

FREE

On Wisconsin Outdoors



with the

Dick Ellis Experts

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Restoring equal protection, and walleyes

FREE



DAVE FIDLIN

Tower Hill State Park

A southwest Wisconsin historical, recreational goldmine

Natural and man-made history is abundant throughout the grounds of Tower Hill State Park, a 77-mile greenspace on the outskirts of Spring Green, but within Iowa County. The site pays homage to a one-time important form of commerce within the area.

The reconstructed Helena Shot Tower is one of the most recognizable, and distinctive, features within this southwestern Wisconsin park. The replica tower, built on the side of a cliff, once housed an economic purpose by way of a lead shot operation for nearly three decades. A rebuilt smelter house that was a part of the business also is on display at the site.

According to historical records, a Green Bay-based businessman named Daniel Whitney saw value in the natural features of what today is the Tower Hill State Park. Whitney, who in 1830 traveled the Wisconsin River, noted the distinctive bluff that is a part of the park's landscape.

Within a few years, Whitney developed a shot tower on the land as he established a company that aptly was known as the Wisconsin Shot Company. Today's park site became a hot spot for lead mining by tapping into the area's resources.

The mined product oftentimes was used for lead pellets in shotguns. The tower itself was used as a collection point for the falling lead mined from the area. The resource eventually was sorted and touched up - by way of drying, polishing and grading - before being shipped off to

manufacturers.

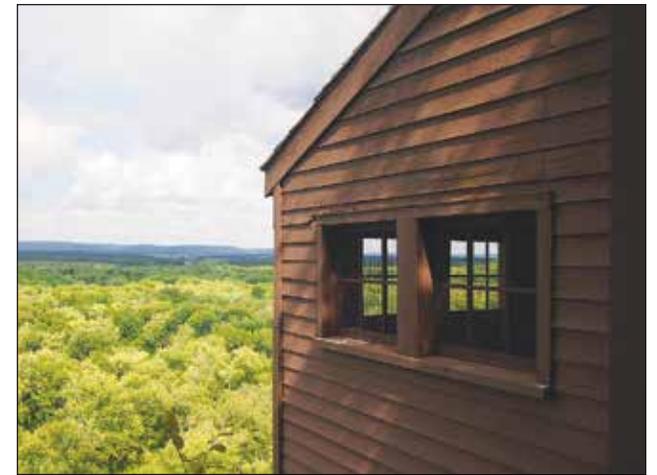
The mining operation ceased in the 1860s during an economic downturn, paving the way for the next chapter of the land's use.

After sitting dormant for nearly three decades, the land was used as a recreational and educational retreat center, known as the Tower Pleasure Company, toward the turn of the century. A log gazebo, pavilion and barn foundation are still on display at the park as remnants from this era.

In 1918, the land was deeded over to the state for the creation of Tower Hill State Park, which ultimately was established in 1922. Today, the park features an assortment of historical displays that are a goldmine for any lover of yesteryear.

In terms of recreation, Tower Hill State Park features several amenities that make it an ideal springtime stop, including hiking trails that traverse through some of the most scenic areas, as well as a canoe landing that feeds into the Wisconsin River. Picnic spots and a campground also are on the premises.

While more modern manmade history is notable at this park site, so, too, is the story behind the natural formations that adorn the land. The bluffs along the Wisconsin River are made of Jordan Sandstone and have been a key geological feature to the overall natural environment in and



The reconstructed Helena Shot Tower, pictured here with the Wisconsin River Valley in the background, is one of the main attractions at Tower Hill State Park.

near Tower Hill State Park.

The site's significance locally and beyond has gained recognition, as evidenced by it being named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

Tower Hill State Park is located at 5808 County Highway C, southeast of Spring Green. It is open daily from 6 am to 11 pm, year-round.

TOM LUBA

No Time Like The Present

Zeroing in on walleye and bass now

Perhaps the most important word in fishing is "Calendar," because your timeline and the fish's are usually not the same. The fish's pertains to water temperature. Yours doesn't. If you remember that fact, your results can be quite enjoyable.

Start with river walleye. They are early spawners when the water temp hits around 43 degrees. Date-wise, that arrives in later March to early April. Most run upriver toward dams. But they all don't spawn at the same time. Downstream areas with rock and wood offer some other options, especially if boat traffic is high. As they move upstream, they look for slower current areas and breaks to hold.

Finished spawners use the current to head back down stream. Certain areas, like irregular riprap banks, with little indentations where fish can stop to feed can be hot spots. Don't forget those locations. They can be good every year.

Start with a jig and minnow. Go with a one-eighth to one-quarter ounce jig for shallow areas and one-half for deeper.

Unpainted heads work; if not, try chartreuse or blaze orange for more color. Twister tails and jigs tied with maribou feathered heads offer more bulk. Maribou will sway in the current and can attract fish even when stationary. Use minnows here, too.

A second spring opportunity is largemouth bass. They're not just a summer target and become active as water temperature reaches 50 degrees. Remember, bass are catch and release until opening day or the first Saturday in May. Visit small lakes or flowages from 60 to a couple hundred acres. Shallow wood and rock will warm quickly and weeds may be starting to come up. Start in the northwest shallows; they hold heat best during this period.

A bass jig (black and blue) tipped with a Berkley Maxscent Power Chunk, which releases scent into the water, is my first shot. Second choice is a shallow running square bill crankbait in bluegill or brown craw patterns. They deflect off cover, creating reaction strikes. Use a smaller 3/16 ounce jig, or a five-inch black with blue fleck Senko stick worm, Texas-rigged on a 3/0 round bend sharp hook



Big bass can also be in the picture as April progresses. This is the time to up your odds by using bass jigs with scented trailers.

if the action is slow. Let the Senko slowly sink, and work it through emerging weeds outside the shallows where the fish may be waiting to move up. It also works in the wood. And at times out-produces the time-honored jig.

Use these walleye and bass approaches in a variety of conditions as the spring weather unfurls.



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TOM CARPENTER

Where Dreams Became Reality

Trout fishing on the seams of spring

Did you know Wisconsin didn't always have a winter trout fishing season? Seems hard to believe, but there was actually a time when trout fishing before the traditional May opener was just a dream.

That dream became a reality long, long ago, when I was attending college in Madison.

The Mad City didn't corrupt me entirely, for autumn weekends and winter breaks were still spent hunting the woods and hills of southwestern Wisconsin. Mendota found me ice fishing. In full spring and summer, open water fishing of all kinds beckoned.

But there was always that problematic "in between" time on the bridge between winter and spring.

I would watch the 10:20 pm weather reports (no Internet back then) to see what an upcoming March weekend might hold. If the forecast promised sun and fairly mild temperatures, I'd give Dad a call midweek and he'd gladly come get me on a Friday afternoon.

We'd get up none too early on Saturday. No use fishing in the frosty-cold dawn – the trout was better when the sun was up and the water had warmed up a little anyway.

Mom would cook breakfast and we'd visit in the sunny kitchen before she would kindly release us, sensing that our thoughts were heading toward some stream gurgling through a picturesque valley.

The creek is done with muddy runoff. Running green-clear below a blue March sky. A few patches of snow remain in roadside ditches and on north-facing hillsides. The woods bare, but the oak leaves russet on the ground. Corn stubble yellow in the fields. Pasture grass flat and brown. Sky, blue.

As is our usual practice, Dad goes downstream, and I start up. I always feel guilty not partnering up, but he understands, and "alone" is much of the idea anyway – getting away from the city, being free, avoiding responsibilities, breathing the clean coulee-country air . . . and hunting up trout.

The trout were always wary. We released most. But it was hard to resist saving a couple nice fat browns for the pan (legal back then). Mom expected it, for she loved to eat trout, and it was part of our easy payback for abandoning her.

Lunch was part of the excursion. You name the town - Argyle, Hollandale, Barneveld, Dodgeville, Muscoda, Boscobel - we knew all the best diners to stop into, warm up in, and eat the lunch special.

Fortified, we'd head back out to try our luck at another creek, the afternoon sun warm on my cheeks and the fish at their most active for the day.

I couldn't recall for you one specific trout I caught on these days. But I could tell you what it was like to see a whitetail - lean from the long winter but alive and strong nonetheless - bound out of some cattails. Or what it



sounded like to hear a pheasant rooster cackling in the willows. Or what the moldering oak leaves smelled like. Or what it felt like to walk in mud after all the concrete of the city.

As the sun sets, we meet back at the car. The cold is coming on, for it is March after all. And the now-frosty air feels good against my cheeks, which are still hot and red from the bright afternoon sun, which is now only an orange memory in the west.

I fall asleep to the blast of the car heater and the crunch of tires on gravel, knowing I'd been trout fishing on the seams of spring.

On The Cover

Growth of youth shooting sports participation across the country is amazingly rapid, including right here in Wisconsin. Nationally, almost 54,000 student athletes participate in the shooting sports. In the spring of 2025, 3,455 student athletes participated in the Wisconsin State High School Clay target league, representing 134 teams statewide.

More than 100 high school teams featuring over 1,900 student athletes are expected for the Wisconsin Trap Shooting State Tournament June 6 and 7 in the WTA home grounds in Nekoosa, Wisconsin. Perhaps most impressive is that nationally there have been zero reported injuries since 2008 to athletes, coaches or spectators in high school clay target competition events, practices or matches.

In this issue, read how MidwayUSA Foundation is working to sustain and grow youth shooting sports by providing long-term funding to youth shooting teams and organizations. Its key to success is its local impact...funding youth shooting teams and organizations, including right here in the Badger state.

On Wisconsin Outdoors has watched and covered the youth shooting sports for many years, with appreciation. First, because every youth participant is taught safety first, safety always from the first time he or she sits down in front of their coaches. And second, because these kids can shoot. Thanks for reading about the very good things that are happening when young people pick up a firearm. (Photo by OWO.)



On Wisconsin
Outdoors
With the Dick Ellis Experts

HUNTING • FISHING • TRAVEL
EXPLORE WISCONSIN

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Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | TWO RIVERS



Discovering Shipwrecks by Paddle: Two Rivers And The Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast

Paddling the Lake Michigan shoreline near Two Rivers is more than just a scenic adventure - it's a journey over chapters of maritime history lying just beneath the waves. This stretch of water is part of the Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary, a 962-square-mile protected area containing dozens of historic shipwrecks that tell the story of Great Lakes navigation, commerce, and tragedy.

