



November
2008

Editor: Tom Raschke (traschke@globaldialog.com)
608-233-6765

Editors Emeritus: Stan Nichols (sanicol@facstaff.wisc.edu)
Jayne Meyer (mshazmat@tds.net)

Casting, Trolling, Live-bait: What do you have to do catch a Madison Musky ?

Notes by Stan Nichols

The potential, possibilities, probabilities, and combinations are almost endless for trying to catch fall muskies in the Yahara Lakes. Just look in the "Rollie and Helen's" catalog, there are about as many lures for musky fishing as you find in a bass catalog.

Geoff Crandall and Steve Reinstra from the Capital City Muskies Club put some order to this chaos at the October meeting. Both are musky guides on the Madison Lakes and perhaps in other areas. They broke their presentation in to casting, trolling, and live-bait techniques and they gave some hints for areas to try for fall muskies.

First they defined fall conditions. When water temperatures are between about 78° and 54° F is early fall. Muskies go into the weeds in seven to eight feet of water, sometimes even shallower. Muskies are active this time of year and research shows that it takes about 14 hours to catch one legal musky. Top-water lures and bucktails are recommended this time of year.

Water temperatures below 53° F are late fall conditions. Muskies head for deeper water, the break-lines. Fish are less active. Research shows it may take 30 hours to catch a legal fish. However, if you catch a fish, the chances of it being a fish of a lifetime are good. The technique is to combine crankbaits with live suckers. The musky season may be extended until the end of December starting in 2009 so more experience with cold-water fishing will be gained.

Some of the gear for fall fishing is obvious. Number one is warm clothing. If you can't stand being out there, you aren't going to catch fish. Also safety is an important issue. The water is cold, icy deck and piers are slippery, and heavy clothing is clumsy. BE Safe!!! For rods, reels, and line Geoff and Steve recommend short rods for heavy baits such as large crankbaits and lighter rods for lighter baits like some spinners. They also prefer fiberglass to graphite rods for ruggedness

in cold weather. Use a quality reel and you may want to clean the grease out of it and lubricate it with graphite. Grease and some oil get stiff in cold weather. They recommend 100 lb. test PowerPro line and 200 lb. test fluorocarbon leaders. They attach the lures to the leaders with split rings instead of snaps.

Release tools are important so you can quickly get the fish back into the water. A jaw-spreader, hook cutter (Nipex is recommended), long-nose pliers, steel glove, and a knife to cut the line are recommended release tools.

There are hundreds of lures. Refer to my earlier statement about "Rollie and Helens" catalog. Hawg Wobbler, Zara Spook, Jackpot, and a Big Joe were some of the top water lures mentioned. Some other lures were the Funky Chicken, Mann's #1 Super Stretch, Reef Hawgs, walleye color Bulldogs, Double Tens, big tube baits and soft tailbaits. Generally if the fish aren't hitting a large bait, go smaller.

As the water cools (below 60° F) sucker fishing is preferred. Use a quick strike rig, reels with a "clicker", 80 pound test superbraid line, and quality rod holders. Suckers 12 to 18 inches long are the size of choice. Use larger suckers as the water gets colder (below 55°). Pick out the darkest suckers in the tank when you select bait. They are the liveliest. A good float for sucker fishing is made from a plastic soda bottle with a planer board clip attached through the cap. When a fish hits, the float can be jerked off the line so it doesn't interfere with landing the fish. There are a number of different types of quick strike rigs and sucker fishing is usually used in conjunction with casting. The artificial lure may attract muskies to the sucker and vice-versa. Generally hooking muskies on suckers is hard, even with a quick-strike rig. Jerk hard!

The final technique is trolling. In many southern Wisconsin waters motor trolling is allowed but not in

Continued next page

Musky, continued.

