

The Dogumentary

27th Year

The Waterdogs Fishing Club

March 2009

March Meeting at VFW

The March meeting will be in the bowels of the Hopkins VFW once again. The road pizza dinner is at 6pm, and the meeting will begin at 7:00.

2009 Waterdogs Fishing Club Calendar

March 5	Monthly Meeting
March 7	WI Winter Trout Opens
March 21	Trout Tournament
<u>March 28</u>	<u>Trout Back-Up Date</u>
April 2	Monthly Meeting
April 25	Crappie Tournament
May 7	Monthly Meeting
<u>May 30-31</u>	<u>Walleye Tournament</u>
June 4	Monthly Meeting
June 19	Bass Tournament
July 2	Monthly Meeting
<u>July 18-25</u>	<u>2009 RockNRoll Musky Tour</u>
August 6	Monthly Meeting
August 22	Bass Tournament II
Sep 3	Monthly Meeting
<u>Sep 19</u>	<u>Multispecies Tournament</u>
Oct 1	Monthly Meeting
Nov 5	Banquet

See the last page for the 2009 Tournament Details

Only 5 Months until the LOTW Trip
Start your forearm exercise program

From the Desk of the President, Helen Tom Keller



We'll meet on Thursday, March 5, at the Hopkins VFW at 6:00 pm for dinner with the meeting beginning 7:00pm. We attempted to get a speaker for March, but our efforts went unfulfilled, unless Kirk can pull a rabbit out of hat.

I tried to get Mike Kurre, the MN DNR Director of Outreach. He was interested and willing to speak to us and very familiar with the Waterdogs through the Cast Away for Kids program. Apparently the club has some notoriety in the Minnesota fishing community for our efforts. Anyway, he can't speak on Thursdays due to the FAN OUTDOORS radio show he co-hosts with Billy Hildebrand. Maybe we can bring the radio show to the club? I'll work on that one.

Mike and I talked for a bit so I asked him about what volunteer opportunities the DNR might have for a club like ours. I could sense his excitement on the other end of the phone, leading me to believe he doesn't get that many inquiries about voluntarism. He will contact me with some specifics, but he had two immediate

thoughts that I think the club should consider. The first was helping at the Governors Fishing Opener in May. I am not sure where it is this year, but he said that all the local guides get booked and they are always in the need of more fishermen to take groups out or to help around the docks getting groups settled. They also hold a kids fishing event he thought might be a good fit for a group like ours.

The second opportunity is in June at a "Take a Kid Fishing" event. The goal is to expose kids to fishing who would not normally get the chance. I told him that I thought some of the Dogs took part in this in the past, but I was not sure. I'll provide an update once I get more information.

Also, thanks to the Dogs helping out at the "Fishing for Life" event on Feb 28-29. Let us know how it goes at our Thursday meeting.

PLAYING HOOKY

Starring: Carmen & Fluffee

Just The Facts	
Date	Tuesday February 17, 2009
Water	Whitewater Valley
Conditions	Low water, extremely clear
Time	11:00am start, 5:00pm finish
Temps	37° Start, 42° High/finish
Skies	Bluebird Start, Overcast Finish
Winds	Negligible-to-light breeze
Baits	98% jig-and-twister
Species	Brown and Brook Trout
Largest	11 ½" Brook
Total	Approx 15

And now the Embellishment:

I've been traveling entirely too much these days to take advantage of the limited number of above freezing days this winter. If I'm not mistaken you could count them on one hand. If I wasn't traveling, I was either sick, or it was raining. But I do love winter trout fishing and have been ever watchful for a break in the weather.

The week prior to Valentine's Day held a glimmer of hope, but I was fighting a business meeting and a cold and my first draft swabbie, Carmen was 200 times worse off. He

suggested President's Day, but the long range forecast didn't bode well. Neighborhood weather man Ian Leonard said a high of 34. Not worth the risk. If he missed the mark by a point or two we'd be picking ice out of our guides all day. Even the day before President's Day Monday the high was expected at maybe 35. I was sorely disappointed to see the thermometer hit 39 and was moaning all day. Tuesday dawned with me getting ready for work and catching the morning forecast where highs of close to 40 were being called for. Enough is enough, the time is right. I headed in to the office with several text and email messages to Carmen. Frankly, if Raymo didn't respond by 8:00, the entire Waterdogs phone tree was going to get activated. At 8 am I head a one word response to my one word email; "Trout"? and that was "When"?

By 9:30 we were hauling down Route 52 to the Whitewater Valley watching the car thermometer climb every mile. Blue skies and 37 degrees greeted us as we pulled in to my favorite stretch of the South Branch. I had not fished the South Branch in quite some time. It was a very changed river. The floods of two years ago had really altered the look of the place. I could have dealt with the change, considering the fine day it was. Carmen and I both assured ourselves that catching fish was secondary to being outside, on the water, on a beautiful day. A few hours later our tune was changing a little.