From the sandy beaches near Neshotah Park to the rocky reaches of Rawley Point, several wrecks rest in shallow waters easily accessible to paddle craft, snorkelers, and swimmers. The sanctuary protects 36 known shipwreck sites - with research suggesting nearly 60 more may yet be discovered - offering paddlers unrivaled opportunities to glimpse history while enjoying Lake

Michigan's clear waters.

One of the most celebrated near-shore wrecks is the Major Anderson, a rare barkentine built in 1861 that met its end in an October gale in 1871. The remains lie in just three to 10 feet of water, about four miles north of Two Rivers. During summer months (July through September), buoys mark their location, making it a comfortable and rewarding paddle from Neshotah Park beach and other parking locations. The hull is still largely intact beneath a layer of sand, offering paddlers a haunting glimpse of Great Lakes maritime history.

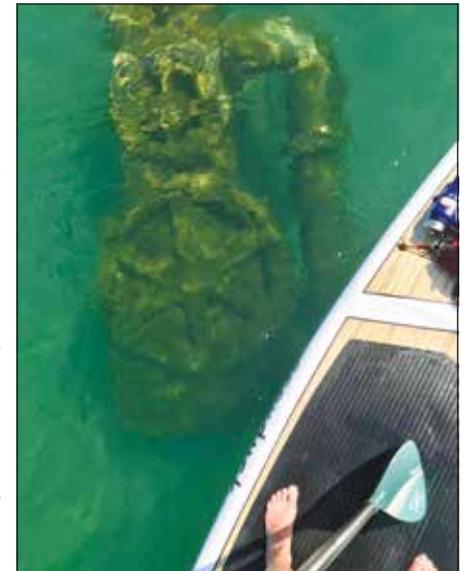
Not far from Major Anderson, the schooner Pathfinder rests in about 15 feet of water off Rawley Point. Wrecked in an 1886 gale and preserved by the quicksand in which it lies, Pathfinder's bow and lower hull remain

remarkably intact, making it an exciting site for kayaking and snorkel exploration.

Another fascinating site is the Lookout, a 19th-century schooner that sank in 1897 and now lies in 11 to 15 feet of water northeast of Two Rivers. Its preserved structure provides a rare underwater window into late-1800s ship construction.

For paddlers planning a trip, calm conditions and clear water are ideal - these wrecks lie within sight of shore on good days. Whether you're a history enthusiast or simply seeking a unique paddling destination, the nearshore waters off Two Rivers reveal stories of the past waiting just below your kayak's wake.

For a complete map of shipwreck locations, where to park and more information about each shipwreck, visit ExploreTwoRivers.com



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CAPTAIN DAVE DUWE

In Search of Dinner

Early spring panfish palooza

In early spring, bluegills and crappies become active with the melting ice and warming water. This is the time of year they move from their wintering locations to the warmest water in the lake. Often this can mean fishing the edges of lakes that still have ice in the middle.

I choose locations like the back of bays or channels and look for soft muddy bottoms as it seems to warm more quickly and hold more fish compared to hard bottoms. The softer bottoms also contain more vegetation which provides both food and shelter for the bluegills. On some occasions it can be hard to find the bigger bluegills; they tend to move a lot depending on the weather. The prime locations don't seem to change from year to year so if you found them in a particular spot last year, there's a good chance that they'll be back this year.

This time of year, the preferred bait is leaf worms, wax worms or minnows. The tackle is relatively simple, a small fixed spring bobber with an ice jig. I use two types of jigs, one with a vertical presentation and the other with a horizontal. Use the smallest bobber you can get away with that will keep your bait off bottom. Seldom will the bobber go under; the slightest movement or twitch indicates the fish has bit, so set the hook.

I would recommend a larger pole, at least six-feet long teamed with an ultra-light spinning reel spooled with some four-pound monofilament fishing line. Because of how light the bobber rig is, wind can be a problem, yielding shorter casts and an inability to detect bites. For greater success, choose your fishing days accordingly.

Like the bluegills, crappies are in a pre-spawn stage. In spring I usually find the

crappies much deeper than the bluegills. I start looking for them in six to eight feet of water in the emerging weed flats. They have a tendency to be very nomadic and are truly a bite that is here today and gone tomorrow. Due to the fact that I am fishing for them in weeds, a bobber is almost always a necessity. To eliminate the bobber would mean you have to move the bait too fast to keep it out of the weeds. With this depth of water, I will choose a slip-bobber with either a small fat head minnow or small plastic fished beneath. Crappies do suspend in the water column so you will need to adjust your presentation to the mood of the fish. I like to start about one foot to 18 inches above the weed growth. The same rod and reel combination can be used for both the bluegills and the crappies.

When fishing in early spring, the panfish



Author Dave Duwe with a Lake Geneva Crappie.

are very susceptible to over harvesting. In Wisconsin the limit is 25 per person. I set a personal limit of 15 fish, which makes a nice fish fry for my family.

For guide trips, call or text Dave Duwe at 262-728-8063.

DICK ELLIS

Perfect Perch

Mississippi River jumbos cooperate in shallow water

Rob Laux of Verona and Rob Heen of Wausau found great perch fishing with Ecker's Backwater Adventure Guide Service in mid-February on the Mississippi River north of Lacrosse. Fishing tip-downs and jigs with waxies in two to five feet of water after a ride to the backwater in guide Chris Eckert's airboat, the group took jumbo fish up to 13 inches and released a whole lot more.

"The appealing, very cool, part of it is fishing such shallow water for such big fish," Laux said. "This is my fourth year doing this with Chris Eckert. Almost all the fish were 10 inches or more and we released almost everything. Last year, spoons with minnow heads worked. This year the fish wanted something different."

"Going in on an airboat to where the perch are is an experience in itself. Once there, you're in a secluded environment and Chris gets you set up for catching fish. The fishing is generally in two to five feet of water. Pulling those big perch out from that shallow water is just an awesome feeling."

Connect with eckersbackwateradventures.com, 608-369-2212 or eckersbackwateradventures@gmail.com.

Note to OWO readers: Send us a photo of what you're catching, where and when, show us your success while hunting, or send your Wisconsin tourism shots from the trails, or wherever you are. OWO will publish your playtime fun in the paper, on our website, or via social media. Connect with ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.



Guide Chris Eckert uses an airboat to take clients to great backwater fishing on the Mississippi River.



Rob Laux, left, of Verona and Rob Heen of Wausau found great perch fishing in mid-February on the Mississippi River north of Lacrosse with Ecker's Backwater Adventure Guide Service.

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Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | ALGOMA

CAPTAIN LEE HAASCH

Thinking Spring

Algoma blossoms after cold weather

This winter has been anything but normal in Algoma. December left us with cold temperatures and lots of snow. January saw sub-zero temps, great for making ice for ice fishing but lighter on snow. February roared in with more Alberta Clippers and additional snow. Ice fishing is going strong with the Ahnapee River giving up feisty steelhead and some giant pike. Snowmobilers are finally enjoying the groomed trails and cross-country skiers have dusted off their skis and hit the trails. But spring is just around the corner!

March and April tips off our season with tail-dancing hot steelhead fishing in the streams and lots of them. It is common for seasoned anglers to catch near limits of fish on a regular basis. Did you ever have the

opportunity to have a steelhead (rainbow trout) smack your bait, bend your pole totally in half and scream out drag on your reel as it dances downstream in the rapids? There is nothing more exhilarating than doing battle, one-on-one, with a 12-pound steelhead on light tackle.

Not only do the river and streams provide early angling opportunities, but Lake Michigan shoreline is also a hot area in March and April. Giant brown trout and trophy lake trout cruising the shoreline, feeding in the shallows, give anglers ample opportunities for memorable battles and tasty meals. Tactics include trolling in small boats, wading off shore, and targeting the fish from piers. Anyone even with modest gear and budget can participate!

Anglers use light tackle to troll with stick baits in 12 to 25 feet of water find this time of the year has some of the best shoreline trolling for huge fish. Not to be outdone, die hard shore fishermen, like in the streams, find the many access areas to Lake Michigan near creek mouths that offer spectacular places to cast with light spinning rods and small spoons. There is no greater thrill than battling trophy size fish on light tackle while standing waist deep in Lake Michigan.

The Ahnapee Trail, part of Wisconsin's Ice Age Trail system, offers some of the best early season adventures for hiking and biking enthusiasts and showcases our abundant wildlife and bird watching opportunities. This trail system offers spectacular views of wildlife and leads you

right into beautiful downtown Algoma for lunch or dinner with locally-created wine or craft brews.

Algoma is open for business and fishing is only a part of what we have to offer. Spring in Algoma of 2026 springs into a beautiful start to our summer line up of fishing tournaments, festivals, car shows and musical events. We look forward to seeing all of you returning to visit us.

Experience for yourself the great fishery Lake Michigan has to offer. And if you want BIG fish, check out Algoma! For charter information or fishing reports, visit our Facebook page at: Algoma, Wisc. Fishing. For a calendar of events and activities, visit our website: VisitAlgomaWi.org.



Angling in the tributary streams to Lake Michigan in the early morning hours should be on everyone's bucket list.

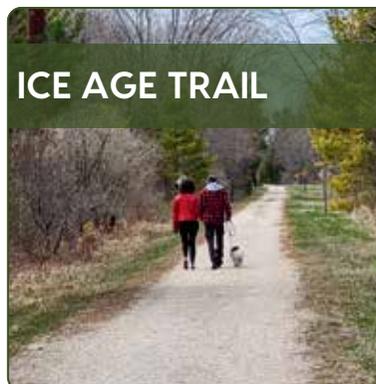
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Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | PORT WASHINGTON



Discover Your Own Perfect Outdoor Escape

Nestled on the western shore of Lake Michigan, just a short drive north of Milwaukee, Port Washington is a vibrant hub for outdoor enthusiasts. While its picturesque harbor and historic downtown are charming year-round, spring and summer truly unlock a treasure trove of adventures, from the thrill of the catch to the dip of the paddle in turquoise waters.

For many, Port Washington's call begins with the allure of its magnificent lake. The city is renowned as a premier destination for **charter fishing**, drawing anglers from across the Midwest. As spring transitions into summer, the waters teem with trophy-sized trout and salmon.



