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WISCONSIN NATURAL SOURCES

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A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a grey flat cap and a bright yellow rain jacket, is smiling broadly while holding a large, silvery fish (likely a salmon or trout) vertically. He is sitting on a boat deck, with the blue water of a lake or ocean in the background. Other people are partially visible on the boat, including a person in a purple jacket to the right and another in a dark jacket to the left. The overall scene is bright and cheerful, suggesting a successful fishing trip.

COME ABOARD

FOR A GREAT LAKES CHARTER

Find a place to hunt
on public lands

Tell us about your
outdoor kits and gadgets

A bolt from the blue



Belted kingfishers nest in tunnels that they burrow into exposed soft cliffs, streambanks and riverbanks above flowing waters where they feed. Nearby gravel pits and quarry areas can provide nesting habitat. Nest tunnels may tilt upward slightly to drain water and may extend three to 14 feet into the bank ending in a nesting cavity.

JACK R. BARTHOLOMAI

Cast an eye and lend an ear to the kingfish of feathered anglers.

Anita Carpenter

A raucous rattle reverberates across the quiet bay. I look up to see a belted kingfisher flying close to shore below the tree line, moving from one overhanging branch to another exposed perch. After a graceful landing, “the king” once again assumes a motionless pose on his wooded throne. Leaning forward almost to the point of tipping over, this bird with a shaggy oversized head and big beak focuses on the water below. When it spots an unsuspecting fish, the patient kingfisher bursts into action diving from its branch and folding its wings back just before its

streamlined body pierces the surface. It grabs the unlucky fish and with a few splashy wing beats lifts its catch out of the water and back to the branch. The bird devours its tasty meal headfirst and whole.

A belted kingfisher doesn’t always fish from a perch. Often it hovers about 50 feet over the water, wings beating furiously and occasionally dropping down a few feet to focus on the pond or stream. Once it spots a fish, the kingfisher instantly changes from hover mode to dive mode and plunges in for the kill, though not every dive is successful.

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WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES

August 2008
Volume 32, Number 4



ROBERT QUEEN



SCOT STEWART



COURTESY OF DNR REMEDIATION & REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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FRONT COVER: Andy Janicki latched into a coho salmon on a good day of fishing on Lake Michigan. Get tips for booking a charter on pages 4-9.

ROBERT QUEEN, Madison

BACK COVER: Mirror Lake Pine Oak Forest State Natural Area in Sauk County. (Inset photo) Princess' pine (*Lycopodium obscurum*). For more information, or to order a guidebook to State Natural Areas, contact the State Natural Areas Program, Bureau of Endangered Resources, DNR, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 or visit dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna.

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Hook into a good time!

Since charter captains and guides are on the water so many days of the year, they track fish locations, movements, baits and techniques that often provide plenty of action to hook newcomers and experience anglers to the fun of catching fish.

Come aboard for tips on booking a Great Lakes fishing charter.



Story by Alisa Lopez and photos by Robert Queen

When my turn came around, I sat anxiously on the edge of my seat — feet tapping, hands restless and heart pounding. Oh geez! I thought, and stared intensely at the fishing lines surrounding me, waiting and listening as the tension mounted in the boat.

“There! That one!” I heard suddenly from behind me. I stood up quickly, looking frantically left, right and behind to see which line the captain was pointing to of the 16 rigs spread out before me like piano wires.

“I see it!”

The reel clicking, the rod shaking —

this is it! My first fish! I ran to the rod, struggling to get my sea legs. Then I gripped the rod and started reeling.

“Keep it steady,” the captain said. I started reeling my fish in, and I swear, it’s a trophy, a real fighter!

My thoughts of the big catch of the day were not long-lived. After we got the

fish in the boat I couldn’t ignore the others on the charter laughing at my “trophy” 12-inch coho salmon. Regardless of their snickers, to me, it was a monster.

Before this mammoth first catch, I admit I was a bit nervous as we arrived at the Port of Kenosha a little before noon. That eased when I got my first faraway glance at Captain Dave Scott, owner of Resolute Charters, and realized he wasn’t the eye-patch-wearing, parrot-on-the-shoulder type sea captain. Upon introductions, he was an inviting host — fun, polite, a passionate angler and a joker who put us immediately at ease.

Four other first-time charter anglers and I boarded the *Resolute* not knowing what to expect during the next five hours on the water. Captain Dave encouraged us to get comfortable and take a look around the cabin. Much to my relief, the bathroom was actually a tiny room with a flushable toilet and hot running water. When I had read “stand up head” on his website, I was a little concerned, but that’s common boat terminology, which to landlubbers simply means bathroom.

As we headed out from the harbor, Captain Dave told us a little bit about himself, the boat, what we would be doing for the day and encouraged us to ask as many questions as we wanted throughout the trip.

When we reached deeper water, four to five miles offshore, Captain Dave slowed the boat and began putting out fishing rods, 16 to be exact. Some were hooked to planer boards that angled those lines wide to each side. Some were hooked to heavy downriggers that plummeted those lines deeper under the water for quick release if a fish hit the line. Some were on outriggers that went out to the side just wide of the boat, and some were on long lines with flashing pieces of metal that trailed far behind the boat as we trolled. The flashers simulate a school of baitfish and attract trout and salmon that may be feeding near the surface.

The captain prepared everything as we relaxed and took in the beautiful seascape of water around us. After he explained what movement we should watch for in the lines, no more than a



Captain Dave Scott of *Resolute Charters* (at the helm) answers his customers' questions and helps them get comfortable for an afternoon trip out of the Port of Kenosha.

couple of minutes passed before a fish hit the lure.

As the afternoon went on, the sun shone high in the sky. We warmed up and so did the fishing. Each of us waited our turn to reel in fish after fish. We lost a few, but that's normal according to Captain Dave. The most fun is the anticipation as you watch the poles around you, waiting to see one get snagged or hear someone else shout out, "Fish on!" There really isn't a reason to run and scramble with your arms flailing wildly to get to the rod. If the fish bite hard, they're on for the long haul. That didn't stop each of us from feeling a sense of urgency as we rushed to get to the poles like our life depended on it, laughing the entire way. We thoroughly enjoyed the battle bringing in the strong, muscular fish that pull, dart, jump and dive as you slowly haul them in toward the back of the boat and the captain waiting with a big net.

We got really lucky. All five of us caught our bag limit that day, and because we moved about and fished different depths, we brought in a mixed bag of cohos, a king salmon (Chinook), lake trout and steelhead (rainbow trout). Fortunately, the rest of my fish were considerably larger than that first 12-incher. Any previous nervousness before our charter adventure had long since washed overboard and as I write

this, I'm making plans to take another day trip.

If you enjoy fishing, being out on the water, feeling the sun and wind, and being in the company of good friends, create your own memories by booking a charter trip. Wisconsin offers endless opportunities for charter adventures at 14 ports from Kenosha north to Washington Island, another 14 ports along both shores of Green Bay, and 11 ports on Lake Superior from Saxon Harbor west to Superior, as well as different kinds of guided fishing opportunities on inland lakes and streams. To help guide you in your quest, here are commonly asked questions and answers about charter fishing. Though most of these questions are aimed to help you plan your strategy for a Great Lakes charter, a lot of this advice will hold for inland lake charters as well.

What is charter fishing?

Charter fishing is when a professional guide provides you with the boat, equipment and expertise to provide a fishing experience within a specified time limit. Most Great Lakes charters fish by trolling, where the fishing lines are baited with lures or bait fish and are drawn through the water behind the moving boat. What this means for the angler is a relaxing ride until the fish bite.

Why book a charter?

A licensed, experienced captain not only ensures a safe, enjoyable trip, but also increases the odds of catching fish because they know the waters and fish on a regular basis.

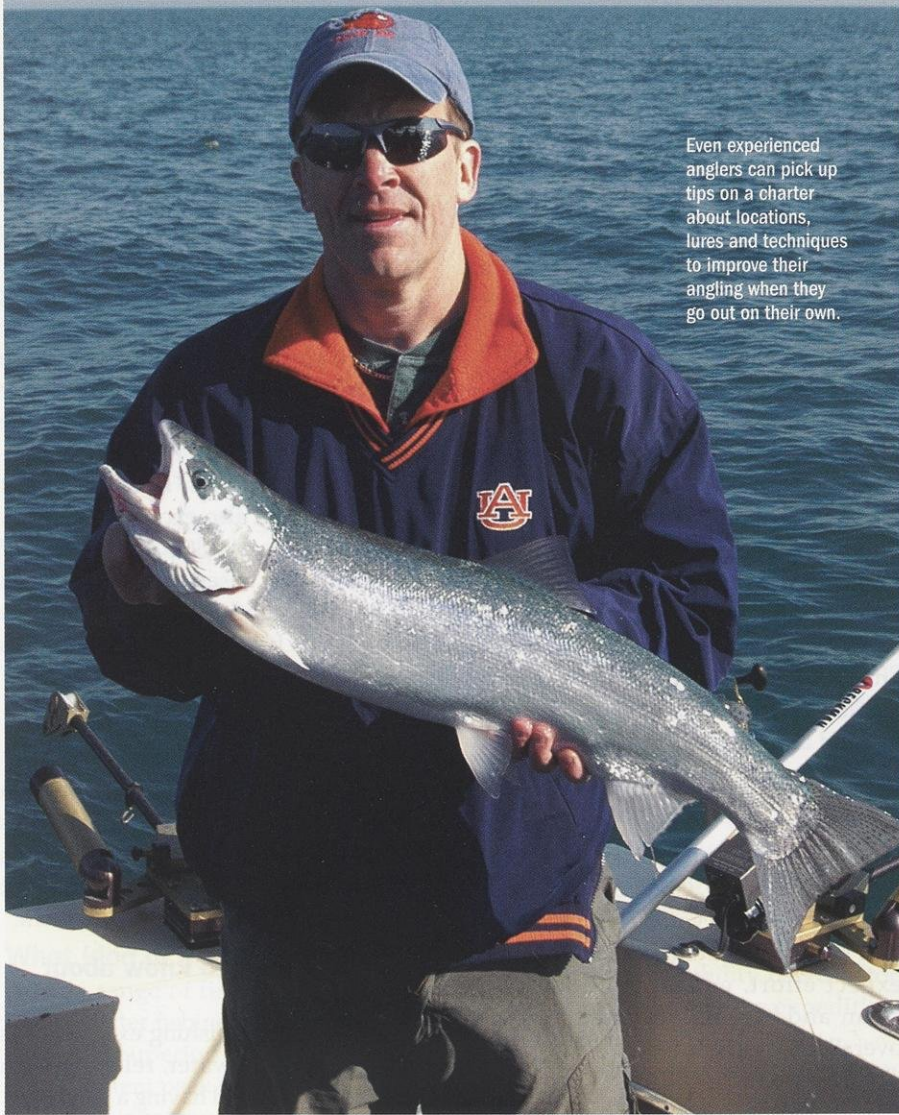
"When you book a charter, you're hiring the captain, his/her expertise, the boat and the equipment," says Dave Scott. "Captains have a great network of information of what the fishing is like and where the fish are, providing customers with the best opportunities to catch a lot of fish."

Being a fairly new angler myself, one of my main concerns was the fact that I had very little fishing experience, but since Great Lakes charters are almost all trolling, you don't have to worry about holding your rod or casting. And with the help of your captain, you don't even have to take the fish off the hook! Similarly, inland lake guides help their clients learn effective casting and jigging techniques.

"We take out people who have fished all their lives and also people who have never touched a rod and reel," says Scott. "Our job is to give you the instructions you need to use the equipment and have fun doing so."

Even avid anglers can benefit from the knowledge of a charter captain.

"A lot of people take a charter out to try to find out where the fishing is



Even experienced anglers can pick up tips on a charter about locations, lures and techniques to improve their angling when they go out on their own.

good, what lures and baits we use, and also which techniques work, so they have more information when they go out on their own boat," says Scott. "It's a quick way to get information versus trial and error. Five hours on a charter boat can save you a lot of time and effort as you learn how to do things."

Case in point, anyone can go, have fun and learn something from charter fishing, regardless of experience level.

How do I find a charter?

There are many ways to help you locate a charter. The Internet is a great resource since such a large majority of charter businesses have their own websites with details such as cost, amenities and pictures of boats and previous trips. Try searching on "Great Lakes fishing charters" or "fishing charters" followed by the port from which you want to depart — Kenosha, Port Washington, Sheboygan, Algoma and so forth. Many full-time captains also advertise online and at sports shows.

Another good way is by word of mouth. Ask locals in the area or the chamber of commerce for recommendations. Don't overlook asking friends who have enjoyed past charters.

When should I book?

If you're interested in charter fishing, start looking early and book as soon as you find a guide you're comfortable with. As with any service that requires reservations, you want to book as far in advance as you can as weekends book up the quickest. Most charters take reservations up to a year ahead of time. The Great Lakes season starts sometime in April, depending on weather, and runs through mid-October. Also remember to call your charter a few days before your trip to confirm the date, find out if weather might delay your trip and reconfirm departure times and travel directions to the dock.