We did not see a single fish for the first two hours. Typically under similar circumstances catching fish is still hard, but at least you see them; spooking them and watching handfuls scatter as you cross the stream. Things were so sparse we couldn't even spook a fish. Even Carmen with his lung rattling cough couldn't startle a fish. I'm always pitching my bait into several different kinds of features; whether dark pools, deep banks, fast water, log jams, you name it. On any given day you can usually pull something from each of these locales. On this given day we saw nothing from any of these features. Finally, on the shady side of a far bank I was able to pull a brownie out from under a log that was lying parallel to the bank. She taped out at 11½ ". A few more casts further down the log had me dropping my jig over a low hanging branch. As I'm pulling my bait through the water trying to free it from it's

arboreal entanglement, another fish hits and is promptly pulled up in to the tree where she danced for a moment and spit the hook. I did recover the bait though!

A couple more hours on this water had perhaps two more fish show themselves to us but nothing landed. In 4 ½ hours of fishing; 1 ½ landed and maybe 3 drive-bys. As beautiful as the day was, not catching fish was getting tiring. “Carmen, it’s time for a change”. I suggested one of a couple of tiny brookie streams I know. You may have heard of this one, it’s called Un-named Creek. There are several islands on Lake of the Woods that go by the same name on the daily tote boards.

It’s a tiny creek and after walking from the car a bit we come upon the first hole. The spot is just big enough to park my Honda Pilot there, no larger. Six casts in to it and we have 5 brook trout on the board with our largest at just over 11 inches. The hole is teeming with them and they are aggressive. What was interesting to see was even some 3-4” fish were taking our bait. This is a great sign in that the local population of brookies are reproducing in the creek. We decide to go down stream and rest the hole after 6 or so fish. The creek has very little fishable water for large stretches. Those “holes” that do present themselves aren’t going to harbor fish of any size. In essence Carmen and I take a 45 minute round trip walk back to our starting hole. Once again we’re back and take another 7 fish or so with Carmen hitting a string of 9 – 11 inchers. It’s a blast and leaves Carmen pondering why the heck didn’t I just take him here at 11:00am. We had so many 10 and 11 inch fish that we must have hit the same few fish 2 or 3 times.



Carmen Cradles a *Salvelinus fontinalis*

While the fishing was tough on the South Branch, we may have been victims of the bright skies and low, clear water. But then again, perhaps the system has not fully recovered from the beatings it took awhile back. If you need winter trout fishing, you may want to consider a slightly longer drive to the Root River system (though I have not fished it in two years as well) or wait until March 1st and head to Wisconsin. I hope to be there soon.



This one measures Four Thumbs Long!

Griz's Ice Fishing Adventures

I've spent a fair amount of time on the ice in the past few weeks, but in general the fishing has been pretty slow. I think that the fish have just been in a neutral or negative mood (at least in the lakes that I've been fishing).

1/31/09 – Glenn Loch, Chippewa Falls, WI

A friend and I set out six tip-ups with shiners for pike in five feet of water on what has normally been a good area of the lake in the past. We moved the tip-ups to different hole locations periodically over the 5.5 hours that we fished, using at least 20 different holes by the end of the day. When it was all said and done we only managed to land one 22" pike and only had 4 other flags.

2/7/09 – 2/9/09 – Upper Red Lake, Waskish, MN

This was the first of two annual trips that I've been doing for about the last six years or so. Fishing has been slow in general all year on Upper Red. We used various jigs (mostly glow jigs) tipped with crappie minnows and rattle reels with walleye shiners. We were fishing in 12' of water about 1.5-2 miles southwest of the North Crib Cluster on a small hump. Overall we caught 18 walleyes (kept 9 between 13" and 16.99", the rest were over 17" or too small to keep), two perch and two pike (one small one and one 29"er that was in the slot). No crappies on this trip. We had four guys on this trip and stayed in the rental house for two nights. Even though the fishing was slow, it was still a good trip.

2/14/09 – Finley Lake, Jim Falls, WI

I fished this lake for the first time as it has no public access. A friend of my Dad's owns the land around $\frac{3}{4}$ of the lake and let us access through it. His neighbors had been catching crappies, bluegills and pike on the lake a few weeks prior to our trip. Three of us fished the lake for about 2.5 hours before moving on to another lake. In that time I drilled at least 60 holes across and around the small lake ranging from 3'-19' of water. We had six tip-ups out and used three jigging rods and three fish finders. The shiners on the tip-ups were nearly dead after only being in the water for a little over two hours and none of us marked a single fish on the fish finders. I fear that the lake has frozen out.

2/14/09 – East Triple Lake, New Auburn, WI

Again, three of us fished this lake for about 4.5 hours. Once again I drilled nearly 75 holes ranging from 3'-15' of water working our way across and around this small lake. Eventually we were able to find a school of panfish in about 6' of water off of a point, but getting them to bite was another story. By the end of the day I managed to catch only one bluegill and a friend managed to catch a small largemouth. Combined with our earlier experience on Finley Lake, this was probably the worst/least productive day that I have ever had while ice fishing, especially for drilling as many holes as we did and covering a lot of ground.