Experienced captains pilot their fleets into the depths just off shore, armed with expert knowledge and top-tier equipment to reel in chinook salmon, coho salmon, rainbow trout (steelhead), and lake trout. The adrenaline rush of a screaming reel, the fight of a powerful fish, and the camaraderie on deck create unforgettable memories, often culminating in coolers full of fresh, delicious fillets.

Not everyone needs a boat to experience the thrill of the catch. **Shore fishing** offers a more relaxed yet equally rewarding experience. The rock-lined harbor is a popular spot where anglers can cast lines for various species, including brown trout and steelhead, particularly during the cooler spring months.

Beyond fishing, Port Washington's natural landscape beckons adventurers of all kinds. The area boasts an impressive network of **biking and hiking trails** that showcase its diverse beauty. The Ozaukee Interurban Trail, a paved path stretching 30 miles through Ozaukee County, passes directly through Port Washington, offering cyclists and hikers scenic views of rural landscapes, charming small towns, and, of course, the stunning Lake Michigan shoreline. For those seeking a more rugged experience, the trails within Lion's Den Gorge Nature Preserve, just south of the city, provide dramatic bluff-top vistas, winding paths through mature forests, and access to a secluded beach - a truly breathtaking escape.

The expansive waters of Lake Michigan offer more than just fishing; they provide a playground for a variety of water sports. On days when the wind picks up, **freshwater surfing** enthusiasts can be spotted riding the waves near the harbor entrance or further south along the coast. While not as consistent as ocean surfing, the lake can produce surprisingly rideable waves, especially after strong northerly winds, creating a unique freshwater surfing experience.

For those preferring a calmer pace, **paddleboarding** and **kayaking** offer serene ways to explore the harbor and nearshore areas. Rent a board or kayak locally and glide across the tranquil waters, enjoying unparalleled views of the historic lighthouse, the bustling marina, and the city skyline from a unique perspective.

The walkable, historic downtown is just steps from the marina. The city hosts numerous outdoor events throughout the year, from farmers markets overflowing with local produce to outdoor concerts by the lake. The annual Fish Days celebration, held in July, transforms the harbor into a lively celebration of its maritime heritage, complete with live music, parade, and, of course, plenty of fish.

Whether you're casting a line, pedaling a trail, catching a wave, or simply strolling along the bluffs, Port Washington promises an abundance of outdoor adventures. It's a place where a Great Lake meets small-town charm, inviting everyone to discover their own perfect outdoor escape.

PHIL SCHWEIK

Spring Walleyes Tactics for more and bigger fish

Now that winter is finally behind us, we can get back to some open water fishing. With that said, some of my best fishing of the year is done right after ice out. Normally I like to target all species, but at this time of the year walleyes are my go-to. They are getting ready to spawn and they can be in very predictable locations.

Traditional techniques work best on these early season walleyes and basic jigs tipped with minnows or plastics and shallow diving crankbaits are my two go-to presentations. I target shallow water locations early and late in the day with both crankbaits and jigs and I target deep water location with jigs during the mid-day hours.

One special note is that on sunny days, don't be surprised to see the walleyes move up shallower than normal and into that six-to-10-foot mid-water depth to feed. I have on many occasions caught them transitioned to this type of depth when the sun has been out for a few hours. I believe that with the sun out, the water warms up a bit, and those walleyes will just slide up to this depth to feed. These are also very aggressive fish if you can find them at this depth.

This time of the year is about as easy as it can get for targeting and catching not only numbers of walleye, but you also have a chance at a true trophy. These are walleyes that have been lethargic all winter long, the females are full of eggs, and now they are getting ready for the spring spawn and they are eating. It is time to go get them!



Ronald Hall from Chicago fishing with Hooksetters Guide Service.

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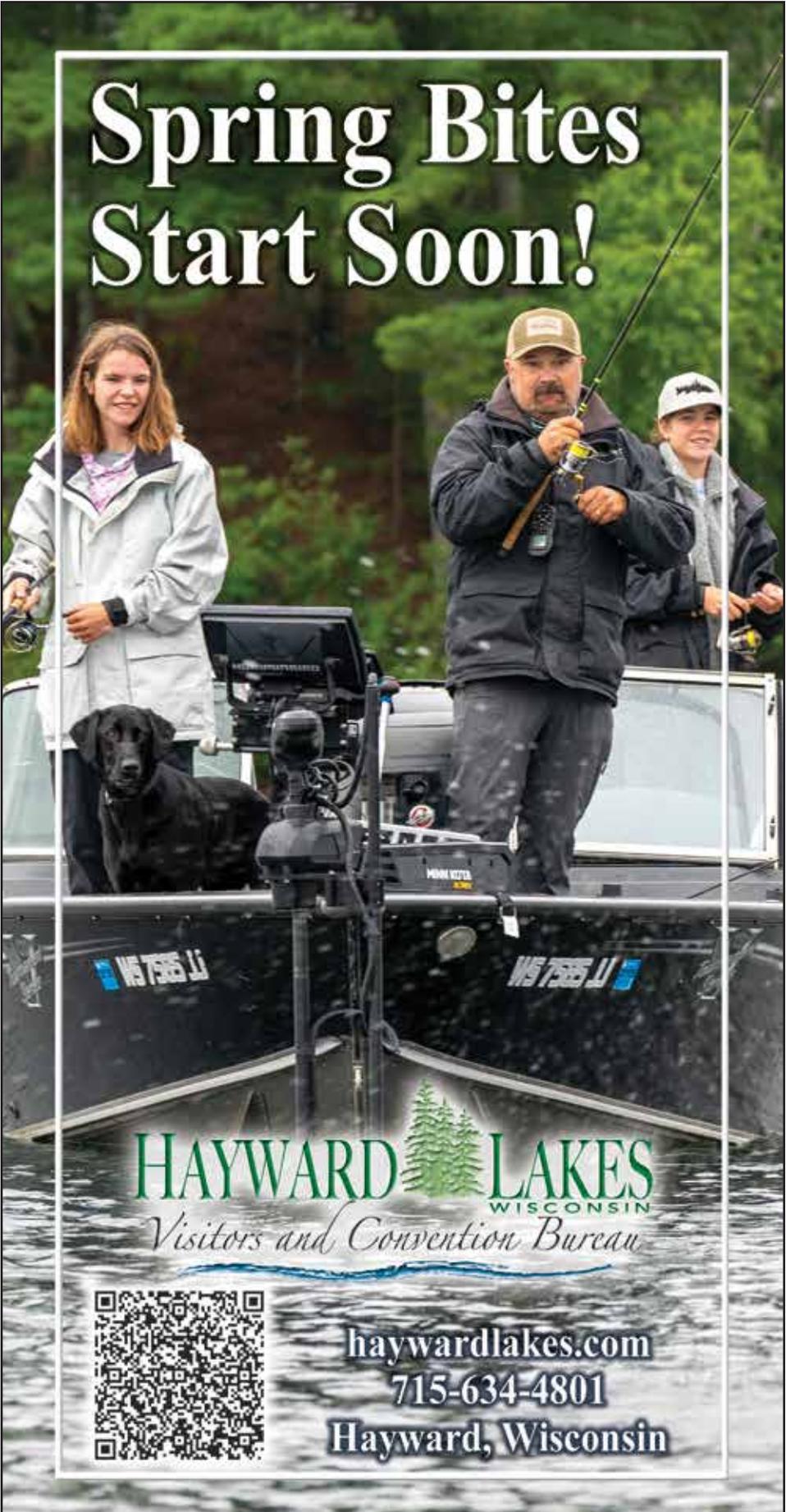
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SPOTLIGHT | HAYWARD LAKES

Spring Turkey Season: A Lesson in Patience And Perseverance

Spring turkey season has always felt like the true start of spring for me. After a long Wisconsin winter, it marks the shift from ice and snow to early mornings, open fields, and the first real signs of the season changing. It's a pursuit that demands patience and persistence, and one that teaches lessons long before success comes.

Last spring, I filled my tag during the later portion of the season, when birds are often more cautious and hunting pressure is high. It was my fourth turkey, and one that stands out not just for the harvest, but for everything that led up to it.

I was hunting with friends Renee and Jason, along with a few others. Until then, I had only hunted turkey solo or with my husband Jay. Sharing camp, early mornings, and strategy with a group added a new layer to the experience and made it especially meaningful. The terrain we hunted offered a mix of agricultural fields, open ground, and wooded edges. Over several days, we worked birds, adjusted setups, and paid close attention to patterns. There were moments of doubt, especially after two full days without success and a frustrating gun malfunction on a bird I should have harvested.

Late-season turkey hunting is humbling, but it rewards those who stay patient and adaptable. On the final afternoon, everything came together. After regrouping, Jason suggested checking a nearby area he felt good about. When we glassed the field, we spotted a tom strutting with hens, with deer scattered across the open ground. I grabbed a reaper fan and began a slow, careful crawl, using every bit of terrain and cover available. Turkey hunting doesn't offer shortcuts. You earn every yard.

When the tom spotted the fan, he broke away from the hens and closed the distance fast, gobbling as he came. Carrying Jason's .410 single-shot with a red dot sight, I made a clean 30-yard shot, and just like that, it was over.

The moment was overwhelming. I cried happy tears, grateful not just for the bird, but for the experience. We even capped the hunt by finding morel mushrooms, a reminder that spring offers rewards beyond the tag.

Every season brings new lessons. For anyone getting started, my advice is simple: find a mentor, stay patient, and keep learning. The most rewarding hunts are often the ones that require the most persistence.

Author Sarah Kozlowski is a Hayward native and outdoor enthusiast. When she isn't hunting and fishing, she runs a media company, Kozlowski Co., focused on outdoor storytelling and digital marketing.



JOHN FAUCHER

When Walleye is King

The Spring run on the Winnebago system

WOLF RIVER—The Winnebago System, including the upriver lakes and the lower Fox and Wolf Rivers, is a premier multi-species fishery year-round. However, from mid-February through late April, the walleye is undisputed king.

As ice conditions deteriorate and spring runoff enters the system, rising water and lengthening days trigger a natural instinct: the pre-spawn migration. Throughout the 150-plus miles of unimpeded Wolf River—stretching upstream to the first dam at Shawano—countless spawning grounds await both baitfish and walleye.

Techniques for Success

Once the ice clears, early-season anglers find success on sandbars, slack water, and shallow flats.

The Up-Run: When water temperatures are below 42°F, anchoring is most effective. High-percentage rigs include 1/8 ounce (or heavier) jigs with minnows, or the classic Wolf River Rig (three-way) featuring a streamer fly or floating jig tipped with a minnow.

