

JANUARY, 1967 35¢

Outdoor Life

BONUS | 1967 Boats
and Motors

FISHERMAN ABROAD

AMAZING BEAR PHOTOS

OL Fishing Editor calls

WISCONSIN
"hottest place
on ice."

P. 46

SPECIAL GUE ALLOWS THIS TO BE PEELLED OFF WITHOUT DAMAGE TO COVER

1/67

THINGS TO READ AND DO NOW:

- **Hare Hunting** ▪ **Ice Fishing**
- **Crow Shooting** ▪ **Quail Ditto**

THE JAGUAR FOLLOWED US:

Record Deer: Fun Duck Hunt

Walter M
Baumhofer

Hottest

This lake has five names and 10 varieties of fish to catch through the ice. I say it's got everything



Adolph Sepich of Sheboygan lands a lake trout. It'll be frozen in minutes

IT'S TOO BAD you live so far from Wisconsin," Tom Pearson wrote late in February, 1965. "I've found the hottest ice fishing you ever saw. Wish we could try this lake together before the ice goes out."

He was talking about Green Lake, 27 miles west of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on Route 23. He had fished it every weekend since he'd found it in mid-January. He said the place was so full of lake trout that he'd often limit out before noon and the rest of the day he'd fish for northern pike or bluegills.

"The average laker," he added, "runs between 17 and 24 inches and weighs between 1½ to 5 pounds, but I caught a 10-pounder last weekend. The pike run to trophies too. My biggest was 15 pounds. And you should see the bluegills. Wow! In fact the lake's got a full house of gamefish: lake trout, brown trout, splake, bass, walleyes, pike, bluegills, crappies and yellow perch. You name it, Green Lake's got it."

It was a letter that would make any serious fisherman pack up and hop the next plane to Oshkosh. But I wasn't able to get away. Months later when I was free, Tom was in the army and far away from Wisconsin.

By then I was so steamed up about fishing Green Lake that I decided to go it alone. So I wrote to an old friend, Gene Roark, public information officer of the Wisconsin Conservation Department, for the latest dope on the lake. He said that the best time to fish Green Lake through the ice was during the first two weeks after the ice is thick enough. He promised to phone the day the ice was ready.

He called on January 26 and said that ice shanties were going out. He offered to set things up for me for the weekend of January 29. I said that was great with me, and Gene said he'd try to meet me at the Oshkosh airport.



Trophy-size fish are registered. These were caught the first day we fished

August Kopplin prepares to move his automated ice shanty to a new spot



Place on Ice

By WYNN DAVIS



This group of bluegill shanties spreads out across a shallow Green Lake bay only 100 yards from my motel-room picture window

It was Dick Harris, however, bundled in a heavy overcoat with collar high against the 20-below-zero cold, who met me after the plane touched down on the hard snow at Oshkosh.

Dick is the area supervisor of the Fish Management Division of the Conservation Department in Oshkosh. He turned out to be just the man to fill me in on Green Lake. On the drive to his office, he told me that the lake has five names. They are Big Green Lake, the official name (for there is a Little Green Lake too); Green Lake, the popular one; Day-cho-lah, an Indian name favored by many small fry; Lac Verde, a hangover from the days of the French explorers; and Mona-pacalah, another Indian name seen occasionally on old maps.

"Big Green Lake is something of a misnomer," Dick said, "because it's neither big (about seven miles long



