

# The Dogumentary

23rd Year

The Waterdogs Fishing Club

August 2005

## Wind on the Water

### Lake of the Woods Special Report

There's nothing like the weather to put your fishing skills in perspective, as was the case at this year's annual trip to Lake of the Woods. What started out as a promise to beat last year's big results, with an early report of great success by the musky school turned out to be a struggle for most guys to equal their results of the past year. A few guys did manage to catch personal bests, first muskies, and some large fish, and we all had a great time, but the weather made it difficult to measure up to our earlier expectations. The chief culprit was the wind, which started blowing hard on Sunday, and remained strong throughout the week until Friday, making many areas un-fishable on many days. The morning temperatures were also in the 40s on a couple mornings, so we were bundled up pretty well on the way out each day. The club did manage to catch 69 muskies during the week, which compares to 108 the year before, 84 in 2003, and 66 in '02.

Here are some of the vital statistics from this year's trip (with comparisons to last year in parentheses):

Number of Muskies: 69 (108)  
Number of 40"+ Muskies: 16 (25)  
5 Largest: 47, 47, 44, 44, 44 (51.5, 51.5, 49.5, 48, 48)  
Most Muskies by Bagbalm: 11 (15)  
Average number of muskies per guy: 2.4 (4.9)  
Trip Musky Skunks: 5 (1)  
Largest Northern: 41 (41)  
Largest Walleye: 23 (23.5)  
Largest Smallie: 18 (19)

Although the weather was tough, the week was still full of good times and funny moments, which are typical when the club gets together.

**The trip began** innocently enough with the first convoy that left town on Friday at noon. It was an uneventful ride up, with no breakdowns or problems. We arrived in Warroad around 6, and broke up into groups checking into the Super 8 hotel, gassing up, and buying those ridiculous I-68 permits. Some guys ended up with fumble-fingered typos on their permits which ended up being useless forms anyway, as Duper failed in his responsibility to call in for all the trip members on each day. Apparently, we are all now under arrest. One of the best parts of the Friday drive-up was the SA station and Subway next door to the hotel, which made gassing up and getting a lunch for Saturday a breeze. The Saturday convoy also had a trip up that was without problems, which is always something to be thankful for, with all that gear rolling down the road for 350 miles.

#### Off to a Good Start

The Saturday fishing started around 8 a.m. for the early convoy, and 2:30 for the Saturday drive-up group. In early action, Duper caught a 22" walleye off Stange Island on his 4<sup>th</sup> cast after buying his license. Later in the morning, Duper and Carmen, both fishing out of Shorty's boat, each caught muskies of 39" and 41", which helped to boost the first day excitement. Later in the evening, a 47 incher was caught by OJ, and another 40 by Hadji to bring the first day total to 9 muskies, which was a fairly decent start to the trip.



**OJ Strikes Early with a 47**

A new type of fish call was also discovered by Father Bertha while fishing with Janitor on the first day. When a nice-sized fish followed Bertha's lure to the boat, Bertha got excited and his foot accidentally hit a little red button on the console of Janitor's boat. The button, was of course, the boat horn and the BEEP sent the fish swimming away for safety. This scene was repeated on other occasions in the Janitor's boat during the week, and not once did the fish attack the lure on the signal.

The first boat problem came early in the trip, as Fluffy's motor died in the middle of a run near Cochrane Island. Attempts to revive the motor by Fluffy and his assistant, Mayo, were futile, even using the tips from the owner's manual. Shorty and crew were close by and came to the rescue, and towed the disabled ship back to the resort. It was not a record tow for the club, but a fairly long gallant effort nonetheless. Back at the resort, Suzy luckily ran into Duane (last name unknown), the only outboard repairman at the Angle, and he agreed to come by later to look at Fluffy's motor. On his way back to the dock, he asked Fluffy if he checked the kill switch, and the Fluffmeister looked and saw that it was half-way out. Upon pushing it in, the motor started right up, without Duane even touching the boat, which earned the additional handle of 'Kill Switch' for Fluffy, which no doubt will haunt him for a long time. The owner's manual even neglected to suggest the kill switch as a possible solution to a motor that won't start - Idiots! Nonetheless, Duane properly earned his \$20 minimum repair fee, including a nice tip.

*There once was a Dog named Fluffee  
His top speed was never enough  
And one day he bitched  
as to Shorty's boat he was hitched  
Now we all have to call him Kill Switch*

After day One, the skunk flags were sent a-flying at both the Party Cabin and Hadji's Crib.