The Down-Run: As fish move off the spawning marshes, anglers transition to drifting the main channels. This is the time to get aggressive: drag crawlers, pull flies, or cast crankbaits for hungry post-spawn walleye.

For more information, contact Johnny's Little Shop of Bait, 1205 W. Wolf River Drive, New London at 920-982-4802. Johnny's is a full service Wolf River bait shop open 365 days a year, from 6 am to 6 pm.

For more information, see the Johnny's Bait Shop Facebook page or connect to littleshopofbait.com.

The author's late uncle, Scott Sockett, holds up an average "back run" walleye caught on a crank bait. (John Faucher photo.)



Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | **PEPIN**



Cast a Line in Pepin County

Pepin County is home to a wealth of trout streams. All around the county, trout fishermen can fish both popular and uncommon streams and expect good action in the beautiful setting of west central Wisconsin. Visitors will find Class I, Class II, and Class III trout streams.

Located just outside of Durand in Arkansaw, Arkansaw Creek is a great stream for trout fishing in Pepin County. A tributary of the Eau Galle River, the creek is classified as a Class II trout stream and stretches for about seven miles. Brown trout and brook trout frequent Arkansaw Creek, making it a good target for fishermen seeking a fish or two for the creel, isolation, and a limit of fun.

Another trout stream we recommend is Bear Creek, which can be found right outside of Durand near Tarrant Park. The creek is a popular stream for trout anglers, specifically the middle section which is classified as a Class II trout stream. Trout fishermen can enjoy around six miles of stream for trout fishing, with many great places for casting a line.

Fishermen seeking to catch brook trout should head to Plum Creek, a stream that runs from Plum City down to the Chippewa River. It is common to catch six-to 10-inch brook trout, but there are also trophy brook trout present in this Class I and Class II trout stream. Additionally, Plum Creek has a large brown trout population, which on average contains larger trout reaching 20-plus inches. There are plenty of public places along the creek to cast a line, as Plum Creek stretches over 10 miles through Pepin County.

A final recommendation for trout fishing in Pepin County is Porcupine Creek. The creek is Class II and stretches for about 10 miles before joining Plum Creek. All the trout fishing spots in Pepin County offer opportunities for beginners and skilled fisherman and are great places to get out and enjoy the outdoors and try your hand at casting.

For more information see visitpepincounty.com or call 715-672-7242, ext. 146.

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Vote to protect your heritage

The power that the outdoor community has at the ballot box is enormous. Hunter Nation encourages hunters and anglers to vote their values. Our ongoing goal is to keep the pressure on our elected officials by never missing an election.

HUNT THE VOTE

- Before Hunter Nation – 50% of licensed hunters did not vote
- Wisconsin has a hunting base of 855,000
 - 56% Conservative and 44% Liberal
- Since 2016 Hunter Nation has reached over 12 million hunters in all 50 states
- In Wisconsin, Hunter Nation was directly responsible for getting 475,498 licensed hunters out to vote in the 2024 election
- Out of the 475,498 voters:
 - 20,259 had not voted in the last 16 years
 - 82,429 had only voted once in the last 16 years
 - 15,307 were first time voters



WISCONSIN ADVOCACY

- Hunter Nation supports H.R. 845 Pet and Livestock Protection Act
 - Federal gray wolf delisting AND removes judicial review
- Hunter Nation is fighting for a wolf numeric population goal vs a vague adaptive management plan
 - Wolf populations need to be guided by science and not social pressure
- Currently the Wisconsin DNR states that Wisconsin has an estimated wolf population of 1,226 – This is somehow 102 less than last year!?
- Hold the DNR accountable for their lack of spending on programs that primarily benefit hunters and anglers – Less than 50% in FY 2023-24. 🗳️

For more information, contact Chris Vaughan, Hunter Nation Wisconsin State Director, at Chris@HunterNation.org.

Just Who Are We Anyway?

A Note from the OWO Publisher

July 4, 2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. America's founders who gave us our freedom and Constitution were almost without exception men of God.

"Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people," wrote John Adams. "It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other." Benjamin Franklin, when asked what kind of government the founding fathers had created responded, "A Republic, if you can keep it."

The health of our Constitutional Republic, its survival, is dependent upon the active and informed involvement of the people. An informed population across the ages is imperative, Franklin meant, because the deterioration of many of those who seek positions of governmental power and wealth is certain.

Now though, the complicit and corrupt media is our greatest enemy, disregarding a steadfast commitment to delivery of truth and protecting the citizen as is their obligation. Instead, false witness, slander, and libel define

media.

The biblical perspective of our founders would label these as sins of "commission", wrong actions deliberately performed contrary to God's law. The term commission indicates that the person has committed the act, and therefore bears responsibility for it.

Sins of "omission" occur when media or any person fails to do what is right or neglects a moral responsibility. Unlike sins of commission, which involve active wrongdoing, sins of omission are characterized by passivity or neglect. They reflect the failure to respond to God's commands, to help those in need, or to act according to moral conscience.

On Wisconsin Outdoors has also evolved over two decades to bring our audience more than outdoor entertainment. We are truth seekers, at a time when America needs us all to be part of the informed population who will pass this great gift of the founders on to the next generation. Anything less, would be our sins of omission. Thank you for reading.

Dick Ellis

DICK ELLIS

On Wisconsin Outdoors

Here we grow again....

Connect with On Wisconsin Outdoors' NEW website at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com.

At no cost, each OWO issue is posted on our website homepage at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com for the online reader.

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To request your OWO advertising media kit, connect with lori@onwisconsinoutdoors.com or 262-352-5579.

On Wisconsin Outdoors hunts, fishes and travels Wisconsin, and we want to know what you're doing. Send us your photos and stories by submitting to our Dropbox at onwisconsinoutdoors.com or by messaging us directly on social media.

At no cost, to receive PDF's of OWO's series on Restoring Verifiable Elections, Walleyes in the Ceded Territory, and of Wolves and Whitetails in Wisconsin, connect with jellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.

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-Gregg Borneman



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BOB'S BEAR BAIT

You Drew a Bear Tag. Now What?

A preseason baiting checklist

By the time March rolls around in Wisconsin, bear season is already on the minds of anyone lucky enough to draw a tag. Snow is melting, daylight is increasing, and preparation officially begins. While opening day is still a ways off, what you do in March and April can have a big impact once bears are fully active.

Preseason is about planning ahead, lining up bait, and avoiding the mid-season scramble that catches a lot of hunters off guard.

Lock In Access Early There are more bear hunters hitting the woods today than there were decades ago, and much like whitetail hunting, gaining permission can be tough. Locking in access early is important before the season ramps up. Preseason is also a good time to scout potential bait locations. Areas near logging edges and travel routes like logging roads often see early movement. Picking solid locations now saves time later.

Review Regulations Wisconsin's bear baiting regulations are specific, and preseason is the right time to refresh yourself. Know legal baiting dates, quantity limits, placement rules, and container requirements. Setting up legal and ethical bait sites from the start helps avoid problems later and protects the future of bear baiting in the state.

Buy Bait Early One of the biggest advantages of planning early is the ability to buy bait before demand spikes. Purchasing bait in March or April usually means better availability, better selection, and sometimes better pricing. It also eliminates the stress of short supply once baiting activity ramps up.

Working with a reliable, Wisconsin-based, supplier like Bob's Bear Bait helps ensure you have what you need no matter the season. Carrying the largest selection of bait and scent options in the state also allows hunters to rotate offerings and keep bears interested and returning throughout the season.



A very large and comfortable bear enjoys another meal on a baiting site in July before the Wisconsin September hunting season begins.

Smart Early Season Bait Strategy

The goal early on is to introduce scent along with some bear bait to get bears aware of a site. Strong smelling bait and scent lures can help draw bears in, especially during the breeding season when bears are covering a lot of ground. Bears also remember bait sites year after year, which is why starting early can pay off long term. One spring day I checked a bait site that was baited the previous year and found fresh bear tracks already working through the area. Baiting early helps get bears aware of a site without committing to a strict schedule or large quantities of bait.

Gear Check Preseason is the time to buy or cut hollow stumps, pick up spray bottles for applying scent lures, and get trail cameras and the accessories that go with them ready before the season gets busy.

Adding security boxes can help reduce damage once bears start visiting regularly. Bears will chew on just about anything, including exposed antennas. If you plan to run a cell camera, placing it higher in a tree can help keep it out of reach.

We will again maintain all the same locations as last year in Appleton, Birnamwood, Tomahawk, Phelps and Ishpeming for 2026, as well as stocking bait at Superior Sport & Feed in Crystal Falls, Michigan. To stay up to date with our latest news and sales, follow us on Facebook. To see a list of our bait or locations, check us out at bobsbearbait.com. If you wish to speak to Bob directly, email him at sales@bobsbearbait.com or call (920) 419-1238. Don't forget to stock up early for the best goodies here at Bob's Bear Bait, your one stop shop for all your baiting needs!

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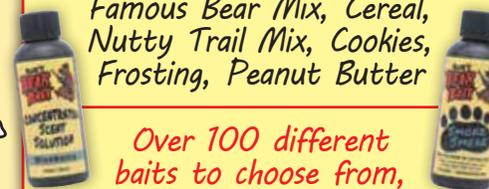
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DICK ELLIS

Arkansas Wild Hogs

Another option for the Wisconsin hunter

Here's one more alternative while waiting for the walleye run or spring gobbler hunt to kick in. Steve Ellis of Lake du Bay shot this wild hog estimated at 100 pounds hunting private land in Arkansas February 12 with friends from Wisconsin.

In Arkansas, a hunting license and completion of hunter safety classes are required to hunt hogs on public land. Neither is required on private land, and there are no seasons, hunting hours or bag limits for wild hogs. They are an invasive species that breeds prolifically, leading to population numbers which the state, farmers and landowners all want controlled because of the damage they inflict to property.

"Contrary to conventional wisdom, the animals are quite clean and they process up similar to a deer," said Ellis, who returned to Arkansas after a previous hunt left him wanting more pig in the freezer. "And the meat is very tasty."

How about you Wisconsin? What have you been doing? Send your photos year-round and a line or three to Ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.



Steve Ellis of Lake DuBay hunted wild Arkansas hogs in mid-February with Wisconsin friends and scored on an approximately 100-pound pig.