Adolph uses an ice-jigging rod outside

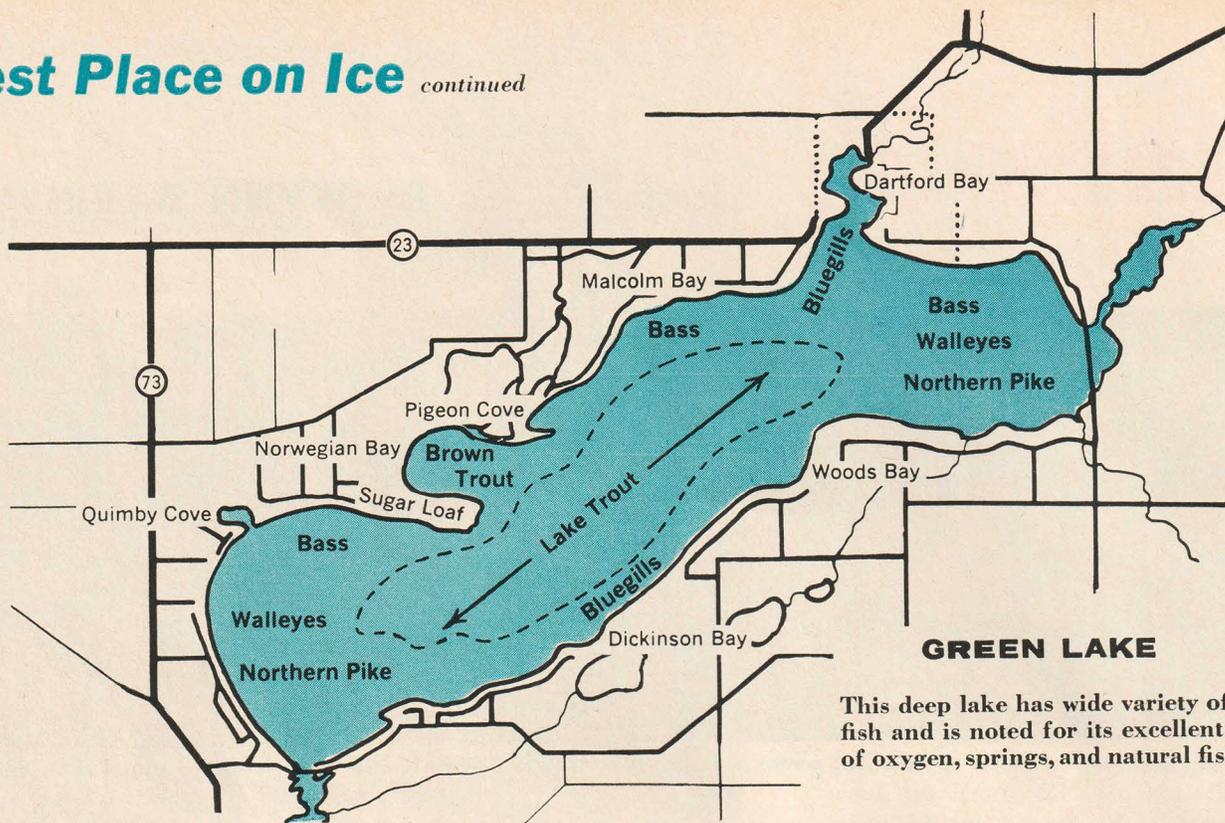


Beside shanty, Lyle Budnick and I admire Jim Schmitz' laker

Lyle shows typical ice-fishing bait, two live minnows on jig



Hottest Place on Ice *continued*



GREEN LAKE
This deep lake has wide variety of game-fish and is noted for its excellent supply of oxygen, springs, and natural fish foods



Here I talk with Lyle Budnick as we jig for lakers from ice shanty

and two miles wide) nor green. On a clear summer day, its surface is as blue as the sky. It's a glacial-dug hole with cold springs in its silt-and-gravel bottom and is officially the deepest lake entirely within the borders of Wisconsin. Its deepest spot is 230 feet and lies between Sugar Loaf, the highest hill along its shores, and Blackbird Point on the opposite bank."

Dick went on to say that much of Green Lake is 200 feet deep, and about two thirds of it is at least 100. The lake is noted for an excellent supply of oxygen and natural trout food, even in its deepest spots. All of these factors, Dick pointed out, contribute to making this one of the great lake-trout waters in the country.

Dick had arranged for Doug Morrisette, district fish manager, to drive me to Green Lake. Doug, a

likable young fellow with an easy smile and a twinkle in his eyes made short work of the trip to Green Lake in spite of snow and ice on the roads.

When we checked in at Gordon's Motel in the village of Green Lake, there was still enough light for us to see out over the lake. A hundred yards from my picture window, dozens of gaily colored ice shanties huddled in little groups like gossiping women.