What's the cost?

Charter trips generally cost around the

same price whether you are booking the boat for one person or six. The costs of running the boat out and back are the same regardless of the number of people aboard, which is why the price may only differ a little if you have two people or a full load. If you like to keep the price low and you only have a couple of people, ask about booking with another small group if possible.

Prices between charters in the same general area shouldn't differ by more than \$40 or \$50. For example, in the Kenosha area, the cost of a six-person, five-hour charter runs between \$450 and \$500. Most fishing charters accept cash, check or credit card. If someone is offering a charter for \$100 or less, there's probably a reason, according to Scott. "It's not always that way, but the old saying, 'You get what you pay for,' might apply."

Most charters require a deposit which is essentially an insurance policy to give customers incentive to show up. No deposit and a no-show the day of the charter, means that a captain just lost a job that he or she may have booked 60 times over. Always ask in advance about the cancellation policy so you know the time allotted to cancel or reschedule. If something comes up, just give your captain as much notice as possible and see if anything can be worked out.

If weather becomes an issue, remember that good captains or guides will not risk their passengers' safety

Brave out the swells

Tips to prevent motion sickness:

- Get plenty of rest before your trip.
- Eat breakfast and bring a lunch, but stay away from greasy or acidic foods.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages.
- Avoid the cabin/enclosed spaces or lying down.
- Sit in the center of the boat.
- Focus on a fixed reference point on the horizon.
- Talk to a pharmacist about over-the-counter preventatives or consider a prescribed remedy and follow directions. Start taking it before you board.

and will be upfront about the weather conditions.

"If the weather is going to be bad and you don't think people will have a good time, you expect your captain to let you know and either postpone or cancel and refund the money," says Scott. "If it's going to be dangerous, you expect your captain not to take you out at all and also refund or reschedule."

When your charter comes to an end, it's customary, although not required, to tip about 10 percent per person. As with any tipped service, show your appreciation for the experience you had.

How long will I be on the charter?

Normally a half-day charter will run around five hours, typically starting at dawn to just before noon. Afternoon charters start about noon or 1 p.m. Your charter may include dock time for filling out licenses and cleaning fish upon your return, or it can mean that the clock doesn't start until you begin fishing and doesn't end until your allotted time is up, or your bag limits have been reached. Captains have different ways of assessing the time, so ask before hand.

Six- and eight-hour charters are also offered as well as two-day charters with overnight stays and a meal or two included.

What type of licenses should my captain have?

Every charter captain should be able to show you a U.S. Coast Guard License, which allows captains to take passengers for hire and also show proof of liability insurance, which protects you and the captain.

Your captain isn't the only one who needs a license. Any angler 16 years or older is required to have either a valid annual fishing license (with a Great Lakes Stamp) or a two-day Great Lakes license (resident or non-resident), which includes the price of the Great Lakes stamp. Sometimes you can purchase these at the charter dock but always ask ahead of time. Fishing licenses are available online, at 1,500 licensing outlets and at DNR Service Centers.

What can I expect from my captain?

Your captain is a vital part of the charter fishing experience. Good captains work hard to make sure you have a great time and hopefully catch fish. You should expect effort, education, honesty, a clean and safe environment and an overall great experience.

When you're calling around and talking to different charter captains, follow your instincts on whether the captain sounds knowledgeable and has his

or her heart in the business.

Years of experience are important. Whether charter fishing is the captain's sole job may be less of a factor in your decision.

"There are some really good young captains fresh out of school who are right on top of things and there are some who have been in the business for 50 years and are just going through the motions," says Scott. "It's a similar situation with part-timers. They can be just as qualified and also excellent captains, but because nearly 80 to 85 percent of our business is based on referrals, you can be fairly confident that if someone is doing this full-time, their customers have had a good experience with them."

Is it better if my captain has a first mate?

With high-tech gadgets and modern equipment such as autopilots, first mates aren't really necessary. Some captains prefer them, some like to work alone, but the majority of captains don't use them.

What do I need to know about the boat?

Part of the charter fishing experience is being out on the water, relaxing with friends or family and having a good time. That said, you want to be comfortable as you will spend hours out on the Great Lakes. The size of the boats will vary, but most are 30 feet or larger, with an average boat being between 32 and 36 feet, according to Scott. Some people run smaller boats, but will advertise for only two to three people, while charters on larger vessels can take up to six clients.

The age of the boat is not really relevant if it's kept in good condition. Wear is normal, neglect is not. Wear would be things such as scuff marks, battle scars and wear spots, whereas neglect would be broken equipment. Unfortunately, you probably won't get a good idea of a boat's condition until you arrive at the dock and by then, it might be too late to cancel the charter.

A few important aspects of a charter boat can directly affect your fishing experience. First things first, a private restroom is something you want to ask about. Generally, most charter boats will have this, but it's also something you don't want to make an assumption



Back on shore the captain fillets the catch as part of the chartered service.

about. Other amenities that might be important are whether or not there is a cabin, if there is heating or air conditioning, and if a sink or refrigerator are available to clients.

When it comes to the equipment, most charter boats will advertise and should have:

- All fishing tackle
- Marine radio
- Radar
- Autopilot
- Global Positioning System (GPS)
- Electronic fish finder
- Downriggers
- Electronic temperature sensor
- All safety equipment

Although many advertisements will show name brands of the different equipment, this isn't really anything that should influence your decision. According to Captain Dave, the captains are "mostly trying to impress each other when they advertise brand name equipment."

What kind of fish will I catch?

A wide range of fish can be reeled in while charter fishing on Lake Michigan and Lake Superior, but different ports have different peak times. Many species including lake trout, brown trout, rainbow trout (steelhead), walleye, Chinook (king) salmon, coho salmon or Atlantic salmon can be caught throughout the year, but each species has its peak seasons. If you're seeking a particular fish, ask your charter captain to tell you the best time to catch what you're looking for. Regardless, the best time to fish is, of course, anytime you can.

Who's going to clean the fish?

Fish cleaning varies per charter. Some captains include fish cleaning and filleting in the cost of the charter, while some will charge per fish for these services. Plan to bring a small cooler with ice for your food and beverages and leave a large cooler in your car to take your fish home. Ice is sometimes provided at the site, but more than likely, you'll have to buy ice locally to keep your catch cool.

If you want your fish smoked, ask your charter captain if there is a smokehouse in the area, but remember that the smoking process could take a few days, at which time you might not be

within driving distance to pick it up. Also check out smokehouse opportunities near your home before your trip so you can drop off your catch if you have a good day.

What is a "no fish or your next trip is free" guarantee?

This is a marketing promise that guarantees if you don't catch a single fish during the allotted time, then your next trip is free. It's not a trick, and captains who use this guarantee normally stand by their word, but it shouldn't really influence your charter choosing decision.

According to Captain Dave, many captains don't use this guarantee, because it's usually not an issue. Getting "skunked" is uncommon for almost any captain.

Can people with disabilities go charter fishing?

Yes! Check with your captain ahead of time, but charters do serve people with various disabilities.

Andy Janicki, a Department of Natural Resources accessibility coordinator, joined our charter fishing expedition, wheelchair and all.


"The charter was really great for me because I like fishing but have trouble doing the 'dirty work' myself," says Janicki. "Before my injury I enjoyed going fishing occasionally, but without the function that I used to have, doing things like baiting a hook and taking a fish off are nearly impossible. With the charter captain taking care of everything, all I had to worry about was reeling the fish in!"

Can I bring children charter fishing?

Children are allowed on most charters and each captain will have his or her recommendations when it comes to age. However, it is usually left up to the parents' discretion. When it comes to the actual fishing, as long as the children can demonstrate the ability to use a rod and reel, captains will often help out and encourage them to reel in their own fish. But, it's important to keep in mind that a charter trip could last more than five hours and that a confined space with no other activities can make any child restless. Come prepared with snacks, plenty

of water and space-friendly activities such as coloring books.

If you have any questions, ask your captain!

Charter captains are in the fish business and the people business. Feel free to ask any questions to a potential captain until you have all your answers. A good captain will take the time to make sure you are fully satisfied and comfortable when booking a charter with them. Keep in mind, they are often out on the water for long hours, most days of the week, so if they don't get back to you right away, they'll get back to you as soon as they can. Have fun and get hooked on charter fishing! 

Alisa Lopez communicates about fisheries issues for the DNR's Education and Information program.

Helpful sites for finding a Wisconsin charter

Charter Fishing in Wisconsin

www.wistravel.com/activities_in_wisconsin/charter_fishing/

Great Lakes Charters

www.great-lakes-charters.com/chartered_fishing.htm

Travel Wisconsin

travelwisconsin.com/Fishing_in_Wisconsin.aspx

Wisconsin Fishing Guide

www.1fghp.com/wi.html

Rental Boat Charters

www.rentalboatcharts.com/fishing-charters/Wisconsin

What to bring

- valid Wisconsin fishing license with Great Lakes stamp
- layered clothing
- raingear
- sunglasses
- sunscreen protection
- hat
- soft-soled shoes
- camera
- gloves
- food (snacks and sandwiches)
- beverages (water, soft drinks, etc.)
- motion sickness medication, if needed
- empty cooler and freezer bags for your fish

Planning a hunt on Wisconsin's abundant public lands is getting better and easier.

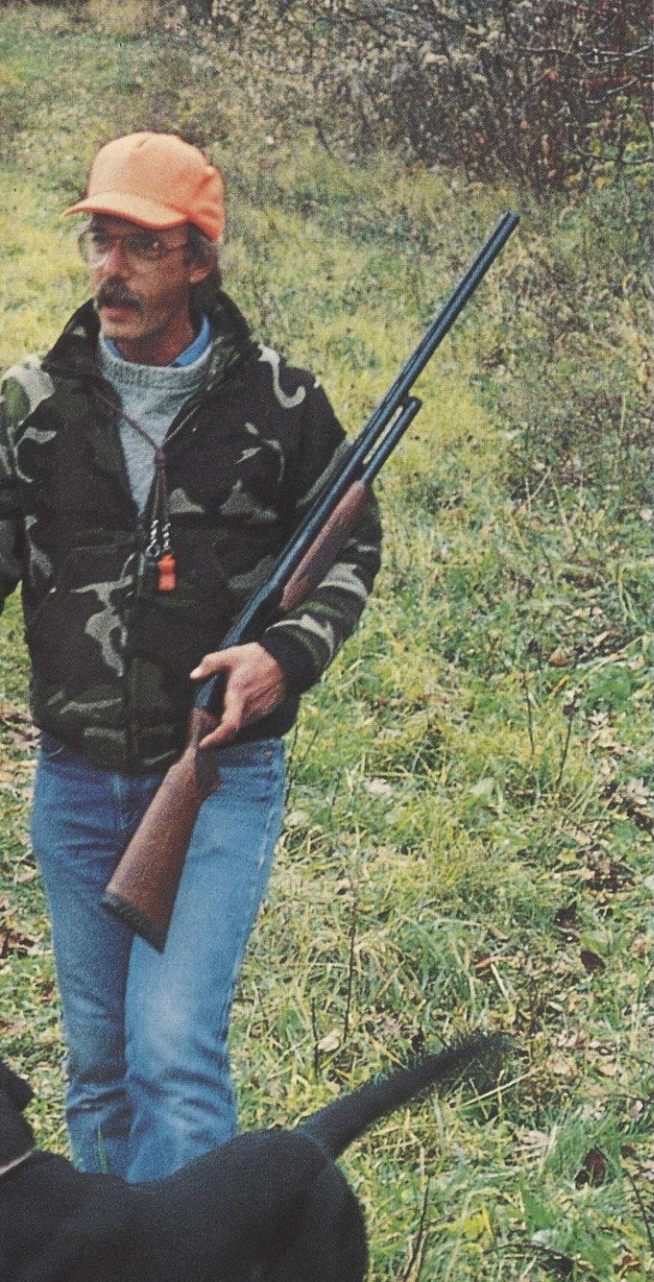
Kathryn A. Kahler

Private lands open to hunting seem to be disappearing at a steady rate, but if you think you're unlikely to find a place to hunt, think again. More than 6.3 million acres of public lands are open to hunting and another 1.4 million acres of private land are enrolled in programs that require landowners to open their property to hunters.

Of the land in public ownership, 2.5 million acres are owned by Wisconsin counties, 2.3 million acres by the federal government, and 1.4 million acres by the Department of Natural Resources. Most of the county and federal lands are forests in the northern half of the state. State-owned lands open to hunting are largely found in state forests, wildlife and fishery areas, and portions of many state parks and trails.

The Stewardship program, used to purchase land and conservation easements since 1990, now requires that lands purchased with Stewardship Funds remain open to five nature-based outdoor activities — hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking and cross-country skiing, except on the few parcels closed to preserve public safety, to accommodate other uses or to protect a unique plant or animal community.





