much bait you have, and how fast you are loosing bait to chubs. With a warm, rainy night in early spring it is easy to pick up 10 to 12 dozen nightcrawlers. They will keep in damp newspaper in the refrigerator for a month or more. I've never used minnows much in streams. They are a hassle to carry but they do work well for trout in Devils Lake, both in the summer and winter. There are other bait options such as chub tails; mayfly or dragonfly nymphs; hellgrammites; grasshoppers, Powerbait, corn, Gummy Bears, and marshmallows that I've not tried or never had good luck with. Dressing a fly with a spike or two often raises the appeal of flies. A live bait bite can often be subtle. In any stream you are likely to get bites from chubs and suckers as well as trout. At one time I thought I could tell the difference between them, but since decided I can't so treat every bite like a trout. You can use catch and release when using bait. Bend down the barbs on your hooks and if you get a deeply hooked fish, just cut the line.

I am convinced that some streams are just not live bait streams and you have to "match the hatch". Early in the season during rainy weather the hatch is often nightcrawlers. There are times and maybe many times that a good fly-fisherman will out fish live bait or spinners. It is a matter of water conditions and what the fish are conditioned to feeding on at that time.

You can go "light" when spin or bait fishing- a box of hooks and/or a pocket sized tackle box. Other useful items to take along are Polaroid sunglasses, forceps, mosquito dope, rain gear, and a bait box.

I few helpful hints; I always try fishing at the bridges. Although they are heavily fished they are generally good fish habitat. I like to keep night bait in the water even if I have to leave the stream area. If you are fishing clear water it sometimes works to leave your bait in the water, then go upstream and kick up some mud. Finally, there is an In-Fisherman video on trout fishing in the YFC collection that gives a lot of good information for catching big trout.

June On The Water Meeting

I have been talking with Duffy about the June on the water meeting. I originally sent you and him an e-mail with some details. The meetings is going to me on Tuesday June 9th. I will provide the grill and some hot dogs. Please use the other info I typed about people contacting me for food/drink/ contributions, and if anyone would like to lend a hand as well, and my phone number. I will have the food ready to eat around 6:00. We will NOT meet before 6 pm like I mentioned in the previous email, the event will start at 6pm.

Bass Tournament

I would also like to Hold a club only Bass tournament on Saturday May 30. I would like to do this on Mendota. We will meet at Warner launch at 7:00 am start Fishing at 7:30 and report back for a "weight in" at 1 pm. The rules would be as follows

Max of 2 people per boat.

Each boat much have at least 1 YFC member present

We will use the combined length of 5 Bass of either small mouth or large mouth.

The honor system will be used to promote catch and release.

People can contact me at 219-851-4347. If people would like to contribute brats/beer/soda we could have a cook out and tally the lengths to award 1st through 3rd place honors, otherwise we can announce the results only in the news letter.

If you have any questions please call me or shoot me an e-mail at:

j.l.swing@gmail.com

Thanks,
Jesse

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The inland lake opener is this weekend and the fishing season will start hitting on all cylinders. Some of the high water we are all complaining about should be good for the fish. I am looking forward to the May 9th walleye tournament on Lake Wisconsin. If anyone wants information on this, let me know.

The May meeting is the last meeting at the VFW for a while and I am interested to listening to the speaker who is guide John Reddy who will be speaking on Lakes Geneva, Delevan and Como. I know those are good bass lakes and I would like to find out what else they have to offer.

Our June "On The Water" meeting is scheduled for June 9. Board member Jesse Swing is responsible for having all the info in this newsletter. Make sure you keep your eyes open for this. The July meeting is the responsibility of Charlie Grimm and he should have that information out to everyone soon. We still need someone to come forward and take the responsibility for the August meeting.

Clay Russell is going to be leading a spoonplugging outing on Mendota in July. Keep your eyes peeled for this one. I participated in this last year with Don Gostomski and we had a great time.

Now the BIG STUFF! June 7th is our annual Kids Fishing Day starting at 11:00am at Warner Park. We need YOU to be there at 8:30am to get all of the work done by the starting time. This is everyone's responsibility. If you have any questions, please let me know. I'll see you June 7th at 8:30am.

