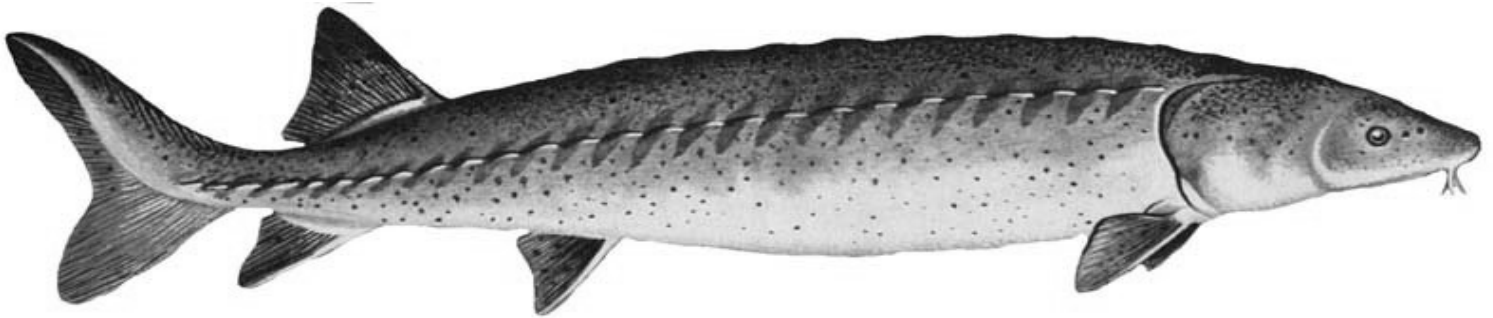




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STURGEON!



By Gary Engberg

As the third largest freshwater lake in the United States, Lake Winnebago covers over 127,000 acres with 88 miles of shoreline. Lake Winnebago system also has the largest natural reproducing lake sturgeon population in the world. Its eggs are used for lake sturgeon re-introduction and rehabilitation projects throughout the fish's original North American range.

The lake sturgeon is a slow growing, long living, and late maturing fish. Both males and females reach legal spearing size (36 inches) in 9 or 10 years. Both males and females grow at similar rates till they reach approximately forty inches. After that, females grow much faster. The female sturgeon usually live longer (up to 100 years) and can reach much larger sizes. Females make up a large majority of the fish over 60 inches.

The first spearing season was in 1903 and there was a ban on spearing from 1915 to 1931. Now, the sturgeon spearing season can last for 16 days or three weekends as it did on the Lake Winnebago in 2007. Last year, the season on the Upper Lakes lasted 6 days with a 65% success rate. This was the longest Upriver season since 1956. The DNR keeps the harvest rate at or below 5% of the total sturgeon population in the whole Winnebago system.

Ice shanty counts are done by the DNR and last season there were 4633 shanties on Winnebago the second weekend of the season and 431 on the Upper Lakes. It is not unusual to have upwards to 10,000 vehicles parked while spearing on a weekend. The ice conditions were good for last year's season and the water clarity was also good

allowing spearer's to see 10 feet down in the south end of Lake Winnebago and down 16 feet in the north-end. The harvest last season was 1347 sturgeon.

This past Saturday, the 2008 season opened with what Ron Bruch, DNR sturgeon specialist, called "ideal conditions with very clear water and good weather". The opening day numbers for the 16-day season totaled 806 fish.

Bruch reported many fish over 100 pounds and 3 fish weighing over 160 pounds on Saturday. The largest fish of the day was a 162.5-pound sturgeon that measured 78.5 inches speared by Matt Johannes of Berlin and registered in Oshkosh.

