



Editor: Tom Raschke ([traschke@globaldialog.com](mailto:traschke@globaldialog.com)) or 608-233-6765

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

## Lower Wisconsin River Muskies

By Gary Engberg

I live on the Lower Wisconsin River, about five miles downriver from the Prairie du Sac Dam which is the last dam on the "hard working" Wisconsin River. Here, are the twin cities of Sauk City and Prairie du Sac which are located on the river's shoreline. The Wisconsin River flows unobstructed from Sauk Prairie to its convergence with the Mississippi River at Prairie du Chien, about 85 miles downriver. Above the dam at Prairie du Sac and to the north is Lake Wisconsin, a flowage of the river that flows south from the dam at Wisconsin Dells. I'm trying to give you a little background on how the current population of muskies on the Wisconsin River and the Lower Wisconsin River initially got there. These fish are growing rapidly and hopefully reproducing with a noticeable increase in recent years.

There is now a fishable population of muskies below the Prairie du Sac Dam to the Highway 12 Bridge and to a lesser degree from the Bridge downriver (Lower Wisconsin Riverway) to the Mississippi River. The deep scour hole below the dam, formed during periods of high water, is ideal for muskies. The fish can feed in the shallows and have the security of deep water close by and very accessible. Muskies are regularly being caught in this four mile stretch directly below the dam by both casting and trolling. Most of the muskies came from Lake Wisconsin during periods of high water and to a lesser extent up from the Mississippi River. Now, these predator-fish are common and fishermen who want to try a new water should find time to fish this portion of the Wisconsin River. I know of dozens of fish from 38" to 46" caught since last fall and that's just the fish I see or hear about from other fishermen.



Muskies have been stocked in Lake Wisconsin, just the other side of the dam, for many years. Whatever way these muskies came into the Lower Wisconsin River, they have found a "home" where they are growing fat on good forage and increasing in their numbers. Previously, a muskie was caught now and then by anglers mostly fishing for walleyes and saugers in the spring and fall. Now, you can go out and put in at any of the local launching ramps and be muskie fishing in a few minutes! The boat landing that I would recommend is the one at the VFW Park which is a mile or so below the dam and just past the Highway 60 Bridge. From there, you have a short ride to the Prairie du Sac Dam. The area directly below the dam (the tailrace area) is the best place to start your muskie excursion.

Begin, by fishing the east shoreline just below the dam. I'd spend some time (at least an hour) casting your favorite baits. Bucktails, jerkbaits, glidebaits, spinner baits, and shallow running crankbaits all will catch fish throughout the year. The Bait Rigs Esoc Cobra jig and its assorted plastics is working well with many muskies being caught on this jig with its plastic grub and reaper tail combinations. Other baits that work in the river's stained water are; Smity Baits, Bucher Shallow Raiders, Grandma Baits, Mann's Minus I jerkbaits, and Bull Dawgs. The best colors are the natural ones; like perch, shad, firetiger, and baits with orange and blue colors. Baits that give off a flash, a sound, and vibration will all catch muskies in the off-color water of the Wisconsin River.

Continued next page

As I just said, the east shore line is the best place to start with this shore having a large back eddy (pushing the water back toward the dam) along the golf course shore. Next, work the willow trees and brush on both sides of the islands which are a couple hundred yards down from the dam. From there, I'd fish both sides of the river casting crankbaits, bucktails, and spinners all the way to the Highway 12 Bridge. You'll find slack water areas, fallen wood, rip-rapped shorelines, bridge abutments, islands, sand flats, drop-offs, rock, gravel, points, and spring holes in this four mile stretch of the river. Again, fish both shores of the river. The best method for fishing is to use your bow mount trolling motor (Minn Kota's work great and make sure it's fully charged so that you have a plenty of thrust) to position your boat and slowly drift with the current while casting the shorelines. As the weather and water warms up, the muskies get more aggressive and will readily attack top water baits and the new, big bladed spinnerbaits like Cowgirls and Figure 8's when "burned" at a high speed just under the water's surface. Near the Highway 12 Bridge is Ray's Riverside Resort and an island with a small bay just below it. Fish this in warm and hot weather because there are springs in the little bay that holds muskies in the warm months of summer.