"Trout shanties?" I asked.

"No," Doug replied. "That's a shallow bay. Those are jumbo-bluegill shanties. When those big panfish run, some of the fastest fishing on the lake happens right out there." He went on to say that the bluegills average about a pound, with 1½-pounders common and enough two-pounders around to make the fishing exciting.

Lyle drills through ice while Don Bruendl skims off chips



I examine an angler's lake trout. These deep feeders come big





Many more local anglers appear out on the ice as darkness approaches. The day's work over, they get in some fishing

Doug promised to be back early in the morning, and the next thing I knew, he and Gene Roark were pounding on my door asking if I intended to lie in the sack all day. It was still black night as far as I could see. I let them in on a blast of frigid air, and Doug gave me the cheerless news that it was 24 below zero with a 20-mile wind zipping down the lake. He said that he hoped I'd brought along warm clothes because this was the coldest morning at Green Lake in many years.

I grinned and showed them my red, insulated coveralls that I'd brought to slip over my heavy wool pants and two light wool shirts.

"They're just about the warmest clothes an ice fisherman can wear," I said, "and not even a 20-mile, 24-below-zero wind can knife through them." I got dressed, and we went out into the bitter morning to find a restaurant.

The only restaurant open so early was filled with anglers, but we found a booth in the back. After butter-milk pancakes, maple syrup, lots of steaming-hot coffee, and good Wisconsin sausages, we climbed into Doug's jeep and headed for the lake that I'd been waiting a year to fish.

Our guide had gone ahead to get the holes drilled and the shanty set up. Luckily, we got Lyle Budnick to guide us. He's one of the best guides on the lake and has the best shanties.

"Guiding is a year-round business for Lyle," Doug explained, "along with running his Blue Roof Cottages

resort and boat livery during the spring, summer, and fall."

We found Lyle, a clear-eyed, ruddy-faced man who appeared to be in his thirties, drilling holes in the 20-inch ice over Sugar Loaf Bar. When I first saw him, his head and shoulders were just showing above a shower of ice thrown up by his power drill as it bit into the hard, black ice. An instant later the drill broke through the ice, and as Lyle pulled it out of the lake, a column of water spurted six inches above the ice and dropped back. Finally, eight holes stared at us like so many black eyes.

We piled out of the jeep to help Lyle move his shanty. It was on sled runners, and we easily moved it over the holes and anchored it against the wind. I was amazed at how neat and comfortable the shanty was. It had a clean, wooden floor and benches running down each side; several high windows provided light and ventilation. A gasoline lantern furnished more light, and a gas stove gave out enough heat to keep the holes from freezing over while we fished.



Doug Morrissette and Lyle look over the day's catch

We'd just set up when Don Bruendl walked in. Don had engaged Lyle and the shanty for the weekend but had agreed to share both guide and shanty with us. Don, I soon discovered, enjoyed company and seemed glad to have us barge in on him. He was in his forties and liked nothing better than to have a fishing rod in his hands and a few friends by his side. He had a ready joke for every occasion and kept us laughing all day. I found (*continued on page 91*)

father like son means much, though, he was chuckling to himself over that last run of Christie's and our double miss.

It was good to know, too, that there were at least two smart snowshoe hares in that Carthage cover, waiting for us to return so they could try to fool us again.

We would talk to Roy Waitt and set a date for the three of us to hunt, I decided. Do it right away. We'd give Roy the hares we'd shot.

I fell asleep trying to recall my favorite recipe for hasenpfeffer, one I got from an uncopyrighted booklet published by a brewer. Back home, I located it in my files, and I pass it along to you here:

- 1 cup vinegar
- 1 12-oz. can of beer
- 2 large sliced onions
- 1 tbs. mixed pickling spices
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 1 large or two small rabbits in serving portions
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 cup fat
- 1 tbs. sugar

Combine vinegar, beer, onions, pickling spices, salt, and pepper in a large earthenware bowl. Add the meat. Cover and let stand in a refrigerator one or two days, turning the meat several times. Dry the meat with absorbent paper and dip it in flour.

