



March 2009

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

Farm Ponds Can Be a Hidden Bonanza

By Gary Engberg

This winter, I've had a chance to fish some Wisconsin farm ponds in Dane, Columbia, and Sauk Counties. These ponds are often under-fished and can provide some great winter ice fishing opportunities for bluegills, crappies, and even largemouth bass. Read my story and column this week to get in on the action!

Anglers who live in agricultural areas in the Midwest are often familiar with farm ponds since they are relatively common and many of us have grown up fishing these kinds of waters. Ponds are found in much of Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest states of Minnesota, Illinois, and Michigan. Many of these ponds are natural having been formed by underground springs and dammed creeks. But, most ponds have been dredged or dug by the owners of the land for their own recreation and wildlife habitat. The best ways to find these ponds are; 1) drive around the countryside looking for these waters, 2) get a topographical map of the area you're interested in and do some exploring which usually means walking, 3) talk to landowners and farmers asking if they may have a pond or know of one in the area that you could fish, and 4) talk to other anglers who are familiar with the area where you're looking. The best way, in my opinion is to get some good topographic maps and start exploring on your own.

The March meeting is
at 7:00 PM, a half hour
earlier than in the past.

The best time to look for and find these ponds is during the summer or fall when you're out hunting or walking. You'll find landowners who might not let you fish during the summer or during the hunting seasons, but will let you fish in the winter. Often, these ponds are saved for the family and friends during the open water seasons. But, wait till deer season is over and there's snow on the ground before you ask to ice fish. I've found people who will let me fish, but I have to release all I catch or all but a few fish. While there is other landowners who don't care how many fish you catch and keep. But if I had a good day fishing their pond, I'd offer them some fresh, cleaned fish for their enjoyment.

I know a local farmer who has a great little pond (about 5 acres) which is full of nice size bluegills, sunfish, crappies, and a few largemouth bass. In the past, we've (me and some volunteers) gotten a permit from the DNR to buy and release fish and forage in the pond. This is a pond that I and a group of counselors and teachers use for a program called "Hooked on Fishing Not Drugs." Check your state regulations for stocking rules in your area. Most states require a permit for the pond stocking so that the DNR knows what is being put in state waters, especially with all the invasive species that are ruining many lakes, rivers and streams. The states must have control of what is being put in its waters.

Ponds also have a way of stocking themselves with waterfowl and other water birds carrying fish and eggs to the pond. Ducks often get fish eggs on their feet and bodies and accidentally stock ponds. Buying smaller panfish and gamefish from wholesalers and fish farmers is another way to stock a pond and by far the quickest and easiest. The pond that I help stock with bluegills and crappies (3 to 5") for some children events are relatively cheap and have done well in the pond. We also make sure that some small minnows are always added for food in case the natural forage present

Continued next page

is not sufficient for the fish numbers. This pond has been stocked every other year for 5 years and now there are 10 to 12" crappies and bluegills from 7 to 9 ".A majority of the fish are released and the number of fish taken out for eating is very minimal.

If you have a pond or access to one be sure and drill all your ice fishing holes first, so you won't spook the fish later in the day. Try hopping from hole to hole till you find a hot and productive one. It's nice to bring a flasher (Lowrance) or camera (Acqua-View) with so that you can map out the pond and know what you have for depth and structure. Hopefully, there are trees, wood, weeds, or brush in the pond and around it. Any structure is good structure in a farm pond. Many pond owners will put Christmas trees on ice, so that they sink and provide cover and structure later in the year for open-water fishing.

Looking for farm ponds to fish is something you can do year-round. When hunting or walking in the woods, remember where you saw those ponds you walked by and around. These waters can also be fall hot spots for duck hunting too.

If you find a pond to fish try these simple techniques. Use 2 to 4 # test Berkley Ice line with a barrel swivel on the end to prevent line twist, then tie on a foot to 18 inches of Berkley Vanish fluorocarbon line with a small ice fishing jig, and finally a wax worm or spike on a sensitive rod about 2 or 2 ½ feet long. Always have a spring bobber on the end of your rod to detect the light biters. A spring bobber is one of the most important things to have when ice fishing for panfish and particularly light-biting bluegills. Have a good jig assortment in different sizes and colors and keep changing till you find the jig that works best that day. If you have water that is over 8 to 10 feet, a small split shot may be added above the swivel to keep your line vertical. Then, dress the jig with a couple of

wax worms or spikes. Use different jigging cadences or speeds till you find the one the fish want. Some days, plastics like Gulp and Power Bait will out fish live bait so always have some for those times. The more active the fish are the more likely they will like artificials, like Gulp.

Pond fishing can be great in the winter especially if you find one that you have to yourself with a good population of fish. Most ponds are stocked with bluegills and crappies, but largemouth bass are also a good fish for stocking into ponds and seem to exist well with panfish. Last week, I and a couple of friends were surprised when we caught some nice 4 to 5 pond largemouth while fishing for bluegills. The bass were caught on the light tackle that we were using for the 'gills, so you can imagine the fight! We ended up with 5 bass and all but one was caught on the bluegill gear. The other largemouth was caught on a tip-up with a large shiner. The bass season in Wisconsin lasts till March 1st and then closes till May 2nd when the general fishing season opens in southern Wisconsin.