More BIG STUFF! July 11 and 12 is Fishing Has No Boundaries. If you haven't volunteered yet with the organization, I'm sure it is not too late. Let them know. We also need bodies there on Saturday afternoon starting at about 4:00pm to get the fish fry going. Dave, Jerry et al make a fish fry look like a work of art. The FHNB organization really depends on us to make this event a great experience for the participants.

Make sure you are at the May meeting to find out about all of the details on hats, sweatshirts, shirts etc.

My thoughts are now turning to the middle of June when my brothers and I, along with my son, will be spending some fishing time in Winneconne. A great place to visit, fish and reconnect with family. I will be at Lang's Landing right near the bridge in Winneconne starting on June 12 through the 16th. If you are in the area, stop by and have some fun with us.

June also brings about a Muskie Tournament up in Winter, WI. After the tournament I will be spending a week fishing the Chippewa Flowage and some surrounding lakes. Life is good.

Fishing Season Never Ends,
Duffy Kopf - Prez

May Speaker

Our speaker is John Reddy, a guide from Delavan. He will be speaking about Lake Delavan and Geneva Lake with a little bit of Lake Como interspersed into the discussion.

I've asked him to concentrate on game fish; so he will talk about largemouth & smallmouth bass, walleyes and northern pike. He might add a little on muskies and lake trout. If you want to publish his website in the the newsletter, it is www.reddyguideservice.com

Clay Russell



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Managing Wisconsin's Lakes and Waters

By Gary Engberg

Every spring as soon as the ice goes out in many of Wisconsin's lakes, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources personnel is out doing fish surveys on many of the state's lakes. There are two kinds of surveys done, one kind is a Comprehensive Survey and the other is Index Sampling.

In the Comprehensive Survey, the DNR combines intensive spring fyke netting and spring and fall electro fishing runs to cover the entire lake being surveyed. The overall purpose of this survey is to describe the size and condition of the major fish populations of recreational interest, assess regulations, and suggest necessary managerial actions. The Comprehensive Surveys target walleye, northern pike, and muskie while providing some insight into the adult components of those fisheries. These surveys are also used to make population estimates.

Index Sampling uses only electro-fishing which is directed at selected sites in both the spring and fall. Bass, panfish, and young of the year fish are most effectively monitored by Index Sampling.

This spring, I was lucky enough to be able to accompany the DNR netting crews on Madison's Lake Mendota. This year, the early spring fyke netting began in the middle of March and continued into the third week of April. Weather is a major component in the spring netting with cold temperatures and strong winds affecting the ability of the DNR workers set nets properly and catch fish. I saw nets that had over 300 channel catfish over 10 pounds in them one day and the next day had zero fish. Even in the spring, fish are constantly moving and seeking out warmer water and areas for spawning. Kurt Welke, DNR Fisheries manager for Dane County, Scott Harpold, a DNR Fisheries Technician Manager, and Dick Brandt, a part-time DNR Fisheries worker did the vast majority of the research and work on Lake Mendota in rain, snow, cold, and the strong winds of a Wisconsin spring.

The spring survey begins when the crews stretch the long fyke nets perpendicular to the shore where adult walleye, muskie, northern pike, and other gamefish congregate in spawning areas. The nets are

checked regularly from everyday to every other day including Saturdays. When the nets are checked and hold fish, the crew measures the fish, determine their sex by the presence of eggs or milt, mark the fish by fin-clipping or tagging, and in some cases removing a scale or a dorsal fin spine sample for later analysis before releasing the fish. All of this data is carefully recorded for later study, analysis, and research. I witnessed a number of fish from the nets that were recaptures meaning that they had been caught in a net in previous years and fin-clipped.



The DNR's Rachael and Kurt netting Northern Pike

The Madison Chain of Lakes include; Lake Mendota, Lake Monona, Lake Wabesa, Lake Wingra, and Lake Kegonsa. The fish netting and sampling follow a 5 year rotation on these lakes. Every year, one of the 5 lakes receives a Comprehensive Survey while the other lakes receive a spring and fall Index Sample. This was

Lake Mendota's year for a Comprehensive Survey.