Trolling is legal in the Wisconsin River and well worth trying! Trolling allows you to cover a larger area of water in a shorter period of time. It makes sense that the more baits or lures that you have out at different depths gives you a better chance for success! Spread your crankbaits out with Off Shore planer boards to cover as much water as possible when trolling both down and up-river. You should have some action on both sides of the Wisconsin River as you travel downriver and again as you head back upriver after reaching the Highway 12 Bridge.

Use the same muskie gear that you would use anywhere else where you fish large muskies or northern pike. I suggest an 8 to 8 1/2 foot rod (G. Loomis or Fenwick) for easy casting, a bait casting reel (Garcia or Shimano), strong braided line (Berkley or Power Pro), some strong steel leaders from 12 to 18 inches long, and a good assortment of lures and crankbaits in mixed colors. Make sure that you have a large quality net (Frabill or Beckman) and an assortment of tools so that you're ready for a quick release after catching the fish.

The minimum size for muskies on the Wisconsin River is 34" inches which is too small in my opinion. I was part of a group of local anglers and DNR personnel that submitted a resolution in this year's Spring Hearings to raise the size limit to a more respectable 50 inches. All muskies should be released ASAP anyway! Good fishing and if you follow these tips, you should have some quality esox action.

Contacts; Guides Wally Banfi, (608) 644-9823 and Gary Engberg (608) 795-4208.

[www.garyengbergoutdoors.com](http://www.garyengbergoutdoors.com)

Wilderness Fish and Game in Sauk City (608)-643-2433 for gear, bait, and good information.

### Gary Engberg Outdoors

10106 Hwy. Y Mazomanie, WI. 53560

Phone & Fax 608 795-4208

E-mail [gengberg@chorus.net](mailto:gengberg@chorus.net)

Web site: <http://www.garyengbergoutdoors.com>

Copyright Gary Engberg Outdoors 2009

**College Funding Services, LLC**


---

*We Help Families find ways to significantly reduce their college costs.*

**Clay Russell, CCPS**

Telephone: (608) 837-9099  
 Fax: (608) 838-4808

4885 Larson Beach Road  
 P.O. Box 319  
 McFarland, WI 53558-0319



V.F.W. Post 1318

133 Lakeside St. Madison  
 608-255-5955

**Full Color Copies** (608) 257-8900



**PRINTING & COPYING, LLC**

131 West Wilson Street, #P300 Madison, WI 53703

One- and Two-Color Printing  
 Copying up to 36" x 48"  
 Large Format Posters

Posters, Banners, Wide Format for Trade Shows, displays, parties, advertisements, etc.

**LUND**  
 BOATS  
 AND  
**PHARO**  
*marine*  
 YOUR FISHING BOAT HEADQUARTERS  
 608-849-5950

### August 11th, 2009 On The Water Meeting

We will meet on Lake Mendota at 6:00 PM by the Warner Park Boat launch, the same place that we had the June meeting. We will provide hotdogs, buns, chips, other stuff, and soda.

Karlette Schoen

### August 14th McFarland Police Dept Kids Fishing Day

The McFarland department is asking if members of the Yahara Fishing club would be interested in assisting them with a kids fishing outing on Friday, August 14. The police officer is stationed at McFarland schools and would like to take approximately 15 kids out on Lake Waubesa for three hours of fishing. They are in need of boats to take the kids on the lake. From what I understand, these are neighborhood kids (not troubled) who have limited or no lake fishing experience. The police department will provide the fishing equipment and bait and an officer will accompany the kids on every boat. The approximate time for the event would be from 9:30 am to around 12:30 pm with a lunch served after fishing. They are planning on launching at Babcock on Lake Waubesa.

If you would be interested in helping in this event by taking some kids in your boat, please let me know by July 28. My email address is [brad.czebotar@charter.net](mailto:brad.czebotar@charter.net) Thanks for your consideration.