You may see some of the farm pond fish on my website, www.garyengbergoutdoors.com. There are photos and a video, so check it out. What's better than a few bluegill fillets frying in a cast iron skillet after fishing in the cold of winter?! Talk about good.

Gary Engberg Outdoors

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March Panelists



Gary Engberg



Wally Banfi



Terry Frey

Gary Engberg, Wally Banfi and Terry Frey will discuss Spring Walleye Fishing.

Gary Engberg Gary is a professional angler, guide and outdoor writer. Many of his articles are published in fishing magazines relating to fishing in Wisconsin and he has occasional columns in the "Wisconsin State Journal" newspaper. He, also, is a co-host of the "Outdoor Horizons" radio show. Gary specializes in walleyes, but is skilled at catching other species as well. He possesses a wealth of fishing knowledge on Midwest rivers and lakes, especially the Wisconsin River.

Wally Banfi Wally specializes in Muskie, bass, walleye and panfish. He has over 30 years experience fishing the Madison Chain and the Wisconsin River. He is a co-host of the popular radio show, "Outdoor Horizons." Wally was the fishing expert and manager for many years when the Steve Gerhardt Sports store was open on Madison's east side. Since that store's closing, Wally has been the sporting goods manager at Ace Hardware in Sauk City/Prairie du Sac.

Terry Frey Terry has fished Wisconsin's southern lakes and rivers for over 35 years. He is a multi-species guide and has a passion for BIG walleyes as well as fly fishing for huge smallmouth and crappies. He is a National tournament qualifier and guide for "North American Fisherman" TV program. In addition to guiding, he hires out for photography trips, also.

Outdoor Horizons starts up again

March 7th at 8:00 AM. WTDA, 1670 AM

Hear Gary Engberg, Wally Banfi, and Tony Puccio discuss fishing and hunting

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Tony Puccio, Wally Banfi

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Devils Lake Club Outing Report February 21, 2009



Mike Hutchen, Keith Dresen, Dave Dresen

By Rick Seeger

When I woke up on the morning of Saturday February 21 I was more than a little worried about how events would unfold for the rest of the day. There was already over three inches of snow on the ground and strong northwest winds were blowing. I finished loading some gear into my truck and headed over to meet up (hopefully) with outing goers at the Waunakee Piggly Wiggly parking lot. Tom Klein and two

of his friends were already there, Mike Hutchen was close behind. We waited until about 6:10 AM to leave just in case the bad roads were delaying anyone. We go out to Devils Lake at about 7:00 and formed up a plan targeting trout. Tom and his two friends wanted to fish up by the south west shore cabin area of the lake, and Mike and I would fish east of the south shore boat launch. We had our tip ups set in at about 7:15 and Mike got his first Devils Lake brown trout at about 7:30. Tom came over to our area a little after 10:00 and reported very slow fishing up by the cabins so I told him he should consider relocating to our area because several people in the area were catching fish. Dave Dresen and his young cousin Keith met us on the ice at about 9:45. Soon after they had their tip ups in they had a double and finished up the day with six fish between the two of them at about 1:30 PM. I missed several fish jigging and on tip ups as well. For the seven of us who went it was a snowy, fun filled day on the ice. If you were planning to go but couldn't make it due to the weather don't feel bad, it was very slow going both directions. Maybe we can try again next winter.



Dave Dresen

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2009 Fishing Expo

Duffy Kopf and Jim Pankratz were there everyday, Phil Emmmling all day Friday & Saturday, Karlette Schoen Saturday & Sunday, Eric Friday & later Sunday. Kevin was there Friday & later Sunday. Tom Wilke Friday & Sunday. Brad Czebotar Friday & Saturday. Don Gostonski, Jim Kloth, Jack Hurst were there Friday & Saturday, KJ Dunbrook, John Kanvik, Larry Mothershead, Paul Marunich. Friday & Sunday, Jeff Wydeven, & Jesse Swing.

Sorry if we forgot to mention anyone - all of your help was appreciated.

We took in \$1257 total between the raffle & new members.

Jim Pankratz and Tom Raschke



Kevin Tvedten, Duffy Kopf and Paul Marunich



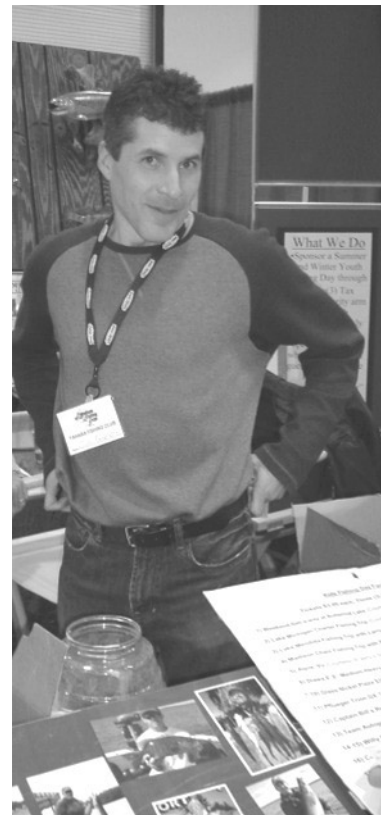
Jim Kloth and Jack Hurst



Jesse Swing and Brat Czebotar



Jack Hurst



Jim Pankratz

Fishing Hot Spots for March and April

(From the WDNR Website)

During this time of year, many fish are moving about in Wisconsin's waters. They are exciting to watch as they dance, wiggle, and sail through the shallow waters of our rivers and lakes to find their breeding places. Here are some hot spots for watching fish.