The arctic cold and blizzard-like winds kept the sturgeon spearing numbers down on Sunday, February 10th. The most difficult task

Continued next page

Final Numbers for the 2008 Sturgeon Spearing Season

was getting to your shanty. Those sturgeon spearkers that did had good success. After the great start on opening Saturday, numbers were down on Sunday. The drifting snow on the lake's east shore made it impossible for plows to keep the lake's roads open. The spearker's that were able to access the lake had good success with a harvest of 297 fish and nine fish over 100 pounds. The largest fish speared on Sunday was a 155 pound and 76 inch female speared by Tom Birschbach of Fond du Lac. There also was a male that weighed 104 pounds which is the largest male harvested since records were first kept in 1956. Sunday's harvest on Lake Winnebago included; 251 sturgeons with 153 females (52 juvenile females and 101 adult females) and 98 males. The Upriver lakes take was 46 sturgeons with 21 females (10 juveniles and 11 adult females) and 25 males.

The Lake Winnebago adult female harvest reached 80.6% and 75% on the Upriver Lakes. If at the end of a spearing day the harvest on either water reaches 90 to 99% of any of the 3 caps set for the water, the season will close at the end of the following spearing day. If the harvest reaches 100% of the caps the season will close on that water that day. Since the harvest caps are set for a system-wide sturgeon population, if the combined harvest from Lake Winnebago and the Upriver Lakes exceeds the system wide harvest cap for a category, all spearing is finished for the year.

If you're not from the Midwest, you make think Wisconsinites are crazy. But, this is another way that we enjoy winter and the outdoors no matter what the weather is outside. The atmosphere on and around Lake Winnebago on Saturday was like one big Green Bay Packer tailgate party. Who cares what the temperature is? This is Wisconsin!

The 2008 sturgeon-spearing season closed today, Tuesday, February 12, at 12:30 PM. DNR sturgeon specialist, Ron Bruch, said the year will "be remembered as the season of the big fish". The total harvest of sturgeon from Lake Winnebago and the Upriver Lakes was 1513 fish with 43 sturgeon over 100 pounds.

The largest fish this season was a 172 pound sturgeon speared by Ed Blatz of Fond du Lac. This fish was the third largest on record behind a 180 pound fish taken by Elroy Schroeder of Appleton in 1953 and a 188 pound sturgeon taken by David Piechowski of Redgranite in 2004. Four of the top ten largest fish on record, (the DNR has records back to the early 1950's) were registered this winter.

Bruch says that this is the greatest run of large trophy size fish in over 50 years which is an indication of the health of the Winnebago sturgeon stock and in my opinion the impact of the 22 stricter harvest regulations, including the harvest cap, enacted by the DNR while working with the Citizens Sturgeon Advisory Committee, over the last 15 years. Thank you and congratulations to them!

Spearkers took advantage of the ideal conditions of ice and water clarity in over a decade to enjoy the short but sweet season. The harvest cap for adult females was slightly exceeded and the DNR won't know for a few weeks whether the 5% annual exploitation limit until all data is analyzed. The harvest is managed to minimize the risk of annual harvests exceeding 5% of the Winnebago sturgeon stock.

Presently, the adult stock in the Winnebago System is estimated at 25,000 adult males and 12,000 adult females and is the largest lake sturgeon population in North America. The system has been intensively managed for over 100 years to control harvest and maintain the breeding stock.

Season totals for the entire system were 276 juvenile females (cap 556), 598 adult females (556 cap), and 639 males (1000 cap).

Gary Engberg



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Notes from the Prez

The Madison Fishing Expo last weekend reinforced in me that when you have high expectations, you get high performance. High performance is the term I am using to describe the Yahara Fishing Club's performance this past weekend. I would like to thank everyone who helped with the variety of duties we had to fulfill. We conducted everything in a classy manner, which is what I would expect.

The day started out with many more people showing up to help vendors bring in their stuff. A few of the vendors that are friends of mine said they very much appreciate the help. This service is one thing that separates the Expo from other fishing shows.

All the time slots for the booth, door and ticket booths were filled. This is great and this is what we need to do every year.