Melt fat in a large skillet and brown the meat on all sides. Pour off the fat. Strain the marinade and add it to the meat with sugar. Bring liquid to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer 40 minutes, or until the meat is tender. If desired, thicken the liquid with flour mixed with a little water.

Serve the meat with sauce, potato dumplings, buttered green beans, and ale or beer. Makes six to eight servings. THE END

THE FISHING LESSON

(continued from page 53)

number of times this same big boar stopped on the bank and watched the river patiently. At other times he ran into the water without pausing and made captures that were astonishingly swift and direct. (See "What's on Your Mind," page 4 of this issue, for more pictures of this boar and some interesting sidelights of the McNeil River trip.)

The three big cubs being taught to fish in these pictures undoubtedly will become as self-sufficient as the old boar or their mother one day. Less fortunate are the three younger cubs shown feeding on the half-submerged carcass of an adult bear.

I can only speculate on whether the dead bear was their mother. But these are undoubtedly cubs of the year, and during four days of intermittent observation I never saw them more than 150 yards from this spot or with another bear.

It's my guess that these cubs have been orphaned and are eating the flesh of their mother. It's likely that she

was killed in combat with another bear. Several years ago on Admiralty Island, and again a season or two later near Becharof Lake on the Alaska Peninsula, I observed cubs trying to nurse from sows that had been dead for several days.

I believe that cubs, after trying vainly for several days to nurse from a dead mother, will begin to eat the sow's flesh. It's an established fact that adult bears will eat carcasses of other bears, but from what I've seen, they don't do so until the flesh begins to break down. THE END

HOTTEST PLACE ON ICE

(continued from page 49)

that Don ran a successful automobile dealership in Green Lake and was one of the town's business leaders.

Lyle supplied us with short ice-jigging rods and open-face spinning reels. Each reel held 100 yards of 10-pound-test monofilament line rigged with a red and white plastic bobber and thin metal jig. He set the bobber to keep the bait just off bottom; then he showed me how to bait the jigs with two live minnows.

I don't know who started fishing first, but several others were jigging before I got my lure into the water. I let the monofilament spin off the reel for what seemed an incredibly long time. Bottom was a long way down—according to Lyle, about 120 feet.

Jigging for lakers requires a sensitive hand. At this season, lake trout are deep and take live bait gently. You have to give them time to get the bait firmly in their mouths before setting the hook. I usually count to 10 and yank on the line.

A very effective trick is to jig by developing a steady rhythm that lifts and lowers the bait 10 to 12 inches. On every tenth drop, leave the bait close to the bottom for a few seconds; then start jigging again. Lakers often grab the bait just as it starts up after such a pause.

Don had just lit a cigar when he yelled, "Got one." Then he groaned and said, "Had one, I mean." He pulled up his line, rebaited, and lowered it again. In a few minutes he yelled, "I got him this time, and he's a dandy."

We watched expectantly while Don hauled in the long line. Then suddenly Don moaned, "It's a damned mud puppy." He brought the thing out of the hole and slammed it down on the boards at his feet.

Mud puppies (*Necturus maculosus*) are amphibians with forelegs and fish tails; they seem to be half frog and half fish. They're plentiful in Green Lake and are usually found where lake trout live. Mud puppies steal bait and eat spawn; consequently they're hated by Green Lake trout anglers.

According to Doug Morrissette, mud puppies are the real villains of Green Lake, and until 10 years ago had cut so deeply into the natural spawning

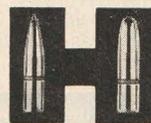
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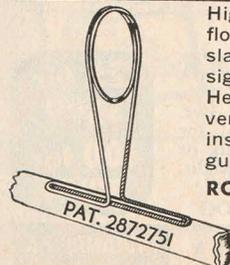


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that heavy annual stocking of lake trout was necessary to furnish top-drawer fishing. The problem had been that the trout had spawned only on Sugar Loaf Bar where there were no rock crevices for the eggs to fall into, out of reach of the hungry mud puppies.