A herd of Arkansas wild pigs passes a trail camera.


Explore Wisconsin
SPOTLIGHT | CITY OF MARINETTE


Walleye Fishing at Its Finest

Each spring, anglers from across the Midwest converge on Marinette for one of the region's most exciting fishing traditions - walleye season on the powerful Menominee River. As the ice recedes and water temperatures begin to climb, thousands of walleye make their annual spawning run upstream from the waters of Green Bay, transforming the river into a premier destination for both seasoned anglers and first-time visitors.

The spring run typically begins in late March and peaks through April, depending on weather and water conditions. During this time, the river becomes alive with activity. Boats line the channel, shore anglers gather along the banks, and the early morning calm is broken only by the sound of casting lines and the excitement of a net hitting the water. It's more than fishing



Each spring, anglers from across the Midwest converge on Marinette for one of the region's most exciting fishing traditions - walleye season.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

SPRING WALLEYE IN MARINETTE

IF YOU NEED ME
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DAN MOERICKE

An 'Up Nort' Report

A bird in the hand

Whenever my grandkids visit me during the winter, there is one thing that is sure to be on their list of 'wanna do' activities. "Grandpa, can we go feed the birds?" is the question that is sure to be asked shortly after their arrival. And, by 'feed the birds,' they are not talking about filling my bird feeders. They are talking about going to a place where the birds will actually eat out of their hands. Fortunately, there is just such a place not too far away.

The Anvil Trail system is first and foremost a cross-country ski trail. However, the hidden bonus is a shelter with a nice fireplace complete with plenty of firewood. And it is around this shelter where flocks of chickadees eagerly await handouts from skiers, snowshoers, and hikers.

To get to the parking area, go approximately 7.5 miles east of Eagle River on Highway 70 and then take Military Road to the south just over a mile. The hike to the shelter is just over a mile, but you can cut that distance in half on snowshoes using the designated trail.

On our most recent trip to the shelter, we were fortunate to have a volunteer manning it and he had a roaring fire going. He even had marshmallows, graham crackers, and chocolate to make s'mores. The kids loved that (me too). We had brought along some sunflower seeds to feed the birds, which they readily ate. The attendant also supplied us with some unsalted peanuts. The birds definitely preferred those to the sunflower seeds.

So, if you find yourself in the Eagle River area looking for a fun and free adventure, head out to the Anvil Trail System to feed the birds. Make sure to take some sunflower seeds or unsalted peanuts. Your kids will love it and so will you. Heck, you don't even need to have kids. Having birds land in your hand is fun for anybody.

I know my grandkids had fun (and so did I). When they ask if we can go feed the birds, the answer is always "yes." Just sayin'.



Grandson Peter enjoying the chickadees.


Explore Wisconsin
SPOTLIGHT | ITBEC


A Place Like no Other

Northwest Wisconsin is a place like no other in the state of Wisconsin. Twelve counties make up the northwest area of the state. If you like outdoors, then you can go to any of these counties and find what you are looking for. The Trail systems are amazing and we offer a free corridor trail map for snowmobiling and ATVing. We also have a sampler guide of every silent sport you can imagine, so take the opportunity and email us for a free brochure of your choice.

Whether it's motorized or non-motorized, Northwest Wisconsin has you covered. For more information see www.northwestwisconsin.com.



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Be sure to check out Lake Superior for salmon and lake trout.

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North Dakota is a dream destination for anglers, offering year-round fishing adventures. Shore fish from scenic banks, or explore expansive waters teeming with walleye, northern pike, perch and bass. In the winter drill a hole, drop your line, and experience the excitement of pulling in a whopper from beneath the ice.

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Lake Sakakawea



Grahams Island State Park on Devils Lake

IT'S TIME TO CATCH UP

Whether you're a seasoned angler or just starting out, North Dakota's waters welcome all skill levels. Family-friendly fishing piers, boat ramps and shore fishing access points make it easy to get on the water. Many locations offer nearby amenities including campgrounds and lodges, perfect for planning an extended stay.

PLAN NOW FOR SUCCESS

Visit the North Dakota Game and Fish website for detailed maps, fishing reports and regulations. Non-resident licenses are available online with flexible options including three-day, ten-day or annual permits. Lakes and access points are well-maintained and clearly marked, ensuring a smooth start to your fishing adventure.



North Dakotan and actor Josh Duhamel, Lake Sakakawea



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RON STRESING

Loading For Tom

Entering your turkey hunt with confidence

Calling in and killing a mature gobbler is a BIG challenge. Simply put, making a lethal shot requires putting enough pellets into a narrow kill zone. While sporting goods stores are full of turkey-specific shells and choke tubes, you still need to figure out where your shotgun pattern hits and what your effective range is. Turkey hunting shells carry heavy magnum loads of fine shot. Extra full turkey chokes will add some yardage to your effective range, but can be a handicap for close-in birds. No matter what combination of ammunition and choke you select, you still need to determine actual maximum lethal range. Time on the range is required to find out what your shotgun can do.

Aiming vs Pointing Shooting a strutting spring gobbler is different than swinging on a flushing pheasant. With any luck, your target will be walking or standing still. You will need to sight-in your shotgun and determine the point of aim in relation to the point of impact of the pattern. Years ago, I found the shotgun I was using for turkey centered the pattern significantly low and left. As I was not using a scope or electronic red dot device, I had used the principle of Kentucky windage. After fine tuning on a bullseye target, I switched to a target with a turkey on it. I held high and right of the base of the turkey target's neck. The result was my three-inch magnum charge of six shot centered patterned on

the head and neck of the turkey target. Any bird within 35 yards or so was in trouble!

Basic Sighting in for Turkeys Begin at 20 yards, shooting from a solid rest, using the choke tube you plan to use for turkey. Line up using the receiver as a back sight and the front bead as a front sight. Focus on a solid dot on the target board, and squeeze the trigger as you would a rifle. Note where the center of the pattern hits in relation to the dot. After a few shots, make your adjustments. You may need to raise or lower your sight picture, or hold right or left. There is no need to use expensive, high-powered turkey loads for sighting-in. Field or even trap loads will work. Both your wallet and shoulder will thank you!

After you figure the point of aim, it's time to bring out a turkey target and shells. Shoot the target from a solid rest at various ranges. This will let you know your maximum effective range. Aim for the base of the neck, as you want at least six to eight pellets in the head and neck region. You need pellets that retain enough energy to break vertebra and penetrate the skull. For this reason, stick



Results of sighting in and patterning your shotgun. Photo by Scott Ford.

with size six lead as your smallest shot size. Today's turkey hunter has a dizzying array of turkey specific ammunition to choose from. Within 30 yards, plain old lead loads of five or six shot will do the trick. Modern plated and buffered loads will give you better patterns further out. Alloys like TSS and Hevi-shot that are heavier than lead allow smaller pellets to be used. These super heavy pellets retain more energy at greater ranges than lead. The only drawback is the cost of the ammunition, running \$8 - \$10 every time you pull the trigger.

Wisconsin law says no pellets larger than four lead or two steel shot may be used. If using steel shot, you cannot use a choke tighter than modified. Try three-inch magnum steel three or four shot.

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Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | ST. GERMAIN

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Check our events page regularly and plan your trip around one of St. Germain's signature celebrations - you won't want to miss the fun!

See our website at st-germain.com.



W Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | LANGLADE COUNTY



Outdoor Paradise

As the snow melts away and the landscapes burst into color, Antigo and Langlade County transform into the ultimate spring and summer destination. Whether you're craving outdoor adventure, local charm, or a peaceful retreat, there's no better place to explore and stay but then Langlade County, the County of Trails!

Langlade County is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts that like to hike, mountain bike, ATV/UTV, paddle, and fish. Blaze the scenic 60-plus miles of Langlade County Ice Age National Scenic Trail, cycle or walk the beautiful Antigo Springbrook Trail, or ride the thrilling ATV/UTV routes weaving through Wisconsin's Northwoods.

The area's 842 lakes, rivers, and trout streams offer endless opportunities for fishing, kayaking, and canoeing. Fly fish the crystal-clear waters of the Wolf River or take a leisurely paddle on many charming quiet lakes. There are so many go-to spots to explore!

Step back in time and uncover the rich history of Langlade County at the Langlade County Historical Society Museum, located in the heart of Antigo. Housed in a historic 1905 Carnegie Library building, the museum

showcases fascinating exhibits. Within the museum, the Antigo-Langlade County Welcome Center offers a warm introduction to the region, providing Langlade County maps, travel guides, and expert recommendations to help you make the most of your visit. Whether you're a history buff or an explorer, these two must-visit locations will connect you to the past while inspiring your next Northwoods adventure.

Don't miss the 35th Annual Pickerel-Pearson St. Patrick's Day Parade, a cherished local tradition that brings together visitors, families, and friends, to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in true Northwoods style on March 14, 2026. St. Patrick's Day-themed floats, local performers, and community spirit are on full display. After the noon parade, stick around for live music, face painting, and festive green gear. Local bars and restaurants will continue the celebration with bands and entertainment throughout the day. For more information, go to <https://bit.ly/2026PickerelStPatricksParade>.

Spend your days exploring "Wisconsin's County of Trails" and your nights relaxing under the starry Northwoods



Come participate in the noon Pickerel-Pearson St. Patrick's Day Parade. Arrive early to reserve your spot.

sky. Whether you prefer a modern Antigo hotel, a cozy cabin, or a lakeside campsite, Langlade County offers accommodations for every traveler.

Let Wisconsin's County of Trails be your home away from home. Plan your getaway today at www.langladecounty.org!



Come for the Trails, Stay the Night



www.CountyOfTrails.org



SPOTLIGHT | KENOSHA



Spring Into Our Surf & Turf Adventures

Cast a line at an inland lake or on a Great Lake! Plan an outing with the Kenosha Charter Boat Association to head out on Lake Michigan where you will catch trout, salmon and more. The fleet is made up of more than a dozen boats with licensed captains and fully-equipped rigs – so all you have to do is show up! The crew will help you with everything from baiting a line to filleting your catch.

Tee off at one of the many golf courses in the area. Brighton Dale Links and Petrifying Springs offer park settings and affordable rates. These courses are maintained by Kenosha County and offer a combined 63 holes of play. You can also try your hand at disc golf at one of the area's four courses. Disc golf is great for just about any age and is a great way to explore some beautiful parks. And speaking of parks, be sure to check out the Dream Playground where people of all ages and abilities can play.

