

OUTDOORSUPDATE

OF THE OUTDOORS:

Hard Water Fishing On Lake Of The Woods

BY GARY HOWEY
Hartington, Neb.

A couple of times each year, we head north to do some fishing on Lake of the Woods, once during the summer and again during the winter.

If you've never been up north, it's quite a treat as it's big water where there are hundreds and hundreds of icehouses on the ice, every size, shape and variety.

As a matter of fact, this year, the Zippel Bay Igloo made its appearance on the ice.

Resembling a large igloo, this large ice-house/bar is a big attraction as it has a full bar, big screen TV, tables and benches where you can not only eat a pizza, you have an opportunity to wet a line while enjoying your favorite drink.

The largest fish taken by anglers in the igloo is a 48" northern that Desire, the young lady that runs the establishment took the first week in February.

Ice fishing is extremely popular on Lake of the Woods, part of the reason being that in the winter you're allowed to use two rods and the limit for walleye and sauger is raised to eight (4 walleyes and 4 sauger).

Walleyes are the larger cousin of the sauger, reaching over 10 pounds with the average size probably being in the 2 to 4 pound class.

Walleyes are identified by their greenish gold color along with the white tip on their lower tail fin.

Sauger on the other hand are much more streamlined and more aggressive than walleyes. Primarily a river fish, the average size for sauger would be 1 to 2 pounds with a fish over 3-pounds being a real trophy.

Getting on Lake of the Woods out of Zippel Bay is easy as ice roads are plowed out onto the 30" of ice, allowing fishermen easy access to their houses. Streets are all marked with street signs such as Perch, Big Fish and Walleye, making it easy for anglers to get to the right spot.

On this trip, we were filming with Nick



Zippel Bay's Igloo has been quite a hit since making its appearance this year on Lake of the Woods.

and Deanna at Zippel Bay Resort. Joining us were Team Outdoorsmen Adventures members Larry Myhre (Sioux City, Iowa) and Jon Thelen (Crystal, Minn.)

Our plan was to start shallow in the morning, working deep during the day and then back shallow for the last light bite.

A cold front had rolled in the night before, which generally shuts the fish down or at least makes them a harder to catch so we knew that it could be a tough bite.

To combat the cold front, we went to live bait, (small hook, split shot and micro bobber) while downsizing our presentation using baits like the 3/16th Lindy Frostee Jigging Spoons.

We were using fat head minnows, going with the smaller minnows the majority of the time.

When using the jigging spoon, a whole minnow may be too much for cold front fish, so we went with a partial minnow (minnow head) as this worked best for us.

Every once in awhile, we'd drop down a Lindy Darter which not only caught a few fish, it also attracted fish into the area as several times our locators would light up below the darter and then our livebait rigs would take a fish.

We were fishing in icehouses placed over rock and rubble, fishing the shallower water on the top early and late and as

the sun got brighter moving off the edge into deeper water.

Since it was such a lite bite, we needed to keep our live bait rigs at a minimum, going with a small hook, lighter split shot and a bobber.

When fishing cold front conditions, you want you bobber to verify float on the top of the water so that the fish feel no resistance when they mouth your bait.

I like to use a very small slip bobber, one that is just visible in the ice hole. If you've ever had a fish pull your bobber down part way and then let go, that's a pretty good indicator that your using too large of a float.

If all you have are the larger floats, you can add a larger split shot so that the float will suspend deeper in the water column.

A good locator is a must when ice fishing otherwise you're fishing blind as all species of fish will move up and down in the water column and can be found a few feet below the ice at times.

If you're fishing right off the bottom as many ice fishermen do and the fish are above you, you're in for a long day!

Locators will indicate when a fish comes in under your transducer, which allows you to either bring your bait up or drop it down putting your bait where the fish are.

We all caught some nice fish and a lot



PHOTO: LARRY MYHRE

Team Outdoorsmen Adventures member Jon Thelen, of Crystal, Minn., poses one of the many walleyes they took while ice fishing out of Zippel Bay Resort on Lake of the Woods.

of the smaller more aggressive sauger, which is a good sign for the years to come, as there will be a tremendous catchable sauger population in years to come.