Brad Czebotar

### September 8th, 2009 Monthly Meeting

Our September speaker is Adam Oberfoell, a licensed guide and tournament angler. He will be speaking to us on catching muskies after dark.

Here is a link to his website:

[www.getthenetmuskyguide.com](http://www.getthenetmuskyguide.com)

**Terry Balding & Associates**  
Professional Money Management  
Financial Planning

515 W. Main Street  
Sun Prairie, WI 53590  
(608) 837-9099  
1-800-727-3039  
FAX (608) 825-6468  
Email: [tbalding@hirep.net](mailto:tbalding@hirep.net)  
[www.plannr.com](http://www.plannr.com)



"Your Partner in Success"  
**Terry Balding CFP**

Securities offered through Harbour Investments, Inc., One Odana Court, Madison, WI 53719  
(808) 274-7744 • Member NASD,SIPC



Live Bait  
Tackle Service  
Guide Service  
Fishing Info

Archery Supplies  
Bow's & Arrows  
Ice Shack Rentals


**D & S Bait,  
Tackle & Archery, LLC**

Gene & Sandy Dellinger  
1411 Northport Drive  
Madison, WI 53704

Store: 608-241-4225  
Fishing Hotline: 608-244-3474  
**BIG-FISH**

[www.dsbait.com](http://www.dsbait.com)

Tune Into  
"Outdoor Horizons"  
Saturdays at 8:00 AM  
Radio WTDY 1670 AM



Hosts Gary Engberg,  
Tony Puccio, Wally Banfi

Bringing you the best in Fishing, hunting and the outdoors.

The summer on 09 continues with cool weather and the thermocline not formed on Mendota. I am sitting on my back patio with my laptop with a nice cool breeze wafting through my backyard.

Yesterday was the spoonplugging outing, led by Clay Russell, on Lake Mendota. We worked very hard at it and had a great time. I am convinced that the fish are much more spread out this year as a result of a surface temperature of 70 degrees. Normally the larger pike are forced by water temperature down near the thermocline and it is not too difficult to find them around 30 feet. Thanks Clay. I had a great time.

Thanks also go out to everyone who helped with a very successful Fishing Has No Boundaries. Those of you that donated the use of you boat and guided, those of you that were assistants or filling a variety of functions and those of you that showed up for the fish fry on Saturday. The fish frying crew is a real machine! I don't know how many people we served, but it had to be at least 300. Great job!

I put out first notice calling for nominations for our Board of Directors. If my calculations are correct, there will be up to six openings. I have been on the Board for about eight years and President for the last three. It is time for me to turn this leadership over to someone else. The only requirements are a willingness to do some work and a bit of a passion to take the organization in a positive direction. Anyone wanting to nominate someone (make sure you get their permission) or you want to nominate yourself (there is nothing wrong with doing this). Those of you that pay

your dues and then sit on your hands all of the time, you are making a very minimal contribution to a great organization. Think about it. Contact me or anyone on the Board to submit a nomination(s).

Our next "On The Water" meeting will be at the Warner Park Boat Launch on August 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm. The "meeting" will be short and then we can get on the water. There will be hotdogs etc. to eat. Make sure you bring something to drink. Karlette Schoen is organizing this one so thank her and everyone is expecting to throw some money into the hat to pay for the food. Thanks Karlette.

Next Saturday Jim Kloth and I will be helping at the "Take An Adult Fishing Tournament". We will be helping Gary Engberg and Wally Banfi, along with the staff at Wilderness Fish and Game, to put on a quality event to encouraging kids to fish. It is always a great time.

If you have ordered club clothing, get it from Tom Wilke. If you want to order something, let Tom know.

Those of you who are willing to share space in your boat at outings, please let Clay Russell know. He is putting together a list. We need to continually make a good effort to take non-boaters out to fish.

Speaking of boats. In October, we will be having a pike outing on Mendota led by Larry Mothershead. Larry will get the info on this into the newsletter. We will be conducting this outing in conjunction with the UW Fishing Team. We will need as many boats there as possible. There is a great number of these college kids that want to get out on the water. Let's show them a good time. Once the date is confirmed by Larry, make sure you put it on your calendar and make it a priority.