ROBERT QUEEN

More than 6.3 million acres of publicly owned lands are open for hunting as are more than a million acres of private lands enrolled in programs that provide incentives for public access.



ROBERT QUEEN

Steve Miller, director of DNR's Bureau of Facilities and Lands, says the vast majority of state property is open to public hunting. Only about 72,500 acres are closed because they are administrative offices, ranger stations, fish hatcheries, boat launches, wildlife refuges and some state natural areas.

"The state has been in the business of acquiring land for outdoor recreation for over 100 years," says Miller. "Almost one-third of the total 1.4 million acres we now own was purchased in the last 17 years, and 93 percent of it is open to hunting. City and county parks and trails purchased or added to with Stewardship grants are mostly closed to hunting.

"Even so, more than 3,300 acres of these lands are open to hunting of some type," Miller says. "Additional land is open for limited hunt-by-permit programs to control deer populations. For instance, in the CWD zones, the DNR strongly encourages deer hunting in county parks, and Dane County has an archery deer hunt by permit in most of its county parks to help contain CWD."

Scout early and take a good map

"It's never too early to start checking out hunting land," advises Scott Loomans, DNR's wildlife regulations policy specialist. "Scouting in spring and summer may help you anticipate where other hunters will be accessing public property so you can avoid interference. I don't think it will prevent conflict, because only cool heads and reasonable minds can do that."

Give yourself plenty of time to become familiar with the property boundaries, habitat and the species you might find there. One of the most valuable investments you can make is a set of good maps. Compared to the cost of a trespassing ticket, it's a small investment! Website links in this story will allow you to download and print maps. Here are some options for purchasing other good quality maps:

- County plat books can be purchased for about \$40 to \$50 from county offices, UW-Extension offices or directly from one of the following publishers. Check before ordering to be sure they carry maps for your county.
- Cloud Cartographics, Inc., 113 5th Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN 56301, 1-800-731-8005, www.ccimaps.com
- Farm and Home Publishers, 524 River Avenue North, Belmond, IA 50421, 1-800-685-7432, or (641) 444-3508, www.farmandhomepublishers.com
- Rockford Map Publishers, P.O. Box 6126, Rockford, IL 61125, 1-800-321-1627, www.rockfordmap.com
- Wisconsin Atlas & Gazetteer, DeLorme, P.O. Box 298, Yarmouth, ME 04016, (207) 846-7051, or 1-800-561-5105, www.delorme.com. This popular recreation guide is available for \$19.95 from the company's

Scout public lands well before hunting seasons to learn the property boundaries, look for animal signs and see who else is using the land.

website, book stores and retailers selling hunting and outdoor recreation equipment.

- All-Outdoors Atlas & Field Guides, Sportsman's Connection, 1423 N. Eighth St., Superior, WI 54880, (1-888) 572-0182, www.sportsmansconnection.com. This two-volume set for northern and southern Wisconsin is similar to the DeLorme maps, but contains more details, \$29.95 per volume.

Another valuable tool for finding open hunting land that won't cost you a dime is DNR's online Stewardship Grant acquisitions mapping tool (dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/LR/Stewardship/mapping.html). Be sure to scroll to the bottom of the page and print out the instructions before getting started.

If you prefer to talk to someone in person, call the DNR Call Center toll-free at 1-888-WDNR INFO (1-888-936-7463) where staff is available to answer questions seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Customers can also contact any local DNR Service Center for information.

Some properties have special regulations so check with property managers before the season. Also check out the information on hunting state-owned lands and federal lands in the deer and small game hunting regulations booklets.

"Driving off established roads, damaging trees, or leaving blinds or tree stands out overnight are prohibited on state owned lands," says Loomans. "County owned properties may have different regulations."

It's up to you to find the land that's best suited to your particular sport, but resources abound to aid in the search. Here are some to get you started.

State land

Wildlife areas

Almost 300 designated wildlife and fishery areas are scattered across the state, ranging in size from the 171-acre Behning Creek Wildlife Area in Polk County, to the 44,000 acres in public ownership along the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway. The DNR website can help you locate each wildlife area (dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/wildlife_areas/alpha.htm) by clicking on a state



KATHRYN A. KAHLER

Maps and boundaries of public hunting grounds are available online, in plat books, field guides, DNR offices, county offices and at forest headquarters.

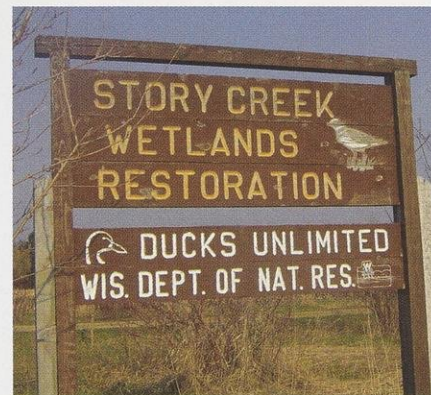
map, choosing from an alphabetical list, or by selecting a county. For some wildlife areas, the website provides a property map, location, directions, a history of the property, and a description of the habitat and species found. Many other listings don't include online details, but all provide maps and directions.

All state wildlife areas are open to a full range of traditional outdoor recreational uses, including hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, nature study and berry picking. Be aware that you may encounter others outdoors and be cautious and courteous.

"Some public hunting grounds are private lands that are leased or eased for public hunting," adds Loomans. "Our signs usually indicate if the property is leased or eased and, in those situations, hunting is the only legal activity. The landowner retains the rights to mushrooms, asparagus and berry-picking."

State parks, trails and southern forests

More than 40 of DNR's park properties are open to hunting and fall within three categories: unrestricted, CWD and limited access. Maps showing the park boundaries and where hunting is allowed can be downloaded from DNR's website (dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/reclands/Hunt.htm) or are available at each park office. Vehicle admission stickers and valid deer hunting licenses are required at all parks. As you would expect, campgrounds, beach



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Properties co-managed with conservation organizations are often open for hunting, but check for special conditions.



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Scout ahead of time to learn what types of hunting and travel are permitted on each property.

areas, headquarters and park building sites and private residences within park properties are generally included in the no-hunting areas of the parks. Camping is restricted to designated campsites.

Unrestricted access: The following parks do not require special access permits for hunting, though some have special regulations and closed areas within their boundaries: Big Bay, Buckhorn, Governor Thompson, Hartman Creek, Interstate, Kinnickinnic, Mill Bluff, Newport, Rock Island and Willow River.

CWD special access: Hunters who wish to hunt deer during the CWD hunts in the following parks must carry a special free permit, available online (dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/hunt/deer/cwdStatePark.htm), at the park office, or at DNR service centers within



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Where private land abuts public lands, you may still be able to hunt if you seek permission before the season begins.

the CWD zones: Belmont Mound, Blue Mound, Browntown-Cadiz Springs Recreation Area, Devil's Lake, Governor Dodge, Mirror Lake, Natural Bridge, New Glarus Woods, Rocky Arbor, Tower Hill and Yellowstone Lake.

Limited access: The following parks require hunters to buy a \$3 Park Hunting Access Permit prior to hunting during allowed seasons. Permits are available on a first-come, first-served basis starting at noon on Saturday, August 23, from any license vendor, rather than from the park. Most parks have special regulations that can be printed (along with the map) from the website (dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/hunt/deer/StatePark.htm). Parks with limited access include: Brunet Island, Council Grounds, Harrington Beach, High Cliff, Kohler-Andrae, Loew Lake Unit-Kettle Moraine State Forest, Peninsula, Perrot, Rib Mountain, Wildcat Mountain and Wyalusing.

Some state trails (Elroy-Sparta and Tuscobia) have unrestricted access for hunting, but check the website for special regulations and maps. Other state trails have varying levels of access, depending upon how much of the property falls within city or county jurisdiction where firearm possession may be limited.

Other recreation areas and southern forest properties that allow hunting are: Hoffman Hills Recreation Area, Richard Bong Recreation Area, Kettle Moraine State Forest-Northern and Southern Units and Point Beach State



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Respect private property boundaries. Some owners open their lands for recreation on a limited basis. Contact them early.

Forest. Most state natural areas are also open to hunting, but check with the property manager to be sure.

State forests

Hunting is allowed on all northern state forests — Brule River, Black River, Coulee Experimental, Flambeau River, Governor Knowles, Peshtigo River and Northern Highland-American Legion. Hunting information and maps of each forest are available at dnr.wi.gov/forestry/stateforests. (Scroll down and pick a forest from the drop-down list for specific information about each forest.) Check the maps or with property managers for campgrounds, picnic areas, wildlife refuges and other closed areas.

The Brule River State Forest has over 40 miles of hunter walking trails and favorable habitat for deer, grouse, woodcock, bear and waterfowl. The Black River State Forest offers excellent opportunities for white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, wild turkey and squirrels. The 90,000 acres comprising the Flambeau River State Forest is open to hunt bear, waterfowl, deer and grouse, to name a few. To the south, the Coulee Experimental State Forest near La Crosse consists of about 3,000 acres of upland timber and open field where hunters will find deer, ruffed grouse, squirrels, turkeys and rabbits.

Governor Knowles State Forest (north of Grantsburg and formerly called the St. Croix River State Forest) has more than 19,000 acres open for white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, black



KATHRYN A. KAHLER

Some owners lease public hunting rights. Scout the land and talk with landowners to learn where access roads and parking are available.

bear, snowshoe hare, squirrel and woodcock hunting. Adjacent to the forest boundary are over 100,000 acres of county forests and two large wildlife areas — Fish Lake and Crex Meadows.

Each fall, the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest draws hunters from around the state for gun and archery deer hunting. Hunting ruffed grouse, woodcock and other small game is also popular here. The diverse forest types on the property, including aspen, birch, oak and pine forests, provide a variety of game habitat. Just over 50 percent of the NH-AL is high- to moderate-quality deer habitat, and 45 percent is high- to moderate-quality ruffed grouse habitat.

Federal land

National Forests

Most federal land in Wisconsin is in the two national forests — Chequamegon and Nicolet. The Chequamegon, headquartered in Park Falls, covers about 858,400 acres in Ashland, Bayfield, Sawyer, Price, Taylor and Vilas counties, while the Nicolet, headquartered in Rhinelander, covers nearly 661,400 acres in Florence, Forest, Langlade, Oconto, Oneida and Vilas counties. Find maps and other hunting information on the forest's website, www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/, click on "Hunting," or stop in at the headquarters office.

Other than a valid Wisconsin hunting license, no special license or permit is required to hunt the national forest. A daily \$5 or annual \$20 parking fee is charged in some areas. Portable stands

Got a story to tell?

We don't expect you to reveal your secret hunting spot, but how about sharing some of your secrets to success while hunting public land? Does a portable tree stand guarantee venison in your freezer? Which forest, park or wildlife area is your favorite? How many years have you been hunting public land and what's your success rate?

Send your letters to:

Readers Write
WNR magazine
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707

Or e-mail letters to:

david.sperling@wisconsin.gov

are allowed on national forest lands and must be taken down each night after the hunt. Screw-in steps and permanent stands – anything nailed, bolted or otherwise attached in such a way as to do damage — are prohibited here, as well as on most other public lands. Stands used by hunters can be left in the woods until the last day of the season when they must be removed. Excessive cutting of shooting lanes is prohibited and only trees under one inch in diameter can be cut.

Hunting is permitted on national forest lands except in campgrounds, other developed recreation sites such as boat launches/landings, picnic areas or posted areas. Just as on state property, there may not be signs or fences to tell you where you may be crossing onto private land. The district offices sell visitor maps at various scales that can help you keep your bearings.

Park so you are not blocking traffic. You cannot take your vehicle off-road or on trails in the Chequamegon-Nicolet to either set up a stand or retrieve game. Camping is allowed anywhere in the forest unless posted otherwise. Some campgrounds remain open during hunting seasons, but services such as garbage pickup, snow removal, water, or latrines are not maintained during the late fall and winter months. You can get information on specific campgrounds by contacting one of the district offices.



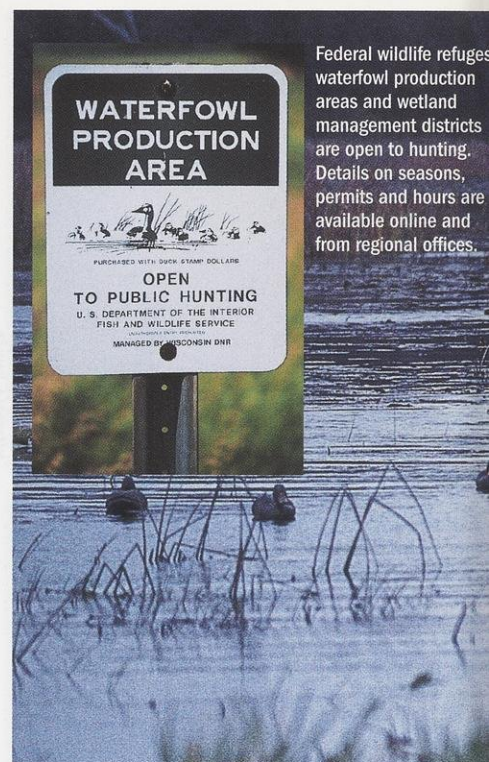
Small parcels detached from larger properties may be posted as "refuges" or "park lands" but are open for some hunting seasons. Find them on the DNR Stewardship mapping site.