most northern Wisconsin waters. In northern Wisconsin you have to row. Some advantages of trolling are that you can cover more water, which is likely to result in more fish, and it is easier than casting for the physically challenged or younger angler. The best area to target is the outer weed edge in 11 to 15 feet of water. A G.P.S. unit is handy to mark and follow the weed edge. If the weed edge isn't working fish in deeper water. Look for schools of baitfish, often 10 to 15 feet down even in deep water. You can troll with up to three lures (rods with one lure each) in Wisconsin so set one lure deep, one shallow, and one about 10 feet down. In warm water you can troll fast, four to five miles per hour. As the water cools slow down the trolling speed, three to four miles per hour when water temperatures drop below 60°, and two to three miles per hour when water temperatures drop below 50°. Down East rodholders with the rod tips in the water work well in the Madison Lakes. This technique prevents the line from fouling in floating lake weeds. Steve and Geoff recommended buying "Mikes Trolling Secrets" (from Drifter Tackle) to determine the depth lures "run" when trolling. A line counter reel is valuable for maintaining a consistent trolling depth. You can use planer boards but stronger clips are needed to hold musky lures and muskies aren't afraid of the boat so the only reason to use them is to spread your lines to avoid tangling them. If you find a school of baitfish troll over them or through them, not under them. Spoonplugs work for muskies.

The last question is where to go in the Madison Lakes? In Lake Wingra Geoff and Steve recommended just about anywhere. Follow the weed edge along Vilas Park and the Arboretum shore. Look for muskies in the weed beds in the early fall. In the summer try the deep parts of the lake. In Lake Monona try the Medical Bar, the area between Turville Point and the rock bar near Winnequah Point, if it is a strong south or west wind try the east end of the lake from Olbrich Park to Schlueter Park. In November try Turville Bay, Monona Bay, and Squaw Bay. The warm water outlet is good when water temperatures drop below 50°. In Lake Waubesa try Christie's Bar, the area out from the Green Lantern Restaurant, the weed beds on the south end of the lake, and the Bible Camp point. In general look for sharp breaks with rocks and weeds.

Recent Muskie Pics from Eric Olson



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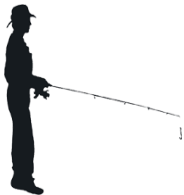
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November 13th outing

November may be the best month of the year for night fishing big walleyes. So let's get together on the break wall at Tenney Park and give it a try. Thursday Nov. 13, two nights after the Nov. meeting, is the night of the full moon. That's always a plus! The lights and current in this area attract lots of fish, plus there is such easy access. You can walk around and fish here for 15 minutes or 3 hours. I have caught a few here over the years in the 10 lb range and a couple even larger. My first 10 lb fish was caught while i was hanging over the fence above the spillway about 20 years ago. This can be cold fishing, especially if it's breezy, so dress warm. I've been doing this for many years and will have my gear to check out and discuss. A medium spinning rod with 8-10 lb line and a few lures are all you really need. Sometimes i also put a fathead or shiner out on a bobber. Some of my favorites to throw are Long A Bombers, Husky Jerk Rapalas, Storm Thundersticks, and plastics like Sassy Shad, Swim Baits, etc. on a 1/8oz or so jig. I always use scent.....usually a shad spray in cold water. I usually bring a big net, pliers, a bump board, gloves, a long stringer, a camera, and when I'm alone i wear a life vest. Jim Pankratz and I plan to light the grill around 5:30 to cook some beans and hot dogs as well as to warm up our fingers. So by 6pm, dinner will be ready and we should have several lunkers on the stringer. Anyway we can always stand around, drink beer, and tell lies. I never let the truth get in the way of a good story! Hope to see lots of members at this one, at least for a little while. So come on out, take a few casts, have a wiener, and howl at the moon! Charlie Grimm



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Club Pics



Paul Marunich caught this 22 3/4" Largemouth on Lake Mendota on Thursday, October 9th. It is Paul's life time largest largemouth. A truly beautiful fish. It was caught on a morning fishing outing with Jeff Western and was caught on a Curly Sue.



Jeff Western with 43" Northern caught in July.



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From the October 18th Pike outing

Got to the landing a little after 7amish! Coach & Paul M. were just leaving the launch to fish the Club's outing. Just as I was leaving a group of 4 new Members pulled up. They were looking for others who were also fishing the outing. Since it was past 7am. I let them know that they were already fishing.

I hit the YFC cribs to the right of Marshall & tossed a MFOTO Marker. {magnet for others to fish} Fog was very thick till late morning. Small mix bag of fish. Two small eyes, one L. Mouth & 4 good size R. Bass. Started trolling when I could see! Found the New Members below Fox Bluff. Rick Reese & His Fishing Partner {Blk Lab} were out too. We went to the Deep rock break @ Gov's Island & tossed marker. Both Rick & I had a break off on Big Northern's. Had many hits, but came off half way up? The eyes were just not ready yet. Temp was still 60 @ surface. Good thing I put the marker out. A Guy came up to Fish it & watched Him Catch 6 Nice eyes on green Blade Bait. {MFOTO Must Work!}

Fishing's Great, Trap 'em to bite can be tuff!