The problem was solved in 1955 when 210 tons of granite was hauled out on the ice, spread over the bar, and left for the spring thaw to lower it into the lake. Divers later reported seeing hundreds of thousands of trout eggs in the crevices. Subsequent dives revealed large schools of trout fry swimming about. As a result, Green Lake has become the greatest lake-trout water in Wisconsin, and one of the best in the nation.

Just as Doug finished telling about mud puppies, Don landed another one, and Gene hauled one up. The boys began ribbing Lyle about putting us over a school of mud puppies, so we moved to a spot closer to shore, above 90 feet of water.

We'd no sooner started fishing again than Don shouted, "Got one." He heaved on his line, and his rod bent down into the water as he began yelling about what a good trout he had. He finally lifted a two-foot laker out of the hole. On Lyle's big scales it weighed five pounds four ounces.

I was jigging my lure and looking over Don's fish when I felt a tap at my bait. I waited for a moment, set the hook, and was fast to a laker that didn't want to come off the bottom. He went down and made long side runs under the ice. Bit by bit I got him up. When I finally lifted him through the hole, he proved to be a fat laker a shade over 20 inches long and a bit more than three and a half pounds.

I forget who landed the next trout, but after our third fish, there followed a long lull during which we smoked Don's cigars, swapped fish yarns, and ate the lunch that Don had generously provided. While we were finishing off the Polish sausages, Swedish bread, Wisconsin cheese, and hard-boiled eggs, Doug pulled up a laker an inch short of the 17-inch minimum.

The trout's swim bladder was badly distended because of the too-rapid change in pressure as the fish was pulled to the surface. When released he would be unable to go down again. Doug showed me how to remedy that.

Air had to be let out of its air bladder. For this purpose Doug carried a two-inch hypodermic needle. He carefully inserted the needle into the side of the fish just below the lateral line ahead of the dorsal fin. This procedure let the air out of the bladder. Then he gently took the hook from the trout's jaw, explaining that if the fish had swallowed it he would have cut the snell and left the hook in the fish.

He put the fish back into the lake and held it upright while it recovered. The trout shook itself, swam out of Doug's hand, and dived straight down.

Both Gene and Don landed small trout, and Doug used the needle, earning the name "the surgeon." Lyle sug-

gested that we move. He felt sure that once small trout move into an area, chances are the bigger ones have left.

It was 2 p.m. before we got set up again. This time I'd hardly started when I felt a tug on my line and sank my hook into a fair fish that yanked right back. He pulled my rod tip into the hole, and I began to get a lot of advice. In time I landed a laker that was a good match for the one Don had landed, all of 5½ pounds. I had limited out. In a few more minutes, Doug had his limit, and by 3 p.m. so had Lyle.

I wanted to see the lake and check on other shanties with Lyle. He knows nearly everyone who fishes Green Lake regularly, including fellows from as far away as Chicago. We borrowed a snowmobile and took off across the ice. Most fishermen had trout, and the majority of the fish ran between 17 and 24 inches, but there were quite a few large trout and one or two real trophies.

We scooted to the head of the lake to see what the northern-pike anglers were doing and found one fellow with a 15-pounder. It was lying on the ice outside his shanty and frozen stiff as a pine board. We saw a few more good pike and heard of some anglers from Milwaukee who had limited out on big walleyes.

We ran into one angler who'd landed a three-pound brown trout. He seemed prouder of that fish than he did of a four-pound laker he'd caught.

We ended our checking run by riding down to the pipe racks where the chamber of commerce and the conservation department were registering the big fish caught that weekend. We got a look at some Green Lake trophies.

The sun was nearing the trees on Sugar Loaf when we returned to the shanty and found six lakers lying on the ice by the door—and my two were still inside. It had been a great day.

On the way back, we came to a large expansion crack that ran clear across the lake with a foot or more of open water showing through. We had to turn around and head for the other end of the lake, the long way around.

As we pulled off the ice onto the road, Lyle invited me to his home for a dinner of lake trout fried by his wife. Doug leaned over and whispered that I was a lucky so and so, because Lyle's wife is one of the best cooks in Wisconsin.