August 14<sup>th</sup> the McFarland Police Department is conducting a morning of fishing. We will be taking off from Babcock Park on Lake Waubesa. The kid they put into your boat will be accompanied by a police officer. Fish from 9:30am – 12:30pm followed by a lunch. I have already committed to being there and if you have the flexibility in your



**Mendota Boat Works**  
5380 Farmco Dr.  
Madison, WI 53704  
[www.mendotaboatworks.com](http://www.mendotaboatworks.com)

---

ph: 608 - 245 - 9041  
fax: 608 - 249 - 9396

Michael Vierthaler  
Owner

Quality fiberglass, gel coat repairs,  
Yacht Chartering and Bottom Painting



**Dorn Hardware  
and Sporting Goods**  
*"The fishing & Hunting Specialists"*

Professional Help - **ELECTRONICS**  
Inland and Lake Michigan  
**Tackle and Accessories**  
 Guns - Ammunition - Archery

Competitive Prices at  
4 Locations  
Northgate Oregon  
Monona  
Brookwood



**Pharo Marine Inc**  
Hwy 113 and River Road in Waunakee  
849-5950



**Pontoons Deckboats**  
Mercury Mariner Force  
Motorisor OMC

*"We excell in service"*

**MAZANET  
MARINA**

"OUR 40th YEAR ON LAKE MENDOTA"  
**SALES & SERVICE**



- \* WINTER STORAGE
- \* 300 WET & DRY SLIPS
- \* GAS DOCK - BEER & ICE
- \* BOAT RENTAL \* LIVE BAIT

[WWW.MAZANETMARINA.COM](http://WWW.MAZANETMARINA.COM)

**249-9316**  
5320 BLUE BILL PARK DR

## Notes From the Prez, continued

schedule, you will be rewarded in heaven by taking these kids out to fish (I need all the help I can get).

Clay Russell and I fished Lake Delevan last Wednesday with guide John Reddy who spoke at our May meeting. John worked his butt off trying to put us on fish on a very windy, high pressure day. Clay managed a fat largemouth and I managed three pike. All on swim jigs.

I have put together a YFC Roster with names, email addresses and phone numbers. Many of you have not recorded your emails or phone numbers. I will have copies at the August meeting at Warner. If your email or phone number is not on the roster, please let me know so I can add it. I would like a complete listing to turn over to the next President in December.

I continue to bless my lucky star that I am in a position where I can put in significant time on the water. Even on some of the "crummy" days we have had this summer, it is very rejuvenating for me to be on the water. We have wonderful fishing water in the Madison area. We are all very lucky.

I will be out on Mendota again tomorrow with Kloth and Steve Reinstra (CCM) and I will be hunting for Muskie on the Wisconsin River the first week in August. Anyone wanting to get their line stretched, let me know. If I don't have anything planned, we can get out somewhere and try to dent the fish population. I hope to see you on the water.

Fishing Season Never Ends,  
Duffy Kopf - Prez

The Prez showing his  
spoonplug reward

## July Spoonplugging

Tom Wilke and I fished together. He caught two northern (36" the biggest) and a 16 1/2" smallmouth. I caught one 32" northern. We fished primarily the north side of Warner Bay and a little bit on the west side of Governors' Island.

Duffy Kopf and Tom fished the larger Brearly Street bar and Duffy caught 3 northern.

Roger Swenson and Stan Nichols fished primarily the northwest shore and caught one northern.

Jim Kloth fished the west side of Governors' Island and caught three northern up to 36".

I haven't heard how Terry Rogers and his partner did.

The weather was not great; there was a wind out of the northwest. But, all in all, the morning turned out pretty well, all things considered.

Clay Russell





## Muskie Fishing Basics

A class for adults who are new to the sport of Muskie Fishing.

Young people 14 years old and up are also invited.

When: Aug. 15, 2009 -- 11:00am – 12:30pm

Where: Madison Gander Mountain's Gander Lodge Meeting Space

Who: Duffy Kopf – Pure Fishing Ambassador

Misc: Duffy has been a teacher for 36 years and coached football for 24 and wrestling for 10. He is also the President of the Yahara Fishing Club.