Kevin Tvedten

I went out with a friend (and maybe new member) Mark Riederer and landed a 34" Pike in 12' of water just off second point. Mark was using a Buchertail jonted perch.

Tom Raschke

I spoke with people in 3 boats plus mine. Catches were 2, 2, 5 and 11. Clay Russel and Ken Warden got top honors with 11 fish. The Reef Hog (weighted) was the top producer. I got a 37.5 inch northern and I didn't hear of any bigger but that's not official. At any rate we had an ideal day with light wind and fog. The fish seem to bite better without a bright sun. Other lures that caught fish included Curly Sue and white spinner bait (musky size). I do not have a complete list of lures that caught fish but this should help. I believe that Clay caught 7 of 8 fish on the Reef Hog. I had 3 of 4 on the Reef Hog.

Larry Mothershead

Paul Marunich and I had 2 fish in the boat 26" and 33" and multiple big fish follows. It was a great day.

Duffy

Add Gatorspoon to the lures that caught fish. Reef Hawg was by far the best.

Stan Nichols

Fishtalk:

Trolled Northwest of the trestle on the 1st. I've never seen so many Boats on the Lake ever! {must be GB's postings on L-L!}. First pass caught nice 17incher. Than a 32incher slammed the bait! Must of only wt 7lbs! Came to the boat in the dark water looking like a very large eye, but it was a Pike. Oh well had a great time playing bumper boats. Caught two keepers & released them back plus white bass & crappies. Water temp was 46 to 48 degrees.

Fall is here & the bite is going!

Kevin Tvedten

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Notes From the Prez

Fishing on Mendota in November – that is just nuts, but it was a beautiful day and the water temp. was 51. The fish were scarce, but who cares.

Now I clear my throat and realize I need to get down to business. We will have a “Special Meeting” within our November meeting to vote on the proposed By-Law changes that were detailed in the last newsletter. Please come ready to vote.

I have only received one nomination for the Pete Froland Award. If you want to nominate someone, please let me know. The Board will select a winner at the December meeting.

It is very important that you pay your dues at the December meeting. They are due by December 31 and it is very convenient to get this taken care of at the meeting. Please pay your dues on time. This makes planning and the Board’s job much easier. Thanks.

The Fishing Contest ends Nov. 30th and the new contest starts Dec. 1. Sign up for the new contest at the December meeting.

Start thinking about the Fishing Expo. The Board will be organizing the committee and they will start working on this immediately. We did a great job last year and that is the expectation again this year. Sign up will begin at the December meeting.

The Board will also start to organize for our Kids Ice Fishing Day. You should know that we may not be able to hold this event this year because of the expense. If you have any suggestions that will help us through this, please let me know.

The first job of the new Board will be to elect officers and decide on committees. We will let you know how this comes out and it will be detailed in the next newsletter.

Now back to thinking about fishing. I have not put my boat to bed for the winter yet. I still hope to get it on the water for some muskie fishing. If that happens, then I will begin to pray for early ice.



See you at the meeting.

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(Pic is from the club outing in October.)

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What is meant by “lake turnover”? How and why do lakes do this in autumn and spring?

By Gary Engberg

The key to this question is how water density varies with water temperature. Water is most dense (heaviest) at 39° F (4° C) and as temperature increases or decreases from 39° F, it becomes increasingly less dense (lighter). In summer and winter, lakes are maintained by climate in what is called a stratified condition. Less dense water is at the surface and more dense water is near the bottom.

During late summer and autumn, air temperatures cool the surface water causing its density to increase. The heavier water sinks, forcing the lighter, less dense water to the surface. This continues until the water temperature at all depths reaches approximately 39° F. Because there is very little difference in density at this stage, the waters are easily mixed by the wind. The sinking action and mixing of the water by the wind results in the exchange of surface and bottom waters which is called “turnover.”

A couple of tell-tale signs that a lake is going through turnover, are that clear lakes become muddy, and there’s sometimes an odor to the water from the decaying vegetation from the bottom that’s now making its way to the top.

During spring, the process reverses itself. This time ice melts, and surface waters warm and sink until the water temperature at all depths reaches approximately 39° F. The sinking combined with wind mixing causes spring “turnover.”

