



THE SMALLMOUTH HORIZON

Helping to Protect and Preserve Quality Smallmouth Bass Fishing

June 2008

Rock Now in Place on Blockhouse Creek

Last winter it was brought to the club's attention that an exceptional little Wisconsin Smallmouth stream needed some work that was not in the DNR's budget.



Blockhouse Creek, a tributary of the Little Platte River located in Grant County in the southwestern part of the state, had to be partially relocated after reconstruction of Highway 151.

Rock was available which had been donated by the Department of Transportation, but funding was unavailable to finish the remaining 1000 feet of new channel. The rock will provide habitat for the abundant forage base as well as spawning areas for the Smallmouth.

At that time our club agreed to help provide some of the money that was needed.

Gene Van Dyke and Scot Stewart of the DNR report that this phase of the project has now been completed with a total cost of \$3,126.52 (The original estimate was \$3,000.) The Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance and the Badger Fly Fishers have split the amount evenly between them.



Gene points out that the work should prove to be very beneficial to this fishery and at the bargain cost of \$3.59 per foot of stream bank protected. This compares with the \$20 to \$30 charged per foot by the National Resources Services Council for similar work.

In the future the department will be seeking funding for some additional work, including:

- Boulder retards
- Upgrading the second "V" deflector (shown above)
- possibly putting in some additional "V" deflectors
- Possibly rip rapping the toe of the sloped bank
- Rip rapping the banks that have not yet been worked on.



Feeding Pattern Emerges: Smallmouth bass now dining on perch

By Guy B. Stuller
Reprinted with permission from
the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

When an angler notices a new pattern on his local lake, it is certain to be information other local fisherman would be interested in.

When an angler notices a new pattern on his local lake that is then confirmed across the country in a national publication, all fishermen should be interested.

That is exactly what Carl Kaufmann of Woodstock IL, did while fishing for smallmouth bass on Lake Geneva over the past few summers.

“What we’ve discovered is because of the large quantities of perch, especially in Lake Geneva, the smallmouth bass are now feeding on them,” Kaufmann said. “This is changing their habits and it’s creating a very quality bite for smallmouth bass.”

Kaufmann, an accomplished fisherman who won the Masters Walleyes Red Wing Championship in 1995 and the Walleyes Unlimited Championship in 1996, had some impressive success in 2006 while fishing for smallmouth bass. The licensed Wisconsin guide caught and released 18 smallmouth weighing more than 5 pounds last year, with two more topping 6 pounds. He points to the new feeding pattern of the game fish as a key factor in the noticeably thicker-bodied smallmouth catches.

“You used to catch an 18- or 19-inch smallmouth and have it weigh only 2 pounds,” Kaufmann said. “Now we are seeing the same 18- or 19-inch fish at about 5 pounds.”

“This last year we caught some really beautiful smallmouth, and I can’t see anything else that has changed except the perch population.”

Beyond the clearwater lakes of Wisconsin, the connection between smallmouth and perch seems to have been noticed as far as the East Coast. Just as Kaufmann was being approached to give a seminar on the subject at the Journal Sentinel Sports Show, he received the January issue of National Bass Fishing magazine, in which there was a story confirming his experiences.

“This seems to be nationwide,” Kaufmann said. “Guys are finding it to be true in New York, Maine, Pennsylvania; wherever you have clearwater lakes, it’s kind of a new phenomenon.”

Trying to convince an avid fisherman that crayfish aren’t the main source of food for smallmouth can be a challenge, but just as the smallmouth population may have changed habits at certain lakes, the anglers that seek them out have begun to change theirs as well. Perch-colored artificial baits, doctoring tube

baits to make them resemble perch, and simply fishing for perch to use as bait are new techniques being used to take advantage of the feeding patterns, Kaufmann said.

Historically, the feeding patterns of a game fish run in a cyclical fashion, Kaufmann said, and it’s important to consider things out of

the normal in order to maximize the potential of your day on the lake. Every lake has a unique set of characteristics that evolves each season, and he points to the level of maturity at Lake Geneva as the reason behind the higher perch population and, in turn, the changing feeding pattern of the smallmouth.

“I think the addition of more weeds in the lake has allowed the perch to have a better spawn,” Kaufmann said. “Often you see massive perch eggs on the weed beds, and Lake Geneva is getting even more fertile as it ages.”

One thing that remains constant in this new scenario is the food chain. As the fisherman discovers easier ways to catch the smallmouth, the smallmouth discovers easier ways to feed its hunger.