Get a different perspective when you visit Boundless Adventures. This aerial adventure park features nine different ropes courses with four levels of difficulty. You'll zipline, climb ladders, and balance your way through the treetops. There is even an axe throwing range

on site for more fun.

Plan a leg day! Take a walk with one of the many self-guided routes that encourages you to get your daily 10,000 steps in. Rent a bike at Total Cyclery and cruise the 150-plus miles of bike lanes and routes in Kenosha County, or take a spin around the oldest operating Velodrome in the country at Washington Park. Use those muscles to power the Lakeshore Pedal Tour trolley as you ride around Downtown Kenosha sipping your favorite adult beverages! Or, climb the Southport Lighthouse 72 steps to the top for amazing views.

In addition to all the wonderful ways to stay active, Kenosha is home to dozens of incredible locally owned eateries. From gastro pubs and breweries to support clubs and bistros, you will want to bring your appetite! With art galleries, gift shops, museums, and entertainment venues at every turn, you'll find it easy to accommodate all the interests in your travel group here.

Adventure beyond the expected awaits in Southeastern Wisconsin. Plan a visit to Kenosha to enjoy outdoor recreation with the whole family. Find Springtime fun faster at VisitKenosha.com.



REEL IN THE MEMORIES.

Head out on the open waters of Lake Michigan for a morning of fishing and fun. Return to shore to discover a downtown filled with eclectic shops, vibrant art galleries, unique museums, and inviting restaurants. Ride an authentic streetcar, explore the lakefront Sculpture Walk, or even climb a lighthouse. Wherever your family's interests lie, Kenosha offers adventure beyond the expected.

Scan to explore Outdoor
Recreation in Kenosha!



VISITKENOSHA.COM





USS Wisconsin Among America's Storied Battleship Legends

One of America's last and largest battleships set forth on its final combat mission during Operation Desert Storm in January of 1991. Commissioned during the waning days of World War II, the USS Wisconsin saw action in the Pacific Theater, the Korean Conflict, and finally Operation Desert Storm.

The Wisconsin was originally designed in anticipation of a war with Imperial Japan, which was wreaking havoc in the Far East during the 1930s. America needed well-armed, fast battleships that could contend with those from Japan.

Construction of the Wisconsin began in the early 1940s and was completed in 1944. She set sail, poetically, on December 7, 1944, the third anniversary to the day of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The Wisconsin was 900 feet long with a full combat load of 58,000 tons. She carried a formidable array of armaments and armor designed to fend off virtually any enemy attack, be it by land, air or sea and bring maximum destruction to her enemies. She had a crew of over 2,700 men and nearly 180 officers and could reach speeds up to 37 mph.

Protecting aircraft carriers and obliterating on-shore targets were Wisconsin's main purposes. To complete these tasks, her main armament battery consisted of nine, 16-inch naval guns mounted in three turrets capable of firing armor-piercing, high explosive and anti-aircraft shells over long distances. Her secondary battery was comprised of 20, five-inch dual purpose guns for close range defensive work against surface and air threats, as well as providing ground-fire support during amphibious operations. She was well protected from the sky by literally dozens of anti-aircraft



The USS Wisconsin, one of the world's last battleships to see wartime duty.

guns.

The Wisconsin saw heavy action in every major late-war Pacific theatre operation, including the Philippines, Iwo Jima, Okinawa and the Japanese home islands. She earned six battle stars for providing cover for American aircraft carriers and pounding on-shore targets, including the

Japanese home islands, in support of US troops. Wisconsin shot down three Japanese airplanes and survived two typhoons. At the war's end, she transported battle-hardened veterans back to the states.

Within six years, Wisconsin was back in action, this time in Korea. Her primary role was bombing North Korean positions in support of US and United Nations' troops. In one memorable instance in March of 1952, a North Korean artillery battery hit the Wisconsin with a 155 mm shell. Several US sailors were only slightly injured in the attack, but the Wisconsin was not in a forgiving mood. In retaliation, the ship fired all nine of its 16-inch guns at the North Korean position, completely vaporizing it.

After the Korean War, the Wisconsin spent time in and out of mothballs until the 1980s when she was recommissioned and refurbished with more modern weaponry, including Tomahawk cruise missiles and early drone technology. Not long after her improvements were made, the Wisconsin was called to battle in Operation Desert Storm in 1991. There she should would act in support of US troops in the battle to free Kuwait from Saddam Hussein.

Operation Desert Storm was the first time in history that US forces used a drone from a ship to direct fire on enemy targets in real-time on a battlefield. In one of its first uses, a drone acted as a spotter to direct Wisconsin's weapons, destroying an Iraqi artillery battery 19 miles away.

Operation Desert Storm was the Wisconsin's last mission. She was decommissioned and now one of the world's last battleships serves as a museum in Norfolk, Virginia.

CITY OF MARINETTE, FROM PAGE 15

- it's a seasonal ritual that signals the arrival of spring in Marinette.

What makes the Menominee River so special is its accessibility and productivity. The river's strong current and rocky structure create ideal spawning habitat, concentrating fish in predictable areas. Anglers can find success trolling crankbaits, vertical jigging with minnows or plastics, or casting from shore near dams, current breaks, and deeper channels. Popular access points include stretches near the Hattie Street Bridge, the Menekaunee Harbor area, and locations upstream toward the dam, where fish often stack up during the peak of the run.

Whether you prefer fishing from a boat or the shoreline, the opportunity to land a trophy-sized walleye is very real.

Fish in the 18- to 24-inch range are common, and each year anglers report catches well beyond that. The combination of strong fish numbers and the chance at a personal best keeps visitors returning year after year.

Beyond the fishing itself, the experience is what makes a spring trip to the March City of Marinette memorable. Crisp mornings often give way to sunny afternoons, and the riverbanks offer beautiful views as winter fades and nature begins to awaken. Local bait shops are busy with anglers swapping stories and sharing tips, while area restaurants and businesses welcome the seasonal influx of visitors eager to relax after a day on the water.

Regulations and harvest limits are carefully managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to protect the health of the fishery and ensure the tradition continues

for generations. Anglers are encouraged to review current regulations, practice selective harvest, and handle fish responsibly.

Spring walleye fishing on the Menominee River is more than a pastime—it's an experience rooted in community, tradition, and the natural beauty of the City of Marinette. Whether you're chasing your first walleye, introducing a young angler to the sport, or returning for another season on a familiar stretch of water, the river delivers excitement, connection, and the unmistakable feeling that spring has truly arrived.

For more information, go to www.fishonmarinette.com or contact the Marinette Welcome Center at 715-732-4333 and get ready to get hooked up!

Securing the Future

Wisconsin Youth Shooting Sports

The growth of youth shooting sports is rapid; some would call it a movement, and that movement, in part, is thanks to MidwayUSA Foundation. This national 501c3 public charity is working to sustain and grow youth shooting sports by providing long-term funding to youth shooting teams and organizations. And while a national public charity, its key to success is its local impact...funding youth shooting teams and organizations right here in the Badger state. Today, **MidwayUSA Foundation is proudly funding 125 youth shooting teams across Wisconsin**, ensuring that thousands of young athletes with an interest in shooting sports, whether shotgun, rifle, or pistol, don't have funding as a barrier to the sport.

The impact in Wisconsin spans every corner of the state and includes a wide variety of program types. Whether it's a high school team, a local JROTC unit, or a 4-H team, MidwayUSA Foundation's endowment model is designed to support them all. By providing a permanent source of funding, these programs move away from the uncertainty of varying budgets to financial stability driven by their fundraising efforts.

What a MidwayUSA Foundation Endowment Means for Youth in Wisconsin

For the thousands of young shooting sports athletes in Wisconsin, a MidwayUSA Foundation endowment is a game-changer. Each year, every funded team is eligible to receive a **5% cash grant** based on its total endowment balance. These funds are used to cover the critical, everyday costs of the sport, including:

- Ammunition
- Targets
- Entry Fees
- Travel Expenses
- Safety Equipment

Since its inception, Wisconsin youth shooting teams have received over **\$4 million in cash grants**. In the most recent cycle alone, \$376,127 was distributed to 57 teams, solidifying Wisconsin's position as one of the **top three states** in the nation for overall cash grant support. Adam



Kerkman, Head Shotgun Coach for the Wilmot Shooting Team, says his annual cash grant allows his team to plan ahead with confidence, rather than operating season to season. "The grant funding we receive through the MidwayUSA Foundation provides something invaluable to our program: stability. That stability enables us to focus on athlete development, strengthen our program, and expand youth participation in the shooting sports. Most importantly, this stability fosters a strong team culture where teammates support one another, develop leadership skills, and grow both on and off the range."

In addition to the 125 individual teams, the Foundation has also provided over \$65,000 to the Wisconsin SCTP Foundation. This key state organization offers large-scale competitions, specialized coach training, and safety certifications.

In 2021, MidwayUSA Foundation recognized that the growth of shooting sports introduced new challenges and added grant programs to fund coach training and range development projects. The state of Wisconsin has benefited from nearly \$300,000 in grant funds from these competitive programs.

Forever Funding

The power of the endowment model is not a new concept. Hospitals and universities all over the country use this



A computerized laser system with dryfire target screen donated by Pheasants Forever and Ozaukee Scholastic Shooting Sports helps youth shooters from schools throughout Ozaukee County learn safety first before ever stepping on an outdoor trap line with live rounds. Safety first, safety always, is taught annually and continuously to thousands of youth sport shooters and students representing hundreds of schools throughout Wisconsin.

model to ensure funding in perpetuity. This is why MidwayUSA Foundation founders Larry and Brenda Potterfield chose this model. The Foundation is funded by its own operating endowment, allowing 100% of a donor's contribution to benefit the team they choose. This ensures the sport doesn't just thrive today but flourishes for years and years to come. To further prove their commitment, they match every donation to a team endowment dollar-for-dollar. No cap, no gimmicks. That's practically unheard of in the non-profit world, but it allows fundraising efforts in our Wisconsin communities to double!

Join the Movement - Support a local youth shooting team.

Funding the sport is just one piece of the puzzle. Wisconsin's success in youth shooting sports is a testament to the passion of its coaches, parents, volunteers, and athletes, too. The sport is ensuring that the traditions of safety, discipline, and sportsmanship are preserved for Wisconsin residents for generations to come.