More big news. The City of Middleton sent the Yahara Fishing Club a check for \$5000. Your Board has been putting a lot of thought into what we are going to do with this money. A decision to get this process started will be made at the next Board meeting.

The club should also be congratulated for donating \$500 to the Wisconsin Outdoor Education Expo. This helps to meet one of our yearly goals as is our way of putting our money where our mouth is. By the way, they still are looking for volunteers. Call Heidi at 877-432-7698 or visit their website at www.wisexpo.com for more information. Dates are May 15-16.

The Capitol City Muskie Club is having their annual Muskie School on March 8th. This newsletter should get to you soon enough so that if you want to register, you still have time. This is a great event and you will learn a lot. Contact Geoff Crandall at 831-6020 or crandall@msbnrg.com.

The wheels are in motion for our annual Kids Fishing Day. This year it will be on June 7 and you need to put this on your calendar.

As far as outings and our "On the Water" meetings go, here is what we have at this point.

Eric Olson will again conduct a Bass Outing in June, Clay will lead a spoonplug outing in July, Charlie Grimm will take the lead on our August meeting and Larry Mothershead will lead the outing next October on Mendota. Stay tuned for more details. We certainly can have more outings and we need someone to head up the June and July meetings. Are you willing to do this?

Our March speaker is Lee Tauchen. Lee is very respected in the Esox fishing community and has a very high knowledge level. Make sure you are there to hear Lee. Invite all of your friends and neighbors. If you know anyone who may be interested in joining our club, make sure they attend.

I would like to wrap this column up by again thanking those club members who made a contribution of some type to our efforts at the Fishing Expo. I feel so much better about how we are performing as a club. I think we have turned the corner a little bit on how we are functioning.

Fishing Season
Never Ends,
Duffy Kopf - Prez



Tuesday night the 26th @ The Dane County Conservation Meeting {VFW}. Charlie Grimm presented Jack Hurst an Award "Conservationist of The Year 2007". This award is for Jack's outstanding contributions to conservation projects. This award came courtesy of the Dane County Conservation League. Please congratulate Jack when you see him.

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Seventh Annual Muskie School 3-8-07 Waunakee, WI High School

This is a partial print of the schedule. See the last paragraph for registration and contact information.

Capital City Chapter of Muskies Inc.

7:30 Doors open, Check-in, coffee & donuts

8:20 Welcome & Kick-off (Auditorium) - All Participants at the Auditorium

8:30–9:00: Strategies for Muskie Anglers - All Participants at the Auditorium

9:00–10:25 [Block #1]:

9:00 A) Poolside Lure Demonstrations – Working Plastics, Jigs & Crank Bait: tips & techniques

9:00 B) Make Your Own Wooden Lures - Overview & Crankbaits – hands-on workshop

9:00 C) Night Fishing Techniques

9:00 D) Muskie Fishing Strategies for Women

9:00 E) Sonar, Fish finders & Marine Electronics - Latest technology & operation

9:00 F) Spring Muskie Fishing Techniques – Getting ready for the opener

9:00 G) Muskie fishing in the Green Bay area

9:00 H) Sucker Fishing & Quickset Rigs

9:00 I) GPS: How to use the thing! – Class & field exercise

10:25 -10:35 Break

10:35 – Noon [Block #2]:

10:35 A) Poolside Demonstration - Topwater, Jerk & crankbaits: tips & techniques

10:35 B) Map interpretation and strategies to use in preparing for new waters

10:35 C) GPS: How to use the thing! Class & Field exercise

10:35 D) Make & Rig Your Own Wooden Row Trolling Boat

10:35 E) Madison Chain Muskie Fishing (panel of experts)