“On every lake we see these cycles with panfish,” Kaufmann said. “Right now we have a really good perch population and fish are opportunists; if it is easy for a smallmouth to get, they will feed on it.”



Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance Ltd.

2701 Gust Road
Verona, WI 53593
(608) 848-3770
wisconsin-smallmouth.com

Jack Browning
President
(608) 277-8668
jackbrow@sbcglobal.net

Steve Winters
Vice President
(608) 524-6348
swinters@jvlnet.com

Mike Simon
Treas./ Membership
(608) 848-3770
madisonmike@tds.net

Gerry Zingg
Secretary
(608) 233-7348
zingger@charter.net

Articles, photos, information, and calendar events for the newsletter are encouraged and should be submitted by the 1st day of the month of issue to: Dan Johnson, 426 Glenway St., Madison WI 53711. If possible, MSWord files sent to: johnson7@tds.net are most appreciated.

River outing scheduled for August.

Saturday, August 9th is the date of the Wisconsin River outing for our club. This will be held on a stretch of the river below Stevens Point.

Some club members plan to meet for breakfast at the Four Star Family Restaurant at the I-39 exit 151 near Plover. The starting time has not been decided upon yet.

Going North on I-39, just take exit 151, turn right, and the restaurant is about 100 yards on your left. They have decent food, and a large parking lot for those who may be towing boats.

It's about 105 miles and a two hour drive from downtown Madison.

Here are the directions to the two landings on the river that our group will be using: Take I-39 to exit 156 (county highway HH) and go west for 2.6 miles to where HH turns left. Turn left on HH and go another 1.5 miles, which will take you just across the Wisconsin River, and turn left on River Road.

Take River Road .8 of a mile and the landing for the Smallmouth special regs section is on the left. There is a blue boat fishing access sign at the driveway entrance to the landing.

For those members who want to fish for Muskies as well as Smallmouth, and have the opportunity to fish either a flowage or the river proper, you will continue another 1.2 miles further on River Road and turn left on Blue Heron Lane. The landing and large parking area are at the end of Blue Heron Lane.

This landing is one of the access points for the Biron Flowage, which supports good numbers of Smallmouth and is one of the best Muskie fisheries in southern Wisconsin.

There is also about ¾ of a mile of river upstream from the landing that offers some wade fishing opportunities at normal August river levels. Both stretches offer some really nice fishing opportunities, and are not usually crowded, even on weekends.

Members with any kind of craft from canoes to large motorboats will find this stretch of the river very enjoyable. There are also numerous shore fishing possibilities along River Road.

Alternatively, if you don't have a boat and are looking for someone who does to fish with, call Steve

Winters and he will see what can be arranged. Weather permitting, this should be a fun time for everyone.

Call Steve Winters at 608-524-6348 for more details including the start time.

Orvis to host two events in June.

On Friday, June 20th Orvis will be hosting a fishing night at their retail store at 1700 Deming Way in Middleton. The event will run from 6:00 to 9:00 P.M.

Orvis endorsed guide and fly tyer of the year Greg Senyo owner of Steelhead Alley Outfitters, will be giving fly tying demonstrations and will do a presentation on fishing Lake Erie tributaries for steelhead in Ohio and trout fishing in Pennsylvania.

Nick Volk of Streamside Outfitters will give a presentation on effective techniques for fishing Wisconsin's Spring Creeks. And Eric Hauser from Double Gunn Cigars will be there with samples of his new Labrador line of cigars.

They will also have Helios rods on hand to cast, and attendees will be able to test their casting accuracy and skill at the par three casting course!

Hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be provided by a local catering company.

The Orvis rod swap begins June 1st. Bring any rod (not exclusive to fly rods) and receive a 25% discount on a Zero Gravity, T3, Superfine, or TLS Power Matrix rod. Donated rods will go to local charities, including the Boy Scouts. This offer does not include Helios, Clearwater, Streamline, or sale rods.



Club member Dan Zavadsky with a nice little smallie taken on an unnamed piece of water.

Our Next Meeting:

There are no monthly meetings from May through August. Call a friend, go fishing, catch, photograph and release, and send us a picture.

See you in September!

Upcoming Events:

- **Friday, June 20th 6:00 — 9:00 P.M.**
Orvis, 1700 Deming Way, Middleton, WI
Fishing Night. See details on previous page.
- **Saturday, August 9th Time tba.**
Wisconsin River below Stevens Point
Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance outing. See details on previous page.