Instead of getting overloaded with information, get just the basics so you can enjoy muskie fishing as we head into the sport's prime months.

## Fish Sticks” to benefit fish in Bayfield County - From the WDNR

BAYFIELD –

Mere months after felled trees were dragged across the ice on Upper Eau Claire Lake as part of a grassroots partnership to restore fish habitat in the near-shore areas on this lake, hundreds of fish are using the trees.

Underwater photos taken earlier this month show a young muskellunge swimming past two tree trunks on the lakebed, a school of panfish darting through branches, and the dark stripe of bluntnose minnows.

“These trees are a piece of the fishery habitat puzzle that has been missing for quite a while and I am excited by the early indications of success,” says Scott Toshner, the Department of Natural Resources fish biologist working on the project. “Hopefully, we can get enough waterfront landowners involved so that we will see positive benefits to the lakes fishery as a whole.”

This year, the Eau Claire Lakes Property Owners Association and the Eau Claire Conservation Club are working with Toshner to find willing property owners to let them place more trees in the shallow water in front of their property on Upper, Middle and Lower Eau Claire lakes.

They learned recently that their “Fish Sticks” project will receive \$15,000 in federal funding through the Glacial Lakes Habitat Restoration Partnership. “It’s a great opportunity to be able to expand the project,” Toshner says.

To date, 395 trees have been placed in Bony Lake, where there were only 89 pieces to begin with. Upper Eau Claire has added 98 trees and Middle Eau Claire, 49 trees.

## Yahara Fishing Club Membership Application

P.O. Box 3271  
Madison, WI 53704

### Annual Dues:

Individual.....	\$25
Family.....	\$35
Youth Member.....	Free
(with paid membership)	

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

**Except for special Summer “On the water” dates, meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the Lakeside VFW Hall, John Nolan Dr, & Lakeside St. in Madison.**

*An Organization to Educate, Protect and Propagate the Interests of All Fishermen in the Yahara Basin Area  
Including all of Madison's Lakes*

**OFFICES AND BOAT SLIPS**




**INTERLAKE BOATYARD**

Located Between Lakes Monona and Waubesa

Call George Kinsler  
**223-1961**

**Ryan and Joyce-Ryan  
Funeral Homes**

Serving Families of all Faiths Since 1938  
"Colonel" Ryan - Roman Ryan - P.M. O'Rourke  
2818 N. Sherman Madison 249-8257 118 N. Franklin Verona 845-0623 5701 Odana Rd. Madison 274-1000



**Lake-Link.com**

**BEYOND THE WATER**

Interactive fishing reports, lake database, topographic maps  
tons of angling and outdoor information and much, much more  
Visit [www.lake-link.com](http://www.lake-link.com) today!

The next meeting is on **Tuesday, August 11th, On The Water**

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### August Events

- August 11<sup>th</sup> - On The Water meeting, Lake Mendota. See Page 3.
- August 14<sup>th</sup> - McFarland Police host a Kids Fishing Day. See Page 3.
- August 15<sup>th</sup> - Muskie Fishing Basics seminar. Gander Lodge Meeting Space. See Page 6.

### September Events

- September 8<sup>th</sup> - September Monthly Meeting at the VFW hall. See Page 3  
Adam Oberfoell will speak on catching muskies at night.

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

President - Larry "Duffy" Kopf..849-7245	Director - Tom Wilke .....834-9554	Director - Jesse Swing .....219-851-4347
Vice President - Paul Marunich...219-4449	Director - Jeff Wydeven.....848-4542	Director - Roger Swenson..608-752-6825
Secretary - Rick Seeger.....849-3714	Director - Jim Pankratz.....288-9789	Director - Jim Kloth .....635-0116
Treasurer - Brad Czebotar .....838-9458	Director - Clay Russell.....838-0088	

Check out our web page at:  
[www.yaharafishingclub.org](http://www.yaharafishingclub.org)



Yahara Fishing Club  
P.O. Box 3271  
Madison, WI 53704