10:35 F) Muskie Fishing in Minnesota: Vermillion and Mille Lacs

10:35 G) Sucker Fishing & Quickset Rigs

10:35 H) Fishing Southeastern Wisconsin - Peewaukee/Okauchee

10:35 I) Fishing Oneida and Vilas Counties and Northeastern Wisconsin

10:35 J) Boat/Motor/Trailer maintenance

NOON—1:00 LUNCH & MINI-WORKSHOPS

1) Making solid & stranded leaders 2) Making fluorocarbon leaders 3) Photography 4) Setting up your boat for muskie

fishing - demo 5) Boat, Motor & Trailer maintenance, 6) Netting/Handing/Releasing muskies, 7) GPS

8) Reel & Rod Repair 9) Muskie Lure Casting Accuracy Contest

Registration is open to the public - everyone is welcome! Indicate class choices on your form (below). Mail the completed form along with your payment (payable to CCMI) to: Muskie Class - CCMI P.O. Box 8862 Madison, WI 53708. The fee is \$29 per person and \$5 for youth 18 or younger. For food catering and other planning purposes, we must receive your payment by 3-3-08. Payments received after 3-3-08 will be \$39 – sorry no exceptions. Your confirmation and a map will be sent to you before the event. Permits are not needed to park at the High School. No smoking is allowed at the facility. Wisconsin law prohibits smoking around the building. Contact: Bill Wood at 608-849-7659, or Geoff Crandall at crandall@msbnrg.com or 608-831-6020 (evenings).

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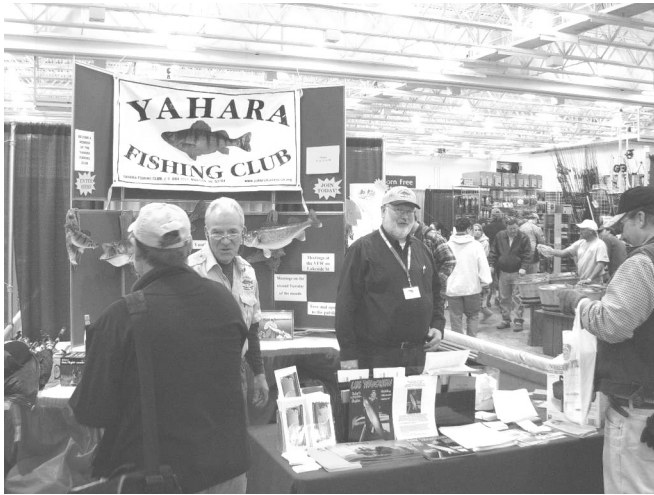


Jiffy
ICE DRILLS
Duffy Kopf Pro Staff

BADGER TURFVENT

2008 Fishing Expo

Photos and captions provided by Kevin Tvedten and Jeff Western



Paul Marunich and Jeff Western at the 2008 Club booth.



If your planning a trip to lake Erie for either Walleye and/or Smallmouth Bass Fishing, Call Capt Hook.

Capt. Pete Scheid donated a trip for our Club Booth's raffle @ The Madison Fishing Expo last weekend.

His number is (800) 453-8403 or visit on line



Also Capt John Iverson donated a trip for our raffle. He is a very good Salmon Fisherman out of Port Washington. John can be reached @ (608) 873-7051 home, boat (608) 575-8622 or go on line www.iversonfishing.com



Lee Tauschen and Jeff Western at the expo.

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March Speaker, Lee Tauschen



Lee is a Bait Rigs Pro-Staff member and field tester who is one of America's most successful young Muskie guides. Lee's Guide Service covers waters in both Wisconsin and Minnesota including Mille Lacs Lake in Central Minnesota. Lee has produced numerous fish in the 50 LB Class and one fish that may have surpassed the Minnesota State Record of 54 LBS. The monster fish measured 55.5" by 27.5" and was released to be caught again. Lee is a writer and contributor for Esox Angler Magazine and has been featured on Lindners Angling Edge TV, Next Bite TV and Woods & Waters TV series.

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February Club Auction

The auction was a great success. We had 66 winning bidders for a total take of \$676. One member spent \$248 on items he won at the auction.