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service land

The Midwest Region of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) is committed to providing quality hunting, fishing and wildlife watching on its lands. In Wisconsin, these cover more than 181,000 acres on eight wildlife refuges and two wetland management districts. Hunting is allowed at Fox River, Horicon, Necedah, Trempealeau, Upper Mississippi River and Whittlesey Creek wildlife refuges.

Staff at the Leopold and St. Croix USFWS wetland management districts manage waterfowl production areas (WPA). A listing of WPA properties managed by the Leopold district in the eastern half of the state can be downloaded from their website at www.fws.gov/midwest/leopold/WPADirections.pdf. For WPA properties in the western half of the state, stop in or call the St. Croix district office at 1764 95th Street, New Richmond, WI, (715) 246-



Federal wildlife refuges waterfowl production areas and wetland management districts are open to hunting. Details on seasons, permits and hours are available online and from regional offices.

7784. Links and contact information for all Wisconsin offices of the USFWS are available at www.fws.gov/midwest/maps/wisconsin.htm or www.fws.gov/midwest/documents/wisconsin.pdf. Information specific to hunting and fishing on national wildlife refuges in Wisconsin is available at www.fws.gov/midwest/huntandfishregulations.

Other federal land

Public hunting is allowed on Fort McCoy property between Sparta and Tomah, about 35 miles east of La Crosse. Check out Fort McCoy's website at www.mccoy.army.mil/, click "Recreation Opportunities" then "Hunting & Fishing." A limited number of gun-deer, archery, turkey and muzzle-loader permits are issued. Fort McCoy has a modified nine-day gun-deer season with two days of buck only (Saturday and Sunday), two days of either sex (Monday and Tuesday), concluded by five days of buck only (Wednesday through Sunday). Fort McCoy is a separate Deer Management Unit and issues its own Hunter Choice Permits. State of Wisconsin Bonus Tags and Hunter Choice Permits are not valid at Fort McCoy.

All seasons, dates and prices are subject to change by Fort McCoy au-



ROBERT QUEEN

thorities. For further information, call (608) 388-3337. Fort McCoy fishing and hunting permits will soon be available through the Wisconsin Automated License Issuance System (ALIS). To receive an application, send a self-addressed stamped envelope (specify type of application) to: Directorate of Public Works, ATTN: IMWE-MCY-PWEN (Permit Sales), 2171 South Avenue, Fort McCoy, WI 54656-5136; e-mail mcco.dpw.permitsales@conus.army.mil to request that an application be e-mailed to you; or, go to www.mccoy.army.mil, and download the application and sample envelope. The Permit Sales Office is located in Building 2168 on the property. Office hours are Monday-Friday 7 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

County land

Twenty-nine of Wisconsin's counties, most in the north, have a combined 2.4 million acres in county forests. With the exception of a few sensitive areas, all are open to public hunting. Visit the Wisconsin County Forest Association website (www.wisconsincountyforests.com) to find contacts for each of these forests, (Click "Forest Acres," then the county of interest). A few of the counties list links to maps, but you are

best off contacting the county's forest administrator — listed on the website — or county park or forest departments located at county courthouses. Or try local chambers of commerce or tourist information centers to see what maps are available.

Check with the county park departments to find out about hunting opportunities in these counties: Dane, Door, Pepin, Portage, Manitowoc, St. Croix, Sheboygan, Lafayette, Sauk, Richland, Fond du Lac and Brown.

The Brown County

website (www.co.brown.wi.us/parks/activities/huntingguide/lines.htm) has a lot of information about hunting in county parks, including property maps.

Programs that require landowners to open land to hunting

Some private lands enrolled in two forest tax programs are open to public hunting. You can hunt and fish on all Forest Crop Law (FCL) woodlands. However, landowners who enrolled woods in a subsequent program, the Managed Forest Law (MFL), were given the choices of paying a higher tax rate if they decided to close their land to public access. Listings of open forest tax law lands in each county can be downloaded from the DNR's website (dnr.wi.gov/forestry/ftax/openland.htm). The listings show the landowner's name, amount of open acreage and the legal description of the property. It's a good idea to purchase a county plat map to be sure of ownership boundaries, roads, rivers, lakes and other land features.

You don't need to ask permission to hunt on open FCL or MFL lands, but it doesn't hurt to call or visit ahead of the hunting season to establish a good relationship with the landowner. It's always a good idea to let the landowner know

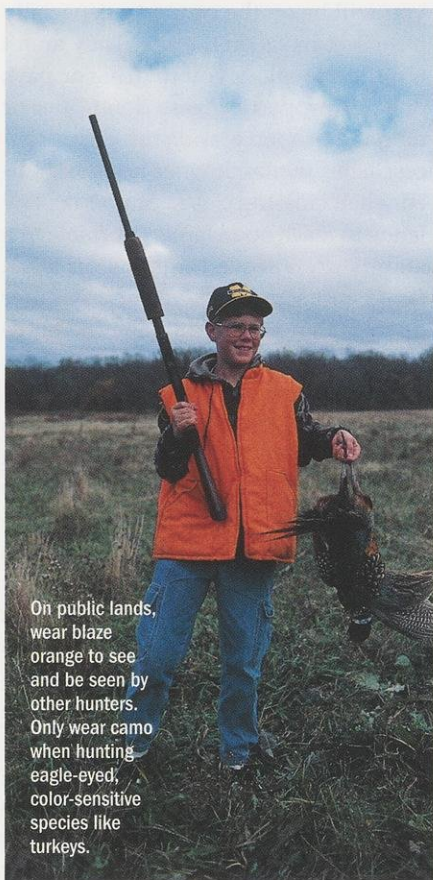
you will be on the property, especially if their home is on the site. They aren't required to allow you to drive or park on their property. Please don't litter or damage property, and stay on any access lanes the landowner has designated when crossing closed or non-tax law lands to reach open lands. Portable tree stands are allowed, just as on DNR lands, but screw-in steps or any other devices that would damage the landowner's trees are not.

Farmers who suffer damage from wildlife (deer, bear, geese or turkey) can file claims and receive compensation from the Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program (WDACP). In return, they must allow hunters access to their property, either by managed or open access. Under the managed access option, the farmer can limit access to two hunters per 40 acres of suitable hunting lands — a determination made by the county damage specialist. All hunters must ask the farmer's permission prior to hunting and sign the farmer's log book. Under the open access option, the land is open to any hunter who notifies the farmer of their intent to hunt.

Some farmers also receive shooting permits to shoot antlerless deer inside or outside of the regular season, and may allow hunters to help them use their damage tags. Lists of farmers who have received deer damage shooting permits and those enrolled in the WDACP can be downloaded from the DNR website, dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/damage/twotypes.htm. Be sure to check out the "Commonly Asked Questions" link for information about blaze orange requirements, the number and type of deer you can shoot using the farmer's tag, and what types of weapons you may use.

Land trusts that open land to hunting

Land conservation organizations, or land trusts, conserve thousands of acres across Wisconsin, and some are open to hunting. The Nature Conservancy recognizes hunting as a management tool in reducing deer populations on their properties where natural plant communities need to be protected. The Nature Conservancy allows open hunting



On public lands, wear blaze orange to see and be seen by other hunters. Only wear camo when hunting eagle-eyed, color-sensitive species like turkeys.

ROBERT QUEEN

without fee or permit at 16 of their preserves in Wisconsin, and takes applications for a permit and fee at another 13 properties. The online permit process, including season dates, hunting guidelines and maps is available at their website, www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/wisconsin/animals/.

Vicki Elkin, policy director for Gathering Waters Conservancy, an umbrella organization for Wisconsin's land trust community, said there are two options for finding other trust lands open to hunting.

"Visit Gathering Waters' website (www.gatheringwaters.org) for a state-wide directory and links to all local, regional and statewide land trusts operating in the state. In addition, the 50,000 acres of land purchased by land trusts with Stewardship grants are searchable on the DNR's website at www.dnr.wi.gov/stewardship/. This website also identifies the public access opportunities on each of these properties," said Elkin.

Feature writer Kathryn A. Kahler hunts deer in southern Wisconsin on public hunting grounds.

Do's and Don'ts for hunting public lands

Tim Lawhern, DNR's hunting safety administrator, has important advice to make your hunting experience on public land more enjoyable.

"Rule number one is to follow the golden rule and treat everybody else as you would like to be treated," says Lawhern. "Then, follow the four basic hunter safety rules — the TAB-K: **T**reat every firearm as if it is loaded. **A**lways point the muzzle in a safe direction. **B**e certain of your target and what's beyond it. **K**ep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot."

Beyond that, Lawhern advises:

DO wear blaze orange – Chances are greater that you will run into someone on a public hunting ground who is hunting a different species, like turkey, squirrel, grouse, rabbit or coyote, and it's very likely that person won't be wearing blaze orange. Two good rules to follow are first, be aware of these other hunters, and second, even if you're hunting a species that doesn't require camouflage clothing — and most don't — wear blaze orange anyway.

DON'T think it's more dangerous to hunt on public land than private land. The fact is, and statistics show, more incidents occur on private land. The chances of being shot and killed by a hunter in North America are exactly the same as being struck by lightning; it's pretty rare. It's a common misperception that hunting on public land is unsafe. Don't let that stop you from trying it out.

DO be courteous – It's public land, so it's free for anybody to use. If you see somebody sitting in close proximity to you, get up and move. If you see a hiker or bird-watcher, treat them with courtesy. Leave the property in better condition than you found it. Whatever you bring in, take out, and whatever you find that's not supposed to be there — like soda cans and empty shell casings — take out, too.

DON'T get into a heated argument – Whatever it's about, it's just not worth it. If you get into a disagreement about something, either try to find a way to mutually settle it, or if it's insignificant, just walk away.

DO report a conflict situation – The best thing to do if you find yourself in a conflict where threats are exchanged is to politely excuse yourself, get to a phone and dial 9-1-1 or the DNR tip-line (1-800-847-9367). If you carry a cell phone, program the number for speed dial.

If you DON'T know where you are, assume you don't have permission to be there! There may be times when you get lost or turned around and aren't sure if you're still on public property. There aren't always fences or signs designating boundaries. That's why it's important to scout in advance, make sure you understand the maps, and know the boundaries. If you get turned around, go back to where you know you have authority to hunt.

DO make the best possible shot – Take aim. Take your time and you won't have to worry about wounded game running onto private property, or another hunter finishing what you started!

DON'T cut down live trees or put up permanent tree stands – On public land, only portable tree stands can be used and these must be removed each day and taken home or back to your campsite. You are also allowed to move dead vegetation or do minor pruning, to make a little blind or to improve your shooting alley, but you can't cut down live trees bigger than an inch in diameter. Leave your chain saw at home!

DO be flexible – Typically, the greatest number of hunters use public hunting lands on the first two days of the gun deer season. If you are concerned about safety on opening weekend, consider hunting during the week or the last weekend, and you'll find far fewer people on these properties.

Lastly, DO know your limitations – Some public lands are rather inaccessible and just getting back into them can be difficult, not to mention the strenuous task of dragging a deer back out. On private land, you may be able to use pickups and ATVs to get to your deer, but you can't on public land. You might want to buy or borrow some of the specialized equipment and carts to transport your deer back to your vehicle.



WHAT DO YOU PACK IN FOR THE OUTDOORS?

Share your stories of homemade kits and customized gear that help you explore the outdoors more safely and confidently.

A homemade kit sewn from old boat canvas keeps simple tools for boat and motor repair together and at hand.

David L Sperling

These days, our outdoor adventures more often end up in a cabin than a tent, and we do more weekend trips than week-long camping. Still, I like to be prepared to be self-reliant. That means we plan our trips, make lists of what we need to pack and follow our plan.

The planning process has many benefits. First, it stretches out the experience and gives more time to think and talk about our vacations. Second, planning provides an excuse to socialize with friends at a pre-trip session. Third, talking through the trip ensures that we will have the gear we need so we don't arrive for shore lunch with duplicate campstoves and no fry pans. Fourth, for me, part of the joy in getting outdoors is getting away from a lot of "stuff." I prefer when we pack light, like we did in the days when everything we needed had to be lightweight and fit into a backpack. I still find light packing to be liberating when I travel.