This describes the general principles; however, other factors including climate and lake depth variations can cause certain lakes to act differently. Take the Eagle River (Wisconsin) Chain of 28 lakes (the largest freshwater chain of lakes in the world). It doesn’t turn over because it’s moving water and is not stratified. It simply and literally “rolls over.”

And the effect on fishing? A lake in the process of turnover has the oxygen level consistent throughout the body of water, and that allows the fish to really scatter, because it’s now comfortable to travel at all

depths. That makes the job a little tougher to find them, no matter what species you’re talking about. But, the feeding pattern remains unchanged, so, find the baitfish, or the structure, and you’ll find what you’re looking for. Post-turnover is also prime time to use larger baits and suckers for muskies. Then the feeding frenzy will be on for the big fish. (This WDNR 2008 Forecasts

Madison chain of lakes –Musky anglers, take note. Survey work conducted in 2007 on the Yahara Chain (Mendota-Monona-Wingra-Waubesa-Kegonsa) focused on finalizing a population estimate for musky on Lake Waubesa. Adult fish concentrate in spring and are vulnerable to netting efforts. Crews captured 312 muskies, with 43 percent (145 fish) exceeding 38 inches, and 17 percent (56 fish), larger than 42 inches. From the 2006 marking sample, 63 fish were

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November Speaker

Our Nov. speaker will be Scott Hogland who will be speaking about using the combination of GPS and Sonar. Club members that want to bring hand held units to the meeting are encouraged to do so.



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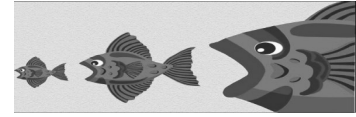
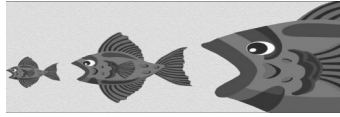
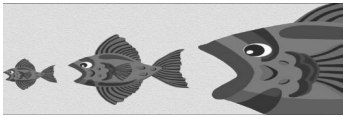
There are really a lot of bargain-priced fishing boats for sale on Craig's list. (link below) This is probably the best time in years to pick up a good used fishing boat. I'm guessing that the marinas and boat shops that advertise on this newsletter are also offering great deals.

<http://www.craigslist.org>

The WDNR 2008 Forecast - How did you do?

Madison chain of lakes – Musky anglers, take note. Survey work conducted in 2007 on the Yahara Chain (Mendota-Monona-Wingra-Waubesa-Kegonsa) focused on finalizing a population estimate for musky on Lake Waubesa. Adult fish concentrate in spring and are vulnerable to netting efforts. Crews captured 312 muskies, with 43 percent (145 fish) exceeding 38 inches, and 17 percent (56 fish), larger than 42 inches. From the 2006 marking sample, 63 fish were recovered, yielding a population estimate of 1,163 fish or .56 per acre. The largest fish was 47.1 inches and tipped the scales at 34.5 pounds. Additionally, Waubesa walleye numbers look robust with ample numbers of fish greater than 15 inches. More than a quarter of the fish sampled measured over 20 inches, and eight percent exceeded the “memorable” definition of more than 25 inches. We noted better-than-average catch rates and size distribution for walleye in Lake Mendota. The average size fish was 15 inches, with fish in the low 20-inch sizes common. Similarly impressive were robust panfish samples on both Lakes Monona and Waubesa. Monona bluegills ranged all the way to 9.2 inches and 63 percent of fish captured were larger than six inches. Waubesa showed excellent bluegill numbers, appropriate for young anglers who require more “catching” than harvest. Bass anglers can choose visits to either Lake Monona for largemouth or Lake Mendota for small-mouth. Both lakes have excellent numbers of catchable fish greater than 12 inches, and harbor memorable

Find fish and habitat survey reports for many lakes and rivers featured in this forecast at www.fishingwisconsin.org. For more detailed forecasts visit dnr.wi.gov/fish/reports/fishingreport/



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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.

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The next meeting is on **Tuesday, November 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: Scott Hogland

Calendar of Upcoming Events

November Events

November 11thth Monthly meeting @7:30 pm, Lakeside VFW Hall
Speaker: Scott Hogland - GPS and Sonar (See article Page 6)
November 13thth Tenney Park Night fishing (See article Page 3)
Organizer: Charlie Grimm

December Events

December 9thth 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!

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Vice President - Paul Marunich...219-4449	Director - Eric Uram.....233-9022	Director - Rick Seeger.....849-3714
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