



Yahara Fishing Club May 2026 Newsletter

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The Fishing Phenom Speaks

By Stan Nichols

Mathew Crawford, a 21-year-old fishing phenom from Oshkosh, was the speaker at the April meeting. Matt has a Facebook page (google Mathew Crawford fishing) where he tells what fish he is catching and where and how he catches them. Sharing this information has garnered him a wide following in the angling world. Most of Matt's fishing knowledge was self-taught, through trial and error. He readily admits he is still learning every time he goes fishing.



He started fishing bullheads from shore in Lake Winnebago. He still catches a lot of fish in shallow water. But progressing to bluegills, they are still one of his favorite early season fish. The basic rig is a VMC fly jig (google VMC flies to see the selection) in brown or pink. If the basic fly isn't working add a chunk of nightcrawler (or maybe a half red worm or a couple spikes).

Matt also gave a list of his favorite fishing destinations and some hints on how to catch the fish:

The Mississippi River in the fall (October and November) for smallmouth bass and walleyes. Fish the shallow flats by the dams.

Port Washington Harbor from October through March for trout and salmon. The harbor never freezes. Use hair jigs or shallow crankbaits. Fish off the docks.

The Milwaukee River in the fall, winter and spring for trout and salmon. The deep hole by Fifth Avenue and below waterfalls.

Story continued on page 2

A CAREER CHRONICLING THE OUTDOORS

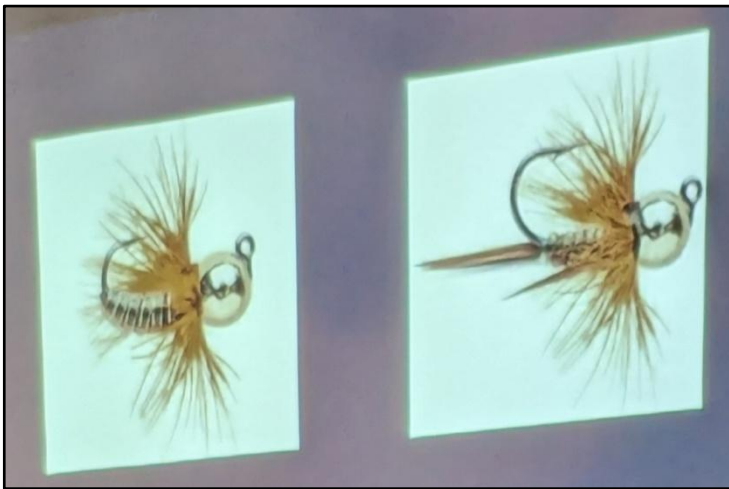
Our May speaker is Patrick Durkin of Eau Claire, an award-winning outdoors writer, freelance newspaper columnist, and general outdoors reporter. He's seen a lot in his 40-plus years of covering the outdoors and has some thoughts about our future as outdoors enthusiasts, so bring your questions! Join us at 7 p.m. on May 13 at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes. Learn more about Patrick at www.patrickdurkinoutdoors.com.

Green Bay in the spring. Troll boards for large walleyes. The best bite is at night when Matt does 90% of his fishing. One spot mentioned was the southeast corner of University Bay. Many fish are caught in four-to-six feet of water using Husky Jerks. He recommends putting lights on your trolling boards, so another boat doesn't run over your lines.

Sturgeon Bay in the spring and early summer. Fish the shallow water along Potawatomi State Park for smallmouth bass.

He likes many small lakes in northern Wisconsin but didn't give specifics to keep down the fishing pressure. Fish the weed lines in summer and winter for northern pike. Walleyes are in the weeds all year round. Night fishing in the winter works well.

The Chippewa Flowage in the fall. Cast Rippin Raps to submerged trees (you might want to replace treble hooks with single hooks to reduce hang-ups).



Matthew Crawford relies on the VMC fly jig and bullfly jig to haul in the early season bluegills.

A few random comments from Matt:

- Follow the wind. The wind blows bait fish into shore, big fish follow.
- Garlic nightcrawlers work better than non-flavored nightcrawlers.
- His favorite lures are hair jigs (1/4 to 3/8 ounce depending on current speed and depth), blade baits, chatterbaits, and VMC jigs.
- Figure out what the fish are eating and try to duplicate it.

If you can't find Matt on Facebook you can text or call him at (920) 479-4415.