I think that explains why I am so drawn to the "little packets" that often play a role in outdoor survival stories: people who made it through harrowing circumstances because they did little things to be prepared. They kept their cool and their advanced "what if" planning provided a mixture of survival gear, skills and confidence. These are the people who pack a first aid survival kit in a Band-Aid tin or keep a boat repair kit in an empty plastic peanut butter jar. These are the trip leaders who always have a compass, fire starting stuff, knife and emergency rations in their hiking vest. They are the people who keep a winter survival kit packed into a small coffee can in their car. These may even be the parents who keep a special fun pack in a Ziploc in the camping gear just so their tent-bound youngsters won't be bored to tears on a rainy day. And these are the folks whose campside cooking gear includes packets of bread-ing and spice mixes just in case the bluegills are biting when the freeze-dried soups are starting to look old.

If you are one of those folks or if you


THOMAS J. SENATORI

pack a special little bundle that makes your stay in a tree stand, hunting blind, kayak or campsite better, we want to hear about what you pack and how it helped you. If your foot care bundle of moleskin, bandages and nail clippers means you can cut your pain and finish a hike where you'd otherwise hobble, tell us about it. If you pack a little something that makes your camping trips that much more comfortable, share

your tips. If your safety kit provided a safety net on an adventure, tell us your tale and fess up about what you carry.

If you can take a picture of your kit both taken apart and bundled up, show it to us in your hands or place it on a white background in good light and share that photo as well so we can see the items you are describing. We are more interested in seeing your customized, homemade kits rather than a

commercial kit you might carry. We want to give other readers ideas they can adapt for their own needs.

We'll print as many of your responses as we can in our February 2009 issue so your fellow readers can spend a little of their indoor time getting ready for the outdoor season to come. 

David L. Sperling edits Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CRAFTING YOUR TALE

Send a description of your kit, can or bundle in up to 200 words. Tell us what's in the kit and why. If possible, please include clear photos, slides or digital images in good focus by September 30, 2008. We'll print as many of your entries as we can.

- 1 Keep it entertaining and tell us why you made space in such a limited kit for each item. Please mention generic names of products rather than brand names, if possible. If you believe a particular brand name was crucial, tell us why, but no product endorsements.
- 2 If you had to use your kit, tell us the story of how it proved to be handy. Keep it short.
- 3 Show us the kit. Please share a photo of the kit and components so readers can see most of the pieces and will better understand what you are describing.
- 4 Sign on the dotted line. Please print your name and tell us from which community you are writing. We want to make sure we spell names correctly for those stories that are published. By the way, we'll publish as many usable entries as we can. Also include a phone number or e-mail address. We won't print the number or e-mail, but if we have a question about your submission, we'd like to have a way to reach you.
- 5 Take several images as digitals, slides or prints. We prefer slides, but quality digitals taken at at least 300 dpi will work, too. If your digital camera is at least 6-8 megapixels, we should have enough resolution. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you would like your images returned. Send digitals on CD, if possible, or send via e-mail attachment to david.sperling@wisconsin.gov
- 6 Send submissions by **September 30, 2008** to: Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 ATTN: My Kit

A SECOND STORY IDEA:

HOMEMADE GEAR THAT WORKS FOR ME

Another area that just fascinates me is the ingenuity folks have in designing little gizmos, innovations and adjustments that make their outdoor equipment that much more functional. These are the little "Why didn't I think of that?" moments. I'm talking about the people who figured out how to duct tape a little LED flashlight to the brim of their cap years before such clip-on lights were available. Or a friend of mine who put a dab of fluorescent paint on his fishing rod exactly 15 inches up from the end of the cork handle so he'd have a handy way to measure a legal fish day or night. Another carries a small inflatable gun rest to his hunting blind that keeps his aim steady and comfortable. Maybe you are one of those who can turn a milk jug into a boat bailer or marker buoy. Or you figured out a way to turn Velcro strips into rod holders that keep your poles on board a bouncing boat or well protected in your pickup. If your homemade hunting gear, fishing tackle, hiking helpers and camping aids make your outings that much more enjoyable, describe it for us, draw it, and send us a picture of your gear in use.

Maybe your special gear helps you spool up a line without a partner, keeps your hunting dog happy, patches up a damaged tent, stops leaks, protects your hunting firearms, helps you launch a boat, keeps your trailer wires dry and working (Boy, would I like that invention!), organizes your gear for quick use or is just darn handy at a campsite. We're happy to share those tips with your fellow readers, and you just might get your picture in the magazine. That story will run in our October 2009 issue. Here are the steps we'd like you to follow:

- 1 Describe your homemade device, improvement or innovation and send us a drawing and photo if possible. Keep the description to a few sentences, and we will write it into a caption to run with a photo that you provide.
- 2 Take close-up photos so we can really see what you are describing. Again, we can use digitals, slides or photos. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want your entry returned after publication.
- 3 Send submissions by **April 30, 2009** to: Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707. Attn: Homemade Gear



UPDATES OF FISH ISSUES WE'VE BEEN FOLLOWING

Fish Disease Specialist Susan Marcquenski and other DNR fisheries staff collect ovarian fluids from spotted muskies in Green Bay to test the fishes' health. Muskies are among the most vulnerable species for contracting VHS.

Tidings from the watery world

*Lisa Gaumnitz,
Andy Fayram and
Brian Sloss*

When a deadly new fish disease was first detected in six fish from Lake Winnebago and Lake Michigan waters in May 2007, state fisheries officials feared the worst.

The disease, viral hemorrhagic septicemia, or VHS for short, does not affect humans, but it can infect dozens of species of game fish, panfish and bait fish, instead of a single species or related species, which is more typical of most fish diseases. VHS can spread rapidly, fish-to-fish and through the water, and it caused large fish kills in 2005 and 2006 in the lower Great Lakes.

A year later, Wisconsin fish officials are breathing a little easier. "The good news is that we have not seen the big fish die-offs we feared, nor has our testing to date found VHS beyond Lake Michigan or Lake Winnebago waters," says Mike Staggs, the Department of

DAVID ROWE



Postings at boat landings and bait shops, inspections at ramps, mailings to boaters and outreach to anglers aim to tell outdoor users of simple steps they can take to slow the spread of fish diseases and invasive species.

to kill young fish right after hatching, so it will take time for such losses to be noticeable in a fish population, Staggs says.

VHS has already triggered significant changes in fish management and anglers' fishing habits — and that's a good thing, given the increasing risk that new diseases and invasive species will be introduced to Wisconsin waters as global trade increases, Staggs says.

Infected bait fish are the main way that VHS spreads to new waters. Moving large quantities of water with VHS from a lake or river to another is a far less common transmission route. So anglers and boaters are now required to follow rules aimed at preventing people and their boating equipment from carrying the disease to uninfected waters. Minnows purchased from a Wisconsin bait dealer and left over at the end of a trip can be used again on the same or other waters under certain limited circumstances. Otherwise they should be discarded and live wells/bilges emptied, cleaned and dried before boats are moved to other waters.

State fish hatcheries have overhauled their egg collection and handling procedures, instituted VHS testing systemwide, stopped transferring wild fish from one lake to another, and limited where fish from certain hatcheries are stocked if the broodstock comes from any waters in the Lake Michigan or Lake Winnebago systems.

People who harvest wild minnows for commercial sale must now get permits to collect wild bait. They and fish farmers are required to have their bait fish tested or inspected for VHS before it can be sold. And all DNR staff who work in the water are required to disinfect their boats and gear before moving to new areas to reduce the risk of carrying VHS to other waters.

"Although the issue for us today is VHS, many of the steps we've taken to slow disease transmission provide better protection from future disease outbreaks, such as the changes in boating and angling regulations. Outreach and education are very good strategies to reduce or stop the spread of invasive species," Staggs says.

If anglers, boaters, the bait industry

Natural Resources fisheries director. "It appears that the steps the anglers, boaters and wild bait harvesters are taking are working to contain the disease."

More than 180 lots of wild fish from more than 50 waters were tested in 2007, and none had VHS beyond the six fish documented from the Lake Winnebago and Lake Michigan systems. Nor has VHS been found in the fish tested through

June 5 from the 30 waters scheduled for monitoring in spring 2008. VHS was found in June in round gobies washed ashore on a Milwaukee beach, but that was not a surprise given the virus had already been found in Lake Michigan fish.

Wisconsin's hatchery system got a clean bill of health as well, with more than 6,000 hatchery-raised fish and hatchery water supplies testing negative for VHS in 2007 and so far in 2008.

Despite that good news, VHS remains a serious fish health issue for Wisconsin, our \$2.75 billion sport fishing industry and \$14 million aquaculture industry. VHS, which can cause fish to bleed to death, is one of nine fish diseases worldwide that must be reported to international authorities due to the high fish mortality and economic



Fish hatchery workers routinely wash, disinfect, then steam-clean distribution trucks to reduce the chance of spreading disease from one body of water to another and to protect healthy stocks planted from the hatcheries.

consequences they can cause. The federal government has limited the movement of 37 species of fish susceptible to VHS out of the eight Great Lakes states and two Canadian provinces and also restricts movement among those jurisdictions.

The impact of VHS on wild fish populations in Wisconsin may not be known for five years or more, Staggs says. The VHS affecting Wisconsin and other Great Lakes freshwater fish is a new strain of a virus that historically caused disease in farm-raised rainbow trout; more recently, other strains have infected marine fish in the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. Based on what's happened in other Great Lakes states where the disease was documented earlier than in Wisconsin, this new strain tends

THOMAS J. SENATORI

JOHN KOMASSA

and state agencies all do a good job in following the new practices and requirements, Staggs believes, Wisconsin can continue to keep diseases in check. "That will give us more time to understand disease, monitor fish populations and adjust to the disease. Whatever impacts we have from VHS wouldn't hit all waters at once. It will give us time to improve our testing and detection methods," says Staggs.

The VHS test takes 30 days to run, so there's concern that results can be outdated by the time they're received. Fish — or hatchery water supplies for that matter — can become infected in the intervening time and that uncertainty has huge ripple effects: it's why DNR is not allowing transfers of wild fish, has limited where fish from hatcheries within the Lake Michigan and Lake Winnebago basins can be stocked, and has moved away from using live suckers as feed for its hatchery-raised musky and walleye, to name a few precautions.

The cost of the test — \$500 to check a lot of 60 fish — and the logistics of collecting and getting the samples to the laboratories within the needed time frame for accurate testing limit how much monitoring for the disease can be done. Wisconsin's surveillance program, while significantly more robust than in many other states where VHS has been detected, has reached only a limited portion of the state's 15,081 lakes and 42,000 miles of perennially flowing rivers.

Work is underway by New York researchers to develop a rapid, one-day test to detect VHS. Even when that test is available, Staggs says the key is for everyone to do their part to prevent the spread of VHS and the next invasive to come down the pike.

"I think it's fair to say our management goal is to contain this disease. It may pop up in a few other waters, but that doesn't mean it's inevitable that it becomes widespread. History in our state and other states with invasive species is that we can slow the spread if we all act responsibly."

Lisa Gaumnitz is DNR public affairs manager for water and fisheries issues.

COURTESY OF PATRICK SCHMALZ



Tournament rules

Compiling records and overseeing the catch and handling of bass helps assess how tournament fishing affects fish populations and survival.

Tournaments continue to attract those who like to fish, compete and have a chance at winning prizes. We continue to refine fishing tournament rules to protect fisheries, protect the rights of other water users and the interests of those who appreciate fishing as a quiet way to relax and unwind outdoors. Since 2004, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources was directed to write rules to govern tournament fishing to maintain benefits for all water users and address issues like crowding at public access sites, noise and behavior on the water, and perceived effects of fishing tournaments on fish populations.

In developing such rules, DNR created an advisory committee of tournament organizers, members of fishing organizations, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress and groups representing other water uses like recreational boating. The committee met 12 times beginning in August 2004 to discuss comprehensive changes to fishing tournament regulations. Public hearings were also held in 2006 and both results and recommendations were presented to the Natural Resources Board. The rules were subsequently modified based on reactions from the public, the legisla-

ture, the Fishing Tournament Advisory Committee and feedback from the Natural Resources Board.

To distinguish small "tournaments" among a few friends from the larger ones that advertise, offer prizes and attract a crowd, the rules describe which sorts of events would warrant monitoring and permits to cover those costs. A fishing tournament that meets any of the following criteria would need a permit under these proposed rules: 1) The tournament consists of 20 or more boats or 100 or more participants; 2) The tournament targets trout on classified trout

streams; 3) The tournament is a “catch-hold-release” tournament with an off-site weigh-in; or 4) The total prize value is \$10,000 or greater.

Fees charged to these fishing tournaments are higher (\$100 or \$200 vs. \$25) if they are commercial in nature or the tournament rules would raise a higher chance of unintentionally killing fish. Tournament fees were calculated to cover the estimated \$33,000 annual cost of administering the program. Costs would be equitably split among the estimated number of tournaments in each category.

In response to concerns raised by the Natural Resources Board, DNR fisheries staff added provisions to the rules that would provide flexibility to reduce the daily bag limit to three fish for walleye and bass tournaments held during hotter summer weather when fish are more stressed. These would apply from the second Saturday in June to the first Sunday in September for walleye and from the second Saturday in July to the second Sunday in August for “catch-hold-release” tournaments when fewer fish might survive before they were released. These reduced bag limits would be specified when the tournament permit is is-

sued well before the actual event. For tournaments where fish are caught, verified and immediately released, such reduced bag limits would not apply.