You can invest in the future of Wisconsin youth shooting sports and support a local team. Every team funded by a MidwayUSA Foundation endowment is listed on the Foundation's website: <https://www.midwayusafoundation.org/fundingwisconsin-yss/>

Find more details about their endowment by searching here. <https://www.midwayusafoundation.org/find-team-fund-team/>

Teams without an endowment can easily start one at no cost. Contact MidwayUSA Foundation's Wisconsin Program Manager to get started.

David Grell
 DGrell@MidwayUSAFoundation.org
 573.507.0863

Every donation made is tax-deductible, and team donations are matched! Plus, your contribution will grow that team's annual cash grant. Your support will allow young men and women in Wisconsin to have a safe, structured, and well-funded environment to compete in the sport they love. **MidwayUSA Foundation is funding Wisconsin youth shooting teams!**



SKB TARGET SHOTGUNS

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HIGH TRAP RIB



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DICK ELLIS

Wolf Tracks

OWO's informal population census continues

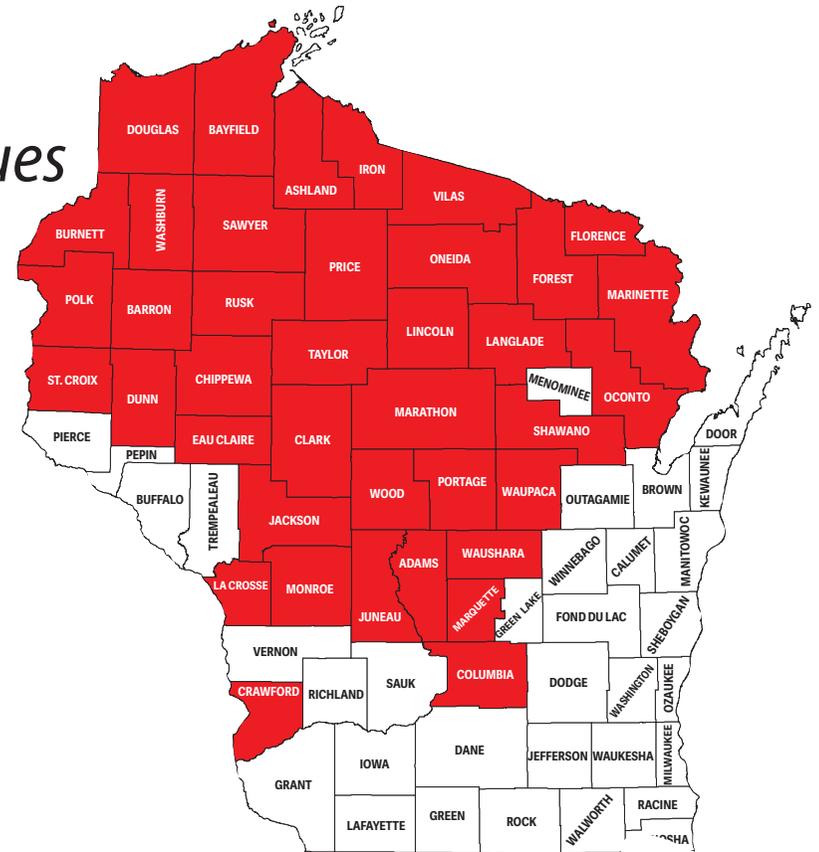
On Wisconsin Outdoors' informal wolf population census continues. Please send your trail cam photos, videos, or hand-held camera shots of wolves in Wisconsin to: wolves@onwisconsinoutdoors.com. List the county where the photos were taken, the date, and verify the number of wolves visible in each photo. Your name will not be published without your permission.

OWO publishers strongly disagree with the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) population estimate that place wolf numbers in Wisconsin at 1007 animals during the winter of 2022/23. We believe that an unmanaged wolf population in the state directly correlates with a severely declining deer hunting experience and that we are among the large majority of Wisconsin deer hunters. We believe that the decline in our Wisconsin tradition will magnify further as individual wolves and wolf packs continue to expand to create an increasingly out of balance predator/prey ratio.

And, in correlation with increasing and expanding wolf numbers, we know that attacks on domestic pets and livestock will continue to increase. Of greatest concern, dangerous confrontations between wolves and humans will increase as a predator not being hunted itself due to irrational and radical federal judicial decisions placing the wolf on the endangered species list loses fear of man.

The wolf is welcome in Wisconsin in proper numbers and balance. He is also a vicious, robotic-like predator seeking only to survive that literally eats his prey alive until death slowly provides ultimate relief. It's how he is made. By contrast, the large majority of Wisconsin hunters embrace logic in preparing for the hunt, including sighting in firearms to ensure a quick, humane kill and electing not to take the shot that does not offer that probability. By placing wolf over man, state wildlife managers and judicial radicals eliminate

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27



CONGRESSMAN TOM TIFFANY'S

PET AND LIVESTOCK PROTECTION ACT TO **DELIST THE GRAY WOLF** HAS PASSED THE U.S. HOUSE.



H.R. 845 AWAITS PASSAGE IN THE U.S. SENATE BEFORE IT CAN HEAD TO PRESIDENT TRUMP'S DESK.



PROTECT RURAL LIVELIHOODS. MANAGE THESE PREDATORS.

PAID FOR WITH OFFICIAL FUNDS FROM THE OFFICE OF TOM TIFFANY.

JIM JOHANNES

An Historical Look at Bayfield County Unit 103

Perspectives of a northern Wisconsin deer hunter

Now that the data for the 2025 hunting season is in, it is interesting to look back on the data for the old Unit 3 (now 103) in Bayfield County, observe the trends in the harvest, and highlight the concerns of hunters in that Deer Management Unit.

Before trying to interpret what the accompanying graph is telling us, I need to describe the data I used to construct the graph. First, I used the historical data published by the DNR in its Deer Metrics System for the overall Bayfield County harvest from 2007-24 as well as harvest data provided to me by the DNR for Unit 3 from 1981-2011.

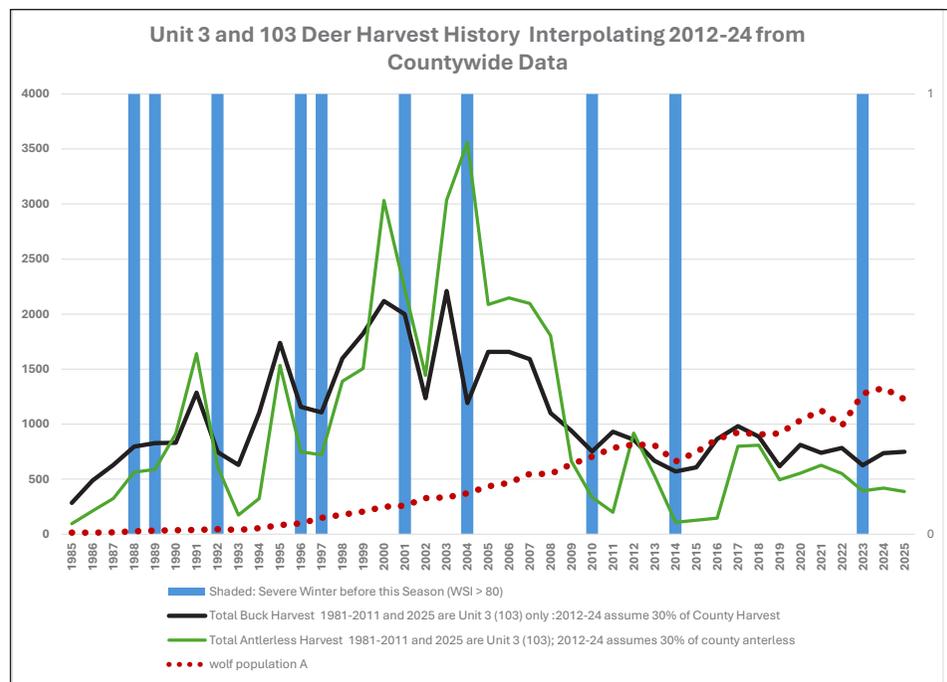
Second, I estimate Unit 103 data for 2012-2024 (when no Unit 3 or 103 data was collected) from Countywide data by using the average bucks harvested in Unit 3 as a percent of the Countywide buck harvest for the period 1985-2011. This is about 31%. I do the same for antlerless deer and this turns out to be 29%. So, I use 30% as the fraction of the County harvest that came from Unit 103 from 2012 to 2024 for both antlered and antlerless in my graph.

Third, the blue vertical lines are years in which the WSI (Winter Severity Index) exceeded 80 (the severe level) the winter before this season.

Fourth, the wolf data is statewide, not for Unit 103, which I do not think is readily available.

The graph suggests the following:

Clearly the buck harvest (black line) is falling which is the cause of greatest concern for hunters in this area. Indeed, it is about 70% of the historical average in this Unit since 1985 and only about 55% of the period



1990-2009 when the wolf population was reestablishing itself.

The chart highlights an interesting dynamic. Historically (looking at 1985-99), whenever the antlerless kill was below the buck kill the deer herd grew as reflected in the DNRs SAK (Sex-Age-Kill) Population Model. In periods like 2000-2008 when the antlerless harvest exceeds the buck kill, the deer population fell. This is common sense and was the logic the DNR used historically to meet its population goals: harvest more antlerless and the population falls. Harvest fewer and it rises. However, after 2009 (as the wolf population grew and stabilized more or less) this common-sense logic no longer holds (at least as it related to the antlerless

harvest). The antlerless harvest is below the buck harvest in almost every year after 2009 but the deer population continues to fall. Hunters taking fewer antlerless off the landscape does not grow the herd like it did historically.

It appears that this anomaly is not related to weather as winter severity is not a key factor affecting the deer herd as much in recent years as it did in the past

My takeaway is that something has changed the old patterns. There is one very obvious candidate for the external force that changed things: wolves. It is hard not to see that the increase in the wolf population in the graph (red dots) is occurring as the deer harvest and population (black line) is falling. It would be very hard to reject the hypothesis

that the DNR is now using wolf predation to achieve its population goals instead of hunter harvest. In other words, if you added wolf predation to the green antlerless line, the total antlerless "harvest" would probably exceed the buck harvest which means the deer population would fall as it has historically.

Of course, it is not fashionable or politically correct to point the finger at wolves and I doubt that the DNR would ever admit that wolves impact the deer herd. So, year after year they roll out their (now standard) litany of excuses for why the harvest is down:

There are fewer hunters in the North.