End Note: There was a considerable discussion about the edibility of sheepshead. Matt says sheepshead are very palatable but keep smaller fish (under 16 inches), bleed them and keep them cold.

Often, at least in Lake Winnebago in the winter, walleyes will be found above schools of sheepshead. The sheepshead feed on zebra mussels and walleyes will feed on bits of meat after the sheepshead crack the mussel shells.

My experience with sheepshead isn't with palatability. Sheepshead have very heavy rib bones, and a lot of the meat is between the ribs, so it is hard to get at.

Update on Madison Lakes New Boat Docks

By Ken Terrill

I spoke with Joel Ringgenberg of Madison City Parks on Friday and here is an update on our boat dock railing assistance project on the Madison Lakes.

After input from the Yahara Fishing Club dock assistance members (Phil James, Rick Kruger and Tom Harrington, who are on our dock committee), a new dock has been put in at Olin Turville boat landing.



New dock installed at the Olin Park boat launch

Also, the existing railing at Warner Park boat landing has also been put in and modified by widening the spacing between the rail sections that were recommended by our YFC members.

Joel has requested that our dock assistance members meet with him at the Olin Turville dock, view the dock, and make recommendations on the existing design.

Joel then is planning on developing a design for the next dock, which will be built this year to be put in at the Olbrich boat landing next year.

Joel has asked that YFC club members look at and use these docks, and give our dock committee input on what they think of the current dock designs and how they can be improved for the additional docks that are planned for the future. Thanks!

Club Members Invited to Help Out with Fishing Has No Boundaries

Fishing Has No Boundaries is a great organization that gives people with various disabilities the opportunity to get out and enjoy the water and the wonderful sport of fishing! (<https://fhnbmadison.com/>) We fishermen know how therapeutic a day on the water can be so we are looking for volunteers to help make this year's event successful. FHNB is wondering if any YFC members could help with this one-day event on July 11, 2026, at Governor Nelson State Park. Once a relationship between FHNB and the Yahara Fishing Club is re-established, it will probably be wanted and looked forward to for years to come.

FHNB is looking for volunteers at all levels of the event – everything from helping participants into the boats, holding boats, making lunches, to helping participants off the boats. The group is also in high need of boat owners to come out and drive their boats around for the day.

Finally, the organization is also looking for two fish cutters at 11 a.m. through 1 p.m. and then again at 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. There may be a few fish, there may be a lot of fish. The fish cutting is gearing this back up at the event because it is being asked for.

Any boat owners interested can contact the main director at the below information for further information on what that looks like for the day. They are looking for both v-hulls and pontoons. Contact Heather Horn at (608) 215-7805, email becmegsam@gmail.com or feel

free to reach out to YFC member Bob Gracia (graciarj04@yahoo.com) for more information. Let's see what we can do to help with this extremely worthy cause!

Notes from the President

By Tom Harrington

Welcome all members to the 2026 fishing season! I hope everyone is off to a successful start.

I had the pleasure to meet Rose Wicherson. She is our scholarship recipient for 2026 at UW-Stevens Point. Rose is enrolled in the Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences program. She enjoys the outdoors and tagging fish as part of her studies. Hopefully we can have her join a meeting in the near future.



At the April meeting, Tom Harrington gave his first address to the club as our new president.

Brian Sloss, Dean of the UWSP College of Natural Resources, included some kind words about Jim and Katie Krause and their contributions to the college.

Jack Hurst, Paul Meyer and I had an enjoyable afternoon at the Bird and Nature Festival held at the Warner Park Community Center on April 26. We informed many visitors about YFC and our Kids Fishing Day. I think Jack knew just about everyone in attendance. It was great to talk to others about conservation in the Yahara watershed.

Club Outings

Lake Waubesa

Get a taste of what our on-the-water meetings are like without the meeting. We will meet at Lake Farm boat landing on Wednesday, May 20th at 6 p.m. Sign up if you're bringing a boat or not so we can get as many people out as possible.

Clements Fishing Barge

You can follow their site on Facebook and they post a fishing report almost daily. The bite has been HOT on the river for walleyes, bluegills, white bass and more. This would be a great time to hit the river! Cost is \$25 for age 16 and up and just \$5 for kids 6-15.