In addition, the DNR agreed to remove certain program costs from proposed tournament fees to cover expenses for law enforcement and on-site data collection by fisheries technicians. These dramatically reduced the fees charged to tournament organizers. The Natural Resources Board passed a revised version of the tournament rules in January 2008. On May 1, 2008, the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing on the proposal. Some individuals supported the rules, but many voiced concerns. The Committee sent the rules back to the DNR for further revision. Tournament organizers didn't like provisions that required participants to submit their boat and live wells to inspection by a conservation warden. Modifications and other small changes have been reviewed by the Natural Resources Board and will again be forwarded to the legislature for its review before new tournament regulations would take effect.

Andy Fayram, DNR fisheries policy analyst.

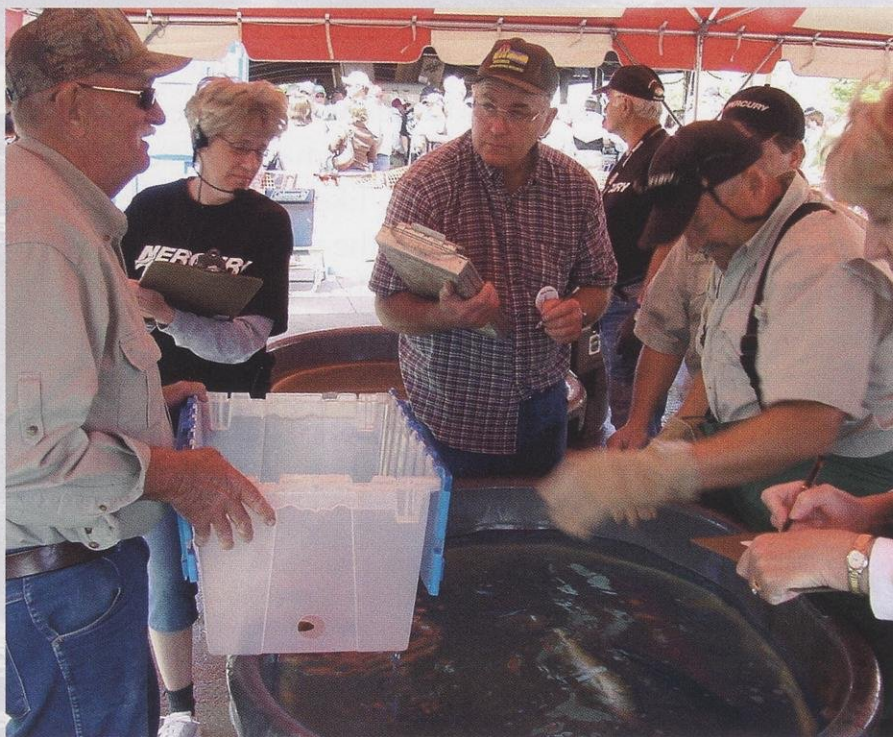


Musky genetics

DNR PHOTO

Our research to identify the lineage and genetic makeup of muskellunge statewide is progressing nicely. To date tissue samples have been collected and analyzed from more than 44 musky populations representing all the major water drainages throughout the musky's native range.

Though we've emphasized testing native musky populations where these mighty fish naturally reproduce (Class 1 waters), we've also tested some populations where muskies have to be stocked to maintain a full complement of fish (Class 2). Further, we tested fish from waters where stocking is critical to maintain a viable musky population because the fish don't reproduce on their



KENDALL KAMKE

DNR Fisheries Technician Doug Rinzel of the Oshkosh office asks anglers about catching tagged walleye when a national walleye tournament was held on Lake Winnebago last summer.



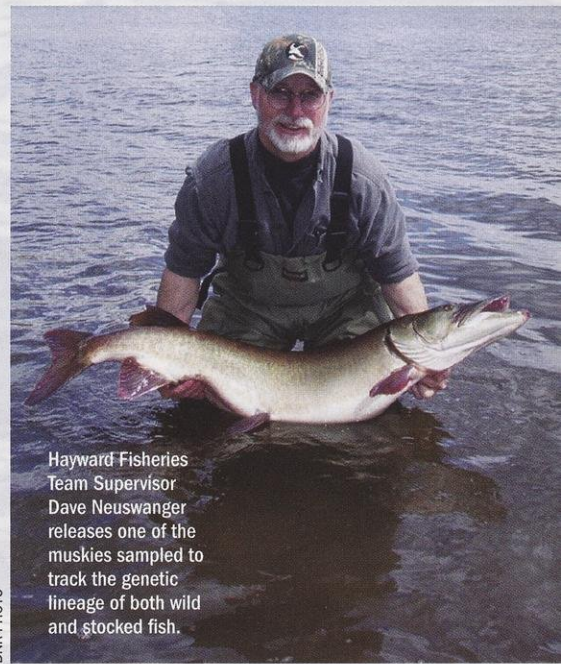
The genetic makeup of muskies whose eggs are collected for hatchery production is being analyzed in a multi-year project to track musky heritage and vigor.

own or don't have much reproductive success (Class 3). This genetic analysis is conducted at the Molecular Conservation Genetics Laboratory at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point where we've now compiled genetic data from more than 1,440 muskies.

Results show there is a great deal of genetic diversity within Wisconsin musky populations, which is a good indicator of the genetic pool from which muskies draw. Greater diversity means greater chance of natural variation which protects a population from genetic weaknesses and recessive traits.

Our tests show a definite split in the genetic makeup of musky populations from the northeastern areas of the state (including the Upper Wisconsin and Upper Chippewa River drainage areas) and the northwestern portions. These distributions and differences do not correspond to contemporary fish management units suggesting these differences are more the result of long-term,

natural variations. One of two explanations or a combination of the two likely describe the current patterns we're seeing. First, the Upper Chippewa River musky populations and the eastern Lake Superior populations may have historically been connected to the upper Wisconsin. This would explain the genetic heritage we are documenting in these fish. Secondly, the influence of stocking cannot be eliminated as a contributing influence if fish were planted from nearby hatcheries rather than relying on established fish management boundaries. For example, the musky populations found in the Upper Chippewa Management Unit are geographically closer to those raised at the Art Oehmcke State Hatchery in Woodruff than the Tommy G. Thompson Hatchery in Spooner. Despite this possibility, we believe this is a minor issue at present due to a high degree of unique genetic features in individual musky populations.




Hayward Fisheries Team Supervisor Dave Neuswanger releases one of the muskies sampled to track the genetic lineage of both wild and stocked fish.

DNR PHOTO

The differences we've observed among populations in western Wisconsin could be due to a combination of their shared ancestry and/or residual effects of the populations originating from a relatively small number of fish. A weak but significant group of muskellunge populations that seem to have slower growth rates has been observed in the genetic data. If this pattern holds up over subsequent data collection and analysis, this could be evidence of a genetic heritage to small/slow growth populations. The research also suggests that each of the discrete musky populations in western Wisconsin may have grown over time from smaller numbers of isolated fish whose genetic makeup has more of an effect in shaping the genetic characteristics of Wisconsin muskies. Under these conditions, the makeup of muskellunge genetic characteristics is more the result of random chance than adaptation.

We expect the final round of data for these genetic heritage studies in Wisconsin musky will be collected, analyzed, summarized and released by fall 2009.

Extracted from an interim report on FY 2008 Wisconsin Muskellunge Genetic Research by Dr. Brian L. Sloss, Wisconsin Cooperative Fish Research Unit and Director of the Molecular Conservation Genetics Laboratory, College of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.



Brownfield recovery provides a fresh start to improve the quality of community life. A key component in renovating the Menomonee River Valley in Milwaukee is providing open space and corridors. For instance, the Hank Aaron State Trail links Miller Park Stadium through the renovated corridor to Lake Michigan waterfront attractions for bicyclists, runners, skaters and walkers. Eventually the trail will extend across the county, linking with the Milwaukee and Waukesha county trail systems and providing connections to the Ice Age, Glacial Drumlin and Military Ridge State Trails.

Back in business

Old factories and abandoned properties are prime real estate to recharge and energize downtowns.

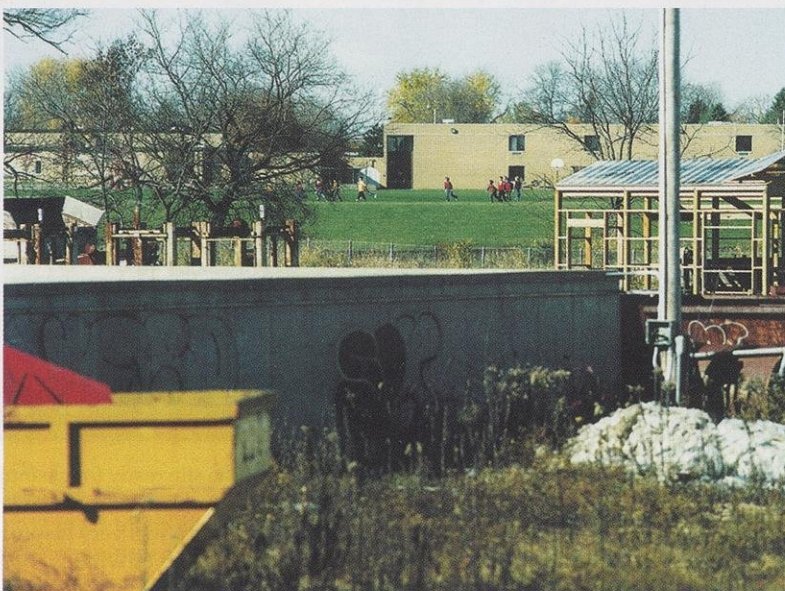
Story by Andrew Savagian and photos courtesy of DNR Remediation and Redevelopment Program

We barely notice them on our daily drives, when shopping downtown, or on bike rides along the riverfront. Like aging volumes on a dusty bookshelf, the old gas stations, shuttered factories, smokestacks and vacant spaces tell us nothing about the story behind their worn exteriors.

Some of these abandoned “brownfields” are less than an acre in size; others would dwarf several football fields. We think of them in industrial cities, like Milwaukee, Chicago and Detroit, but they are also found in small towns and nearly every village in rural Wisconsin. They are often painful reminders for communities be-

cause they can be unsightly, they haven’t been cleaned up in years, and they recall more prosperous times when employers like steel mills, rail yards, scrap yards, plating companies, canneries and tanneries provided jobs that fed families and the local economy.

The beauty is we are learning these old eye-



Three views from the old Stokley cannery near downtown Waunakee where 21 buildings on 13.5 acres were rehabilitated. See the area's remarkable restoration on the next page.

sores can become assets again. They are usually centrally located, within walking distance of homes and would-be workers, on major transportation routes and already have sewer, water and other utilities.

One such recovery story begins in Waunakee, a town of about 9,000 people in Dane County. For decades, the local Stokley canning company was an economic powerhouse that once employed 300-400 people in the heart of the community.

Times changed, and so did the fate of the cannery. By 1997, the plant was still shipping vegetables, but only employed 25 full-time workers. The Chiquita Banana Company purchased the facility in 1998 and promptly closed its doors for good. A brownfield was born.

At about the same time in Stevens Point, a Brownfields Study Group convened by the State Legislature was developing incentives for hundreds of Wisconsin communities like Waunakee to turn an estimated 8,000 — 10,000 brownfields into community assets once again.

Like many brownfield reclamation projects, the Waunakee site looked like something out of an old black and white movie — shuttered doors, rusted tanks, scores of broken windows and graffiti-laced walls framed the 13.5-acre site and gave the community landscape an unwanted black eye.

"It was quite derelict," said Kim Wilde, Waunakee's city administrator. "Definitely not something you wanted in the heart of your community. One of our state senators toured the property with us, and he had some military background. It really reminded him of a war zone — it was pretty awful."

Wilde noted the site posed safety and environmental concerns, too. Local police were frequently called in to deal with vandals. In addition, two 10,000-gallon underground storage tanks on the property held old gasoline and an unknown material. The surrounding soil was contaminated with petroleum fuels. Monitoring wells showed contaminants like benzene and toluene in the groundwater at concentrations that exceeded state standards. It was a big headache for city officials, who in years past had little recourse to take action.

"You don't know what you're dealing with and you're afraid of liability for what you will find," said Wilde. "[Back then] a lot of communities stayed away from these sites."

Waunakee's lament was typical of communities across the state and the nation. Without governmental support most local officials mothballed these properties, leaving them idle for years or decades.



Waunakee's revitalized Village Center provides housing for senior citizens and a complete senior center with food services and exercise areas. The community complex also boasts classrooms, art spaces, a gymnasium, community meeting rooms and rental space for community and family events. A five-acre pond reflects the relaxed, fresh feel of the space, as well as providing flood relief and a runoff detention basin.