### **Day Two: Blow Wind, Blow**

Sunday started out as a normal day with sunshine and the promise of a good day of fishing. The plan was to fish until after noon, and then come back in for a lunch provided by Jessica Fandrich and crew. As the morning went on, the westerly wind came up and made fishing difficult in any spots that weren't protected. By noon, it was a ridiculous gale-force, even with a warm temperature and not a cloud in the sky. Moving between protected areas was a real challenge. But, the worst was yet to come, as the wind from the west made the ride across the shallower and more exposed Angle Inlet nearly impossible.

### **Fear Factor: Lake of the Woods Edition**

The rollers were 4 to 5 feet high in the totally exposed inlet, and with the wind that was gusting to over 40 mph, it was a wild and wet ride for all. Probably a real good day to have your killswitch cord attached to you. At the very least, all the fishermen were wearing their life jackets as they tried to cross the rough water. Several different strategies were used, from going slow to pounding through the waves. One strategy involved plowing through the waves past the Outpost, and then, quickly turning the boat to ride the westerly winds back to the Outposts boat channel. Anyway, all boats were back in time for Father Bertha's mass and lunch at the lodge, except for Juan Valdez and Southern Man. New captain Farm Boy came through the waves in his new boat and was excited about the way that it handled the big waves. He was beaming as he talked about how great his new boat was, as the lake water dripped off his head. No matter what kind of boat you were in, it was impossible to come through the waves without getting soaked to the bone. It was warm and sunny despite the wind, so few of us had rain gear on for the wet ride home.

Nine guys attended mass, and then we all went over to the lodge for a big lunch. The wind was still howling, and the guys were all in agreement that we would wait out the blow until later, and see if it would die down enough to go out and fish again. But our big concern was the boat still out in the waves, and each boat that came pounding down the Angle caused everyone to stand to see if it was Laun. Several guys tried to raise the lost boat on their radios, and even Jessica gave it a try from the more powerful lodge radio. After 6 p.m., we were talking about sending out the search parties to see if we could find the guys before dark.

By 7:00, the wind had died down a little and another boat came down the Angle, which turned out to be our boys. They had spent much of the day holed up on an island out of the wind, waiting out the weather. The boat had trouble handling the waves because it would not plane out and also had a bent prop from a recent rock, a radio that would not transmit, and a map that they could not use to tell for sure where they were. They were lucky just to make it back, and some valuable lessons about boat safety were learned by the club. The next day Laun jacked up his motor a bit, and got his radio hardwired by The Perp, but his boat would still not plane out properly, even with a different prop, so he and Griz missed out on most of a day of fishing.

*Southern Man is a guest of the Club  
Rarely his boating skills flub  
But one day a big breezer  
Put his brain in the freezer  
As he rode up on rocks in a Skeeter*

Sunday's fishing success was a bad as the weather, as only 4 muskies were reported caught, and all of them in the 30" class. Two of the four fish were caught by Glenn Johnson, a guest of the club, with a 31" and 38", both on a Harasser bucktail.



**Glenn Johnson Nails his Lifetime First**

Trolling motor problems also cropped up on the second day. Earlier in the day, Janitor's trolling motor gave out, and then, later on, Nasty's trolling motor also quit. Luckily, we learned that there is a new Minn-Kota authorized trolling motor repairman on the Angle, who's shop is located on one-half of a gift shop near the Angle Inlet's only nine-hole golf course. The repairman eventually got both trolling motors up and running. And, by the way, we learned that he sells rebuilt trolling motors for the truly desperate.

**Day Three**, Monday, started out cold in the 50s, with most of the guys putting on cold weather gear to start the day. The wind was still there, even in the morning, and worked its way up to gusts above 20 mph, but at least we were able to get to most areas and fish. By the end of the day, 15 muskies were caught, with Bag Balm, Suzy, Felix and Fishdick catching two each. The big fish of the day was a 40" caught by Little Fart, his personal best, while fishing with Uncle Felix.



**Little Fart with new Personal Best**

Fishdick and Dr. Meat spent some time cavorting with a 50" class fish that was in the shallow back of a bay and got spooked out by the lures. It then sat in 2 feet of water right next to the boat and refused to respond to the furious jigging by the hungry fishermen. It wasn't until the net was lowered to scoop her up, that she swam away.

This was also the day that Kojak caught the biggest northern pike of the trip, a 41". The fish came from the Toadstool Islands area, and was caught on a modified in-line spinner.



**"Fish the Reeds for Pike" says Kojak**

**Day Four** was back into the skunk-hole for the club, as only four muskies were caught. Nasty got at 41", and The Perp got a 40", which was his lifetime first, biggest, and most. The weather was 'stable', as in Bad like the day before, with a strong Northwest wind. Several other fish were lost close to capture by several guys in what was becoming a trip of lost big ones, and strange behavior by the muskies.