If you're looking for a place to do some ice fishing yet this winter, Zippel Bay Resort will have icehouses out until the end of March.

We ended up taking home our eight fish limit on this trip and are patiently waiting for the soft water season when we'll make another trip to Lake of the Woods, the walleye capital of the world.

For more information on Zippel Bay Resort and the excellent fishing on Lake of the Woods, go to www.zippelbayresort.com.

Gary Howey, Hartington, Neb., is a former tournament angler and hunting and fishing guide. His award winning Outdoorsmen Adventures television series can be seen on KTTM/KTTW-TV, Sioux Falls/Huron on Saturday @ 6:30 am and Sunday @ 7:00 am. For more outdoors information go to www.outdoorsmenadventures.com.

Pursuing Coyotes With Hounds Is A Fading Art

BY DENNIS ANDERSON

(c) 2010, Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

IN SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA — Jerry Hanson lives in the Twin Cities but has hunted coyotes in this country for 20 years. His dad started him running hounds, though back then the prey was foxes. "Now the coyotes have run the foxes out," Hanson said. "The two won't live together. Coyotes will kill a fox."

As Hanson spoke, he and I were in his pickup. This was Wednesday, and we weren't far from the hunting cabin he stays in when he and his American foxhounds make the trip down here. Owned by a friend, the cabin comes rent-free with a wood-burning stove and a pretty good bed.

"I have to take a snowmobile to get to it, but that's OK," he said.

Hanson is a houndsman, an uncommon type of hunter in Minnesota these days. Time was when many farmers hereabouts kept a hound or two and let them run foxes at night. But a good hound today is a rare sight.

"These dogs need exercise and training," Hanson said, "and in Minnesota it's hard to find a place where you can run them."

It was noon, or nearly so, and a pair of Hanson's foxhounds had been trailing a coyote for nearly two hours. Despite the deep snow, they seemed still to be moving effortlessly, a fact confirmed by Hanson's handheld GPS, which tracked the dogs — Thunderbolt and Lucky — via the signal-sending locator collars attached to their necks.

"I'm not entirely familiar yet how to use this thing," Hanson said, his fingers fiddling with the gadget. "It would be better if I did."

Five hunters were in our bunch, some armed with shotguns, others flat-shooting .223s loaded with 36-grain Barnes Grenade bullets. It is, this method of coyote hunting, a social affair often involving this many participants, give or take a few.

Jesse Hadler is here from Lake City, Minn., with his two hounds, and Trapper Aesche from Frontenac, Minn., and Steve Schroeder, Reed Engler and Hanson from the Twin Cities area.

Some coyote hunters prefer to chase these animals without partners or dogs. A call is used, oftentimes that of a distressed rabbit, to attract a coyote to within rifle range. Then, if possible, the animal is popped, and just like that, if things go right, the hunt is ended.

"I prefer hunting with dogs," Hanson said. "For one thing, I like dogs. For another, I enjoy hunting with other people. Also, this way, the hunt takes longer, and I just like that."

Regardless the type of hunting, the effect on the coyote population is the same: zero, or nearly so. Capable, seemingly, of repopulating themselves to counter any threat, coyotes are overabundant throughout Minnesota, surviving on anything that is edible, and many things that are not.

Oftentimes a houndsman will look for fresh coyote tracks crossing a road and put his dogs to chase there. Maybe the tracks are fresh and the chase is in fact begun. But maybe the tracks aren't fresh enough, and the dogs never pick up a trail.

Or perhaps the tracks lead the dogs into danger. "One time a coyote led Lucky through a yard that had fighting dogs," Hanson said. "They weren't pit bulls, but they were that type of dog. Lucky didn't come out of that too good. I had to bust up the fight and carry him out of there."

A vehicle and a tank full of gas are required for coyote hunting with hounds. A lot of miles can be covered keeping up with the dogs and, eventually, heading off a coyote.