The legislature charged the 30-member Brownfield Study Group of local government officials, consultants, state agency staff, lawyers, professors and nonprofit representatives to develop alternatives. Their early decisions proved important in guiding practical solutions. First, the group agreed that any idea from anyone was worth considering. Second, recommendations would be forwarded via consensus, but the group would also include any dissenting opinions in the final reports.

"The study group really works both sides," said Charlie Bartsch, former director for Brownfield Studies with the Northeast-Midwest Institute in Washington, D.C. "It has been much more than your traditional blue ribbon committee, where they do the report, shake hands and go home. This is truly an ongoing, revolving effort."

The study group's report contained more than 70 recommendations including a simple funding program to help local governments like Waunakee jump-start cleanup investigations at properties like the Stokley factory. Called the DNR Brown-

fields Site Assessment Grant (SAG), the program provides seed money to assess abandoned properties and conduct limited activities to remove immediate hazards like pulling old, underground gas tanks or removing abandoned barrels.

Legislators and the governor took the study group's recommendations to heart. More than 25 proposals were added without debate into the 1997-1999 biennial budget.

"I think everyone was pleasantly caught off-guard," said Darsi Foss who heads the DNR's Brownfields and Outreach Section.

"We made the case that helping the environment could be good for economic development, and to the legislature's and governor's credit, they felt that these were solid recommendations that had been duly vetted by the study group."

From blight to highlight

Today that Waunakee site is a brownfield no more. After working with an environmental consultant to secure a \$100,000 Brownfield Site Assessment Grant, the city investigated a good portion of the property

and got the site ready for cleanup and redevelopment.

"The grant was very helpful early on to give us an idea of what we were dealing with," said Wilde. "It gave us information we needed to know about how big a problem we really had. We wouldn't have been as aggressive in pursuing [cleanup] without a grant."

The environmental consultant, Scott Wilson of Ayres and Associates, was more emphatic. "[The SAG] was absolutely and unequivocally important to the project – without it, that building would still be standing," said Wilson. "It really was the glue that held that project together."

With a plan in place, the city garnered an additional \$1 million in other state and federal funding to help clean up and redevelop the property. After cleanup, Cannery Row, Inc. acquired part of the property and built a 77-unit senior housing facility on part of the site in 2005. Then in 2006, Waunakee built a new community center and a stormwater retention basin on the remainder of the property.

The retention basin manages runoff into Sixmile Creek, which feeds into Lake Mendota.

Susan McDade, Waunakee's Community Services director, said the new Village Center offers a wide range of facilities and programs for the entire community and beyond. Both redevelopments employ more than 50 people. The former blighted property was valued at \$500,000 and is now worth approximately \$12 million.

In 2007, the city won a Wisconsin Parks & Recreation Association Award of Excellence and a national Community Sustainability Award from the International City Management Association for the Stokley project. This year *Recreation Management* magazine presented Waunakee its Editor's Choice Award for the site's innovative architecture and design.

"When we talk about this site, we try to tell people that it's never easy, and if you look at the whole project, it can get overwhelming," McDade said. "But without the brownfield grant, this project would not have happened. It gave us a starting point and we knew, at a minimum, we could get this location cleaned up."

Another 187 communities in Wisconsin echo McDade's feelings and have made good use of the DNR SAG program since its inception eight years ago. Those communities have conducted more than 722 site assessments and investigations, removed 479 storage tanks, demolished 529 structures and helped clean up 1,400 acres of contaminated property.

As for the study group slated to run one year? It is now in its tenth year of public service, has recommended 65 additional proposals, including new grants, insurance programs, and tax and liability incentives for brownfields. Its work has helped make Wisconsin one of the top states in the nation for promoting brownfield cleanups and redevelopments in the past decade.

"Wisconsin is second to no state in putting together the kind of long-term, cross-sectional, public/private partnerships represented on the study group to drive land reuse," says Bartsch.

Kim Wilde agrees. "I think the two most important tools Wisconsin has to really make these projects happen are the state brownfields programs combined with Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) districts. Those two tools together are very powerful, and make Wisconsin a leader in brownfields redevelopment."

Andrew Savagian is a natural resources staff specialist and communicator with DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment Program based in Madison.

Wisconsin brownfields – a decade of renovation and recovery

Here are just a few community improvements with before and after pictures brought about by restoring brownfields. To read more success stories, visit the DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program website at: dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/cleanup/rr_success.htm.



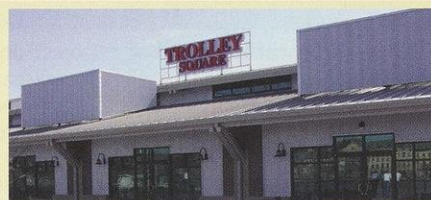
Milwaukee's Menomonee Valley

The granddaddy of all Wisconsin brownfields, Milwaukee's Menomonee Valley, stood for decades as a blighted industrial area with many contaminated, vacant lots and scores of dilapidated buildings. No more. Revitalization of the "Valley" will bring dramatic changes this year, including opening the \$95 million, 130,000-square-foot Harley-Davidson Museum on a formerly contaminated site. Harley officials expect the museum to draw 350,000 visitors each year, and a new companion hotel, The Iron Horse, is going up nearby. According to Menomonee Valley Partners Inc., the Valley has added 2,100 jobs since 1998, and developments in 2008 are expected to bring in another 2,000 jobs.



Amery's Fire Station

The Superlocker site in this tiny northwestern Wisconsin town used to host a gas station, bulk oil terminal, car dealership, ice cream plant and a meat locker before it was abandoned. After cleanup in 2004, the city built a new fire station that has become the centerpiece of downtown renewal. Mayor Harvey Stower expressed appreciation to DNR for the excellent cooperation in returning this brownfield into a productive property.



Appleton's Trolley Square redevelopment

Appleton's waterfront renaissance includes Trolley Square as part of a master plan to revitalize the Fox River corridor. In its long history, this site was home base for a knitting mill, lamp manufacturer, metal fabrication and machining operations. Thereafter Valmet Company made paper processing systems here for more than 50 years before the property was abandoned. SAG grants of \$120,000 funded planning cleanup options and the city created a tax district to spur redevelopment. After cleanup, the site was exempted from future liability by the city. Today, the 20,000-square-foot Trolley Square features a display for a refurbished Birney Streetcar, and houses a restaurant, wine store and a banquet/catering business. Outdoor amenities include a riverwalk, dining and entertainment areas. The property could also link via an old railroad trestle to a trail across the river.



Baraboo's Public Works Building

An old rail yard located in downtown Baraboo had been a community eyesore in a prime location for many years. Adjacent to the world-famous Circus World Museum, the site had a long history of industrial use and contamination, including heavy metals and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). A SAG grant jump-started cleanup. The city acquired the property, demolished several buildings and removed an underground storage tank. After cleanup, the city built a \$5 million public works facility on the property, which has spurred additional development in the downtown area.



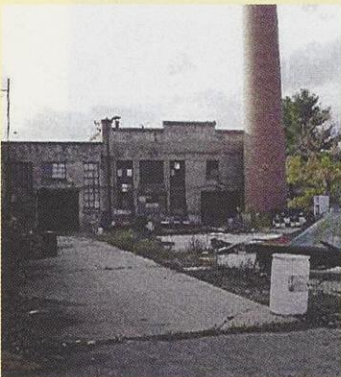
La Crosse's riverside redevelopment

This La Crosse site encompassed several properties near the Mississippi River. Soil and groundwater in the area were contaminated with heavy metals such as arsenic, chromium and lead. The city, working with the DNR, investigated and cleaned up the site, and in 2000 completed new headquarters for Century Telephone Enterprises, Inc. (CenturyTel). Approximately 500 service jobs were retained and 100 created in the redevelopment, creating an annual payroll estimated at \$20 million. A multi-story apartment complex was subsequently built on the remainder of the site.



Eau Claire's North Barstow Street project

The new Phoenix Park and Royal Credit Union Corporate headquarters in downtown Eau Claire combine two former brownfield properties, each with a rich manufacturing history. Using several state grants, including a \$100,000 SAG and a \$5,000 Green Space and Public Facilities Grant, city officials bought both properties, removed several tons of debris from one site, then decontaminated an adjoining manufactured gas plant through demolition, excavation and off-site disposal. Public green space now provides walking and biking paths along the river, and the credit union headquarters supports more than 100 full-time employees.



Wausau's Marathon Rubber renovation

This factory made rubber footwear and raingear from the 1920s through 1999. The abandoned factory, vandalized numerous times, was considered a public health threat due to broken glass, asbestos and soil contamination. After cleanup, the property was redeveloped as a neighborhood park and housing for low- to middle-income families. In addition to a \$100,000 SAG, the city also received a \$90,000 Community Development Block Grant and built the homes with assistance from Wausau Fresh Start, an AmeriCorps program employing mostly Southeast Asian youth.



Kenosha Harbor restoration

Once one of the largest brownfields in the state, this 70-acre site operated as the Simmons Mattress factory for nearly 100 years then, after 1960, became American Motors Corporation (AMC), manufacturing cars there until 1988. After decommission, the factory was demolished and extensive cleanup began in the mid-1990s. Eleven underground storage tanks were removed and approximately 6,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil were excavated from the site.

Today Kenosha Harbor redevelopment offers residential and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Kenosha Harbor Park provides a lakefront promenade and recreation trail, a marina and an electric street car system that links to nearby rail service to Milwaukee and Chicago. Condominiums, outdoor cafes and a farmers market surround the city's new public museum. Property values at the site increased \$50 million from 1989-2003, and nearby property values increased by more than \$13 million. Twenty-two jobs were created, and the harbor redevelopment helped increase property tax revenues by nearly \$900,000 in 2003.



De Pere's historic C.A. Lawton Townhouses

The C.A. Lawton Company, located just south of Green Bay in downtown De Pere, opened its doors in 1891 to expand its ductile and iron operations. The foundry operated for 80 years, and after the site became a brownfield, city officials and a developer stepped in to clean up contaminated soil and remove leaking underground storage tanks. Following extensive renovation, the building was converted into the Lawton Foundry Town Homes — 70 rental units each with 660 to 1,800 square feet of space as townhouses and flats. By preserving historical aspects of the property, the \$5.5 million refurbished foundry earned a spot on the National Registry of Historic Sites, and the value of the property increased by more than 35 percent.



Milwaukee's/West Milwaukee's Journal-Sentinel Printing Facility

These two former brownfields comprise 43 acres. For decades the Incryco-Babcock & Wilcox property was the site of a steel tubing and metal fabrication plant that straddled the village of West Milwaukee and City of Milwaukee border. Site contamination included petroleum, lead and PCBs. After working with the DNR on investigation and cleanup, the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel Company built a new production facility onsite in 2002. Redevelopment increased the property tax base by more than \$20 million, brought more than 400 service jobs to the neighborhood and kept a major local employer close to one of Wisconsin's largest urban centers. In addition, the site provides a home for the Domestic Animal Control Commission.

A bolt from the blue

continued from page 2



Oshkosh's Riverside Park Expansion Project

This former Wisconsin Public Service (WPS) power plant in Oshkosh served as a manufactured gas plant from the 1880s to 1946. Another portion of the site was home to numerous businesses, including a furniture factory and lumber storage yard. In 2002, WPS cleanup activities demolished buildings, disposed of 4,000 tons of debris and excavated underground gas holders and contaminated soils. The city purchased the property in December 2003, and redevelopment expanded a city park, provided space to construct a new amphitheatre, and provided public art display spaces, a pavilion and parking. Close to \$500,000 in public and private funding, including a \$200,000 DNR Green Space and Public Facilities Grant and a \$200,000 EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant made this stunning renovation possible.



Sheboygan's Harbor Centre – South Pier Project

Forty acres of prime real estate on a peninsula at the confluence of the Sheboygan River and Lake Michigan had been furniture and toy manufacturing factories and storage piles of coal, fertilizer, petroleum products, coke and salt. After cleanup of contaminated soil and groundwater, the property was redeveloped into a waterpark hotel, resort complex and conference center, employing more than 350 people. The city added a riverfront promenade, educational facility and lakefront walk. This brownfield had a wide variety of financial assistance, including more than \$12 million from the City of Sheboygan, a Tax Incremental Finance District (TIF) and more than \$4 million in grants from local, state and federal programs, including a \$262,000 DOA Coastal Management Program grant.