Sturgeon Bay Salmon Charter

We have two boats going on Thursday morning, August 27th. This will be prime time for king salmon and your chance at catching a 20-plus pound fish! This is a 5-hour charter and about \$160 per person. WE HAVE TWO SPOTS OPEN FOR THE EARLY BOAT AND TWO SPOTS OPEN FOR THE LATER BOAT. PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN GOING.

Port Washington Salmon Charter

Currently we have three confirmed dates, June 4, June 9 and August 28th. The first two June charters are full but we have two open spots on our August 28th charter. We have three people wanting to go out on June 10th which then

leaves three more open spots. June 3, June 10, August 19, 20 and 24th are possible dates for additional opportunities but not guaranteed unless we book them immediately. The cost will be about \$92 with a full 6-person charter and we're asking for a \$50 deposit to secure your spot. The June trips are for cohos, rainbows and lake trout with the August trip chasing large kings. This is a 7-hour charter for the price of 5.

Big Bay de Noc Smallmouth Outing

Come experience what the U.P. has to offer! This is our famous smallmouth trip but you can catch northerns too. With a close side trip to Little Bay de Noc for walleyes your fishing cup will be filled full. Finish your night with a great dinner and a Widowmaker beer at the Nahma Inn for a club outing that will become your favorite one of the year! Currently we're looking at May 15-17 and May 22-25 but you can fish anytime during the week of May 11-15 or May 18-22. (Walleye season opens May 15th.) Sign up for this great outing even if you don't have a boat. As with all our outings we try to get everyone in a boat if possible.

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

Boat for Sale

For sale: 16-foot Alumacraft Backtroller, 40-horse Johnson motor, Spartan roller bunk trailer, rigged for fishing. Many extras. Asking \$1,950. Contact Stan Nichols, (608) 838-8415, Stanley.nichols@wisc.edu



From the club's Facebook page:

A screenshot of a Facebook post from the "Yahara Fishing Club Members" page. The post is by Eric Buzza, posted 3 days ago, and is marked as an admin post. The text of the post reads: "Last Months Speaker Matthew Crawford does a great job Promoting the Yahara Fishing Club with one of his latest videos." Below the text is a video thumbnail for a post by Matthew Crawford, who is in Madison, WI. The video post says "4d" and "Shore fishing in Madison was incredible, Bluegills were hitting on every cast!" and "We found this incredible action in a side channel off Lake Monona. A 1/32oz VMC fly jig 2-4 feet under a bobber worked best for me, but the fish were so fired up, they were hitting other baits too. No live bait needed this trip." It also includes a thank-you message to Eric Buzza and Jim Kusuda and the hashtags #bluegill #fishingtrip #wisconsin #madison. At the bottom of the screenshot is a photo of two people holding bluegill fish.



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 May 13th meeting is at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes

Patrick Durkin of Eau Claire is an award-winning outdoors writer, freelance newspaper columnist, and general outdoors reporter. His presentation will draw on his 40-plus years covering the outdoors and the key issues for clubs like ours going forward. Join us at 7 p.m. on May 13 at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes (2121 E. Springs Drive, Madison). Learn more about Patrick's background and read his columns at <https://www.patrickdurkinoutdoors.com/>.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Wednesday, May 13, 7 p.m.: Monthly meeting at Bowl-A-Vard Lanes (see above).

Mid to Later in May: Club outing for pre-spawn smallmouth on Big Bay de Noc. Club members are going up at various times. See details on page 5.

Saturday, June 6: Summer Kids Fishing Day at Warner Park

Wednesday, June 10, 6 p.m.: First summer on-the-water meeting. This one will be on Lake Mendota. Meet at the Warner Park boat launch. Food will be provided.

Saturday, July 11: Fishing Has No Boundaries, Governor Nelson State Park. See page 3 and <https://fhnbmadison.com/> for more details.

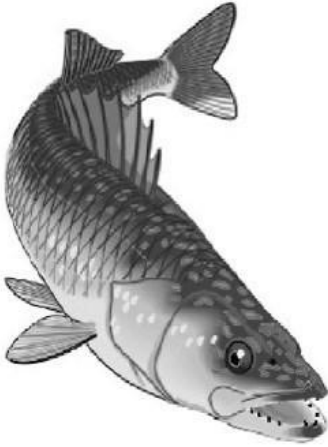
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Yahara Fishing Club
P.O. Box 259803
Madison, Wi 53725



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

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

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