As a stocked fishery with little if any natural reproduction, Lake Mendota's walleye and pike numbers are better than most of the lakes in Wisconsin. The size structure is excellent and harvest or legal-size walleyes are well represented. There also is a growing and significant smallmouth population and a quality largemouth fishery. The perch numbers are down over the long-term mean, but the hatches of 2004 and 2005 should be of good size.

Lake Mendota is an excellent fishery for most species of gamefish and all panfish. The open water season opens on May 2nd and I would recommend this lake for any anglers looking for trophy size fish of all species. The only early season drawback that I see is that Lake Mendota is a big lake (10,000 acres) with deep water (90 feet) that warms up much slower than the other

Continued next page

Managing, continued

“Chain” lakes. The other lakes in the Madison Chain are much smaller and shallower allowing them to warm quicker and get fish active sooner. I’ve also been out on the other lakes in the spring during their netting and all of these urban waters have excellent fisheries. All of the photos that accompany this story are from Lake Mendota this year, so you can see the quality! The minimum size for gamefish is 18 inches for walleyes and a daily bag limit of 3 fish, the minimum size for both smallmouth and largemouth bass is 18 inches, and the northern pike minimum is 40 inches. There are some muskies, but they are not stocked in Lake Mendota and come from the other lakes in the Chain



DNR Technician Dick Brandt with a nice walleye



World record yellow bass netted and releases on the north side of Lake Mendota.

by way of the Yahara River. Additionally, there are very good crappie, bluegill, sunfish, white bass, and yellow bass populations. During the recent netting, an almost 17 inch and 3 pound yellow bass was netted on Mendota’s north shore. This bass was a state record by almost ¾ of a pound and a world record by over a half a pound. The fish was released and is swimming in Lake Mendota.

The Wisconsin DNR also conducts surveys and netting at numerous lakes around the state every spring. Much of the spring netting in northern Wisconsin is done in the Ceded Territory that is speared by Native Americans. The focus is on

lakes that are heavily speared by the main target being walleyes. As I write, spearing is taking place on many lakes and the DNR surveys help determine the bag limits on many of these speared lakes.

If looking for a quality lake to fish this spring, try Lake Mendota in Wisconsin’s Dane County. There’s great fishing for all fish species, good access, County and State Parks for camping, and if a lake is slow then you have a choice off others close-by Lake Mendota.

Contacts; D and S Bait and Tackle on Lake Mendota’s north shore. Ask for Gene and he’ll steer you in the right direction and has the bait and tackle that you may need. (608)-241-4225.

Guides; Tony Puccio (608)-212-6464, Wally Banfi (608)-644-9823, Terry Frey (608)-220-6366, Ron Barefield (608)-838-8756, Gary Engberg (608)-795-4208.

DNR Dane County Fisheries Manager



Duffy teaching the inaugural fishing class last week at the University of Wisconsin - LaCrosse.

Filleted fish needed for Fund Raiser

Jack Hurst is looking for donations of filleted fish that will be used for a benefit which contributes toward Kids Fishing Day. St. Pauls Lutheran Church 2126 N. Sherman will have a grilled chicken and fish diner on Friday, June 19th, from 5:30 to 7:30. Cost is \$10.00 for Adults and \$4.00 for children under 6.

Proceeds from the dinner go to church related charities. Jack is arranging a \$1200 donation for Kids fishing day.

Contact Jack to make contributions or for more details. His phone number is 608-249-4720.

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The next meeting is on **Tuesday, May 12th**, 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: John Reddy, a guide from Delavan

Calendar of Upcoming Events

May Events

May 7th - D&S Bait, 7:00 PM, Mike Pecosky, Spring and Summer Walleyes. Free
May 12th - Monthly meeting @7:00 pm, Lakeside VFW Hall, Speaker John Reddy.
See article page 4
May 14th - D&S Bait, 7:00 PM, Wally Banfi, Madison Chain Muskies. Free

June Events

June 7th - Annual Kids Fishing Day starting at 11:00am at Warner Park
June 9th - On The Water meeting. See article by Jesse page 3.

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

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