Brad Czebotar (Treasurer)

WDNR Inland game fish season closes March 2

MADISON – Anglers should be aware that the game fish season on most inland Wisconsin waters closes at the end of the day on Sunday, March 2.

The panfish seasons remain open year-round as does the season for certain game fish on select lakes and rivers, including much of the Wisconsin River and its impoundments. Waters that remain open are listed in the Guide to Wisconsin Hook and Line Fishing regulations and on the Department of Natural Resources Web site.

In addition, an early trout season opens 5 a.m. on March 1 and continues until Sunday, April 27 at midnight. The early season is catch-and-release only, and only artificial lures with barbless hooks may be used while fishing for any species of fish on trout streams.

Most trout streams are open to early fishing with the exception of most Lake Superior tributaries and most streams in northeast Wisconsin. Check the 2008-09 Trout Fishing Regulations and Guide to verify which waters are open during the early season and visit the early trout fishing page of the DNR Web site for tips on the flies and techniques to use – as well as other information – to help make your early trout season more enjoyable and successful.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Joe Hennessy - (608) 267-9427; Larry Claggett - (608) 267-9658

Wisconsin Outdoor Education Expo

May 15 and 16 2008 (Thursday and Friday)
Dodge County Fairgrounds,
Beaver Dam WI

As noted by Duffy Kopf at the February meeting and in his monthly notes, volunteers are welcome to help out at this event. Please contact Duffy (849-7245) if interested.

The Expo provides Wisconsin students with learning and participation opportunities in the outdoors, the Expo 2008 will communicate the relevance of wildlife and habitat management in our lives. The Expo 2008 will teach outdoors skills, encourage ethical behavior and perpetuate Wisconsin's hunting, fishing and conservation heritage.

The Expo 2008 will focus on "hands-on" activities and participation, and will use these opportunities to introduce schoolchildren to wildlife-related outdoor skills, natural resources, conservation and management concepts. The Expo 2008 will be structured with at least seven separate "camps" where kids and families will be able to learn about and participate in outdoor activities: Archery, Dogs, Camping and Trail Recreation, Fishing, Firearm Safety, Conservation Heritage and Wildlife Trail.

At Expo 2007, held in May, 4000+ (up 800 from 2006) fourth and fifth grade students from throughout Wisconsin participated in "see, touch, and do" activities such as fishing, archery, camping skills, outdoor heritage and natural resource conservation concepts. At least 600 teachers and chaperones accompanied these students on Friday. The Expo was open to the public on Saturday and over 750 parents, grandparents and children attended this free event. Consequently, at least 5350 students, teachers and family members attended the Expo, in spite of high fuel prices.

Yahara Fishing Club
Membership Application

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Madison, WI 53704

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Annual Dues:

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

Except for special Summer "On the water" dates, meetings are held at 7:30 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

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The next meeting is on **Tuesday, March 11th**, at the Lakeside VFW Hall (John Nolen Rr. & Lakeside St.)
The Board Of Directors meet at 6:15 pm, The **General Membership meeting starts at 7:30 pm.**

Speaker: Lee Tauchen

March Events

Calendar of Upcoming Events

March 11th - Monthly meeting @7:30 pm, Lakeside VFW Hall

Speaker: Lee Tauchen

March 8th - Sixth Annual Muskie School

Waunakee, WI High School

April Events

April 8th Monthly meeting @7:30 pm, Lakeside VFW Hall

Speaker: To be announced

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

President - Larry Kopf.....849-7245

Vice President - Paul Marunich...219-4449

Secretary - Jim Zegers.....848-6299

Treasurer - Brad Czebotar873-5228

Director - Rick Lane873-5228

Director - Eric Uram.....233-9022

Director - Jim Pankratz.....288-9789

Director - Bonnie Miller.....824-9792

Director - Jayne Meyer.....662-9374

Director - Rick Seeger.....849-3714

Editor - Tom Raschke.....233-6765

Fishing Expo - Jeff Western....831-1092

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



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