2/15/09 – Rock Lake, New Auburn, WI

A friend and I fished for crappies and bluegills for about 2 hours before moving to another lake. The crappies had been biting on the lake the previous week and my friend weighed a 16", 2 lb.- 6 oz. crappie for another guy only 8 days earlier. We marked a lot of fish in 10'-30' of water, but again the bite was slow. We did catch several small bluegills and perch, but we decided to move on to a different lake and look for more aggressive fish.

2/15/09 – Marshmiller Lake, New Auburn, WI

The two of us set out 4 tip-ups for pike and jigged for panfish in 5'-6' of water using small jigs tipped with waxies for about 3.5 hours. I marked fish on the graph almost constantly, but they were not active and the bite was very light when they did decide to cooperate. We managed to catch 30-40 bluegills between the two of us, but only 5 were big enough to keep. The highlight of this trip was being able to take pictures of a car that had recently gone through the ice (see photo), not that I was delighting in someone else's misfortune or anything, you just don't see it that often in person. My guess was that they were driving across the lake from one resort/bar to the other, veered off course, missed the landing, and ended up in the small bay where the creek enters the lake off to the side of the landing. When the newspaper came out later in the week, my Dad confirmed that I was exactly correct in my guess and that the driver was subsequently charged with drunk driving.



Introducing some New Bass Structure

2/19/09 – 2/22/09 – Upper Red Lake, Waskish, MN

This was the second of my two annual trips, and again, the fishing was slow. We again used various jigs (mostly glow jigs) tipped with crappie minnows and rattle reels with rainbows and suckers. We also set tip-ups out for pike on several occasions. We were fishing in 14' of water about 2 miles west of where we were fishing on my first trip (about 5.5-6 miles from shore). Overall we caught 18 walleyes (kept 8 between 13" and 16.99", the rest were over 17" or too small to keep), two perch, three crappies and one nice 38.5", 14 lb. – 9 oz. pike (see photo). We had five guys on this trip and stayed in the rental house for three nights.



The big pike was the highlight of this trip. I marked it on my graph, and then another guy marked it on his. I had him turn on my Marcum underwater camera and we watched it on there for a minute or so (and knew that it was a pretty decent fish). A third guy then marked it on the far side of the house heading in the direction of out tip-ups outside. Terry (the guy

in the photo) tied on a larger jigging spoon and tipped it with a 4"-5" sucker at set it in the rod holder. We thought that the fish had left the area, but about 1.5 hours later the rod slammed down in the rod holder and drag was peeling off of the reel. We managed to clear all of the other lines from the water before the pike could get tangled in them and, after a few minutes of fighting, Terry landed the fish.

It's been nice to get out fishing a lot recently, but hopefully the action will start getting better now that we are getting close to March. I hope to get out at least one day this weekend as well.

A World Record?

By Kojak

A few weeks back, the Perp found some information, I think online, and sent it to Flyboy. The information concerned the world record for muskies caught on a fly rod. Turns out the world record is 51.25 inches for muskies caught on a fly rod, using a 36 pound tippet.

You may recall that Fly Boy caught a 51 inch muskie at Lake of the Woods. He used a 20 pound tippet. He has not been able to find any information concerning muskies caught with the equipment he used. So, he has applied to the Freshwater Fishing Society to certify his catch and release of the 51 inch muskie, using the 20 pound tippet, as a world record.

The application has been witnessed and notarized. Now he is waiting for an answer. I will let you know the results when I hear. I think it is kind of cool to think our club might have an opportunity to be part of a world record.



The Possible World-Record Musky

Photo Committee Reminder

Dogs are reminded and encouraged to take photos of things other than a partner holding a fish, too! The March trout event is a prime example of bucketfuls of photo ops -- putting on/removing waders, boots, partner falls down in the creek, pulling a partner out of a creek after he falls down, partner drying off, partner netting a fish, rapids, water over rocks, picture of water coursing over your own feet while you're standing on rocks in shallow water, picture of a bad backlash after ice has jammed up your rod tip, fishing under a bridge, following your partner across a stream, and the list goes on and on. But don't forget to take along a Ziploc bag and keep your camera in it – you might be giving a camera to your partner to take a photo of YOU after you go down! And of course, photos of dogs holding fish are always good, so don't forget those obvious ones...

Greenstick

2009 Waterdogs Tournament Series

Mark Your Home and Work Calendars Now!

Date	Species	Location	Dogs in Charge
Saturday, March 21 (March 28 Backup)	Trout	Pierce and Rush Counties, WI	Janitor, Nasty, Shatner
Saturday, April 25	Crappie	Washington Lake	Mama's Boy, Griz
Sat-Sun, May 30-31	Walleyes	Big Stone Lake	Duper, Analist, Perp
Friday, June 19	Bass	Clearwater Lake	Helen, Buick
Saturday, August 22	Bass	Chisago Lakes	Chips, Farm B, Fluffy
Saturday, Sep 19	Multispecies	Minnetonka	Greenstick, Shorty, Kirk