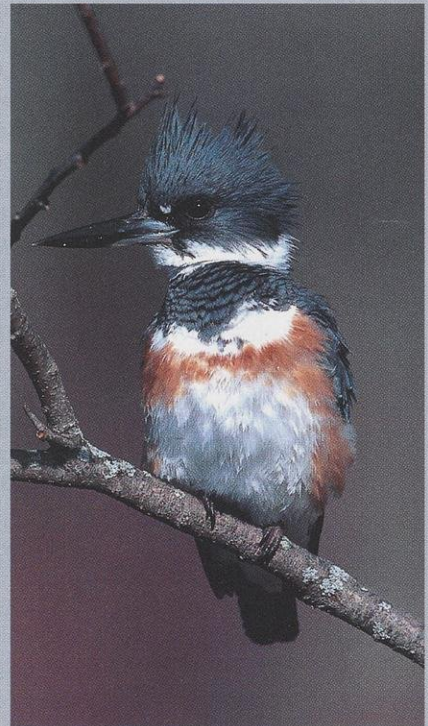
Of the 86 mostly tropical species of kingfishers, only the 13-inch belted kingfisher, *Ceryle alcyon*, plies Wisconsin's lakes and rivers. It's an easy bird to identify with its big blue-gray shaggy crest atop a proportionally oversized head on a smallish body. Its large black beak is a formidable fish-catching tool. Blue-gray dominates the head, back, wings and tail of the chunky bird. The conspicuous blue-gray breast band traverses a snow-white belly. A white neck collar separates the blue-gray head from its back. This is one of the few North American birds where the female is more colorful than the male. She sports a rusty-red belly band and flanks that are often hidden behind folded wings. Believe it or not, the distinct colors look inconspicuous viewed up through a green backdrop of branches and sky.

Belted kingfishers live solitary lives outside of the late spring nesting season. Pair bonds form after the male establishes a territory. After mating, the formidable task of nest building begins. Kingfisher nests are long, horizontal tunnels excavated in high, exposed vertical sites like riverbanks or sand and gravel quarries where there is water nearby. A good place to search for kingfisher nests is among active colonies of rough-winged or bank swallows. The swallow nest holes are about 1½-2 inches and the kingfisher is three to four inches across. The tunnel-like cavity typically is burrowed about three to four feet into the bank but may extend as far as 15 feet before ending in a nesting cavity that is protected from predators. The long tunnel means a lot of digging for a bird with weak feet. Consequently, kingfishers may return to the same nest site for several years.

Within the 10-inch nest chamber, the female lays an average of six to seven white eggs. Both male and female birds share time incubating the eggs for about 23 days. When it's time to switch from one parent to the other, the kingfisher on the outside "rattles" to alert its partner to leave the nest before the partner on the outside enters.

After hatching, the young are fed regurgitated food and spend about a month in the dark burrow before emerging. They remain with their parents for another three weeks learning and perfecting their fishing skills, after which time they are on their own. The family breaks up and each go their separate ways. Only one brood is raised per year.

Belted kingfishers may be seen any time of year. Though most of these birds migrate to better fishing spots in winter, a few remain here as long as open water is flowing below dams or on large rivers where the fishing is good year-round. Unfortunately, fish hatcheries are not immune to predation from the hungry opportunistic kingfishers. So year-round, I'm always looking and listening for the shaggy crested bird with the big rattle. Even if I don't always see it, the loud rattle is music to my ears and a welcome addition to Wisconsin's natural chorus.



JACK R. BARTHOLOMAI

Female kingfishers have a more colorful reddish band across the chest and flanking the area between the belly and the back.

A group of belted kingfishers is referred to as a "crown" or "rattle."

Anita Carpenter searches high and low for signs of Wisconsin wildlife year-round.

Comforts

When wildlife moves in



TONY GEIGER

As fall arrives, wildlife will be seeking out warm places to spend the winter. But will you agree with their choices? What if a mouse makes a nest in that wet vac in your garage? What if a squirrel gets a little too cozy with the comforter in the attic? Mice and squirrels can cause problems if they take up residence in your roof spaces. They can tear away insulation and

chew through wires causing a risk of fire.

Several sources can help when you encounter nuisance wildlife. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services and Wisconsin DNR provide some nuisance wildlife assistance.

If you have a problem with nuisance bears, wolves and birds, please contact the USDA's Wildlife Services. The two district offices in Wisconsin are located in Waupun and Rhinelander.

USDA-WS, Waupun District
1201 Storbeck Dr.
Waupun, WI 53963
(800) 433-0663
(920) 324-4514

USDA-WS, Rhinelander District
PO Box 1064
Rhinelander, WI 54501
(800) 228-1368
(715) 369-5221

If you aren't certain which office to call, try the toll-free number at (866) 4-USDA-WS (866-487-3297) and you will be directed to the right office for your area.

Questions about other species? Contact your local DNR Service Center from the online link at dnr.wi.gov/contact/. Local DNR staff will provide advice and technical assistance over the phone to help you legally solve your nuisance problems. Many private pest control operators are also listed in your local yellow pages under "Pest Control Services." Some municipalities have animal control officers and UW-Extension also has some county staff available to assist.

Don't take wild animals out of the wild. Young animals in captivity become dependent on people and may not survive when reintroduced to the wild. They do not make good pets.

Do not attempt to handle a sick or injured animal. Wild animals can injure people and carry diseases. Children and pets should also be kept away. If the animal appears vicious and presents a concern for safety, contact your police department or local DNR office for advice and assistance.

Bird feeder refreshers

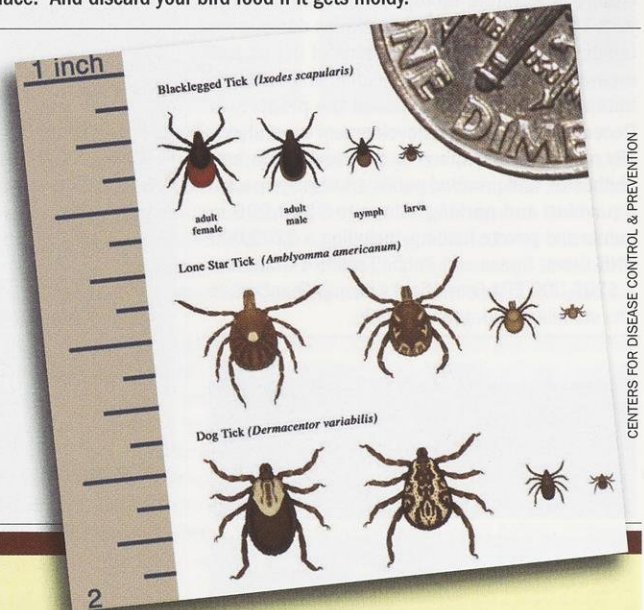
Birds can become sick from moldy seeds and decomposing hulls. Bird droppings may also spread infectious bird diseases. That's why it's important to clean your feeders once every two weeks and more often during heavy use. To clean, wash your feeder in hot, soapy water, then soak or rinse it in a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water. Dry the feeder before refilling.

Don't forget to clean the ground below the feeder to prevent a build-up of birdseed hulls and other waste. Bird food scattered on the ground can attract unwanted rodents.

It's also important to make sure your bird feed is stored properly to keep it fresh. Store seeds in secure containers (such as metal cans) to prevent squirrels and mice from getting to it. Keep the containers in a cool, dry place. And discard your bird food if it gets moldy.



STEPHEN J. LANG



CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION

Tick check

Swelling, tenderness and joint pain, limping and fever are a few of the signs. Lyme disease, transmitted through the bite of the tick, *Ixodes scapularis*, can strike dogs and cats, too.

Smaller than the head of a pin, these very tiny ticks, commonly called deer ticks or black-legged ticks, are hard to see. After each outdoor excursion, do a complete tick check of your pet. Check paws, around the collar, behind and in the ears, around the tail and all about the head. Brush your pet after each outing, preferably outside. Check for bumps. If you do feel a bump, tease the fur apart to identify the cause. An embedded tick will vary in size, from a pinhead to a grape.

If you find a tick, wear rubber gloves, then use tweezers to gently grasp the tick as close to your pet's skin as possible and gently pull away from the skin. Try not to crush the tick. If it looks like some of the tick did not come completely out (the tick's mouthpart has a barb that makes removal more difficult), use an alcohol sterilized needle to remove the remaining pieces. After removal, cleanse the area with antiseptic.

There are a few Lyme disease vaccines approved for canines that can decrease your dog's chances of contracting the disease. Many tick products and medications are available over the counter and from your veterinarian. Sprays, collars and dips repel and kill ticks to some degree. Tick collars are considered less effective than some of the preventative pills. Several antibiotics are available to treat Lyme disease and are especially effective if administered in the early stages of the disease.

Traveler

Spare the petrol, have a gas



Artists chalk up their pavement canvas.

GREEN LAKE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

In this summer of higher gas prices, Traveler casts an eye toward the water, the heavens, the hills and the shore for little adventures and simpler pleasures near home. Like over in Oshkosh where on Saturday, August 9, up to 500 youngsters can wet a line in a friendly little get-together they call the **Otter Street Children's Fisheree**. There will be plenty of adult help, refreshments and prizes as the kids try their luck catching a good time and maybe a few fish at the ponds in Menominee Park. Pre-register by calling (920) 233-2892 and plan on checking in about 8:30 in the morning for fishing fun that runs from 10 until noon.

If your cup of tea is staying out of the crowds and away from the summer heat, we heartily recommend getting away from the city lights and casting your eyes skyward on a summer's night for the annual **Perseid Meteor Shower** whose cosmic dust show speckles the night sky with comets from mid-July through mid-August, peaking each year between August 8-14. Star-crossed lovers and families alike can join a few stargazers near the

tip of Door County at **Newport State Park**, 475 County NP near the town of Ellison Bay. Join us in the picnic area on August 12, bring some lawn chairs or blankets and bundle up for the sky show that will only get better and better as dusk turns to dark and then dawn. If the skies stay clear, as many as 60 comets an hour should streak across the heavens especially between the constellations of Perseus and Cassiopeia. Don't remember those Greek dudes and dudettes? Then bring along your mythology texts to read up by flash-

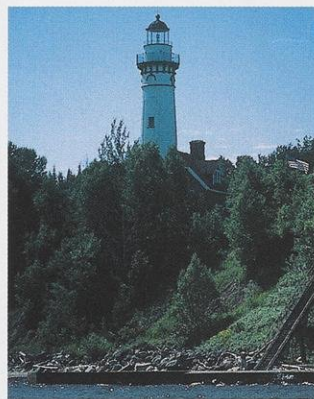
light of the mighty Perseus who slew the multi-headed medusa and brought fire to the earth, and the vain and beautiful queen, Cassiopeia, who lays claim to the star-studded skies from her throne in the shape of a lazy W.

If connecting the dots of the constellations caught your fancy, then cast your eyes downward in Green Lake on August 16 where artistes and sidewalk Cézannes alike will draw stars, rainbows and dragons on Mills Street at the annual **Chalk Art Festival** from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. Call 1-800-253-7354 for details of how you can make your mark on concrete and take in the colorful hand drawn masterpieces. Just don't get a hernia trying to take one of those pavement Picassos home!

If you enjoy the stroke of a paddle as much as the stroke of a piece of chalk, set your compass for Superior to watch more than 100 international teams ride the backs of sleek mythological beasts along the shore of Barker's Island at the **Lake Superior Dragon Boat Festival**, on Friday, August 22 from 6-10 p.m. and Saturday, August 23 from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. It's our nation's largest gathering of these long, lean canoes and crews, 1-866-336-1107, e-mail info@lakesuperiordragons.com.

Arts, craft and food booths run alongside the race route throughout the festival.

Or follow crowded flocks as border collies herd and drive their woolly charges at the **WWSA Sheep Dog Trials** in Portage on Friday, August 29 through Monday, September 1 from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. See these amazingly focused dogs working sheep through a triangular quarter-mile course aided only by the herder's voice and whistle commands. The trial is held in fields at N5085 State Road 78, Portage. Follow signs posted at the big truck stop where I-94 and I-39 meet. Contact Jean Bass at (608) 497-2515 or (608) 845-6996 for more information about this Wisconsin Working Stock Dog Association event.



ROBERT QUEEN

Don't be stranded on shore when the **Apostle Islands Lighthouse Celebration** leaves the dock from

September 3 – 20.

This annual event features daily lighthouse cruises and tours of the seven historic Apostle

Islands lights. Other activities include lectures, concerts, a Keeper's Dinner and more. Tour the newly renovated Raspberry Island Lighthouse. Tours and cruises leave from the City Dock in Bayfield. Contact toll-free: 1-800-779-4487, email: info@lighthousecelebration.com.





Wisconsin, naturally

MIRROR LAKE PINE OAK FOREST STATE NATURAL AREA

Notable: A dry-mesic forest dominated by white and red pines along with red, white and black oaks on the gently undulating sandy uplands west and north of Mirror Lake. Huckleberry, low blueberry and hazelnut compose the shrub layer. Vernal ponds and a small stream add to the site's diversity. Nearer the lake, narrow ravines feature scenic sandstone cliffs up to 35 feet high.



How to get there:

Within Mirror Lake State Park. From the junction of Interstate 90-94 and Highway 23 in Wisconsin Dells (Sauk Co.), go south 1.3 miles on 23 to Pickerel Slough Rd. Park along Pickerel Slough Rd. and walk south or west into the natural area. Vehicles must display a state park sticker. Visit dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna/sna406.htm for a map and more information.



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