Lyle lives a short walk from my motel. First I went to the motel and put on clean clothes; then I walked to Lyle's with the snow crunching underfoot. Lyle was just steaking the trout when I arrived. I noticed how firm and orange-pink the meat was, more like Pacific salmon than any lake trout I'd ever seen.

The unique color and delicious flavor of Green Lake trout are due to the real hero of Green Lake, the opossum shrimp (*Mysis relicta*), a small crustacean on which the lakers feed.

This is no ordinary fresh-water shrimp. It's a rare species, about an

inch long, that lives near the bottom in deep, cold water. Only two lakes in Wisconsin contain opossum shrimp, Lyle said. He went on to tell me that these shrimp have what is called the carotene factor—from the word carrot, denoting orange color—which lake trout convert into orange-pink meat.

Fortunately there are untold millions of 'possum shrimp in Green Lake. Doug Morrisette explained that the lake trout get their phenomenal growth by devouring hordes of them daily. In fact, he said, a Green Lake six-inch fingerling grows to 16 inches (one inch short of the legal length) after only three years. It takes a similar fingerling six years to reach this size in nearby Lake Michigan.

Next morning Gene and Doug were at my door before sunup. We went out into the frigid dawn and walked over the snow-covered streets to the restaurant. Breakfast down, we piled into Doug's jeep and sped to the lake.

This second day was not quite so cold as the first. It was 20 below when we started fishing and about 10 above at noon. The day was just as exciting as the first and the fish as willing.

Don Bruendl, so delighted with our good luck during the weekend, invited all of us to dinner at Green Lake's leading restaurant. It was a great way to end an unforgettable fishing trip.

How do you know when to go to Green Lake for the best ice fishing? It's usually the first two weeks after the lake is frozen hard enough to hold

a lot of weight. But Green is the deepest lake in Wisconsin and the last to freeze over. You can't judge its ice cover by the lake back home.

It's a good idea to write the secretary of the chamber of commerce, Green Lake, for ice conditions and a list of motels and guides. You'll find a shanty more comfortable than fishing out in the wind, and you can rent them. Or bring a windbreaker of some kind. Guides charge up to \$20 a day, but four anglers can split this by using the same guide and shanty. Motels offer off-season rates averaging \$6 a day single and \$8 double.

I can't think of a better way to spend a winter vacation than by traveling to some top-drawer lake, settling down in a trailer, pickup camper, or motel, and fishing through the ice. For one thing, in most places more fish are caught through the ice than are caught during the heat of summer. There are no water skiers or speedboaters to bother you, and no mosquitoes, black flies, or midges. If you dress correctly for the cold, you can be more comfortable in January than on a boiling-hot day in July.

Increasing numbers of fishermen are enjoying ice fishing. Only a few years ago, it was exceptional for an angler to travel more than 100 miles to fish through the ice. Now many anglers, including entire families, are driving, flying, or going by train for as much as 300 miles. I made the long trip from New York to Green Lake, more than

1,000 miles, and had one of the best winter vacations I've ever experienced.

Fishing licenses are always a bargain when you think what you get. The Wisconsin out-of-state license, for example, costs \$6, and a husband-and-wife license for 15 days is only \$7. The lake-trout season is open January 1 to September 30. But the ice is usually not strong enough for fishing till mid-January and lasts about eight or nine weeks. At this time, it's also legal to take brown trout, splake, northern pike, walleyes, sauger, bass, and all panfish.

A 10-percent spot check conducted in 1966 by the Wisconsin Conservation Department indicated that more than 10,000 legal lake trout were caught during the short ice season. This represents a 100-percent increase over the 1965 season. More than 20,000 bluegills were landed, also an increase over 1965. Many legal splake, northern pike, walleyes, crappies, and jumbo yellow perch showed up in the count.

If you drive to Green Lake, you can pick up a license on the way at a number of convenient spots, such as the Tourist Information Center on Interstate 94, two miles north of the Illinois line; the Wisconsin Vacation office, 205 North Michigan Avenue in Chicago; or any of six tourist information locations along the state line. If you haven't tried ice fishing, take down your tackle now and start planning. You'll find adventure, excitement, and good fishing.

THE END

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