1. Walleye (late March-Early April)
 - o Eureka Fishway at the Eureka Dam on the Fox River (Winnebago Co.)
 - o Spoehr's Marsh, 5 miles north of Shiocton on HWY 187
 - o Turtle-flambeau Flowage, Lake of the Falls County Park on HWY FF, southwest of Mercer
2. Steelhead (migratory rainbow trout) (March-April)
 - o Lake Michigan tributary streams: Root River, Racine
 - o Keltzch and Estabrook parks on the Milwaukee River, Milwaukee
 - o Kewaunee River, Kewaunee
 - o Menominee River, Marinette dam
 - o Peshtigo River, Peshtigo
 - o C.D. Besadny Anadromous Fish Facility, Kewaunee
3. Northern Pike (April-June)
 - o During high water, flooded ditches which feed into Green Bay, Green Bay
4. Suckers (April-June)
 - o Kewaunee River Egg-Taking Facility, Kewaunee
 - o Red River County Park, north of Dykesville
 - o Peshtigo River at railroad bridge, Peshtigo
5. Muskellunge (April and early May)
 - o Below the Okauchee Lake Dam, Oconomowoc
 - o Below the Lake Wingra Dam, Madison
6. Lake Sturgeon (mid April-early May)
 - o Highway X crossing, Wolf River between New London and Northport
 - o Shawano Dam, Wolf River, Shawano
 - o Shiocton along HWY 54 near "Bamboo Bend"
 - o Sturgeon Trail, New London

The Lake Winnebago system has the world's largest single concentration of the amazing lake sturgeon. These prehistoric giants annually swim upstream from Lake Winnebago to spawn on the rocky shores of the Wolf and Embarrass Rivers. *This event is highly dependent on water temperature, but usually occurs for several days between late April and early May when waterflow is high. Call ahead to find out when the fish are active. Contact New London Chamber of Commerce at (920) 303-5444 or the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources at (920) 424-3050.



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8th Annual Muskie School

Brought to you by the Capital City Chapter of Muskies Inc.

Date: March 21, 2009

Time: 7:30 am - 3:30 pm

Place: Waunakee High School

100 School Drive

Waunakee, WI

Admission: Adults - \$29 (\$39 if you register after March 15, 2009)

Kids (18 and under) - \$5

Join us for this fun annual event and learn everything you need to know about Muskies. The school is designed to provide in-depth knowledge on key topics such as:

- The latest technology and techniques
- Fishing basics for youth and beginners
- Lures, rods, and reels
- Muskie fishing in Wisconsin and Minnesota

Enjoy lure demonstrations, hands-on workshops, "How to" classes, panel discussions, and much, much, more. You won't be disappointed!

For more info go to www.capitalcitymuskiesinc.org, email crandall@msbnrg.com, or call 608-831-6020 (evenings)

Enjoy FREE coffee and donuts in the morning and a catered lunch!

All profits will be used to stock muskies and fund programs that promote muskie fishing.

Yahara Fishing Club Membership Application

P.O. Box 3271
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Annual Dues:

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

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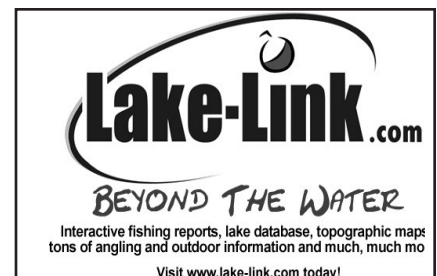
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Except for special Summer "On the water" dates, meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the Lakeside VFW Hall, John Nolan Dr, & Lakeside St. in Madison.

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



The next meeting is on **Tuesday, March 10th**, 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: Panel Discussion. Note Start time of 7:00 pm.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

March Events

March 10thth Monthly meeting @7:00 pm, Lakeside VFW Hall

Gary Engberg, Wally Banfi and Terry Frey will discuss Spring Walleye Fishing.

March 21st Muskie School.

Waunakee High School See article page 7.

April Events

April 14thth Monthly meeting @7:00 pm, Lakeside VFW Hall

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

President - Larry "Duffy" Kopf..849-7245

Vice President - Paul Marunich...219-4449

Secretary - Rick Seeger.....849-3714

Treasurer - Brad Czebotar838-9458

Director - Tom Wilke834-9554

Director - Jeff Wydeven.....848-4542

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

Director - Clay Russell.....838-0088

Director - Jesse Swing219-851-4347

Director - Roger Swenson..608-752-6825

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



Yahara Fishing Club
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