"That's why I hunt down here," Hanson said. "I know the landowners and have permission from most of them to cross their land. There are a lot of places in Minnesota where I could hunt coyotes. But to avoid trouble, you really need to know the landowners."

For a long while, we had no visual contact with Hanson's dogs or the coyote they chased.

Then Aesche came by in his truck, reporting that he saw the dogs not far north of us.

Turning to me, Hanson asked politely: "Do you mind if I drive somewhat aggressively?"

"OK," I said. "Sure."

Whereupon we fishtailed along a back-country road, high-tailing it toward a long bend in the snow-covered gravel, through which we sort of drifted until the pickup's tires again gained traction, rocking us ahead.

A half-mile farther along, we skidded to a stop in time to see a coyote fairly sprint across a snowswept farm field, 300 yards ahead of Lucky and Thunderbolt, who trailed gamely behind, tongues swinging.

Then, like a ghost, the coyote disappeared, offering no shot.

This chase could end various ways, Hanson said. The coyote might seek refuge in a brush pile, for a standoff until hunters arrived. Or the coyote might get away, running the dogs ragged in the process.

Or a hunter might make a killing shot. "A coyote runs every night and is in great

condition," Hanson said. "I believe a coyote could run 15 miles an hour for an entire day. He's really only about 4 inches across in the chest. And a coyote doesn't weigh much — a big male is 35 pounds and a female about 10 pounds less. My foxhounds, on the other hand, weigh about 80 pounds and have greater lung capacity. But it's hard to get them in shape anymore to run all day. And the snow tires them out."

Soon Aesche was stuck in the middle of a field, his pickup held up by snow.

We seemed no closer to the coyote than when the chase began.

"We need to change dogs," Hanson said. "Lucky and Thunderbolt are tired."

Now Hadler removes two foxhounds from crates in the back of his truck and leads them on a leash toward a woodlot.

Hanson also breaks out a new hound, Annie, and leads her in the same direction. Engler, Aesche and Schroeder position themselves strategically in nearby fields, their guns ready.

Hadler and Hanson free their dogs, and the coyote busts from the woodlot, lickety-split, opening its legs and using up country fast.

The deep snow seems not at all to bother the fleeing animal.

I hear what seem to be two shots. Crack. Crack.

Or maybe not. Either way, the coyote runs unfazed across the white nothingness, no place to hide, the hounds in pursuit.

Jumping behind the wheel of Hanson's truck, I take my turn driving aggressively on country roads. My camera is my gun, and I'm trying to get close enough for a shot.

Two miles away, the coyote doubles back.

Experienced at this, Hanson, Adler, Schroeder and Aesche know intuitively the direction the coyote is likely to run.

"Like everyone else, a coyote is a creature of habit," Hanson says.

Nearly four hours have passed since the chase began.

The coyote crosses a county road, soon to disappear into another woodlot. Waiting there is Hanson, a load of buckshot in his 12 gauge.

A squeeze of the trigger and the chase ends.

Retrieving the female coyote from beneath a tree, Hadler discovers that her right rear leg below the knee had been lost long ago, perhaps to an accident, or to an encounter with a trap or gun.

"She ran all that way on three legs," Hanson said. "They're tough animals. I respect them a lot."

TROPHY SPOTLIGHT



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Dilyn Tramp caught these three fish on the Missouri River on Feb. 28.

Antelope Hunters Report Success

PIERRE — One of South Dakota's first fall hunts is archery antelope, and through surveys from the 2009 season submitted by hunters, the state Game, Fish and Parks Department begins planning the 2010 seasons.

"Each year, our agency follows up the different hunting seasons with surveys to determine harvest and other season-related information," said Corey Huxoll, GFP harvest survey coordinator. "The surveys are a vital part of our work and a direct contribution that hunters make to the management of wildlife in South Dakota."

About 2,400 archery antelope licenses were issued in 2009. Hunters had a 16 percent success rate, taking 516 bucks and 189 does. Overall harvest was down from the previous two years.

The 2010 archery antelope season will be proposed by the GFP Commission at its April meeting and finalized at the May meeting. The application process for the 2010 season will open in mid-summer.

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