**Nasty Boy, Nice Fish**



**Lifetime First and Biggest for the Perp**

Day Five was another decent performance by the club, in terms of numbers. Fifteen muskies were caught, with Suzy leading the charge with 4 muskies caught from the back of the Janitor's boat. Despite repeated attempts at 'honking' the fish away, Suzy caught fish of 29", 34", 37", and a trip-tying 47", all on his modified Vibrax. The 47 came from an area known as the Rummels, close by the Angle, but in their excitement, a girth measurement was not taken, so OJ's first-day 47" still stood as the trip leader. Suzy and The Janitor caught five muskies this day, which equaled the world record of 5 fish caught by Suzy and Baggy last year.



**Duper Eyes Another Big One**

Other notable fish from Wednesday included a two-fish day for Felix, including his lifetime personal best of 44" Dave was using a new bait that day, a Slopmaster spinnerbait fresh out of the package. It's a spinnerbait with a different style of wire and weight. He got his fish in his favorite stomping grounds up in Monument Bay.



**A New Personal Best for Felix**

Felix's 44 was also the key big fish in the One-Day Team grand Slam winning combination as he fished with brother Rick that day. Team Anderson also caught a 33" northern, a 15" walleye, and a 12" smallmouth for a 104" total length for four species. The day's catch was worth \$120 for the lads.



**Old Fart Loves the Northerns**

Fluffee also had a good day, with two fish, a 30" and a 44". He caught both fish in the Candyland area on a white Schumway Hothead, bless his heart. In fact, three of the four fish that Fluffee caught on the trip came off that overgrown beetle-spin. Yes, it appears that Fluffee is now casting for the other team!



**Fluffee Schums Up a Dandy**

Father Bertha also broke the 40 barrier on Wednesday, with a 43" fish caught off the Toadstools. Tim caught his fish on a Jackpot, which was the only fish caught on a topwater all week. Many guys threw topwaters during the week, and there was some action on them, but like with most other lures, the fish were not hooking up.

**Day Six** was the return of the Bag Balm, as his weekly musky total had slipped behind Suzy at 8 vs. 5. Baggy caught three fish this day, a 28", 37", and a 42", all on the standard #6 black and silver Vibrax. His fish came from the Tranquil Island and Bishop Point area. Suzy was shut-out on this day, which ended with the boys tied at 8 muskies for the trip, so far.



**One More Muskie for Baggy**

The club total for the day was 12 fish, which was above the daily trip average of 10, but below last year's average of 15. Three other 40" fish were caught on Thursday, a 41" by the Janitor, a 40.5" by Kojak, and a 40" by Farm Boy. This was also the day that Rocky Liebrock finally got his first fish of the trip.



**The Janitor Mops Up on the Muskies**



**This is Getting Easy!**



**Farm Boy Releases a Nice One**

The musky that Farm Boy caught eliminated the skunk from cabin three (Hadjji's Crib), and their skunk sign was moved over to cabin 5, the Party Cabin, where it remained for the rest of the trip, even though one of the Party Cabin boys, Dr. Meat, finally got his first fish of the trip. There was still one skunk left in cabin 5.

**Day Seven**, the last day finally saw a return to calmer weather, and with that, the fish activity seemed to pick up, but the catching did not. The club caught 10 fish for the day, with three of them belonging to Bag Balm, who increased his week's total to eleven. Jay also caught his biggest fish of the trip, a 44", as well as a 36" and a 29". Another big fish for the day was caught by Farm Boy with his second 40"+ fish of the trip, a 41.5", from the north side of Whaletail Island.



**Farm Boy with his Late Entry**

The Perp and Fishdick decided to take advantage of the calmer wind and fish the Pancake Island area. At Stange Island, where Suzy caught his first-day walleye, Brian had a big fish attack his Vibrax at the boat, jumping

out and spitting the lure. A few casts later and 50' down the shore, a 36" hooked up for him. Another 50", and there was another upper 40s following to the boat. And so it was for most of the guys on Friday, where the better weather made getting around easier, and also got the fish more active. Now if only we could have stayed for a few more days...

This year taught us that no matter how good we are getting at figuring out the muskies, we are always at the mercy of the local weather, which can make all the difference in our success. This year, the club's two best days were 15 fish, which was our average day from the year before. Maybe next year's worst day will be 15, with the classic stable weather that leads to more aggressive fish. We can only hope that Duper will deliver.



*Shorty forgot his remote  
Day one he towed Fluffee's boat  
No muskies he hooked  
So on Friday he booked  
And once home for the remote he looked*

**Next Year – Redemption!**