Hunters are lazier than they were historically.

Deer habitat has deteriorated over the last 20 years, and/or

Some weather event ruined every hunting season since 2000.

It would be nice to investigate these non-predation excuses with more honest research and transparency. There probably are fewer hunters in the far north (at least in part because there are fewer deer) but with all the additional seasons and weapons I wonder if hunter-days in the woods are down significantly? Maybe some hunters are lazy, but they have better technology which offsets some laziness. Has the habitat really deteriorated? All the logging has created wonderful habitat on much of the public land in Unit 103. Finally, to assume that weather patterns during the hunting season in the far North are different today than in the earlier period on this graph seems quite an heroic assumption.

Jim Johannes is a retired Professor at UW-Madison who has hunted Unit 103 in Bayfield County since 1963.

WOLF TRACKS, FROM PAGE 26

hunting traditions and heritage, take away the opportunity for venison in freezers across our state, and invite slaughter to deer and other prey that even anti-hunters would not tolerate if they could witness just one such kill.

To receive a PDF of On Wisconsin Outdoors ongoing reporting on wolves in Wisconsin or walleyes in the ceded territory, connect with ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com or visit our website at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com.



Bayfield County Buck Carcass



10-19-2020 Bayfield County 9 Wolves



Bayfield County Wolf Chases Deer

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As sportsmen, how do we thoughtfully give away a variety of USEFUL outdoor merchandise? Well, it's not as easy as it seems. First, you need to think about WHAT fellow sportsmen (and women) would like, determine HOW the winners receive their merchandise, figure out the best way to be 100% legal with everything from firearm registration to shipping, and then create a web-based venue to make it happen.



They all seem to be taking more time than anticipated but have no doubt...it is happening. We have partnered with a local Waukesha firearms manufacturer and distributor that will be able to ship firearms directly to your favorite FFL dealer, or have raffle winners pick-up firearms at their business location. All other non-FFL items will ship direct to your home! Pretty darned simple!

As sponsors, we hope you like the choices that we have made for the first (yes, there will be more in the future!) Spring Sportsman's Giveaway!



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JOHN ELLIS

Unequal Protection, the Destruction of Wisconsin's Ceded Territory Walleyes, and the Next Governor

For more than 40 years, the *State of Wisconsin* has been violating the *14th Amendment of the United States Constitution* by allowing less than 1% of its citizens (*Chippewa tribal members*) to fish for Ceded Territory walleyes out of season, while preventing the other 99% from participating. The ongoing out of season fishing by the privileged few has resulted in the destruction of Wisconsin's Ceded Territory walleye

resource and caused great economic harm to the entire state.

The unequal protection, destruction, and harm have been thoroughly documented by *On Wisconsin Outdoors (OWO)* in our series, *Walleyes in Wisconsin's Ceded Territory*. They are the direct result of poor leadership by Wisconsin's elected officials, and within the Chippewa tribes, and must be addressed

and corrected by Wisconsin's next governor.

As the open water fishing season approaches, and in the middle of an election year, *OWO* is re-running Part-Six in the series subtitled, *The 14th Amendment and Indian Citizen Act*.

You can receive the entire series, as well as our series on Wisconsin wolves, by emailing jellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.

JOHN ELLIS

Walleyes in Wisconsin's Ceded Territory-Part Six *The 14th Amendment and Indian Citizen Act*



Wisconsin's fishing seasons are timed to allow fish to spawn. When this is combined with proper bag limits, it ensures an ongoing healthy population of fish. If managed properly, there should rarely be a need to restock the resource.

But since 1985 *Chippewa* tribal members, who are U.S. citizens that represent 1% of the population, have been *solely* allowed to fish for Wisconsin's Ceded Territory walleyes as they spawn and before the season for them opens. During the 40 years that this has been allowed, a calculated 33,717,384 "keeper walleyes" (fish weighing between 1 ¾ and 2 lbs.) have been removed from the Ceded Territory lakes. The out of season fishing has destroyed the natural reproduction of the walleyes there.

Adding insult to injury the *Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)* has subsidized the destruction of the Ceded Territory walleyes, by paying the Chippewa Tribes to restock them. The money paid for the restocking comes from the 99% of non-tribal U.S. citizens who the DNR won't allow to participate in the out of season fishing. Further, the restocking has been an exercise in futility because there is no substitute for the lost natural reproduction of the fish. (See *Walleyes in Wisconsin's Ceded Territory-Parts One through Five*,

in archived issues at onwisconsinoutdoors.com.)

The abuse began when *Federal Judge Barbara Crabb* upheld the Chippewa Tribes' treaty right to "hunt and gather" in the Ceded Territory, but disregarded the *14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution*, the *Indian Citizen Act*, and the damage that would be done to Wisconsin's walleye resource by a small minority of citizens. For 40 years that damage has had a devastating effect on the livelihood of millions of non-tribal citizens throughout Wisconsin. The damage continues today because the State of Wisconsin enables and participates in it.

The 14th Amendment and Indian Citizen Act

Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution ratified on July 9th, 1868 states, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction equal protection of the laws."

The *Indian Citizen Act* signed into law by President Calvin Coolidge on June 2nd,

1924 states "all non-citizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States be, and they are hereby, declared to be citizens of the United States: provided that the granting of such citizenship shall not in any manner impair or otherwise affect the right of any Indian to tribal or other property.

Together, the Fourteenth Amendment and the Indian Citizen Act mean the following:

1. *All Chippewa tribal members born in the United States since 1924 are citizens of the United States. Among other benefits, citizenship allows tribal members the right to participate in U.S. elections.*
2. *Because fishing out of season for spawning Ceded Territory walleyes by 1% of U.S. citizens (Chippewa) has been proven to severely damage the resource and harm all but a few, the State of Wisconsin must file a federal lawsuit on behalf of all citizens to stop it, based on the 14th Amendment and the Indian Citizen Act.*
3. *Because the State of Wisconsin cannot "deny to any person within its jurisdiction equal protection of the laws", until all out of season fishing for spawning Ceded Territory walleyes is stopped the State of Wisconsin must allow non-tribal U.S. citizens to participate in it.*

4. *The State of Wisconsin must stop paying the 1% of U.S. citizens (Chippewa) allowed to fish out of season for spawning Ceded Territory walleyes, to restock them. The money for restocking comes from the 99% of non-tribal U.S. citizens who are denied equal protection of the laws.*

The 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution is in place to protect every citizen, not just a privileged few. As citizens of the United States, the Chippewa tribal members do not have a "unique right" to destroy the Ceded Territory walleye resource that belongs to us all by fishing for them out of season and before spawning is complete.

If the Chippewa Tribes assert that they do have a unique right, based on treaties signed or their status as a "sovereign nation", they will be undermining their own benefits as citizens, including the right to participate in U.S. elections. It is *not* their right to stand on the reservation or on U.S. soil, depending on which one benefits them most, when it hurts everyone else.

For 40 years, the State of Wisconsin has failed to equally protect all of its citizens as required by the 14th Amendment, and the Ceded Territory walleye resource that belongs to all of us. Wisconsin must now right the wrong, and protect both.

EDITORIAL LETTER

JAMES BOHN & GREG BRAMBOW

TANSTAAFL

A bedrock economic law

That's not a misprint. TANSTAAFL stands for: "*There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch*". Economics tells us that nothing is free even if someone claims otherwise. Everything has a cost.

This is an election year. Politicians will make promises to gain votes. They'll rarely mention the cost of their programs. They'll try to convince you that, like Rumpelstiltskin, they can spin straw into gold.

The truth is there's no free lunch. The cost of everything government does is borne by the public in one form or another.

The cost may be reflected in your tax bill today. If government borrows the money, the cost will appear in your future tax bills. If government prints the money, you'll bear the cost in the loss of value of your assets through inflation.

Worse, it's not a dollar-for-dollar transfer of your money. Taxes and inflation alter our incentives.

When taxes go up, personal and private investment goes down. Less work and less investment result in a lower standard of living.

When taxes go up a \$1.00, private income drops on average by \$1.30. The additional 30 cents is the loss in output because of the negative effects of taxation on our willingness to work and invest. In terms of economic prosperity, taxation is a negative sum game.

The same is true for inflation. When inflation rates are high, people look for ways to avoid holding a devaluing currency. Exchange takes place by barter rather than cash. Some hold gold and other precious metals.

In Argentina, high inflation caused people to give up on cash and instead stockpile bricks. Bricks don't depreciate, can be used to build houses and won't be devalued since unlike money, government can't print more bricks.

Price controls also have a cost. New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani wants to control rents. But rent controls create housing shortages. Eventually, people move to where housing is available. Cities with rent control become less vibrant. Those that stay face even a higher tax burden.

The next time a politician tries to sell you on a cure-all government program, remember that there's no free lunch. Recognize they're trying to win your vote and not prioritizing your long term economic and financial health.

Think *TANSTAAFL*.

To learn more, connect with Personal Economics, a non-profit financial and economic education organization in the Milwaukee area at personaleconomics.org.



Explore Wisconsin

SPOTLIGHT | ASHLAND COUNTY



Ashland in The Spring

Sometimes in the months of March and April, I don't think Mother Nature knows if it is supposed to be winter or spring, so in Ashland, we just plan for any kind of weather. If it is snowy, we still can play outside until April 15 when the private snowmobile trails shut down. If the ice is still on the bay, we can still ice fish, which is always plentiful on Chequamegon Bay. You can literally cut one hole in the ice and catch three or four species of fish from perch, to smallmouth to coho to herring, whitefish, and even some smelt. But when the ice goes out, then we plan on the annual smelt run. "Something's Fishy in Ashland; Have You Smelt it?" is our tagline for smelt season.

People drive more than five hours to try their hands at catching smelt in five-gallon buckets. We have sometimes 200 phone calls a day, wondering if the smelt are running. And again, it's Mother Nature that decides that. If fishing isn't your thing, but relaxing is, come to Ashland and just get away from the noise of the big city and take a long weekend. Stay in our cozy hotel properties and enjoy the quiet, calm surroundings that we call home. If it's water you seek, waterfalls or ice, then come to Ashland, where you'll "Find Yourself Next to the Water!" For a free fishing guide for both Chequamegon Bay and Ashland County Inland Lakes, check out visitashland.com.



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